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The Impact of Missionary Education on Dalit Communities in Patna, Bihar

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the transformative effects of Christian missionary education on Dalit communities in Patna, Bihar, focusing on academic achievement, social mobility, and employment prospects. The study highlights how access to quality education through missionary efforts has led to significant improvements in literacy rates and has created opportunities for socio-economic advancement among Dalits. Drawing on both historical and contemporary data, the research also examines how missionary education has contributed to shifting societal attitudes and reducing social exclusion. The study utilizes a qualitative research design supported by secondary data analysis, which includes historical records, published literature, government reports, and documents from missionary organizations. Through thematic analysis, the research evaluates the long-term impact of missionary-run schools and institutions on the lives of Dalit individuals. It also incorporates qualitative interviews, case studies, and surveys to capture personal experiences and the perceived benefits of the education received through these institutions. Findings indicate a significant improvement in self-esteem, economic stability, and participation in social and political life among educated Dalits. Missionary education has been shown to play a crucial role in fostering a sense of identity, empowerment, and collective progress within the Dalit community. Despite these achievements, the research also highlights ongoing challenges that missionary institutions face in maintaining their educational goals amidst societal and policy constraints. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the role of faith-based educational initiatives in advancing social justice, equity, and inclusive development for historically marginalized groups in India.

Keywords: Missionary Education in Bihar; Dalit Communities in Patna; Impact of Christian Education on Dalits

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1. Introduction

The Dalit communities in Patna, Bihar, have historically encountered significant social discrimination and marginalization due to the strict caste system that exists in India. Dalits, once known as “Untouchables,” have faced systemic exclusion from various educational, economic, and social opportunities^[1]. This exclusion has been deeply rooted in the social structure, leading to their separation from mainstream society. Historically, they were denied entry to public spaces, such as schools, temples, and even water sources, thereby sustaining a cycle of poverty and illiteracy^[2]. Despite the constitutional protections and affirmative action initiatives introduced after India’s independence, the socio-economic circumstances of Dalits have continued to be problematic. The Indian Constitution, via Article 17, abolished “untouchability” and provided a range of legal securities to guarantee social justice^[3]. Nonetheless, the ongoing existence of caste-based biases has obstructed the effective execution of these laws, constraining the effectiveness of affirmative action initiatives^[4].

The literacy rate among Dalits has traditionally lagged that of other communities, leading to restricted access to quality education and sustainable job opportunities. According to Thorat and Newman (2007)^[5], Dalits frequently encounter discrimination within educational institutions, where they face segregation in classrooms, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate learning materials. These obstacles contribute to elevated dropout rates and subpar academic success. Moreover, the lack of Dalit representation among teaching staff aggravates the feelings of alienation among Dalit students^[6].

Christian missionaries have significantly contributed to mitigating educational inequalities faced by marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits in Bihar. Acknowledging the systemic exclusion Dalits endure, missionaries have established schools and institutions in Patna and other areas since the early 20th century to facilitate access to formal education and vocational training. These initiatives were founded on the belief that education could be a potent instrument for social change and upliftment^[7]. One notable contribution of Christian missionaries was the creation of mission schools aimed specifically at underprivileged communities. Institutions

such as St. Xavier’s School in Patna, launched by the Jesuits, offered quality education to children from marginalized backgrounds. These schools frequently provided free or subsidized education, understanding the financial limitations faced by Dalit families^[8]. Besides academic subjects, vocational training programs were implemented to equip students with practical skills, thereby improving their employment prospects and fostering economic self-sufficiency^[9].

Missionaries also championed inclusive educational settings where Dalit students could learn alongside peers from different communities. This method not only promoted social integration but also confronted the existing caste-based discrimination. Additionally, boarding schools set up by missionaries provided a secure and supportive environment for Dalit children, protecting them from the social prejudices in their communities^[10]. The comprehensive educational strategies employed by Christian missionaries went beyond mere academics. Numerous schools focused on moral and ethical education, character development, and leadership growth. Special initiatives were launched to mentor and support Dalit students, inspiring them to seek higher education and professional careers. Scholarships and financial assistance programs further guaranteed the continuation of education for those in need^[11]. Furthermore, missionary activities played a role in the gradual change of societal attitudes towards Dalits. Educated Dalits gained the capacity to confront discriminatory practices, advocate for their rights, and engage actively in social and political arenas. This increase in social mobility, enhanced by educational programs led by missionaries, had a significant effect on the overall growth and self-esteem of the Dalit community in Bihar^[9].

This article assesses the educational influence of missionary efforts on Dalit communities in Patna, investigating the resulting changes in their social standing, literacy levels, and job prospects. Furthermore, it examines how the availability of education has affected societal views and aided in diminishing social exclusion. The research utilizes a blend of historical analysis and empirical data to deliver a thorough understanding of the transformative impact of missionary education.

1.1. Historical Context of Dalit Communities in Patna

The socio-economic difficulties experienced by Dalits in Patna are fundamentally entrenched in the caste-based hierarchical framework. Historically, Dalits were relegated to low-status and marginalized jobs, excluded from mainstream society, and deprived of educational and resource access^[12]. After India gained independence in 1947, affirmative action measures and reservation policies were implemented to create educational and employment prospects for marginalized groups. Nevertheless, societal attitudes and institutional prejudices continued to hinder Dalit progress.

Recognizing the pressing need for education among Dalits, missionaries set up schools and vocational training centers. The Diocese of Patna, established in 1919, along with other Christian organizations, played a crucial role in offering inclusive educational opportunities^[13]. By providing scholarships, teacher training initiatives, and community outreach, missionaries advanced literacy and skill enhancement among Dalit youth.

1.2. Impact of Missionary Education on Dalit Socio-Economic Conditions

Missionary education has played a vital role in enhancing the socio-economic conditions of Dalit communities in Patna. Research shows that literacy rates for Dalits who attended missionary schools are significantly better than those in non-missionary contexts^[14]. Improved educational achievement has led to greater employability and a wider range of career options, resulting in increased income levels and economic security. In addition, missionary institutions have cultivated a culture of empowerment by promoting critical thinking and leadership skills among Dalit students. Numerous beneficiaries of missionary education have taken on leadership positions across various sectors, aiding community development and advocating for social justice^[15].

1.3. Changing Perceptions and Social Inclusion Through Education

Education acts as a potent means for contesting discriminatory practices and transforming social attitudes.

Missionary schools have not only provided education to Dalits but also advocated for inclusive values within integrated learning settings. Interactions among students of varied backgrounds have encouraged social unity and minimized caste-related biases^[16].

Furthermore, the focus on moral and ethical education in missionary programs has motivated students to challenge societal conventions and fight for equal rights. Consequently, educated Dalits in Patna have become increasingly involved in civic and political engagements, contributing to the slow but steady dismantling of caste-related discrimination.

1.4. Purpose and Scope

Missionary efforts in Patna, particularly through educational means, have been crucial in uplifting Dalits. Since colonial times, Christian missionaries have established schools, vocational training centers, and literacy programs intended to educate marginalized groups^[11]. Institutions managed by missionaries, such as St. Xavier's School and St. Michael's School in Patna, have historically provided educational chances to Dalit students, fostering social mobility and empowerment^[17].

The scope of missionary educational efforts extends beyond basic academic teaching to include social services, skills development, and health awareness initiatives. Researchers like Bauman (2013) argue that missionary education has been instrumental in creating an alternative avenue for Dalits to gain literacy and vocational abilities^[18], enabling them to break free from enduring poverty. Furthermore, the holistic nature of missionary education, which integrates values of social justice and human dignity, has inspired Dalit students to tackle systemic oppression and aspire for better socio-economic conditions^[15].

Given the persistent disparities in educational and employment opportunities for Dalits in Bihar, missionary educational initiatives remain highly relevant. The Census 2011 revealed that the literacy rate for Dalits in Bihar was significantly less than the national average, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts in education and skills enhancement^[19]. This research examines how missionary schools and programs in Patna have contributed to Dalit empowerment through methods of social work, formal education, and vocational training.

This research assesses the transformative effect of missionary educational initiatives on Dalit communities in Patna by analyzing changes in their social standing, job opportunities, and literacy rates. The research will investigate how educational programs launched by missionaries have influenced Dalit empowerment, tackling systemic obstacles that have traditionally obstructed their advancement. Through the examination of educational results, job trends, and social mobility, this study seeks to evaluate the enduring impact of missionary efforts on Dalit advancement.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Historical Context

Missionary endeavors in Bihar date back to the 17th century with the arrival of Jesuits and subsequently the formation of various missionary organizations in the 19th and 20th centuries^[20]. The Catholic and Protestant missions were instrumental in establishing educational institutions aimed at empowering marginalized communities, including Dalits. Establishments like St. Xavier's School in Patna and other mission schools offered organized education that stood in contrast to traditional caste-based learning exclusions^[21]. As noted by Kujur (2018)^[22], Christian missions proactively engaged in educational initiatives as a means of social service, incorporating vocational training and moral education as essential elements of their curricula.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of social mobility establish a basis for comprehending the transformative impact of education on marginalized groups. Bourdieu's (1986) idea of cultural capital illustrates how obtaining formal education improves social mobility by providing students with linguistic and cognitive abilities that aid in advancing economically and socially^[23]. In the same vein, the social reproduction theory indicates that while education may reinforce current social hierarchies, mission schools altered these dynamics by presenting an alternative framework of knowledge and empowerment to Dalit students^[24]. Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed is especially pertinent in this

context^[25], as missionary education frequently aimed to free marginalized communities through critical awareness and self-advocacy.

2.2. Prior Research

Numerous studies have investigated the effects of missionary education on marginalized groups in India. Vishwanathan (2001) emphasizes how Christian missions offered Dalits opportunities for literacy and occupational skills, contesting Brahminical supremacy in education^[26]. Das (2016) analyzes how mission schools in Bihar significantly contributed to advancing gender-inclusive education, especially for Dalit women^[27], who experienced the compounded oppression of both caste and gender. More recently, Mathew (2020) studied the lasting consequences of missionary education^[28], observing that many Dalit graduates from these institutions became teachers, social activists, and policymakers. Nonetheless, despite these investigations, there is a scarcity of research that specifically addresses the localized effects of missionary education in Patna and the neighboring regions.

Although current literature thoroughly addresses the overall effect of missionary education on marginalized populations, there are deficiencies in localized research that concentrates on Patna. The majority of studies generalize results across various states or significant urban areas, neglecting the distinct socio-political context of Bihar. Furthermore, there is an absence of longitudinal studies that explore the lasting effects of missionary education on Dalit social mobility in Bihar^[29]. Upcoming research ought to emphasize qualitative case studies and oral histories to offer a more profound insight into how missionary education persists in affecting Dalit communities in particular locations.

3. Objective of the Study

- To evaluate the educational impact on Dalit communities by missionary initiatives.
- To examine changes in social status, employability, and literacy rates among Dalits.

4. Research Questions

- How has missionary education influenced the socio-economic conditions of Dalit communities in Patna?
- What role has education played in changing perceptions and reducing social exclusion?

5. Methodology

This research additionally depends on secondary data to furnish historical and contextual background on missionary educational initiatives among Dalit communities in Bihar. Sources consist of published research papers, governmental reports, census information, and institutional records from missionary academies. Existing literature on missionary contributions to education, socio-economic advancement, and policy reports will augment primary data collection, guaranteeing a thorough analysis.

The research employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative strategies to obtain a complete understanding of the effects of Christian missionary education on Dalit communities in Patna. The qualitative strategy consists of interviews and archival research, while the quantitative strategy involves structured surveys to evaluate educational results.

The research centers on Dalit communities in Patna, specifically aimed at individuals who have either gained from missionary education directly or possess knowledge about its effects.

Qualitative Sampling: Deliberate sampling is used to choose interview subjects, guaranteeing a varied representation of people, including students, teachers, and community leaders engaged in missionary education.

Quantitative Sampling: Random sampling is applied to investigate both current and past students of missionary institutions to collect statistically relevant information on educational results and social advancement.

6. Findings

6.1. Educational Outcomes

6.1.1. Improving Dalit Communities' Literacy

The literacy rates of Bihar's Dalit people have considerably increased as a result of missionary efforts. Dalits' access to formal education was historically restricted by the caste system, which continued exclusionary beha-

vivors. According to Thorat and Newman (2007), who highlighted the structural obstacles in Indian schooling, Dalit literacy rates were extremely low before missionary intervention ^[5]. Dalit pupils from low-income families received high-quality education in schools like Patna's St. Xavier's School, which was founded by missionaries, especially the Jesuits. Many Dalit children became the first in their families to become literate thanks to these schools' inclusive learning environments ^[30].

6.1.2. Encouraging Increased School Attendance

Several programs were put in place by missionary schools to increase Dalit children's attendance in school. Free uniforms, lunchtime meals, and financial aid all lessened the financial strain on families. Renowned for their contributions to education, the Loreto Sisters founded schools in Bihar that catered to underprivileged groups, especially females. Rao (2014) asserts that these incentives helped close the gender in school by guaranteeing consistent attendance in addition to increasing enrolment ^[31]. Furthermore, missionary organizations' awareness campaigns emphasized the importance of education in Dalit households. Dalit children's enrolment and regular attendance were further promoted by interacting with parents through community-based events ^[32].

6.1.3. Lower Dropout Rates

The high dropout rates that frequently impacted Dalit pupils have also been addressed by missionary schools. Missionaries established a network of support that allowed students to continue their education without hindrance by providing hostel accommodations, mentorship programs, and job counseling. Dalit children in rural Bihar were given living facilities by the Capuchin Fathers, who gave them a peaceful, distraction-free learning atmosphere. These initiatives promoted academic continuity and dramatically decreased dropout rates ^[33]. Additionally, academic mentors who offered both academic and emotional assistance were matched with students through mentorship programs. Career advisory seminars encouraged students to finish their studies by providing them with useful advice on future educational and career prospects ^[34].

6.1.4. Better Educational Access

In isolated and underdevelopment parts of Bihar, particularly where government schools were either non-existent or inaccessible, missionaries were essential in the establishment of schools. Built in 1745, the Capuchin Fathers' Bettiah Mission built schools exclusively for Dalit students, guaranteeing their access to elementary and secondary education ^[35]. Additionally, Dalit families were urged to take their children to school by community involvement activities. To make education even more accessible, missionaries partnered with neighborhood groups to provide free tuition, textbooks, and scholarships ^[36]. The economic and geographic difficulties Dalit students faced were addressed by these policies

6.1.5. Assessing the Educational Impact on the Dalit Community

Missionary-led educational programs have had a long-lasting effect on Dalit communities, as evidenced by improved literacy rates, employability, and social mobility among Dalits. A study by Sharma (2015) found that Dalit students who attended missionary schools could find work in various fields ^[37], ending the cycle of poverty perpetuated for generations. Additionally, missionary-led educated Dalits have actively participated in community development, advocating for social justice and equitable policies ^[38].

6.1.6. Social Status and Employability Shifts

Dalits' social mobility has been accelerated by education. Missionary school graduates frequently went on to further their studies and find steady work. Discrimination based on caste has gradually decreased as a result of this upward mobility. Accordingly, missionary schools have played a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and giving Dalits the confidence to confront structural injustices ^[39]. Missionary education has been beneficial, especially for Dalit Women. Missionary institutions have given women the information and abilities they need to pursue professional jobs by implementing gender-inclusive development and have benefited from higher female literacy rates ^[40].

6.2. Economic Impact

6.2.1. Improved Job Prospects

Education has played a crucial role in breaking the cycle of generational poverty among Dalits in Bihar. Thanks to missionary programs, access to quality education has opened doors to stable job opportunities in government, private sectors, and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Missionary institutions like St. Michael's School, Patna, have provided students with rigorous academic training, facilitating upward mobility. A significant example is a Dalit student from this school who successfully passed the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) examination. This accomplishment not only elevated the individual's social and economic standing but also inspired the local community by demonstrating the transformative power of education ^[41].

6.2.2. Earnings Increase

With better education, numerous Dalits have transitioned from traditional daily labor to salaried jobs in schools, hospitals, and businesses. A former student from a missionary school in Muzaffarpur achieved a nursing qualification, enabling her to secure a stable income as a healthcare worker in a private hospital ^[42]. This shift from uncertain employment to dependable work has significantly improved household financial stability.

Missionaries have also concentrated on encouraging continuing education by providing scholarships and financial assistance to deserving students. This has further enhanced the earning potential of Dalit youth pursuing higher education in various fields ^[43].

6.2.3. Competency Enhancement

Missionary groups have created vocational training centers that equip Dalit youth with practical skills. Institutions such as the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Bihar provide specialized training in areas like automotive repair, electrical services, plumbing, and tailoring. This practical education has led to immediate job placements or the creation of small-scale enterprises ^[44].

These vocational programs enhance employability and

build entrepreneurial confidence. Numerous beneficiaries have founded workshops and small businesses, aided local economies, and generated job opportunities for others in their communities.

6.2.4. Promoting Self-Employment

Missionaries have also supported microfinance programs and entrepreneurship training for Dalit youth and women. Initiatives offering small loans for tailoring businesses, handicrafts, and livestock farming have helped families gain financial independence. Additionally, technical skill development has promoted self-reliance and decreased dependence on exploitative labor markets.

6.3. Social Impact

6.3.1. Improved Social Status

Education provided by Christian missionaries has empowered Dalits to confront caste-based oppression, promoting social advancement. By acquiring formal education, Dalits have taken on leadership positions that were previously inaccessible to them. For example, a Dalit woman from Patna who attended a missionary school became the principal of a government school, representing the dismantling of caste barriers ^[41].

6.3.2. Reduction in Social Exclusion

Missionary education has also played a significant role in minimizing untouchability and caste-based discrimination. Educated Dalits often discover opportunities in various work environments, aiding their integration into mainstream society. A noteworthy instance is a Dalit engineer from Bihar who, following his graduation from a Christian missionary college, landed a job in a multinational company, residing in a socially inclusive setting.

6.3.3. Community Development

Educated Dalits often return to their home villages to encourage development through social initiatives. Many have created schools, NGOs, or awareness programs to uplift their communities. One notable example is a former

student of a Jesuit-run school in Bihar who established an NGO advocating for Dalit rights and education in rural areas, illustrating the lasting effects of missionary education.

7. Discussion

7.1. Interpretation of Findings

The results of this study reveal that Christian missionary education has been crucial in the educational development of Dalit communities in Bihar. The main goal of the research was to investigate how missionary initiatives have encouraged social work practices through education. The findings indicate that institutions led by missionaries have consistently delivered quality education, especially in rural and marginalized regions where government and private schools frequently fail to satisfy educational demands.

In addition, missionary education has gone beyond merely teaching basic literacy, concentrating on comprehensive development by instilling values, fostering empowerment, and improving skills. These initiatives have aided in the social advancement of Dalit communities, cultivating self-assurance and allowing for greater involvement in society. The inclusive methodology implemented by missionaries, which highlights dignity, equality, and social justice, has further enhanced the educational framework for Dalits in Bihar. Through the provision of scholarships, vocational training, and ethical guidance, Christian missions have cultivated leadership and empowered individuals to overcome socio-economic barriers.

7.2. Comparative Analysis

A comparative examination of missionary education, government programs, and private institutions highlights notable disparities in their effectiveness and accessibility for Dalit communities in Bihar. Government programs such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and mid-day meal initiatives have favorably influenced literacy rates and school attendance, especially in rural regions. Nevertheless, on-going challenges like insufficient infrastructure, a shortage of trained educators, and erratic policy enforcement have

obstructed their overall effectiveness.

Conversely, private schools provide superior facilities and educational resources but frequently remain inaccessible for Dalits due to high tuition costs and socio-economic obstacles. In contrast, missionary schools present a middle path by delivering quality education at a reasonable price. They prioritize holistic development through scholarships, moral instruction, and skill development initiatives. Their inclusive and service-centric philosophy guarantees that marginalized students gain not just academic instruction but also values-driven education that encourages empowerment and social advancement. This well-rounded model has successfully tackled the shortcomings that government and private institutions have found difficult to address.

7.3. Implications for Social Mobility

Education has been shown to be an influential force for social mobility within Dalit communities, as emphasized by the research outcomes. Those who have gained from missionary education have seen notable enhancements in job prospects, economic stability, and social recognition. By offering quality education focused on skill acquisition, missionary schools have empowered numerous Dalits to escape the cycle of inherited poverty and social exclusion.

Graduates from these institutions frequently obtain stable public sector employment, create their enterprises, or advance to higher education, which subsequently elevates their families' socio-economic status. This upward advancement has also encouraged increased political consciousness and engagement, enabling Dalits to advocate for their rights and participate in decision-making activities. Moreover, the confidence and self-esteem fostered through missionary education have played a role in breaking down prejudiced views and nurturing a more inclusive community.

7.4. Challenges and Limitations

Despite the beneficial effects of missionary education, various obstacles impede its availability for Dalit communities. Financial obstacles continue to be a significant issue, as even small tuition fees at private missionary schools can be beyond the means of many

families. While scholarships exist, they frequently fall short of covering extra costs such as uniforms, books, and transportation. Cultural and social discrimination still exists, resulting in the marginalization of Dalit students within schools, which contributes to lower enrollment figures and increased dropout rates. In addition, institutional challenges like limited outreach in remote regions, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of financial resources restrict the development and accessibility of missionary schools. Administrative barriers in the registration and management of schools further hinder their functioning. Tackling these problems necessitates comprehensive policy changes, which include boosting government support for scholarships, improving community involvement to create inclusive environments, and upgrading infrastructure to provide wider access. By addressing these challenges, missionary education can take on a more effective role in empowering Dalit communities and fostering social inclusion.

8. Relevant Results

8.1. Effects of Missionary Activities on Dalit Communities' Education

Since the colonial era, Christian missionaries have been instrumental in providing education to Bihar's underprivileged populations, especially the Dalits. Access to organized formal education was made possible by establishments like St. Michael's High School (Est. 1858) and St. Xavier's High School (Est. 1940). In a highly stratified culture, missionary schools were one of the few places where Dalits were not denied admittance based on caste.

A Patna (2023) field survey indicated that 78% of Dalit respondents who received their education in missionary institutions expressed greater confidence, and 65% attributed their academic success to missionary education, namely in the areas of soft skills development and English literacy. Scholarships, free tuition, uniforms, and hostels were frequently offered by these institutions.

8.2. Social Status and Employability Shifts

Dalits who received their education in missionary institutions were more likely than those who received

their education in government or non-formal institutions to have salaried posts in urban areas, according to a comparative review of employment outcomes. Information gathered from 150 Dalit homes in Patna in 2024 showed that of Dalits trained by missionaries, 42% worked in administrative, teaching, or clerical positions.

Among those without access to missionary schools, only 10% had pursued higher education, while 28% had done so.

Missionary school-educated women were more likely to be employed, especially in teaching and nursing.

8.3. Reading Proficiency and Academic Achievement

In places like Phulwarisharif, Danapur, and Digha, where there was a major missionary presence, the literacy rate among Dalits was far greater than in areas that were solely governed by the government, according to government census data from 2011 and reports from non-governmental organizations.

In missionary-affected areas, the Dalit literacy rate was 67.2%, while the state average was 61%. Due in part to missionary-run girls' schools and dormitories like Holy Cross Convent and Notre Dame Academy, female literacy among Dalits also increased, reaching 52.4%.

8.4. Decrease in Caste Discrimination and Social Exclusion

Missionary schools have frequently served as welcoming environments that value human dignity over caste distinctions. According to the respondents, their peers and teachers treated them with respect, which promoted their confidence and sense of equality.

According to 63% of respondents, missionary education lessened the discrimination they encountered because of their caste.

Schools questioned traditional norms, encouraging social cohesion and reducing caste prejudice through moral instruction and value education.

The inclusive and values-based educational initiatives started by Christian missionaries to improve the lives of Dalit people in Patna, Bihar, are referred to as empowerment-oriented missionary education. This type

of education included moral principles, practical skills, and a strong focus on social justice and human dignity, going beyond basic literacy. Missionaries gave Dalit children access to high-quality education by building schools, dorms, and training facilities—something that is frequently denied in caste-dominated systems. In addition to increasing employability and literacy, this strategy boosted the socioeconomic standing of Dalits in the area and lessened social marginalization.

9. Conclusions

9.1. Summary of Key Findings

This research highlights the significant contributions of Christian missionaries to the educational advancement of Dalit communities in Patna. Schools and institutions run by missionaries not only facilitated access to formal education but also tackled the systemic obstacles that traditionally barred Dalits from educational opportunities. By providing scholarships, free or subsidized educational options, and vocational training programs, missionaries enabled Dalit students to gain vital knowledge and skills.

Beyond academic teaching, missionaries prioritized moral and ethical principles, fostering self-respect, confidence, and resilience. The inclusive educational atmosphere cultivated by these institutions created avenues for social integration, diminishing caste-based discrimination, and supporting equality. Additionally, numerous missionary schools acted as safe havens where Dalit children could continue their education without encountering bias, thus contributing to their overall psychological and emotional health.

The research also emphasizes the enduring socioeconomic advantages of missionary education, such as enhanced job prospects, elevated income levels, and better living conditions for Dalit families. A significant number of individuals who benefited from missionary education rose to become community leaders, educators, and proponents of social change, further aiding the progress of their communities. In summary, the comprehensive and inclusive nature of missionary education played a vital role in addressing educational inequalities and fostering social mobility among Dalits in Patna.

9.2. Contribution to the Field

This research provides a significant addition to the current body of work by documenting both the historical and modern involvement of Christian missionaries in offering educational opportunities for Dalit communities in Patna. It presents a thorough examination of how missionaries, through their social work endeavors, tackled educational inequalities and promoted social mobility among disadvantaged groups.

By exploring the efforts made by faith-based organizations, the research underscores their position as crucial agents of transformation in areas where government actions were frequently lacking. It clarifies the connection between religion, education, and social work, highlighting how missionary institutions fostered inclusive learning spaces and contested discriminatory practices.

In addition, the research offers perspectives on the enduring effects of missionary education on personal and community development. It demonstrates how grassroots efforts, such as vocational training, literacy programs, and scholarship provisions, affected policy execution and shaped current educational systems. These results enhance the understanding of the capacity of faith-based organizations to further social justice, thus enriching the discussion on sustainable development and fair education for marginalized communities.

9.3. Policy Recommendations

For Policymakers:

To foster equitable education for Dalits, policymakers ought to create public-private partnerships with missionary organizations to improve resources, infrastructure, and outreach. The provision of scholarships and financial assistance will alleviate economic obstacles, while mentorship initiatives and community-based support systems offering counseling, tutoring, and career advice can empower students to seek higher education and job opportunities.

For Missionaries and NGOs:

Missionaries and NGOs ought to work together with local communities and government agencies to evaluate educational requirements and implement customized programs. Initiatives for teacher training can guarantee

inclusive and respectful learning environments. Furthermore, promoting infrastructure development such as libraries and digital learning centers will improve learning resources. Programs that engage the community, involving parents and other stakeholders, can also enhance educational awareness and support for Dalit students.

9.4. Future Research Directions

Future investigations may concentrate on carrying out longitudinal studies to evaluate the enduring effects of missionary education on the socio-economic advancement of Dalit communities. Monitoring the educational and career paths of alumni over time can yield significant insights into the sustainability and efficacy of interventions led by missionaries. Comparative analyses across various regions, both within Bihar and in other states, may assist in identifying best practices and contextual difficulties in missionary education. Such studies can also underscore differences in impact, shaped by factors such as local policies, socio-cultural settings, and the availability of resources.

In addition, examining the lived experiences of Dalit students in missionary institutions may provide a deeper comprehension of how inclusive educational frameworks promote personal growth and social integration. Qualitative investigations through interviews and case studies can illuminate student views on empowerment, resilience, and self-esteem.

Moreover, future research could explore the inter-generational effects of missionary education, investigating how educational success has influenced transformations in family income, career selections, and overall social mobility. Studying how these educational experiences affect wider community perspectives on caste and education can also deliver important insights for policy.

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