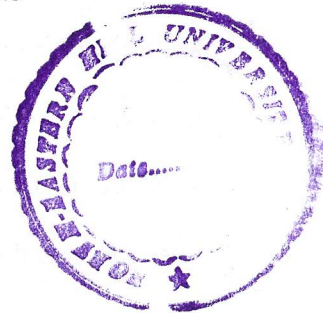


**ROLE OF INDIGENOUS TUNES IN CHURCH MUSIC
IN THE KHASI AND JAINȚIA HILLS**



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ABSTRACT

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Church music is written for performance in a religious rite of worship; it is a term which is most commonly associated with Christian tradition. Church music in some form or the other is seen to have existed and played its role right from the early churches. It continues to be an important element playing a dominant role in the worship services of worldwide Christian denominations today. Indigenous music on the other hand is one that belongs naturally to a place. It is created by a particular culture and reflects the traditions, concerns and activities of that culture. Indigenous music which comprises both folk and traditional music therefore, explains the original way of life of a particular culture which is being valued, preserved and enriched in all its social, cultural, secular and religious aspects.

Church music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills was brought by the foreign missionaries at the time when Christianity itself was then established. Church music in the Presbyterian Church was introduced in 1841 by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Missionaries, and later, when Catholicism was brought by the German Salvatorian Missionaries in 1890, Catholic Church music was also established.

At the very start of Christianity, the Welsh missionaries introduced their own music form known as Welsh hymnody in the Presbyterian Church services. Welsh hymnody consists of hymn tunes which developed in Wales in the 19th century due to the spread of evangelical Calvinistic Methodism. In like manner, the Catholic Church missionaries also brought with them their own music form called Latin hymnody or Gregorian chants. These are melodies set to sacred *Latin texts* and sung without accompaniment. These two music forms are therefore said to have become the earliest church music of the Presbyterians and the Catholics respectively. With the spread of Christianity efforts were then made to develop church music in the two respective churches. Western hymns were in the course of time translated into Khasi, hymn books were gradually prepared and church choirs began to be formed. Western music then had the pre-eminence of being the sole music in these denominations, while Khasi indigenous music was totally ignored from the church music proper.

Meghalaya is a Christian dominated State where the Christian population has reached the figure of 16, 23,209 or 70.01 per cent of the total state population (Statistical Hand Book Meghalaya 2007). In Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Presbyterians and the Catholics because of their early arrivals have become the two major Christian denominations. Besides these, recent decades

have shown the springing up of a number of other Christian denominations like the Baptist Church, the Unitarian Church, the Church of North India (CNI), the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Church of God, Church of Christ, the Assembly Church of Jesus Christ (India), the Trumpet Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Full Gospel Fellowships and others.

Like the Presbyterians and the Catholics, the above denominations as and when they are established also started their own church music (though mostly of Western origin), maintain their own set of hymn books and church choirs, and attribute due importance to hymn singing in all their church and worship services. It is also interesting to note that most of the Christian churches today are very enthusiastic to participate in their Sunday and worship services and express their faith in hymns.

It is therefore, this practice as stated that has made church music become an indispensable component in the worship services of Christian denominations. In view of the above however, and for the purpose of the study, the subject of church music and indigenous tunes is being analyzed with special reference to the Khasi-Jaintia Presbyterian and the Catholic churches, in which church music is very prominent and has greatly advanced when compared to other denominations.

It may be mentioned that a good number of works, writings and compositions on Khasi music have been produced by local writers, composers and songwriters in recent years. It is recorded that the first Khasi songs written and published in the tonic sol-fa notations entitled *Ki Sur Syiang* (melodious tunes) was brought out by the Sacred Heart College, Mawlai, Shillong in 1958. This was followed by the publication of a Khasi Song book *Ki Jingrwai Khasi* (Khasi Songs) by Victor G. Bareh in both tonic sol-fa and staff notations in 1960. Other subsequent publications include that of P.R. Kyndiah in 1969 who has written about Khasi music in his article "A Peep into Khasi and Jaintia Music" as quoted from *Khasi Heritage – A Collection of Essays on culture and religion of the Khasis*. C. Khongwir a Khasi music composer and songwriter has also talked much of Khasi Traditional music in his writings on "Some stray thoughts on Traditional Khasi music" as quoted from the Magazine *Panorama* in 1984. He has again produced a commendable work on Khasi folk music in his essay on "Khasi Folk Music- A General Survey" as quoted from the book *Less We Forget- Indigenous Peoples'* year 1994. A.D.Tham in 1985 has published some works on "Khasi Folk Song" as quoted from the *Sura-*

Jhankar, and E.B.R. Wanswett in his book *Khasi Music- A Peep*, 2001 tried to explain Khasi music that flourishes against all odds.

Other recent publications include that of Lapyngshai Syiem who has produced a book in 2005 on *The Evolution of Khasi Music: A Study of the Classical Content* in which she talks of Khasi folk music, Khasi Traditional music and Khasi Musical instruments, and analyzes Khasi beats and tunes in the classical context. This was followed by the publication of a book entitled *Katto Katme Shaphang ka Put ka Tem Tynrai* (A Glimpse on Traditional Music) by the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong and edited by H.Giri in 2006.

Again, coming closer to the subject of Church music, E.W. Kharsohnoh in his unpublished seminar paper on “Ka Bynta Ka Traditional Music Ha Ka Jingshakri Blei” (Role of Traditional Music in the service of God) has briefly explained the role of Khasi traditional music and the need to introduce Khasi indigenous music in church singing. In line with this, Radiancy Rnga in her Master of Theology unpublished dissertation on the “Significance of the Khasi hymn Book for Christian Education” in 2004 has also highlighted on the importance of hymn singing as a means of educating Christians. She also indirectly expresses her regrets for ignoring Khasi indigenous music from Church music.

In addition to the above, we also have a number of music compositions on church music and devotional songs in both western and indigenous forms composed from time to time by local musicians and songwriters. But so far no analytical study has been done on church music, nor has there been any work done on the role played by Khasi indigenous tunes in church music as such. It is in this context therefore, that an attempt is made to analyze church music and the role of Khasi indigenous tunes (vocal and instrumental) in church music.

The Methodology applied in the pursuance of the research work involves the collection of data and materials through Primary and Secondary sources.

Primary Sources have been drawn from the written documents like *The Vatican Council II-The Concilliar and Post Concilliar documents* (1962-1965) of the Roman Catholic Church, *Ka Kot Jingrwai Ban Mane Ia U Blei Ha Ri Khasi Bad Jaintia* (Presbyterian hymn book) 2000 edition, *Ka Lynti Bneng* (Catholic hymn book) 1998 edition, and other documents, hymn books, relevant music compositions and others collected from the respective church denominations under study and others. *Questionnaires* with a readymade schedule of relevant questions

pertaining to Church music and the Church choirs have been served to selected persons representing the Presbyterian, Catholic and other denominations which include church leaders, elders, composers, musicians, songwriters, choir directors and others versed in the subject. *Interviews* have been conducted with selected persons possessing knowledge and experience on the subject.

Secondary Sources have been drawn from published books, journals, magazines, articles, seminar papers, weeklies, dailies, website and other printed materials.

The study is being organized in five chapters.

Chapter – I **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is devoted to the introduction and definition of music, folk and traditional music or indigenous music, church music and music in the Khasi⁹ traditional religion.

Music is a basic social and cultural activity of mankind, which has probably existed in some form from the earliest days of man. It is an art or activity that appears in all cultures around the world. Views and opinions on the importance of music have been expressed by people representing different walks of life. Apart from the above, it is also observed that Christian churches from the earliest years have had a place for music. Music functions as a significant component of religious ritual throughout the world, which also forms the subject of this study.

The term music comes from the Greek word *Mousike* by way of Latin adaptation, which applies to all branches of art over which the muses were supposed to preside. Definitions of music vary, being a subjectively perceived phenomenon. Its definition has been tackled by philosophers, lexicographers, composers, teachers, semiologists, linguists, scientists and musicians. However, with due recognition to the various definitions, music has been appropriately defined as the art of combining vocal and instrumental sounds into rhythmic, melodic and harmonic structure.

Every tribe or culture is born with its original type of music called folk music and

traditional music, before it is exposed to other types of music like church and secular music. Folk music is music that relates to a community or particular region and has existed for a long time. It is music spontaneously composed and sung or played by the common people in commemorating their experiences and events of everyday life. It therefore forms the basis for other forms of music, and is handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Folk music gives birth to another form of music known as traditional music. It is that music which has been commonly practiced for a long time. It is also handed down from generation to generation, but unlike folk music, it contains some elements of organization, and is acquired through learning and repetitive practices.

Along with folk and traditional music of a particular culture, other forms of music like church music of any Christian denomination may be established. Church music as has been the tradition is always associated with Christianity. The word 'Church' is defined as a place where Christians meet, and in this context it means the Christian community. The term 'denomination' on the other hand implies a group of churches having their own particular traditions and practices. Hence, church music or liturgical music is that music used in public worship of the church.

Church music which is closely associated with religion and religious worship is found to play a different role in the context of the Khasi traditional religion. Khasi religion is a traditional religion professed by the indigenous inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It is purely monotheistic which believes in One Supreme God, but they have no common system of worshipping God, as they have no temple or sacred place of worship. Their religion is a way or practice called *Ka Niam Khein Ka Niam Bishar* (The religion of figuring out, the religion of reasoning). With regard to the part played by music therefore, it is noted that the religious music for instance found at *Hima Khyrim* includes the religious drum beats of the *Hima*. Likewise, the non-religious music found at *Hima Myllichem* includes the socio-cultural dance beats used at the level of the *Raid* under *Raid Myllichem* (Myllichem Native State). Music therefore, in the folk and traditional form is being used in the performance of sacrifices and other rituals in the Khasi traditional religion, but church music and congregational singing as practiced in other Christian churches do not exist.

This chapter deals with the presence of Christianity in respect of the Presbyterians and the Catholics in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, a brief historical development of Church music in general, the advent of foreign missionaries and its impact on church music, and a comparative study of the music forms prevalent in the two respective churches.

The presence of Christianity in the context of the Presbyterians is being assessed through the Synods which function with the help of ordained district church leaders and ministers known as Presbyteries. The Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Assembly at present comprises two synods. *The Khasi-Jaintia Presbyterian Synod-Mihngi* (East) covers the East Khasi and Jaintia Hills comprising 13 Presbyteries. *The Khasi-Jaintia Presbyterian Synod-Sepngi* (West) covers the West Khasi Hills with 25 Presbyteries, and the *Ri Bhoi Synod* which is by itself autonomous functions with 5 Presbyteries. These three synods have a total of 43 Presbyteries with a population of 5, 18,647 Presbyterians. In like manner, the Catholic presence has been assessed through the Dioceses and the number of Parishes that function under them. *The Shillong Archdiocese* takes care of the East Khasi Hills and the Ri Bhoi district with 30 Parishes. *The Nongstoin Diocese* covers the West Khasi Hills with 12 Parishes, and the *Jowai Diocese* operates in the Jaintia Hills with 10 Parishes under it. These Dioceses have 52 Parishes under them with a population of 4, 06,453 Catholics as recorded in 2005. Therefore, based on 2007 records, both the denominations have a total population of around 10 lakh Christians.

The role of music in the Church is noted to have its own historical developments and impact on the people and Christianity. This similar situation is also seen with church music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Its historical development has created an impact on the people, literature, education, and above all on Christianity and church worship of different denominations. This can be better explained by referring to the different periods of musical history in general.

The Medieval Period (600-1450 A.D) The earliest church music that developed during this period was Plainsong or Plainchant known as Gregorian Chant (named after Pope Gregory I-

590-604). This refers to singing a single line melody, without counterpoint and originally without accompaniment. This was followed by the 9th century development of Organum a polyphonic texture combining two melodic lines simultaneously.

The **Renaissance Period** (1450-1600 A.D) A music feature called Word Painting developed. This is a musical representation of specific poetic images. Music in this period is found to be chiefly polyphonic dominated with a special feature of being mostly imitative in style.

The **Baroque Period** (1600-1750 A.D) The Protestant Reformation in 1517 led to the development of different musical practices such as the Chorales which were hymn tunes set to music in German text for congregational singing by Martin Luther (1483-1546 A.D) The Chorale is the main musical expression of the Lutheran Church in which the texts were written not only as worship tools but as statements of the Christian doctrine. This was followed by the Monophonic Singing of Psalms by John Calvin (1509-1564 A.D) who felt that austere devotion was not possible when instrumental music or polyphonic choral music was used in church. Calvin's attitude about the role of music in worship was in direct opposition to Martin Luther's ideas, because for Calvin music should not detract from the message of the scriptures. Another religious movement of the period was Methodism, a Protestant denomination founded by John Wesley (1703-1791) and Charles Wesley (1707-1788) who introduced another musical practice known as hymnody. The Wesley hymns were directed toward two basic concepts. First, hymns and hymn singing must be based on biblical sources; second, the music must be simple and direct. From this period, the practice of hymn singing in worship services was strongly established and used throughout the world wherever Methodism is practiced.

From the **Classical Period** (1750-1828) and the **Romantic Period** (1828-1900) onwards, there took place the development of all the essential genres, forms and instrumental combinations leading to the foundation of the Symphony, String quartets, Opera and modern concerts. These developments in fact led to some sort of a decline in Church music, but attempts were made to reform and reintroduce the chant and sacred polyphony which again led to its revival by the end of the 19th century period.

Christianity in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills began to take firm roots with the arrival of foreign missionaries. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Missionaries with Thomas Jones I and his

wife Anne Jones as the pioneering missionaries landed at Sohra (Cherrapunjee) on 22nd June 1841 where they established the first permanent mission among the Khasis. From here Christianity was soon extended to Jaintia Hills and other places. It is recorded that 50 years after the arrival of the Welsh missionaries, the pioneering work of the Catholic Church in these hills began with the advent of the German Salvatorian Missionaries who reached Shillong on February 27, 1890. The four missionaries headed by Fr. Otto Hopfenmueller had their headquarters in Shillong from where the Catholic missionary work was then extended. These missionaries who had also brought with them their own music forms had always maintained a policy of popularizing their hymns in their respective churches. Church music and hymn singing therefore flourished and have become so prominent that church services without music seem to be incomplete.

The Presbyterian Church which received the Christian faith from the Welsh missionaries also follows the hymn tunes and music forms brought by these missionaries in all their worship services. The first collection of hymns in the Presbyterian Church was published by Thomas Jones in 1845, after which a series of other editions took place. In their hymn singing style it is noted that their music forms is a combination of elements found in Isaac Watts hymn style, the pietistic Lutheran stream and the Wesleyan hymn traits as to the form and content. It is perhaps the combination of these elements that has enriched the singing tradition of the Welsh, which has been deeply implanted in the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Church.

The Catholic Church uses the Latin hymn tunes or Gregorian chants brought by their missionaries. These chants consist of melodies set to sacred Latin texts which is said to be the official music approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic hymn book *Ka Lynti Sha Bneng* (The Way to Heaven) was first compiled and published by a German priest Fr. J. Bethan in 1894 which also led to a series of revisions in the subsequent years.

This Chapter analyzes the important aspects of Church music namely, the role of hymn singing, the role of musical instruments, the Choir and Choir Director, and the essential qualities of Church music.

Every religious denomination considers hymn singing as an essential part of the Liturgy and church worship. Hymn is a religious song that the congregation sings together, and Worship means the feeling or expression of deep respect for God. It is observed that like other Christian denominations, due importance is being given to the role of hymn singing with efforts to popularize and develop the same in both the Presbyterian and Catholic churches. This is indicated by the rich collection of hymns as appeared in their respective hymn books with their efforts to develop the same.

The use of Musical instruments to accompany the singing acts as a support to the voices, renders participation easier, adds splendour to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up the worshippers' minds to God and higher things. The use of instruments namely the organ was introduced into church services in the 9th century by the Benedictine monks in the monasteries, and between the 10th and 13th centuries the organ became the exclusive church instrument in Europe.

In the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian Church, hymn singing was first accompanied by a folding organ at Nongsawlia (Cherrapunjee) a few years before 1897. It was played by a missionary, Sir Pongwern who was then attached to Sylhet, and in Mawkhar Presbyterian Church the organ was used for the first time by Ms. A.W Thomas sometime around 1897-1900. In the Catholic Church, hymn singing was first accompanied by a pumping organ and at times the accordion at Laitumkhrah Catholic Church from 1912 onwards, and later by the 1930s the organ was used. Today, the most commonly used instrument in most of the churches is the Casio or the keyboard.

Today, every big church irrespective of denominations maintains the organ or keyboard as the approved and most appropriate instrument to accompany church singing at all times. It is also

observed that Khasi indigenous musical instruments like ka *Bom* (big drum), ka *Duitara* (four stringed instrument), ka *Ksing shynrang* bad *Ksing kynthei* (male drum and female drum) and others have been introduced from the 1990s in the Presbyterian Church and from the 1980s in the Catholic church to accompany hymn singing and special numbers by choir groups in the open air services, though in the church, their use is still limited.

It is recorded that the first church choir which had sung in voices started in the 4th century during the time of Pope Sylvester I (314-335 A.D). It was known as *Schola Cantorum* (A Singing School and in this context, a Church choir) which later on came to be known as the *Sistine Choir*. This choir used to perform at the liturgical celebrations of the Pope and also at other worship services. This was followed by another well known choir of the time the Chapel Royal of the British Crown established in 1135 and others. Part song known as polyphony was greatly appreciated and widely used by the 16th century period. In part singing, the different voices of Soprano, alto, tenor and bass sing different melodies, the harmony of which can be achieved through the choir. The term 'choir' therefore, means an organized group of singers which is often associated with the term choral.

Christian churches take great care to establish church choirs. In the Presbyterian Church, church choirs are formed at the Assembly, Synod, Presbytery, and District and also at local church levels. In the early decades, choirs were formed on temporary basis depending on occasions. It was only from 1975 that the first standing church choir known as the Mawkhar Presbyterian Church choir was formed at Mawkhar, followed by the Khasi-Jaintia Presbyterian Synod Mission Board Choir in 1976 and others in subsequent years. In the Catholic Church the first church choir was founded in 1924 under the name St. Cecilia Choir which remains a standing choir till date. Church choirs are now formed at the diocese level as well as at the parish and local church levels. Today, church choirs either standing or temporary choirs occupy a special place in different churches as they add solemnity, flavour and grandeur to the services.

Owing to the growing importance of church choirs, the large size of the choirs, and to ensure good performance, the need for a Choir Conductor has become essential. A choir conductor is one who directs the choir with the responsibility of determining the overall sound, tempo, balance and the dynamics of a performance. From about 1825 orchestral and choir directors became a regular feature of any large ensemble. It is noted that church choirs in the

Presbyterian as well as Catholic Churches took great care to select and maintain qualified choir directors right from the time that the choirs were founded.

On account of the great role and importance attached to church music, it is suggested that church music should possess the essential qualities to make it fit and appropriate for the purpose of divine worship. Church music therefore should be solemn, restrained, quiet, tranquil, dignified and noble. In other words, it should be provocative i.e. alive, effective, with strong communication both musically and textually, prayerful i.e. with prayer text, and simple in music and text. All these therefore should emphasize on the dignity of divine worship, draw the active participation of the people and at the same time express pleasantly and truly the sentiments of the Christian soul.

Chapter – IV **INTRODUCING INDIGENOUS MUSIC INTO CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN THE KHASI-JAINTIA PREBYTERIAN AND CATHOLIC CHURCH DENOMINATIONS.**

This chapter dwells on the aspect of inculturation as an indispensable factor in the evangelization process, the role of indigenous tunes, and the attitude of the Presbyterian, Catholic and other Churches towards indigenous music.

The acceptance of indigenous tunes into the church music proper to any church is a slow process. It requires that a particular church should be able to respect, adapt, and accept the way of life, the culture and musical traditions of the people in its evangelization work. It is therefore considered that the first step that leads to the indigenization of any church is the aspect of inculturation. The word inculturation is derived from acculturation a term used in Anthropology which indicates the process by which one social group acquires the customs and habits of another. It is again differentiated from the term enculturation a technical term in social sciences which denotes the process by which an individual is integrated into his society. Inculturation therefore, which has a theological connotation refers to the process by which a particular church expresses its faith and life in and through the local culture. This aspect in the course of time opened the way for the implementation of vernacularization of worship in the liturgy which comprises both language and music.

The term indigenous is derived from the Latin word *indigena*, meaning a native and indigenous music is that music born out of the culture of a particular race. Khasi culture like other cultures possesses its own music known as Khasi indigenous music which explains the rich tradition of Khasi music – folk and traditional which has developed a long time ago. Khasi traditional music which is vastly different from the music of hymns and other music forms has complex beats, staccato rhythms, regular chanting, a distinctive lilting and occasional slurs. It consists primarily of melody and lyrics used in the truly Khasi traditional terminology.

Ever since its establishment, the *Seng Khasi* has taken upon itself the task of up keeping, and preserving Khasi culture and its traditional practices. Seng Khasi is a socio-cultural cum religious body of indigenous people of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It was established in 1897 by a group of 16 Khasi youths of Mawkhar, Shillong who saw the threat to the identity of the Khasis by the influence of the west. It is therefore founded for the protection, preservation and enrichment of Khasi culture, customs and systems. In a word, the Seng Khasi tries to bring all Khasis to the same platform, to awaken Khasi thought from the myriad changes and to love what belongs to a Khasi. Therefore, unlike the Khasi traditional religion, and like other Christian denominations, the *Seng Khasi* has a fixed place of worship called *Ka ĩng Seng* (Community house) where they meet on Sundays. As a religious body, it also maintains its own set of services, prayers of a spontaneous manner, and produces hymn books called *Ki Jingrwai Seng Khasi* (Seng Khasi hymns). Its hymn book which had its first edition in 1911 and the latest in 2005 contains 185 hymns in total, all composed and set to Khasi indigenous tunes.

Khasi indigenous tunes began to be introduced in the Presbyterian Church from 1990 onwards. However, prior to this, an attempt was made by Rev. Sorkin Singh to compose a Khasi hymn tune *Ko Jisu, Ko Jisu* (O Jesus, O Jesus) between 1946 and 1948 which sounds quite indigenous in its tune. The tune however popular it was at that time was not incorporated in the Presbyterian hymn book, and gradually became out of use. Mention may also be made of a song book entitled *Ki Sur Kynud Na Mihngi* (Oriental melodies) composed by E.W. Kharsohnoh, in which a rich variety of 80 songs and hymns was published in 1999. In addition to these, there have been quite a number of other indigenous songs composed by S. S. Syiemlieh, B.C. Lyngdoh, E. Sohlang and others at different periods of time. These songs which focused on varied themes and subjects have been set to Khasi indigenous tunes and are found to be rich, enlivening and appropriate for church use. It may however be noted that though these songs were not given entry

into the Presbyterian hymn book, yet they prove to be well accepted by the Christian community. They are widely used and have gained popularity and appreciation at the assembly, synod, presbytery, district and local church celebrations of the Presbyterian Church.

The 2000 edition of its hymn book shows that so far of the many indigenous hymns that have been composed only one hymn – *Hangno Ka Lawei Jong Phi* (where is your future) was included bearing No. 567 in the hymn book. This hymn was composed and set to Khasi indigenous tune by S.M.Syiem in 1979. However, an encouraging trend that is worth mentioning, is the fact that as of now, the Presbyterian Church authorities both at the assembly and synod levels are seriously considering the views and opinions that flow from various levels of the church community on Khasi indigenous music. The views as such, emphasize on the need to introduce Khasi indigenous tunes into church music to enable them worship God and express their Christian life in the most indigenous manner. The entry of the above hymn therefore, in the midst of 639 other hymns is opening the way for more indigenous tunes to find place in the next edition of the Presbyterian hymn book.

The Catholic Church on its part, which started introducing these tunes from the 1980s, is showing a more positive trend. The Eleventh Edition of the Catholic hymn book 1980 has given entry to 27 indigenous Khasi tunes in the midst of 665 hymns, and the Thirteenth Edition, 1998 which has a total of 653 hymns and psalms has a number of 40 hymns set in the truly indigenous Khasi music forms.

After the departure of the Welsh missionaries in 1969 the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards indigenous music has not changed much, as the work of developing and editing the hymn book, and the voices in favour of traditional Khasi tunes remain in status quo. A number of writers like Nigel Jenkins, J. Fortis Jyrwa, Radiancy Rnga, E.W. Kharsohnoh and others have pointed out the harm done by the early missionaries with regard to the exclusion of Khasi thought forms and musical traditions from the church.

However, from the 1980s onwards particularly from 1985, there has been a movement among the youths, church members and songwriters who have expressed their taste and liking for Khasi indigenous tunes. This has also inspired many local music composers to compose choir songs and choral music in the indigenous forms. The composition of a choir piece *Ah Jerusalem* by S.S. Syiemlieh in 1985 turned out to be a very enlivening and encouraging experiment. The

composition and performance of the song as such may be said to have spread an all round awareness among church leaders and the church community as a whole of the richness and beauty of Khasi indigenous tunes. The experiment has therefore led to a change in the mindset and attitude of the youths in particular and many other Presbyterian believers towards Khasi indigenous music, expressing their desire that such tunes should be encouraged for regular use in the church.

As a matter of fact, the liking for Khasi indigenous songs is seen in every celebration or meeting of the Presbyterian Church be it at the assembly, synod, presbytery, district or local church levels in which the choirs perform their special numbers using Khasi traditional musical forms. It may also be pointed out that people's attitude today towards traditional music, their desire to procure Khasi musical instruments and learn the art of playing them is so much alive that it has become a movement. The demand for Khasi traditional musical instruments like *ka Bom* (big drum), *ka Ksing shynrang* and *Ksing kynthei* (male and female drums), *ka Duitara* (stringed instrument), *ka Padiah* (small drum) and others which were on the dying stage in the past decades, have now come to a revived stage as we could see from the demand that flow from all quarters irrespective of age, religion and church denominations.

The change of attitude has also led to a resolution taken by the Synod at *Jirang* (Ri-Bhoi district) in 1998 that a song book of 50 Khasi indigenous tunes be published which later on would be incorporated in the hymn book. It may however be mentioned that though the above resolution has not yet been materialized, yet as of now many church leaders, elders and different sections of the Presbyterian community favour that these tunes be encouraged and recognized in the Presbyterian worship.

The Catholic Church which is already in the process continues the practice of inviting and collecting compositions and works of indigenous nature for inclusion in its hymn book whenever it is due for revision.

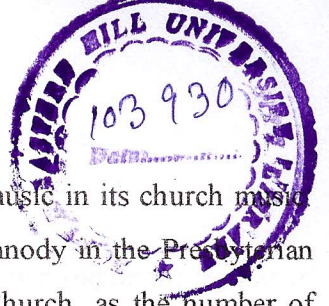
The present attitude as stated above, is therefore an indication that Khasi indigenous music will sooner or later find place and get due recognition to praise and worship God in the Church music of all church denominations.

This chapter specifies the findings that evolved from the previous chapters of the study.

Prior to the arrival of Christianity into the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the only music that prevailed then was Khasi folk and traditional music known as Khasi indigenous music. The Khasis then were not exposed to any other alien music form but lived in their own culture and music traditions. But with the coming of Christianity, an altogether western music form was used in the Church to the exclusion of Khasi indigenous music. The rigidity of accepting indigenous tunes in the church was quite strong in the Presbyterian Church, though a change of attitude to a certain extent took place only from the 1990s. In the Catholic Church, though initially western music dominated, yet the attitude of using these tunes became flexible right from the 1980s. The trend in this direction has also been contributed because of the emergence of many local, clergy and lay composers in the Catholic Church.

Church music is found to be very rich in both the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian and the Catholic churches. This is obvious from the volume and rich collection of hymns that have been incorporated in their respective hymn books. The 2000 edition hymn book of the Presbyterian Church *Ka Kot Jingrwai Ban Mane Ia U Blei Ha Ri Khasi Bad Jaintia* for instance contains a big volume of 639 hymns and choruses, and the 1998 edition of the Catholic hymn book ka *Lynti Bneng* contains a collection of 653 hymns and Psalms. Church music has further been enriched by the manner in which hymns have been properly classified and indexed into relevant sections. The Presbyterian hymn book is being divided into 19 sections and the Catholic hymn into 40 sections, which bear appropriate themes and subjects facilitating the selection of the right hymns at services meant for different occasions.

Presbyterian Church music is found to be originally based on Welsh hymn tunes and other western music forms. As appeared in the hymn book the hymns are mostly direct translations of western tunes, with a few original compositions again set to western music forms. These hymns have become so popular that they are sung not only in church but also at leisure, at work and homes. Catholic Church music is also originally based on Latin hymnody or Gregorian chants bearing its own music forms. This music form became prominent in the Catholic Church since its advent till the 1980s, and later, with the introduction of Khasi indigenous tunes, the Catholic



Church began to cherish the mixture of both western and indigenous music in its church music. There is therefore, still an overwhelming dependence upon Welsh hymnody in the Presbyterian Church, though less dependence on Latin hymnody in the Catholic Church, as the number of Khasi indigenous tunes already represents a substantial collection.

One prominent hymn singing style found in the Presbyterian Church other than the Catholic Church is the practice of syllabification or breaking up of syllables. Single syllable words (monosyllable) for instance like *ieit* (love), *bneng* (heaven), *kdang* (satisfied), *kmie* (mother) and many others are broken up or separated into two syllables by adding the vowel 'i' or the consonant 'y' which also sounds like a vowel. Likewise, the two syllable words (dissyllable) like *Jaipdeh* (lazy), *diengphna* (cross), *iakmen* (rejoice) and so on are broken up into three syllables in singing. The practice therefore breaks the above words into the following form- (*i-ieit*, *by-neng*, *ky-dang*, *ky-mie*) and (*Jai-py-deh*, *dieng-phy-na*, *ia-ky-men*) and so on. Such practice may however, be considered as irregular as it goes against the music norms which states that sound and sense should coincide and that the tune and text should match. It therefore leads to confusing and ambiguous readings causing discordance in hymn singing. Though the practice is no longer adhered to by modern composers and songwriters, yet the singing style of the hymns already set in the hymn book is still continuing.

In the earlier decades, the practice of lining out was quite prominent in the hymn singing style of the Presbyterian Church and other denominations, though very marginal in the Catholic context. It is a practice of having each line read by a minister or leader and followed by the congregation. The practice which is again a western tradition was adapted as a temporary measure, probably because of the inability of the people to read and also due to shortage of hymn books then. Though the practice is still prevailing, its relevance has greatly declined.

The practice of congregational hymn singing in different Christian denominations in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is found to be monophonic in style, with the whole congregation singing the melody in unison with or without instrumental accompaniment. But with the formation of different church choirs, the practice of polyphonic singing style takes place in which two to three or four voice parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) perform in harmony. The music form of polyphony has become a regular feature today in all church choirs, whether they are standing, temporary, amateur or professional church choirs.

Vernacularization of language and music in the liturgy form the two important aspects of inculturation. The aspects imply that every part of the liturgy or service be translated into Khasi language, and that all liturgical texts, religious writings, prayers and hymns be created in a genuine Khasi Christian terminology. With regard to music the term also implies the use of Khasi indigenous tunes in its form and content. In the Presbyterian and other denominations the aspect of vernacularization of music with regard to the recognition of Khasi indigenous tunes in the church is found to be partially achieved, though in the Catholic Church they have been implemented since 1990 with the efforts made by Fr. F. Kharwanlang and D.T. Laloo. It is also encouraging to note that in denominations like the Church of God, the Unitarian Church, the Church of Christ, and others which are the offshoots of the Presbyterian Church, the use of Khasi indigenous tunes in the church as well as in open air celebrations, have been introduced right from the time of their establishment.

The Khasi indigenous hymns that have been incorporated in the hymn books of the Presbyterians, Catholics and other denominations have their tunes which can be notated in both the staff and tonic sol-fa notation systems, and are found to blend well when accompanied with western musical instruments like the piano, organ, guitars and drums. However, since they are primarily melody based, they are found to be better expressed when accompanied with Khasi traditional drum beats, which again, can be notated in both the above systems. Therefore, depending on their beats, these hymns can be accompanied either with the drum beat of *ka Ksing Shadwait Kynting Dieng* (Sword dance by tossing up the stick), *ka Ksing Shadwait Tem Beit* (sword dance), *ka Padiah Ardieng* (small drum by using two sticks) or others.

The Presbyterian Church like other denominations takes care to emphasize four things in its worship services- Reading of the Bible, Praying, Preaching and Singing. In the past decades, special efforts were made to popularize hymn singing by teaching hymns and holding tonic sol-fa classes in the Church and primary school levels. Today, training in music is being imparted by music schools and music institutes like the Board of Synod Institute of Music, Shillong which started in 1988 followed by others in the subsequent years. The Catholic Church however, because of its lengthy and complex type of liturgy, does not lay stress on any particular aspect as such but gives equal importance to every part of the liturgy. Efforts have been there to impart training on music and tonic sol-fa courses initiated by the Archdiocesan music ministry which

started since 2001, in addition to the emphasis that training be imparted in Seminaries, Training Houses, and other Centers of study. These courses however, are still insufficient and lack specialization. It is perhaps this difference in emphasis and specialization which has made singing in the Presbyterian Church to obtain a better quality and standard in comparison to singing in the Catholic Church.

The practice of adapting some popular songs and catchy tunes from other sources, like cinema music, anthem tunes of some countries, or from audio cassettes etc into church music is quite common and is being done in many church denominations. It is however noted that at times such adaptations fail to acquire the essential elements of dignity, solemnity and simplicity of church music making them become inappropriate and unfit for church use. No doubt, they have been adapted bearing biblical texts or the psalm texts. But they seem to degrade or lessen the true dignity and solemnity of the service, as for many who are aware of their origins will divert their minds to the original implication of the songs, rather than as devotional hymns for which purpose they have been adapted.

Referring to the attitude of different churches and their respective communities towards Khasi indigenous music, it is observed that vis-à-vis the Catholic missionaries, the Welsh missionaries had a negative attitude towards Khasi culture and religion. They considered Khasi traditional religion as pure animism, uncivilized, superstitious and had many aspects which did not go in harmony with Christian faith. For this reason they disassociated Khasi cultural elements from Christianity. Another reason perhaps which has added to the above attitude is because of the native character of Presbyterianism which had deep impact on the policy of the Church, which had led to the rejection of Khasi cultural elements and indigenous music from the church.

This trend however, as already mentioned, did not seem to have lasted very long, as a change of attitude has been seen particularly from the 1990s among the youths, even among many church leaders, elders, composers, song-writers and the different sections of the church community of their desire and enthusiasm to have an open mind towards Khasi traditional music and its use as a regular component of church music.

Today, the different church denominations have no restrictions on the use of indigenous Khasi music in the church and at all times in open air services. In addition to the denominations mentioned above, other denominations like the Church of North India (CNI) or the Anglican

Church, the Assembly Church of Jesus Christ (India), and others are of the opinion that Khasi indigenous tunes which are well composed, solemn and appropriate for church use, are always accepted for use in church and other services. Therefore, on analyzing the overall scenario, it is observed that the present trend however slow and marginal it may be, yet the process is on and positive.

Church music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, whether they are of Welsh or Latin sources, has been well accepted by the early Christians. The fact that these hymn tunes have gone deep into the singing culture of the people, shows that they are recognized and cherished by these churches and the Christian communities at large. In like manner, it is observed that for Khasi indigenous tunes to find place in the church music of any denomination, it depends on the *inculturizing* attitude of a particular church and how far it is able to give its recognition and acceptance to these tunes. All hymn tunes for that matter, whether of western or indigenous forms serve the same purpose of praising and worshipping God. Therefore, until and unless the church gives its recognition to these tunes, they will remain stagnant.

It is however, admitted that church music in all its forms and elements, continues to meet the *spiritual needs of people*, to unite congregations through hymn singing in worship services, to teach them about faith and morals, and to derive their spiritual satisfaction in praising God through music.

The study as such is expected to help the different church denominations to cherish with deep appreciation the music brought into Khasi and Jaintia Hills by the good missionaries, which should be preserved, treasured and used. At the same time an awareness has been created among the churches that cultural elements and music culture of the Khasis are not to be disregarded but to be respected, revered and used by giving them due exposure in the church music proper to praise and worship God in consonance with other music forms.

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