

**THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN MEGHALAYA
(1813 – 1972)**

BY

ALICIA GATPHOH

SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR J. B. BHATTACHARJEE

SUBMITTED

IN

**PART - FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG – 793 022**

APRIL – 2006

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE

The state of Meghalaya created on 21st January 1972 was the outcome of a struggle by the indigenous people of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills. Prior to this, the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District formed part of the state of Assam. At the time of India's Independence, the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos visualized a separate hill state for the hill districts as their geographical, political, social, linguistic and cultural systems were different from the people of the plains. However, it remained a vision only at the time, as the Government of India retained them as part and parcel of the state of Assam. Though they wanted a separate hill state, the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos did not press their demand even at the time when the North East Frontier Agency (now called Arunachal Pradesh) was created and its administrative set-up was separated from Assam. The appointment of the States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 raised the hopes and aspirations of the people in these hills. When the Commission visited Shillong in 1954, the leaders of the hill districts placed before it their demand for the creation of a separate hill state on the eastern frontier. Nevertheless, the Commission did not favour the move for bifurcation of the state of Assam within a decade of India's Independence.¹ Frustrated and disappointed, the educated Khasis, Jaintias and Garos kindled the flame of separate statehood in the hearts of the people and accordingly, the Eastern India Tribal Union was formed to voice aspirations of the tribal people. Interestingly, though named Tribal Union, a few non-tribals who shared the same vision became members of the Union. But again, people's hopes were dampened when the Eastern India Tribal Union allied and joined the Chaliha Congress Government in 1957.

¹ H W Sten, *Meghalaya Year Book 1976-1977*, p 324-325; R S Lyngdoh, *Government and Politics in Meghalaya*, p 308.

Convinced by Pandit G B Pant, Capt. W A Sangma, one of the front leaders of the Union, joined the Assam Cabinet as Minister of the Tribal Areas Department, a portfolio and department created consequence to the alliance of Eastern India Tribal Union with the Congress.²

Within a short period of being in the ministry, Capt. Sangma was conscious that his colleagues were indifferent to the newly created department which he headed. Situation worsened in 1960 when the Assam Government took steps to promulgate the use of Assamese language as the sole official language of the state, despite stiff opposition from the hill districts. This caused apprehension among the hillmen, who feared that this might be the first step towards imposition of Assamese culture on the hill tribes within the state. In protest against the language policy of the State Government, Capt. Sangma and his associates resigned from the ministry. A general meeting of the hill leaders was held in 1960 to urge upon the Government of Assam to drop the proposed Language Bill in the interest of the non-Assamese people. At the meeting, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) was formed as a united front to fight for separate statehood.³ With the formation of APHLC the struggle for statehood by the hill tribes gained momentum. Since then, the Government of India appointed a series of commissions which put up proposals, such as, the Scottish Pattern of Administration in 1960, the Nehru Plan in 1964 and the Federal Structure Plan in 1967, to the hill leaders. But the leaders would accept nothing short of statehood. Realizing the strong determination of the people, the Government of India in May 1968 announced the Autonomous State Plan, a Plan intended to grant autonomous status to the hill districts of Assam. Having studied the Plan minutely and after ascertaining the views of the people, the APHLC accepted this Autonomous State Plan on a 'trial basis' despite opposition from the Assam

² R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p 324-325.

³ Ibid., p 339-340.

Legislative Assembly, which claimed that such a Plan would adversely affect the security and integrity of Assam.⁴

The acceptance of the Autonomous State Plan led to the introduction of the Assam Reorganization (Meghalaya) Bill during the Winter Session of the Parliament in 1969. The Bill was passed by both Houses of the Parliament on 24th December 1969 and the same became the Assam Reorganization (Meghalaya) Act on 29th December 1969, the day it was given assent by the President of India.⁵ Thus this Act led to the creation of the Autonomous State of Meghalaya. The All Party Hill Leaders Conference welcomed the Act and in its 21st session held at Shillong from 25th to 27th January 1970, resolved to work for the all-round development of the state and its people. The Autonomous State of Meghalaya comprising the two hill districts of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District, was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on the 2nd April 1970 at the Garrison Ground, Shillong.⁶ The APHLC categorically asserted that the Autonomous State status was not their ultimate goal and would endeavour to urge upon the Government of India to grant the hill districts a full-fledged statehood. Having assured the Government of India their cooperation, the APHLC had to wait for an opportunity to stake its claim to separate statehood. Opportunity came in 1970 when Manipur and Tripura were raised to the status of full-fledged states by the Government of India. The leaders of the APHLC implored upon Mrs. Gandhi the need to make Meghalaya a full-fledged state. Concurring with them, Mrs. Gandhi announced on the floor of the Lok Sabha on 10th November 1970, that, the Government of India had decided to accept in principle Meghalaya's demand for statehood and hoped that this decision would be welcomed by the Members of the House. The same announcement was also made by K C Pant, then Minister of State for Home Affairs, on the same day in the Rajya Sabha. These announcements were welcomed jubilantly by the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos. Even the Government of Assam, which had initially opposed the creation of an Autonomous state and the elevation of Meghalaya to

⁴ Ibid., pp 423,429; H W Sten, op cit., p 50-51.

⁵ R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p 426.

⁶ Ibid., p 427.

full-fledged statehood, accepted the decision. Eventually, the Government of India enacted the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 in December 1971 which conferred upon Meghalaya the status of a full-fledged state, comprising the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District. At last, on 21st January 1972, then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, inaugurated the state of Meghalaya at a befitting function at Polo Ground, Shillong.

This newly created state of Meghalaya, lying between 25°5'N and 26°10'N Latitudes and 89°47'E and 92°47'W Longitudes, covers an area of 22,489 sq.km. According to the Census of 1991, the state has a population of about 17.75 lakhs with an average density of 79 persons per square kilometer. The state is bounded by Bangladesh on the South and West, by the Brahmaputra valley of Assam on the North and by North Cachar and Mikir Hills on the East. With the exception of the narrow belt in the north and the west, the whole of Meghalaya is a plateau known as Meghalaya Plateau. This plateau which range from 150m to 1961m above sea level is an irregular topography in the north and the west but steep and regular in the south. This region comprises of undulating hills, crystal rivers with cascading waterfalls and thick virgin forests with sacred groves. The northern and western lowlands include the fertile low lying areas that slopes towards the Brahmaputra plains. Meghalaya is directly influenced by the South West Monsoon that blows from the Bay of Bengal. The state is subjected to the vagaries of the Monsoon and the climate itself varies with altitude. The climate of Khasi-Jaintia Hills is uniquely pleasant, neither too warm in summer nor too cold in winter. However, the plains in the Garo Hills experience a warm and humid climate except in winter. The Monsoon season begins from May onwards till September. The southern region is the rainiest area on earth, with Mawsynram, experiencing the heaviest rainfall on an average of 959 mm or 377 inches. Winter sets in mid-November and lasts till February. The rest of the year is almost dry but quite pleasant, particularly during Spring and Autumn. The state seldom remains free of clouds – the very reason the name '*Meghalaya*' which means the *Abode of Clouds* is given by S P Chatterjee, a geographer of the Calcutta University.

The Khasis, Jaintias and Garos for countless generations have retained their ancestral matrilineal system. The survival of this original system till today, makes one think, that, the people have successfully resisted social changes in keeping with their time honoured customs and institutions. The daughters of the family are generally the heiresses of ancestral and family inheritance with the youngest daughter getting the lion's share. Among the Garos, the parents have the option to select anyone of the daughters as the heiress or *Nokna*.⁷ This system is a living and active institution influencing greatly the social and political life of the people. The Khasi and Jaintia societies comprise of the clans called *Kurs* which are actually the outgrowth of many families descending from a common ancestress *Ka lawbei* and her husband *U Thawlang*.⁸ The Kur is the first social and political entity of the Khasis and Jaintias. When a Kur settles in one particular place, a village is formed. Here the eldest male member of the Kur exercises influence in the village. A village grows and develops when other Kurs came to settle or when a male member brings his wife to his village and set up home there. It, however, should be noted that the husband has no right to participate in his wife's Kur as he himself belongs to another Kur. Marriage within the same Kur is taboo. Among non-Christians, marriage is performed in the house of the bride's mother where the groom accompanied by his male relatives and friends, is handed over to the bride's maternal uncle by the Ksiang, that is, the one representing the groom's side. But among the Christians, marriage is performed in accordance with the Christian Marriage Act. Divorce is recognized among the Khasis and Jaintias. Usually, divorce is resorted to, when one partner commits adultery or in case of incompatibility or infertility.

With regard to the Garos, the society comprises of three major clans called 'Katchis'. These are Marak, Sangma and Momin.⁹ Besides these three Katchis, there are sub-clans as well. These sub-clans actually branched off from the original clan and in course of time developed into independent clans. Again, each Katchi is subdivided into a number of lineages called Machongs.

⁷ M S Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos*, p 214

⁸ H Barch, *History and Culture of the Khasi People*, p 322.

⁹ S Barkataki, *Tribes of Assam*, p 23.

The Machongs are the basic units of the Garo social structure. From among the dominant Machong of a village, a male member is selected to be the headman of the village, and is titled the Nokma. In the Garo language, 'nok' means 'house' and 'ma' means 'mother'. The term 'ma' also means 'big'. Though the headman is a male, he is called Nokma because the Garos attach great importance to the mother or the woman. Like the Khasis and the Jaintias, the Garos too cannot marry within the same clan. A marriage is usually performed after the parents have given their consent. In most cases, love marriage is the order of the day. The Garos recognize two types of marriages - Nokna marriage and the Agnate marriage. In a Nokna marriage, the husband of the Nokna invariably belongs to the Machong of her father and often, her father's nephew is the chosen one. This means that usually, the marriage of the Nokna, who is the heiress to the family inheritance is an arranged one on her mother's side, her mother's machong is to ensure the continuity of lineage while on her father's side, his machong is responsible for providing a husband to the heiress. After the marriage is performed, the two machongs are then called Akim. In the Agnate marriage, the other elder sisters can marry into any machong, except her own. In most cases after marriage, the husband stays in the house of his wife alongwith his mother-in-law and he then becomes the 'Nokrom', that is, the representative of his father-in-law. Like the Khasis, divorce is allowed among the Garos and is easily obtainable when there is mutual consent. In such cases, the parties merely have to pay a penalty to the community. However, if divorce is sought on grounds of adultery and infertility, mutual consent is hardly required. No doubt, among the Christians, Garo marriages are performed according to the Christian norms.

In all the three communities, death of a person is mourned by the entire clan and the community. Among the non-christians, the dead body is cremated alongwith the performance of elaborate rituals and ceremonies, whilst among the Christians, the dead body is interred in the presence of relatives and friends.

Social life of the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos is purely corporate, instances of which can be found today in the rural areas. Construction of houses, harvesting of paddy, construction of wells and regulation of water supply, construction of roads and bridges,

demarcation of land, these and other works of utility are performed jointly by the inhabitants. The Khasis, Jaintias and Garos are culturally rich. Religious and cultural festivals are celebrated with pomp and grandeur even till today. The Khasis celebrate Shad Suk Mynsiem and Nongkrem Dance. Shad Suk Mynsiem also known as Shad Weiking symbolizes love, peace and friendship and is held at the Weiking Ground in Shillong under the auspices of the Seng Khasi. This festival is observed before the sowing season in March or April annually. A notable feature of this dance is that, only virgin girls can participate while for men, both married or unmarried can.¹⁰ The other festival, the Nongkrem Dance known as Pomblang Nongkrem, is associated with the ritual of goat sacrifice. This festival is observed after the harvesting season and is held at Nongkrem, thereby, the term Shad Nongkrem or Nongkrem Dance. Compared with Shad Weiking, Shad Nongkrem comprises of a number of rites and rituals. Prayers are offered to Ka Pah Syntiew, the founder of the royal dynasty. Here too, only virgin girls can join in the dance alongwith the young men and boys. During the dance, one can easily identify the girls of the royal family by the umbrellas held over their heads.¹¹ Recently, the Khasis have started to commemorate the myth of u Sohpetbneng, a mythology that u Sohpetbneng was the golden ladder that connects Heaven and Earth.

Among the Jaintias, Behdienkhlam is celebrated during the rainy season in the month of July. The term Behdienkhlam literally means driving away the evil spirit, that is, plague. Prior to the dance on the last day, the Dollois, Basans, Lyngdohs and elders have to perform a number of rituals and sacrifices. It is the descendants of the four legendary sisters called Sookpoh who perform the main rituals. Only menfolk participate in the dance. However, the womenfolk, in their respective homes offered sacrificial food to the spirits of their ancestors with prayers for blessings and prosperity. Among the Garos, the Wangala Dance or the Hundred Drums festival is observed after the harvesting season in the month of November.¹² This dance signifies the gratitude of the people to the god of fertility called Misi-A-Gilpa-Saljong-Galapa. Everybody young and old, male and

¹⁰ H W Sten, op cit., p 25.

¹¹ Ibid., p 34; P R T Gurdon, *The Khasis*, p 154.

¹² Ibid., op cit., p34-35.

female, join in the festivities. A marked difference among these dances are that, while the Khasi dance is slow with easy rhythm, the dance of the Garos is more vigorous and virile.

The Khasis, Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya were predominantly agriculturists. They adopted the jhuming method of cultivation. Rice is the chief crop grown both in the wet valleys and the terraced highlands. The latter is well irrigated by the indigenous system of irrigation, that is, channeling the water from long distances to these fields. Other crops grown in these districts are millets, maize, potato, ginger and chillies. However, there are certain crops that are confined to the respective districts, such as, cotton and cashewnut cultivated in the Garo Hills, while areca-nut and betel leaves are mostly grown in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.¹³

Prior to the coming of the British, these tribes, were rich and prosperous as they could sell their products at the flourishing border markets. The Jaintias in particular, extended their authority upto the plains of Sylhet, now in Bangladesh. Besides agriculture, the other sources of livelihood of the people are drawn from the mineral resources present in these lands, of which, the most important are coal, limestone and iron-ore. During British rule, Mr. Hary Inglis of Inglis and Company, mined the limestone quarries present in the Khasi Hills and earned substantial profits. Over and above these, there are also other numerous items of trade such as wax, ivory and honey. The hilly terrain especially on the southern slopes, have different kinds of fruit trees thriving on them. Of these, the most popular are oranges and pineapples, which are exported to other neighbouring states and even across to Bangladesh. Banana, lemon, a variety of berries and nuts are found in abundance throughout the state. The people in the hills depended on neighbouring states for salt, tobacco, cotton and woollen clothes and household items. Nowadays, these are brought mainly by the Marwatis, a trading community who monopolized the trading business in the state, both in the import and export of the goods. The post-independence period saw the state emerging as one with the highest Hydro-electricity potential in the North East, second only to Arunachal Pradesh. Being hardworking, the people had started developing their own cottage

¹³ H Bareh, op cit., p 448; H W Sten, op cit., p 64-65.

industries which includes weaving, carpentry, pottery, basketry and goldsmithy as well as forest-based industries.

During the pre-British period, these three districts were independent of each other. In the Khasi Hills District, there were the Syiems (chiefs) who ruled over their respective syiemships. There were thirty syiemships during this period, independent of each other. The Syiems exercised their duties alongwith the advices of their Durbars. The Durbar is an organization of elders including the Myntris, Basans and Lyngdohs within the syiemship. It was the Durbar which exercised a great influence on the king and also sanctioned the right to declare war or sign treaty with other independent states. However, should the Syiem be of a strong and authoritative nature he could easily influence his Durbar to carry out his wishes. In the Jaintia Hills, there were the Syiems as well as the Dollois. These too, were independent of each other. Both among the Khasis and the Jaintias, succession to the office of the syiemship was determined by the matrilineal set up of the society. The deceased ruler would be succeeded by the eldest son of his eldest sister. If she had no son, then to the eldest sons of his other sisters. In case none available, then the crown would go to the nearest maternal cousin brother.¹⁴ Among the Garos, the only political system that existed during the pre-British period was the office of the Nokma and the village council. Differing from his Khasi and Jaintia counterparts, the Nokma did not exercise political authority. In fact, he was rather a social and economic representative of the village whose activities centred on social and cultural functions rather than on political administration. However, in course of time, the Nokma's duties started increasing. He had to dispense justice, maintain law and order, regulate jhum cultivation and even checked as well as looked after the foreigners within his jurisdiction. As the Nokma assumed office by virtue of his marriage to the girl of the seniormost house in the village, therefore, his successor, commonly, was his own son-in-law. The Khasis, Jaintias and Garos continued with their respective forms of administration till the advent of the English.¹⁵

¹⁴ H Bareh, op cit., p 251-252; P R T Gurdon, op cit., p 68.

¹⁵ D R Syiemlieh, *British Administration in Meghalaya, Policy and Pattern*, p3

When the British had established their control over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in the second half of the eighteenth century, it brought them into contact with the Garos of Goalpara. The intermitten fights between the Garos in the hills and the zamindars in the plains compelled the British Government to intervene. David Scott, the then Agent to the Governor General could settle the differences by segregating the Garo territories and the same were brought under direct British control after a series of expeditions till the whole Garo inhabited territories were annexed. When in the second decade of the the nineteenth century, the Burmese tried to extend their sway by occupying the territories of the Ahoms, the former became a threat to the British in Bengal. This made the British to seek friendship of the Jaintia king and as a result, Raja Ram Singh, the ruler of the Jaintia Kingdom, and David Scott, the Agent to the Governor General, signed an agreement on 10th March 1824, by which Raja Ram Singh agreed to render military assistance should the East India Company be engaged in a war east of the Brahmaputra. In addition to this, David Scott promised the Raja a portion of Assam's territory if the latter would launch an attack on the Burmese in case of a war between the English and the Burmese. The First Anglo-Busmese War broke out and lasted from 1824-1826. The war ended with the victory of the English and the imposition of the Treaty of Yandaboo.1826 on the King of Ava. This victory led to the annexation of Assam by the British and at the same time it opened the door for British entry into these north eastern provinces. Furthermore, because the military help rendered by the Jaintia Rajah was found negligible, the British felt that, he was not entitled to a share of the promised territory won from the Burmese.¹⁶

The annexation of Assam saw the necessity of opening a direct route linking Gauhati and Sylhet via the Khasi Hills. While construction of the roads was in progress in the Khasi Hills, a conflict arose between the Khasis and the British over the disrespectful attitude of the British soldiers and labourers towards the Khasis. This led to the outbreak of the Anglo-Khasi War (1829-1832) which ended in the victory of the

¹⁶ H K Barpujari, *Problem of Hill Tribes : North East Frontier*, Vol. 1, pp 44-45; J B Bhattacharjee, *The Garos and the English*, pp 237-249

English and subsequently the annexation of the whole Khasi Hills to the British dominions. The Jaintia Kingdom comprising the hill areas and the plain parganas was a wealthy kingdom. The British coveted it, but the alliance of 1824 tied their hands to undertake a forward policy against the Jaintia Raja. The death of Raja Ram Singh in 1832 gave them the opportunity to pick on the Raja. His successor, Rajendra Singh, was asked to revise the Treaty of 1824 with an additional provision requiring the Rajah to pay an annual tribute of Rs 10,000/- to the British. Unless agreed to, Rajendra Singh would not be recognized as the rightful Rajah by the British. Rajendra Singh though a youth of sixteen years only, rejected the unjustified imposition of the tribute. Matters took a bad turn with the release of Chatter Singh, the Chief of Gobha, by Rajendra Singh. Chatter Singh was the prime suspect in the abduction of four British subjects in 1832, to be sacrificed to goddess Kali. By releasing Chatter Singh, the British suspected Rajendra Singh of being an accomplice of the perpetrators. Despite entertaining doubts of his complicity, the British ordered the confiscation of the Rajah's lowlands. Rajendra Singh protested against this unjustified annexation of the lowland parganas. Because the British would not repeal the order, the Jaintia Rajah forsake his hill territory too. Thus by 1835, the whole Jaintia Kingdom was annexed to the British territory.¹⁷

The Garos came into contact with the British much earlier than the Khasis and the Jaintias. Prior to the advent of the British, the Garo hillmen indulged in marauding the plains. With the grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the British extended their sway upto the border of Garo territory. To protect the plainsmen and to check attacks of the hillmen. The East India Company through the efforts of David Scott, entered into engagements with the Garo chiefs of the hills. Despite the agreements, the Garo hillmen continued to raid the plains. Left with no alternative, the British led a series of military expeditions against the Garos till all the chiefs were subjugated. And in 1869 Garo hills was constituted a separate district within the province of Assam.¹⁸

¹⁷ H K Barpujari, *op cit.*, pp 235-237; D R Syiemlieh, *op cit.*, p72.

¹⁸ J B Bhattacharjee, *op cit.*, pp 236-265

In course of their governance, the British found that none of the three tribes had a script of their own. Absence of a script naturally means absence of education. That is why, some British officials asserted that the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos were illiterate. This assertion is historically incorrect, as is evinced by the presence of some records. It is historically true that these indigenous tribes of Meghalaya had no script of their own and therefore, were compelled to adopt the scripts of their neighbouring states or of their literate subjects whom they governed. Because of this there are records in Bengali script or in Assamese script available in the office of the Deputy Commissioner and also in the Assam Civil Secretariat Record Room. These records go to prove that a few of the rulers were conversant with the Bengali script and therefore, could be termed as "literate"¹⁹

It is interesting to note that the Khasi Syiems whose syiemsships were located in the border areas, such as, that of Bhowal and Shella, owned territories extending over the plain regions of undivided Bengal. This meant that they had Bengali speaking states as their neighbouring states and subsequently, they entered into trade relations with the latter. Under such circumstances, the Syiems the Myntiris and to some extent the merchants of these states would try to acquire some rudimentary form of education to enable them to be conversant with the plain people. Of course, having no script of their own, they adopted the Bengali script to read and write the Khasi language. Moreover, these Syiems appointed Bengali Muktiars as Record-keepers in their royal courts to ensure that all affairs of the state were documented and properly maintained. Also knowledge of the Bengali script helped in maintaining contacts and communications with their neighbouring states in the plains through their emissaries. Above all, these Syiems appointed Bengali tutors to teach the children of the royal families. H Bareh authenticated these assertions when he wrote, "In 1817 we learn from a record that an ambassador, u Phan Bosen, deputed by the Syiem of Nongstoin, brought down and delivered a letter to Geo Inglis, a lime merchant in Sylhet district. It must have been written in Bengali. The Syiems employed tutors to read and write in Bengali and

¹⁹ H Bareh, op cit., p 393; H Bareh, "Sources of the History of the Khasis and Jaintias", in *Sources of the History of India*, Vol II, p201.

Assamese. In 1834, Rijon Singh, a lad of 14 years, installed in Nongkhlaw to succeed U Tirot Singh, according to the Government record, knew how to read and write in Bengali. He was taught Bengali by the Bengali mukhteers.²⁰ When the Syiems had Bengali Muktiars in his court and Bengali tutors in his palace, it naturally follows that his myntris too would follow suit. To keep himself abreast of the state affairs, these myntris would try to acquire some rudimentary form of education and the same would also be extended to their offsprings. Merchants and the wealthy class too, particularly, those who had trade relations with the plainsmen would try to learn to read and write for their own benefit and likewise would send their children to acquire the basic knowledge of reading and writing. Their interest in acquiring education must have made the Wahadadars to set up a Primary school in Shella as early as 1823, prior to the coming of Alexander B Lish. This school was similar to the Brahmanic school of Bengal, because of the close proximity of Shella to Bengal and moreover, some of the Shellites had received some rudimentary education in the Brahmanic schools of Bengal. EW Dkhar claimed that this assertion was "an authoritative one and has been affirmed by persons of the past generation who were actively involved in setting it". Because there were no qualified persons to teach in this school, the Wahadadars recruited the services of two educated persons of Bengal, Shri.Thakurdhon Mukherjee and Shri.Tarini Ghosh, to teach in this school. Shri.Thakurdhon Mukherjee was paid 25 silver coins and Shri.Tarini Ghosh was paid 20 silver coins per annum. Sometimes, they received presents and gifts from the people in recognition of their educational services.²¹ Having Bengali teachers to impart education to people who did not own a written language, they adopted the Bengali medium alongside Sanskrit and English, giving the pupils the options to choose the language they desired to learn. Though this school was not set up on western lines, without a doubt it proved that the Khasis were not illiterate as claimed by some British officials.

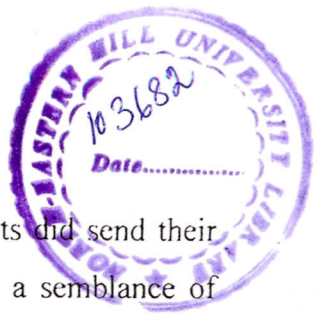
²⁰ H Bareh, "Sources of the History of the Khasis and Jaintias, in *Sources of the History of India*, Vol. II pp 201- 202

²¹ E W Dkhar, *Primary Education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills*, p 41

With regard to the Jaintias, it is extremely necessary to note that the Jaintia Kingdom as a whole covered both the hills and the plain territories of Sylhet and Mymensingh districts in present Bangladesh. When the Jaintia parganas in the plains were annexed to the Hill domain, the Jaintia Rajah made Jaintiapur the headquarter of the Jaintia Kingdom, and Nartiang in the midst of the hills, was made his summer capital. With Jaintiapur as the capital, the Jaintia Rajahs naturally came into contact with the literate and educated Bengalis. By virtue of governing the Bengali subjects, the rulers too, had to learn to read and write their own language using the Bengali script. Thus the Rajahs of the Jaintia kingdom were literate. Moreover, unlike the Khasi Syiems who used thumb impressions to sign treaties and agreements, the Jaintia Rajahs, being literate, personally signed the treaties and agreements either with the other Indian states or with the British in later days. On many occasions, these Rajahs surrounded themselves by scholars and men of letters. They had Bengali Muktiars as Record-keepers of the Royal court. They were the ones who recorded all state affairs and also maintained records relating to land revenue. These records were written in Jaintia language adopting the Bengali script.²²

Being literate and educated, the Rajahs of Jaintia had poets and scholars adorning their courts, many of whom were Bengalees. Mention may be made of Kaviraja, a Sanskritist who composed the celebrated Sanskrit work Raghav Pandaviya was patronized by Kamadeva, the Jaintia Rajah who ruled from 1090-1119 A.D. Besides being patrons of scholars and poets, the Rajahs appointed Bengali tutors to teach the children of the royal family. Though these children did not received any kind of formal education imparted through formal schools, they could not be termed as illiterate, for they could read and write the Jaintia language written in Bengali script. Likewise, the nobles of the royal courts too, made efforts to learn the art of reading and writing so that they could pursue the matters in their official capacities and also to enable them to communicate with the subjects in the plains. Besides, the Rajah, the royal family and the

²² J B Bhattacharjee, "Social and Religious Reform Movements in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in *Social and Religious Reforms Movements in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p-449



nobility, a certain section of the people who were traders and merchants did send their children to the schools in neighbouring states to ensure they acquired a semblance of education so they could read and write their language using the Bengali script.²³

Unlike the Khasis and Jaintias who were hillmen, the Garos comprised of Garo hillmen and Garo plainsmen. Of the two, the former were in a pre-literacy stage before the coming of the British, while the latter had access to elementary education through the Bengali medium. A close contact with the people from the plains introduced the Garo plainsmen to rudimentary education, acquired through Bengali medium. Quite strong was the bond with Bengali language, that the latter continued to be used as the medium of instruction till the end of the nineteenth century, despite Roman character, had been ushered in by the Baptist missionaries.

The Khasis, Jaintias and Garos during the pre-British period, were not privileged to have access to formal education of the western model. Among the three tribes, the Garos were the first to be introduced to formal education as early as 1826, a momentous year in the history of North East India. The defeat of the Burmese in 1826 in the hands of the British, resulted in the annexation of Assam by the Treaty of Yandaboo, 1826. This treaty was a landmark in the history of British relations with Northeast India. The Treaty of Yandaboo opened the gateway for British occupation of the states in the North eastern region. The King of Ava, upon whom the Treaty was imposed, guaranteed to withdraw and abstain from all future interferences with the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jynteah. In deference to the agreement between the British and the Rajah of Jaintia Kingdom, the latter was promised a portion of the Ahom territory at the successful termination of the war. But as the help rendered by the Jaintia King was found negligible, the British felt that he, therefore was not entitled to a share of the promised territory won from the Burmese.²⁴ The annexation of Assam saw the necessity of opening a direct route linking Gauhati and Sylhet via the Khasi Hills. This brought the English into direct

²³ J B Bhattacharjee, "Sources of the History of the Khasis and Jaintias" in *Sources of the History of India*, Vol II, pp214-215.

²⁴ H K Barpujari, op cit., pp88-89; J N Choudhury, *The Khasi Canvas*, p256

contact with the Khasis. In course of time, the tribal chiefs of these three hill districts were overpowered and their territories annexed to British dominions.

The establishment of British rule over the Garo Hills, Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills paved the way for the coming of the foreign Christian missions, who learnt that the soil in this region would be very fruitful for evangelization as the people here followed their own indigenous religions. When the British first come into contact with the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos, they described them as 'barbarians and uncivilized people'. To the British, Christianity was the mean to civilize the 'heathens' as they were sometimes referred to. And to Christianize these tribes, education was a must. Therefore, the British Government encouraged educational efforts of its officials and the missionaries. This being the case, education can be defined as the tool to civilization and Christianization. The coming of the foreign Christian missionaries led to the beginning of education among the inhabitants of these hilly regions. Protected and financially aided by the British Government, the efforts of the missionaries to impart education to the people was a success. particularly when measured in terms of evangelization, the primary objective of the British.

Chapter VII

Epilogue

In the previous chapters, an attempt has been made to discuss the progress of formal education in Meghalaya from a historical perspective. The period of study covers the era from the time formal education was introduced in the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills, till the creation of the state of Meghalaya. In the course of study, it is seen that in the nineteenth century the thrust was on elementary or primary education. During this time, a number of schools were opened in the villages to impart elementary education to the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. In the Khasi and the Jaintia hills the middle schools and high schools were opened during the last quarter of the century. But in the Garo hills, education was limited to primary education only till the end of the century, despite the fact that formal education was introduced as early as 1826. The door to higher level of education was opened only in the twentieth century and it progressed at faster rate during the post independence period.

It is an accepted fact that the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos did not have a written character and literature of their own during the pre-British period.⁴⁵⁰ Though script was absent but some of the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos living in the plains or in the border areas with the plains of Assam or Bengal could read and write their own languages using the Bengali script.⁴⁵¹ The Jaintia Rajas, in particular, issued coins stamped with the name of the Raja to commemorate their accession to the throne. Moreover they maintained court records and even had poets who adorned the royal courts.⁴⁵² This is so, because, Jaintia kingdom extended from the hills to the plains of Sylhet. The vast extension of the kingdom brought the Jaintias living in

⁴⁵⁰ A Chakravarty, *History of Education in Assam 1826-1919*, p63; H Bareh, "Sources of the History of the Khasis and Jaintias" in *Sources of the History of India, Vol II* ed. S P Sen, p195; J H Morris, *The History of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists Foreign Missions*, p46.

⁴⁵¹ H Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, p393

⁴⁵² *ibid.*, p394; P L Gupta, *Coins*, p171

the border areas into close contact with the educated plainmen which resulted in the former acquiring a limited education, that is, having a basic knowledge of reading and writing. Similar, was the case with the Khasis inhabiting the plains and the border areas of Assam and Bengal. The Khasi chiefs whose territorial boundaries touched the plains of Assam and Bengal, maintained their official records using the Bengali script. The myntris who were part of the royal court found it necessary to acquire a basic working knowledge of reading and writing. Moreover, both the Khasis and the Jaintias were engaged in trade with the plainmen and as such, it was imperative for them to learn the Bengali script and language for furthering trade and commerce. A Khasi writer E.W.Dkhar, went as far as to claim that the residents of Shella village were privileged to acquire elementary education as early as 1823. In his, *Primary Education in the Khasi and Jaintia hills*, Mr E.W.Dkhar wrote, "The first modern Primary School in the then United Khasi and Jaintia hills district to the best of our knowledge was established at the village of Shella on the Third of February 1823, being Pdia Bazar (Shella Bazar) day" He further claimed that two educated gentlemen from Bengal, Thakurdhon Mukherjee and Tarini Ghosh were invited to teach at a salary of 25 and 20 silver coins annually.⁴⁵³

According to E.W. Dkhar, English, Sanskrit and Bengali were taught in the schools with students being given the right to choose the language they wanted. To substantiate this assertion, Dkhar asserted that u Laithat, the first Khasi to be appointed as a dubasia (interpreter) for the English was a product of this school. Having learned the Bengali language and being conversant with English, u Laithat joined as a government court interpreter of Capt. Lister posted at Saitsohpen.⁴⁵⁴ The contention of E W Dkhar that this was the first school to be set up in the Khasi and Jaintia hills is difficult to be accepted as historical truth for there were no historical records or any other evidence to prove the existence of a school prior to the coming of the Christian missionaries. With regard to his

⁴⁵³ E W Dkhar, *Primary Education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills*, p41; H W Sten, *Ka Histori Ka Ktien Khasi*, p58

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p42

assertion of u Laithat being the first Khasi to enter service of the British Government, this is supported by the writings of G.A.Jones,⁴⁵⁵ though he did not mention about his school days or the school he studied in .The very fact that u Laithat served as an official court interpreter under Col Lister, prior to the advent of the Missionaries, goes to prove that all the Khasis were not illiterate during the pre-British era.

Among the Garos, there were the Garo plainsmen and the Garo hillmen. Of the two, at least a few among the former were literate and could read and write the Garo language in Bengali character .This was a result of living in close proximity with the educated Bengalis and Assamese As such, all Garos cannot be termed as illiterate during pre-British period because there were some Garos in the plains who were literates. Therefore, the claim by the British officials that the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos were totally illiterate was based not on the ability of the people to read and write but on the absence of formal education as existed in the West.

Formal education was introduced in the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo hills with the advent of the British into these hill tracts. In the Khasi and Jaintia hills , formal education was introduced by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Presbyterian Mission while in the Garo hills, formal education was introduced at the initiative of British officials.In the southern Khasi hills some schools were started by the Serampore Mission before the rise of the British. Be it in the Khasi hills, Jaintia hills or Garo hills, formal education was introduced with the sole objective to civilize and Christianize the hillmen.⁴⁵⁶ This, therefore, meant that education was used as a tool for evangelization. This assertion that education was the means to Christianization was supported by the correspondences between the Missionaries and the Government. These correspondences bring to light the intent of the government to impart only elementary education to ensure civilization

⁴⁵⁵ G A Jones, *Ka History Jong Ka Balang (1841-1966)*, p26

⁴⁵⁶ A Chakravarty, op cit., p122; P N Dutta, *Impact of the West on the Khasis and Jaintias*, p185

of the 'barbaric' hillmen, a derogatory term used by the British when referring to the hillmen. These correspondences also showed the objective of the Christian missionaries in their efforts to educate the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos. The missionaries did not hide the fact that their priority was evangelization and education was only a means to achieve their goal of Christianizing all the three tribes.

To achieve their objective, the foreign missionaries and the British officials felt the need to reduce the indigenous languages into written forms. Regarding the Khasis, Krishna Chanda Pal was the first to visit and propagate the Gospel. His success in baptizing two Khasi men emboldened William Carey to translate the New Testament into Khasi using Bengali script. The translated version of the whole New Testament was published in 1831 under the title, *Khashee New Testament*.^{*} This translated work of Carey can be said to be the first published book in Khasi language and, therefore, to Carey goes the credit of putting Khasi language into a written form even though he used the Bengali script.⁴⁵⁷ After publication of the New Khashee Testament, Carey realized the futility of having a Khasi Bible, if the same could not be read. The only means to enable the Khasis to read the Bible was to impart elementary education to the people. For his vision to materialize, William Carey sent Alexander B. Lish, a step son of Rev. William Robinson, a colleague of Carey in Calcutta, to Cherrapunjee with the dual task of preaching and teaching. Having learned the Khasi language so that he could reduce it to Bengali characters, Lish prepared one or two Readers in the Vernacular language using Bengali script. These readers were in use in the first three schools set up by A. B. Lish at Mawsmai, Mawmluh and Cherrapunjee. Except for the school in the military station at Sohra, where a bit of English language was taught alongside Khasi and

* H W Sten, J H Morris and R S Lyngdoh stated that this New Testament was published in 1824 while H Bareh and W Pryse stated that it was published in 1831.

⁴⁵⁷ G A Jones, op cit., p 2; J H Morris, op cit., p73; R S Lyngboh, *Ka History ka Thoh ka Tar Khasi, Bynta I*, p25

Bengali, in the other two, only Khasi and Bengali were taught.⁴⁵⁸ Establishment of three schools simultaneously meant that Alexander B. Lish was assured of obtaining the services of a couple of teachers, because, it was not humanly possible for him to teach in all the three schools at the same time though they were located at a closed distance within one another. Lish obtained the services of u Duwan and u Jungka as teachers at Mawsmal and Mawmluh. Interestingly, one of the two, was the first Khasi convert of K.C. Pal. If Lish could secure services of these two at such an early stage, then the claim that some sort of elementary education was imparted at Shella might have been correct.

Initially, the schools were proceeding quite well with an average attendance of 36.⁴⁵⁹ But the novelty soon wore off and attendance declined. At such a time when educational efforts of Lish were at a very low ebb, the Serampore Baptist Mission was amalgamated with the Baptist Missionary Society in 1837. An outcome of the amalgamation, coupled with the ill health of A.B. Lish, brought the missionary and educational work of the Serampore Mission in the Khasi hills to a close and this eventually led to the closure of the schools in 1838.⁴⁶⁰ For a time, it appeared that the door to education was closed for the Khasis but for the arrival of Rev. Thomas Jones, the missionary of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission, on 22nd June 1841.⁴⁶¹ The arrival of the Welsh Mission was not accidental nor co-incidental, because Jacob Tomlin, a missionary in Malacca, had suggested and proposed to the Welsh Mission to take up missionary works in eastern India with specific reference to the Khasi hills. Based on his suggestion, Thomas Jones was sent to the Khasi hills.⁴⁶² Without wasting time, immediately on his arrival, Thomas Jones learned the local dialect.

⁴⁵⁸ P N Dutt, op cit., p184

⁴⁵⁹ J H Morris, op cit., p74.

⁴⁶⁰ J H Morris, op cit., p75; P N Dutt, op cit., p185; R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p26; W Reade, "Ka Jinghikai Kot (Education)" in *Ka Centenary History ka Balang Presbyterian ha Ri Khasi-Jaintia, Nadeh 1841 haduh 1940*, p60

⁴⁶¹ E W Dkhar, op cit., p52; J H Morris, op cit., p78; R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p29.

⁴⁶² G A Jones, op cit., p5.

Befriending the hillmen, Thomas Jones came to know that a previous attempt had been made by the Serampore Mission to give Khasi language a written form using the Bengali script. Not knowing the reason why it failed, he made the historic decision of supplanting the Bengali script by the Roman script and thus, gave the Khasis their 'first very own alphabet'. Not one but multiple reasons made him to adopt this decision. Firstly, the failure of Alexander B Lish to reduce the Khasi language into a proper written form with definite alphabet. Secondly, the Welsh missionaries came to these hills directly from Wales and were not acquainted with the Bengali language. Therefore, to avoid wastage of time and to remove the inconveniences caused in learning two alien languages by the missionaries, the Roman script, accordingly supplanted the Bengali script. Thirdly, it saved the Khasis time and energy spent on learning two foreign languages and two different scripts simultaneously. And fourthly, it was found that the Roman script was far more suitable in writing the Khasi language.

Because of the above reasons, Thomas Jones adopted the Roman character and the Sohra dialect to read and write Khasi language. Sohra dialect was chosen as the main dialect because its phonetic sound could be easily adapted to the Roman script. Thus, Rev. Thomas Jones gave the Khasis their very own script and alphabet to reduce this oral language into a written one. For this phenomenal decision, Rev Thomas Jones was rightly called the "Father of the Khasi Alphabet".⁴⁶³ This, first Khasi alphabet introduced by Rev. Thomas Jones comprised of twenty one letters. These were "A B K D E G Ng H I J L M N O P R S T U W Y"⁴⁶⁴ His hard work and determination paid dividend when he published the First Khasi Reader, titled *Ca Citap Nyngcong ban hicai pule ci ctin Cassi*, written in 1841 and published in 1842 by the Calcutta Baptist Press.⁴⁶⁵ Though a booklet of only 8 pages, this first Khasi Reader was, in fact, the most valuable literary contribution to Khasi literature because it comprised the Khasi alphabet which changed the Khasi language from an oral language to a written one

⁴⁶³ R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p31.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., p33

⁴⁶⁵ H Bareh, *A Short History of Khasi Literature*, p27; J H Morris, op cit., p80; K W Nongrum, *Ki Kot Khubor bad ki Kot Khasi*, p53.

. Here, it is interesting to note that Rev. Thomas Jones used 'C' instead of 'K' in his First Khasi Reader, the title of which is spelt *Ca Citap Nyngcong ban hicaï pule ci ctin Cassi* and not *Ka Kitab Nyngkong ban pule ka ktien Khasi*, as it was spelt in latter years. When and why he changed is not known till today, for nowhere had he given reasons for doing so. We can assume that he found the use of 'C' to represent the sound of 'K' and 'Kh' was not viable. The maiden venture of Thomas Jones naturally would not be perfect and the flaw is remedied by Jeebon Roy Mairom and Radhon Singh Berry in 1896 with the addition of two more letters "ĩ" and "Ñ" to help spell and read the more difficult words with precision as per pronunciation. And in 1899, Jeebon Roy published *Ka Kot Pule Nyngkong* to ensure that all the 23 letters are used in the schools at the elementary level.⁴⁶⁶

Despite the fact that the Khasi Romanized script was used in the missionary schools for the past twenty years, questions arose as to the wisdom of adopting the same for all schools. Lt. Colonel J C Haughton, Offg. Commissioner of Assam, wanted that the District administration together with the Welsh missionaries should draw up a plan for the education of the Khasis and Jaintias giving due attention to these points : Firstly, "Whether only Cossyah should be taught in the village schools, or whether it should be combined with Bengalee." Secondly, "Whether the Cossyah should be taught in the Bengali or Roman character." And thirdly, "Whether instruction should be given through several dialects of the hills, or one common dialect for the whole."⁴⁶⁷ Regarding the first point, Haughton held the opinion that education should be in the Khasi language, except for the schools located at Cherrapunjee and Jowai, for scholars were not found disposed to learn Bengali. With regard to the second point, initially he thought that it would be advantageous to introduce Bengali character for the Khasi language, but later many reasons changed his views. He realized that, if Bengali character was also used alongside the Roman one, then it necessitated the appointment of an entirely new set of teachers to teach in the schools which adopted the Bengali

⁴⁶⁶ H Bareh, op cit., p36; K W Nongrum, op cit., p42; R S lyngdoh, op cit., p33

⁴⁶⁷ File 406 (1863) / Letter No.123 C, dated 2.6.1863.

character, Haughton opined that the early acquisition of the English character by the Khasi pupils from the very beginning, smoothed the path of those who proceeded to the acquisition of English. Moreover, retention of English character would help the Khasis to communicate readily with his European superiors. And with regard to the third point, he felt that any extended plan for education would be best carried out by the Welsh missionaries, who were already engaged in the works. Haughton strongly affirmed that "Introduction of any separate or independent means of education would be a hindrance rather than an aid to the cause".⁴⁶⁸ As there were more advantages in retaining the English character, therefore, the decision of Rev. Thomas Jones was justified and English script was adopted permanently.

In the Garo hills, the British Government and later the American Baptist Mission continued the use of Bengali script and Bengali medium of instruction till the end of the nineteenth century. The factor that determined continuity of Bengali script and language is that the first schools set up by the government were located in the plains and Garo plainsmen were familiar with this script and language. The Roman script was first adopted by Rev Miles Bronson in 1868 to write a few Garo Primers. Interestingly, Bengali script and Bengali medium continued to be used alongside the Roman script and the Garo language till the end of the nineteenth century. When later on it was found that Bengali script caused problems while spelling the indigenous words correctly, it necessitated the use of loan-words of neighbouring languages. Coupled with this, the missionaries, the teachers and the taught faced the problems of learning two new languages at the same time. To overcome this hurdle, the Third Triennial Conference of the Assam Baptist Missionary Union, held at Tura in 1893, resolved, "that in the opinion of this Conference the Roman alphabet is the best for the Hill Tribes of Assam that have no written languages".⁴⁶⁹ The passing of this resolution entailed a lot of hard work in compiling or translating Garo work in the compilation or

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.*,

⁴⁶⁹ M S Sangma, *A History of the American Baptist Mission, Vol Two*, p166; "Resolution of the Assam Mission of the American Baptist Missionary Union", in *Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of the Third Triennial Conference*, 1893, p8.

translation of Garo Primers and Readers in Romanized script. While the switch over from Bengali to Roman alphabet was in progress, the schools in the Garo Hills continued the usage of Bengali language, and Bengali script alongside the Romanized one. To expedite the use of Roman script, in 1900 M.C. Mason, published 8,000 copies of "An Introduction to English for Garo pupils" and E.G. Philips published 1,000 copies of Garo Grammar, both using the Roman character.⁴⁷⁰ With these basic Primers in hand, other Garo publications were published by the Baptist Missionaries. Furthermore, the switch over helped in faster printing and publication. Thus Garo primers and grammar books were henceforth published adopting the Romanized Garo alphabet comprising of twenty letters. These are, 'A B C D E G H I J K L M N O P R S T U W' and they are in use till today.⁴⁷¹

Different from the Khasis and the Garos, the Jaintias did not and still do not have a script of their own till today. When the Welsh Mission set up schools in the Jaintia hills, its missionaries imposed Khasi alphabet and Khasi language upon them. This, the missionaries did, might be due to the similarity of languages or to save the missionaries the extra load of learning the language and formulating new alphabet for the Jaintias alone. During the post independence period, attempts had been made by some educated Jaintias to give the language a written form using Roman character. Here too, except for a limited modification to suit the pronunciation, the alphabet used are the same as those for Khasi language. Albin Pariat, a noted Jaintia composer, composed songs and hymns in Jaintia language and also translated some from the English Hymn Book. Pariat used Roman character to publish hymn book entitled *Rwai Pnar* wherein he used the letter 'C' to suit the phonetic sound of the language.⁴⁷² Despite these attempts, Jaintia language till date is yet to have a script and an alphabet of its own.

⁴⁷⁰ M C Mason, "report from the Tura Field" in *Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of the Sixth Session of the Assam Baptist Missionary Conference, 1900*, p32

⁴⁷¹ L N Sangma, *A' Chik, Dalgimin Manderangna Skiani Kitap, Baksa*, p20

⁴⁷² A Pariat, *Rwai Pnar*,

Therefore, the Jaintias continued using Khasi alphabet with slight modifications whenever and wherever necessary.

Owning a script to write the Vernacular languages would not be beneficial to the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos unless the same was disseminated to the people. The medium to facilitate literacy among these tribes was educational institutions. With their primary objective to Christianize the Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos, the missionaries set up a number of elementary schools in the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills to impart basic knowledge of the 3 R's. In the Khasi hills, the abandoned educational efforts of the Serampore Baptist Mission was revived by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission in 1841. Rev. Thomas Jones, not knowing the exact reasons why the Serampore Mission abandoned their evangelical and educational efforts in the Khasi hills, opened three schools, one each at Mawsmmai, Mawmluh and Sohra in 1842. According to J.H. Morris, of the three, the first to be established was the school at Mawsmmai and Larchai was appointed as the teacher there. About the same time, he opened another school at Mawmluh with Nising as the teacher, and the third school was at Sohra with Jom as the school teacher.⁴⁷³ At Sohra, the missionaries and the Sohra school were housed within the civil and military stations there. This was not a practicable arrangement for a long period, and therefore, it was deemed necessary to move out and settle at a separate site. At their request, Syiem Suta, Syiem of Sohra, granted the missionaries a plot of land at Nongsawlia. Accordingly, the Mission House, the Church and the school buildings were constructed at Nongsawlia for propagating Christianity and education amongst the locals.⁴⁷⁴

Conversion to Christianity was opposed by the Khasis and this would have thwarted the progress of education had the British Government not stepped in. In 1848, a Khasi school girl named Nabon decided to embrace Christianity. Her decision was stiffly opposed by her family and kinsmen. Seeing

⁴⁷³ E W Dkhar, op cit., p53; G A Jones, op cit., p9; J H Morris, op cit., p81; R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p53.

⁴⁷⁴ J H Morris, op cit., p83-84; W Reade, op cit., p61-62.

her determination not wavering, the people blamed the missionaries for her stubbornness. Apprehensive that the same might occur with their children, they stopped sending their children to schools. Only a few were allowed by their parents to continue their schooling.⁴⁷⁵ This incident was merely a dot in the history of education in the Khasi hills, for two years later, in 1850, the third school was started at Shella, that too at the initiative of a local person, u Laithat, the court interpreter of Col Lister. Unfortunately, the school house was destroyed by the summer floods. The residents of Shella looked upon this to be the acts of gods who were displeased with the Christians. Despite oppositions, u Laithat, helped by Mr Inglis rebuilt the school house and in 1851, Rev W Lewis visited Shella to formally open it.⁴⁷⁶

Ten years had come and gone and during this period, the enduring efforts of the Welsh Missionaries resulted in the opening and functioning of five schools in the villages of Mawsmi, Nongsawlia (the Mission Station), Mawmluh, Cherra and Shella. This, definitely, was a sign of the progress of education in the Khasi hills. However, these ten years of educational progress was localized in and around Cherrapunjee. Though the educational efforts of the missionaries had their ups and downs, they were undaunted. Many times they had to swim vigorously against the turbulent waves of oppositions. Sometimes they received the support of Khasi Chiefs and well meaning people, who recognised the value of education. One such case was the support and encouragement the Welsh Mission received from Jidor Singh, Chief of Khadsawphra, who encouraged his subjects to send their children to the neighbouring schools. He convinced the missionaries to start a school at Mawnai and the same was opened in 1853. This was soon followed by the opening of a series of schools in most of the principal villages of Khasi hills.

When Jaintia kingdom was annexed by the British Government in 1835, the Jaintia hills became good grounds for proselytization and education. In

⁴⁷⁵ J H Morris, op cit., p102-106; W Reade, op cit., p66.

⁴⁷⁶ G A Jones, op cit., p13-14; J H Morris, op cit., p122.

1842, Thomas Jones accompanied by Capt Lewin and Capt Yule visited Jowai. Except for preaching the Gospel, no initiative was taken by him to educate the people.⁴⁷⁷ No definite reason was given either by the Welsh Mission or by Thomas Jones why they did not set up a mission station and start education at this juncture. In studying the prevailing conditions at the time, it can safely be said that the mission did not have missionaries to spare for works in the Jaintia hills or that Thomas Jones did not find a suitable place to set up a mission and a school. Thomas Jones must have been keen to start a missionary project in the Jaintia hills, for in 1846, he again visited Jowai and in this instance too, he returned back to Sohra. With his departure in 1847, the attempt of the Welsh Mission to evangelize and educate the Jaintias was shelved once again.⁴⁷⁸

The first ten years of educational expenses were borne by the Welsh Mission. When in 1854, the Wood's Despatch was implemented, the government extended financial aids to educational institutions in the country and granted a sum of Rs 50/- per mensem to the mission for educational purposes. The Welsh Mission too, for its educational projects in the Khasi hills was a beneficiary of the Woods' Despatch, and the Government of Bengal sanctioned Rs 50/- a month to the mission for the advancement of education among the hill tribes. With this financial assistance and availability of a local Khasi teacher, u Luh, the Welsh Mission opened a school at Jowai in 1854. This was the first school set up in the Jaintia hills. The monetary aid from the Government made it possible to open two more schools in the Khasi hills, one within the military station at Sohra, and the other at Sohbar.⁴⁷⁹

In 1857, with the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny, the missionaries were apprehensive that the revolt might spread to the region, particularly, with some Indians revolting in Sylhet. However their fears and apprehensions were misplaced, for, despite the upheaval in Central and Northern India, educational works in the Khasi and Jaintia hills progressed and this was proved by the opening of

⁴⁷⁷ G A Jones, op cit., p11; J H Morris, op cit., p82-83

⁴⁷⁸ J H Morris, op cit., p94.

⁴⁷⁹ G A Jones, op cit., p41; J H Morris, op cit., p135.

more schools in this hill tract. However, six years later, the Jaintia Rebellion broke out which hindered the educational progress in the Jaintia hills for a short period only. Because the local Christians remained aloof from the rebels, the government rewarded the Welsh Mission by increasing its educational grant to Rs 500/- a month. With this grant came government inspection of the mission schools and submission of annual reports of educational works executed by the mission. The increased liberal financial assistance helped in the opening of more schools in other villages, such as, Shangpung, Mustoh, Nongbah and Nongtalang.⁴⁸⁰

The Welsh Mission was soon followed by the Roman Catholic Mission who started their pioneering work in 1890. Faced with stiff opposition from the Welsh Mission, the Roman Catholic Mission started the Boarding-cum-Orphanage convents to induce the people to send their children to schools. And the first such institute was set up at Laitumkrah in 1891. With Shillong as the mission headquarter, the Catholic brothers and sisters spread their missionary activities to other villages in the Khasi and Jaintia hills. In 1893, a school and an orphanage were opened at Shella. But when they were destroyed by the floods, the brothers and shifted the mission station to Laitkynsew. There at Laitkynsew a school, an orphanage, a convent and a printing press were established to further missionary activities. The Roman Catholic Mission extended its mission fields to Jaintia hills also and the first mission station comprising of a school, a convent and an orphanage were set up at Raliang in 1894. Success of the Raliang mission station emboldened the Catholic mission to start a Society of native mission sisters in 1912. This new venture was the first of its kind in this region.

Besides the schools established by Christian missionaries, there were schools started by private organizations or by some concerned citizens. Of the private organizations, the Seng Khasi School deserve a special mention as the school was started with the objective to revive the past heritage of the Khasis and to combat the force of Christianity. The school set up in 1899 by eminent Khasis like Jeebon Roy Mairom, Sib Charan Roy and others aimed to inspire the youngsters to drink from the fountain of the

⁴⁸⁰ E W Dkhar, op cit., p64, G A Jones, op cit., p44-45.

past and to stand steadfastly defending their religion and culture. This was the only school set up by a non-Christian organization in the nineteenth century. The pre-independence period of the twentieth century witnessed a number of schools being set up by other Christian and non-Christian missions. Of these, mention may be made of the Adventist Training School, previously known as the Assam Training School, established by the Seventh-Day Adventist Mission at Thadlaskein in the Jaintia hills. This school started by Pastor O W Lange imparted both formal and vocational education. Vocational education comprised of farming, dairying, automobile repairing and also driving. Till 1947, the school imparted only elementary and lower secondary education. Being a multi-purpose school with separate hostels for boys and girls, pupils were not confined only to the locals, but many from other parts of the province sought admission into it. The school therefore, catered its educational services to a diversified student community. An interesting feature of the school which differentiates it from other schools in Jaintia hills, was the medium of instruction. Unlike the rest, where Khasi was the medium for teaching, at the Adventist Training School, English was the only medium of instruction and Khasi was taught as a vernacular subject.

Shillong, being the headquarter of the province, its population comprised of diverse communities, who came to work in the government departments and later settled permanently. Having no vernacular school teaching in their respective languages, most of them were compelled to get admitted to the Shillong Government High School, thereby making it the most multi-lingual school in the province. Its students were not only the Khasis, for whom the school was originally intended, but it also comprised the Assamese, Bengalees, Nagas, Lushais, Garos, Marwaris, Gurkhas, Punjabis etc. The Quinquennium Review for 1932-1937, reported that, "At one time, there were representatives of nineteen languages in the school which has an enrolment of over six hundred. The problem of dealing with so many divergent interests in a single school has been intensified by the introduction of the vernacular as the medium of instruction. The Assamese and Bengalees, naturally do not want their boys to suffer in competition with the boys in the plains, which they must do while English continued as

the medium of instruction. On the other hand, it is not possible to teach so many nationalities except through the medium of English."⁴⁸¹ To settle this problem, Mr. Small proposed to split the school into two, one for the hill boys and one for the plains. The former would continue usage of English as the medium of teaching, for Khasi was not recognized as a medium of instruction. But for the latter, a conflict arose as which of the two be adopted as the medium. Neither of the two would give in to the other language to be the medium of instruction. Since it was not feasible for the government to maintain two separate Government high schools, Mr. Small, therefore, proposed setting up of two separate aided schools financed liberally by the government, and retaining the Shillong Government High School as the only government school in the capital.⁴⁸² As records showed, this proposal was kept in abeyance and nothing materialized out of it. Thus, the Shillong Government High School continued to retain English as the medium of instruction while the vernaculars were taught as language subjects.

During the pre-independence years, minority communities in the capital shouldered the responsibility to diffuse education through their respective vernaculars. The Nepalis in Shillong had set up their own Middle English school in the capital with primary classes attached to it. Like other schools, this school, too, received financial aids of Rs 100/- from the government and a Municipal grant of Rs 40/- only.⁴⁸³ Another school of the minority group in Shillong was the Anupchand Hindi Marwari Middle English School, which had functioned from the 1920's. This school too, received some financial aid from the government.⁴⁸⁴ Besides these, there were other missions who undertook the task of diffusing knowledge to the people, such as, the Church of England, now called Church of North India, established schools in Shillong and Jowai, the Rama Krishna Mission which set up its famous school in Cherrapunjee and the Unitarian Church which set up the Hajom Kissor Singh Memorial School in Jowai, to name a few.

⁴⁸¹ *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam during 1932-1937*, p 65

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, p66

⁴⁸³ *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Assam 1937-38 to 1942-43*.

⁴⁸⁴ *Proceedings, Education Department, 1928*.

Benefits of education can never be undermined. That is why some concerned citizens came forward to start some schools when and wherever needed. An example was the Bengali schools for boys at Laban and for girls at Jail Road. These were started to impart Bengali vernacular education to the children of Bengali parents, employed in the services of the British Government at the time, and were posted or transferred to Shillong after it was made the capital of the province.

In the Khasi and Jaintia hills, the government initially, played the role as a mere financier to the different missions that undertook the task of educating the people. It was in the twentieth century, that the government came forward to provincialized some of the existing schools and to establish purely government educational institutions. Thus, there were three sets of schools functioning during the British period – the purely government schools that were either established by the government or were provincialized and brought under the direct management of the government, the government aided schools that were financially aided by the government but management under their respective committees and the purely private schools which were managed and financed privately, either by private individuals or organizations.

With regard to the Garos, it was the British officials not the missionaries who opened the door to formal education. In 1826, David Scott opened a school for the Garo boys at Singimari with Valentine William Hurley as a teacher. Hurley resigned in 1827 and James Fernie succeeded him as the new incumbent. Unfortunately, his physique could not adjust to the changed climatic conditions and died in 1828. Non-availability of teachers made Scott to shelve the project temporarily.⁴⁸⁵

Educational activities among the Garos was resumed in 1847 by the British Government when it started a school for the Garos at Goalpara, rendering free fooding and boarding. Apprehensive that usage of Bengali medium tended to draw the Garos towards Hinduism, the government decided to appoint a Bengali Christian teacher, one with knowledge of Garo language or was willing to learn it. Thus, to check influence of Hinduism, the government appointed Pintu Babu as teacher in the Goalpara school.

⁴⁸⁵ M S Sangma, *History of Education in Garo Hills*, p12

The next school was opened at the initiative of an educated Garo, Ramke Momin, who started a school at Damra in 1864. The ability of a local to set up a school and teach his countrymen, goes to show the success of the government in initiating education among the Garos. Regardless of the small number of students, this school functioned smoothly and was elevated as a Normal school or a Training school in 1867. In recognition of progress made by this school, the government sanctioned a monthly grant of Rs 50/- to the Damra school. Because the rains inconvenienced the missionaries to travel to Damra, from 1870 to 1875, the school functioned partly at Damra and partly at Goalpara. This kind of an arrangement was detrimental to the school and in 1875 it was shifted to Goalpara and thence to Tura in 1878 permanently.⁴⁸⁶

Unlike the Welsh Mission which set up the earlier schools at its own expense in the Khasi and Jaintia hills, the first mission schools in the Garo hills were sponsored by the government. With government's financial aid, the American Baptist Mission opened a few more schools to meet the demand of the time. It is worthy to note that, as early as 1872, Garos could boast of possessing one Normal school and fourteen village schools. Ironically, Garo girls read only Bengali texts while the boys read Bengali texts alongside the simple Garo texts written in Bengali characters.⁴⁸⁷

Taking a keen interest in transfusing education among the Garos, the government established schools at Gossaigoan, Rewak and Kabulpara. Side by side, the British government stressed upon the missionaries the need to open more schools to cover the entire Garo hills. Financially aided by the government, the missionaries opened nine schools, of which four were closed by March 1876. Despite closure of some schools, at the end of the century there were 86 Primary schools and one Normal school in the Garo hills. It is necessary to note that, inspite of having an increased number of schools and pupils, the literacy percentage was only 0.8 % of the total population. This shows that education in the Garo hills was very low and almost negligible. A reason for this low literacy rate, was the motive the government and the mission had when they introduced

⁴⁸⁶ E G Phillips, "Historical Sketch of the Garo Field", *Jubilee Report 1886*, p70

⁴⁸⁷ M S Sangma, op cit., p31

education in the Garo hills. The government's motive was to civilize the Garos through education, while to the mission education was a mean to chritianization.⁴⁸⁸

Whatever be the motives of the British officials, the Baptist missionaries or the Welsh missionaries, the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills, witnessed a decisive increase in the number of Primary schools during the pre-independence period. After Independence, Primary schools were established throughout the length and breadth of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills, and by the end of the period under study, there were more than two thousand Primary schools in these areas. Proportionate with the increase in the number of Primary schools, there was a corresponding increase of students enrolment. While there were hardly a hundred pupils studying in the first schools set up in the Khasi and Jaintia hills and the Garo hills, on the eve of Meghalaya attaining statehood, there were more than ten thousand pupils studying in the existing Primary schools.

Primary education alone would not help in the progress and development of education, for, at this level, the pupils were merely taught the basics of education. There was the need to start the next higher level of school education, that is, the Middle school level, to meet the growing demands for Primary school-teachers at the time. Middle schools were of two types – the Middle English schools and the Middle Vernacular schools. The first Middle school to be set up in the Khasi and Jaintia hills was the Nongsawlia Middle English School, about 1869. Only five Middle schools managed by the Welsh mission and by the government were in existence till the end of the nineteenth century. With the arrival of the Roman Catholic mission, more Middle English schools were set up in these hills during the twentieth century. Here, it should be noted that Middle schools in the Khasi and Jaintia hills were Middle English schools, because there were no sufficient text books in the Khasi language. The Middle Vernacular schools were actually, the schools that adopted either Assamese or Bengali as the medium of instruction. Such schools were established in the Khasi and Jaintia hills catering to the need of Assamese and Bengali speaking pupils. Sad to say, Garo hills did not have a Middle school during the previous century. It was as late as 1905 that the Normal school

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp37-38

at Tura was converted to a Middle English school.⁴⁸⁹ Despite owning a Middle school as late as 1905, Middle schools in the twentieth century saw a definite increase, both in terms of schools and in the strength of the pupils. However, from the scanty reports available regarding the establishment and functioning of Middle schools, it can be seen that the Middle schools were not given due importance. The reason for this, can be safely taken that, the Middle schools were taken as mere links between Primary schools and High schools.

Though the earlier missions and the government were credited for the introduction of education among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos, but they failed to open the door to higher education through high schools. Credit to start a high school for the Khasis and Jaintias, went to Jeebon Roy Mairom, who started the *Ka Jylla Skul*, that is, a Provincial school, in 1876 at Shillong. The school followed the syllabus of the Calcutta University as the students had to sit for the Entrance Examinations conducted by the same. Because of financial constraints, this school was amalgamated with the Entrance school set up by the Welsh mission and placed under the management of the government. The school was then renamed as Shillong Government High School with Rev. Ceredig Evans as the Headmaster.⁴⁹⁰ This high school was a blessing for the youths of Shillong, for it opened the door to higher education ensuring better and brighter prospects for them. The thirst for higher education is witnessed by the establishment of a high school at Shella in 1892 at the initiatives of the local people. Though its progress was slow, but it was a giant step taken in the field of education, because, a private unaided high school set up in a village could achieve a little success when one of its students cleared the Entrance Examination in 1895.⁴⁹¹

Likewise in the Garo hills, the door to higher education was opened not by the government nor by the missionaries, but by the Garo themselves who set up the first high school, The Sobha School, at Tura in 1934. Four years later, the school was

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p46

⁴⁹⁰ H Bareh, *Progress of Education in Meghalaya*, pp 183, 185

⁴⁹¹ *Report on the Administration of Province of Assam 1893-1894*, p183; J F Jyrwa, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Khasi-Jaintia 1864-1899*, p338

provincialized and Kandura W Momin was appointed as the first full-fledged headmaster. In 1958 it was converted to a Government Multi- Purpose school and remained in this status during the period under study. The Catholic Mission which had raised its Primary school to the Middle level in 1957, again elevated the same to a high school in 1964 and was renamed as Don Bosco High School.⁴⁹²

With regard to the Jaintias, no high school was set up till 1941. It is amazing that the Jaintia hills which owned no high school contemporary with the Khasi hills, had produced one of the first graduates, u Solomon Blah and one of the first lady graduates, ka Trophila Shullai. Their achievement was due to the fact, that Jowai is only about 65 miles from Shillong, and therefore, the Pnars could pursue their higher education in Shillong. In this instance, neither the missionaries nor the locals came forward to start a high school, but it was the government who established the first high school at Jowai in 1941, called, the Jowai Government High School.⁴⁹³ The post-independence period saw the establishment of more high schools in the Jaintia hills.

Education in the State of Meghalaya is a Shillong – centric education. Except for the primary schools, the secondary schools and colleges were mostly located in and around Shillong. But after Independence, the Government aimed to spread higher education to all. To achieve this goal, the government set forth to extend grants-in-aid to schools and colleges. With government's financial help, higher education had spread to other towns, though to a limited extend. The following Table shows the actual number of educational institutions located at varied distances from the towns.

⁴⁹² M S Sangma, op cit., pp55-58.

⁴⁹³ *Records of the Jowai Government High School.*

TABLE VI : RURAL - URBAN CONTINUUM : GARO HILLS DISTRICT

Distance from the nearest town	Number of Villages	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Middle Schools	Number of High/Higher Secondary Schools	Total of All the Schools
5 km. or less	07	02	01	-	03
6-10 km.	29	13	-	-	13
11-15 km.	68	32	01	01	34
16-25 km.	219	95	07	03	105
26-50 km.	794	394	28	09	431
51-100 km.	834	525	38	18	581
101-200 km.	287	159	10	03	172
201km.&above	06	03	-	-	03

Sources : Census 1971- Meghalaya, District Census Handbook, Garo Hills District.

TABLE VII : RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM : KHASI-JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT

Distance from the nearest town	Number of villages	Number of Primary Schools	Number of Middle Schools	Number of High or Higher Secondary Schools	Total of all the Schools
5km.or less	19	25	10	03	38
6-10 km.	31	20	03	02	25
11-15 km.	69	43	08	04	55
16-25 km.	157	74	11	02	87
26-50 km.	578	252	36	08	296
51-100 km.	967	381	79	11	471
101-200 km.	369	96	20	-	116
201km.&above	26	01	-	-	-

Sources : Census 1971 - Meghalaya, District Census Handbook, United Khasi And Jaintia Hills District.

Despite being pioneers of education, neither the Welsh mission nor the government started a college in the Khasi and Jaintia hills, and similarly, in the Garo hills the Baptist missionaries and the government did not open a college for the Garos. It was the Roman Catholic mission who fulfilled the need for collegiate education by starting the St. Edmunds College in 1916. This was soon followed by the establishment of St. Anthony's College in 1934. As these two were mainly boys colleges, in 1935, the first girls' college, Lady Keane Girls' College, was set up at Shillong through the initiative of some concerned citizens and was under private management. Contemporarily, the Catholic mission opened the St. Mary's College for girls only. The pre-independence period saw no colleges being set up in the Garo hills and the Jaintia hills. For the Garos the first college was set up by concerned citizens in 1955 at Tura. Due to paucity of funds, it functioned for only one year and was closed down. The same was reopened in 1958 with some grants from the Government of Assam.⁴⁹⁴

At the time the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos fought for statehood, the Government of Assam opened two government colleges, one at Jowai and the other at Tura., to wean the public from their struggle for statehood. And these were the only two government colleges in the state of Meghalaya till today. In Garo Hills, a college was started at Mendipathar on the eve of attainment of statehood. Functioning for a few years only during the period of study, nothing much was known about it, except for this being the only college in the Garo Hills receiving grants-in-aid from the government at that point of time.

The afore-mentioned schools were intended to provide formal education to the indigenous Khasis, Jaintias, Garos and other Indian communities. What about the children of British Officials and staff of the Government, especially, when Shillong was made the capital of the erstwhile Assam? To fulfil their educational needs, the government set up the Pine Mount School for girls in 1900. The school was actually a girls school, but boys were allowed to read at the kindergarten level only. Catering to the European and Anglo-Indian community, the school followed the same

⁴⁹⁴ MS Sangma, op cit., p58

course as the then existing public schools in the country. Alongside the formal classes, lessons on music and cookery were also imparted.

In all the three hill areas, no technical or industrial school worthy of the name was set up. Sir Bampfylde Fuller, then Commissioner of Assam, was the first to initiate opening of a technical school in Shillong, and the result was the Fuller Industrial School. This was a government institute which offered Diploma courses in carpentry and blacksmithy. Because these courses were meant only for boys, a Weaving school for girls was started in 1919, where girls acquired knowledge in the art of weaving, dyeing and designing. Technical education made some progress during the post-independence period. In 1965, the Shillong Polytechnic was opened. This institute offered Diploma courses in Automobile Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Applied Mechanics besides Economics, Management and English. The curriculum comprised both theory and practical, taught term by term till the completion of the prescribed courses. In 1976, Shillong owned an Industrial Training Institute, an institute already existing in Gauhati since 1965. This institute imparted training in Radio and Television mechanism, Electric mechanism, Automobile mechanism, carpentry, welding, wiring, stenography, etc. A technical which contributed much to vocational education of the people was the Don Bosco Technical School situated in the heart of the capital at Laitumkhrah. This school provides training on automobile mechanism, welding, carpentry, printing and binding, electrical mechanism etc. In Garo hills, an industrial department had been attached to the Tura school by the missionaries intended to teach the improved method of cultivation at the time. But this could not be termed an industrial school, because it did not offer Diploma Certificates to its trainees. The only technical institution in the Garo hills was set up in the post-independence period, that is, the Industrial Training Institute which adopted similar courses as the institute in Shillong.⁴⁹⁵

Progress and development of education is largely dependent on government policy. Though some of the indigenous chiefs were literate, none of them followed a policy aimed to impart formal education to their subjects. When British

⁴⁹⁵ H Bareh, *op cit.*, pp 50-52

Government annexed these hill districts, the former introduced an educational policy to promote the growth and spread of education among its subjects. The creation of the office of the Director of Public Instruction in the provinces co-ordinated the educational administrative policies during the British era. The Director was assisted by a host of Inspectors, Deputy Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of schools who functioned as supervisors within their own respective jurisdictions. For better co-ordination and supervision, two Inspectors of Schools were appointed, one for the United Khasi and Jaintia hills District and the other for the Garo hills District. Both were expected to supervise the school administration and submit their reports to the Director of Public Instructions at Shillong. However, supervision of high schools, technical schools and colleges were under the direct supervision of the Director.⁴⁹⁶

An important feature of the educational policies of the British Government was the introduction of the system of grants-in-aid to the educational institutions of all categories. This system emerged due to the financial constraints faced by the earlier missions in their attempts to educate the people. To relieve itself from direct responsibility of educational activities, the government from the very start, adopted the policy of rendering only financial assistance to the schools in the form of salaries, stipends and scholarships, leaving management of the schools in the hands of respective missions. But this did not mean that government had no control over the institutes. In fact, financial assistance brought with it government supervision of the educational institutes and in course of time, these aided institutes were governed by rules and regulations of the government, thereby bringing them under the control of the latter.

For promotion of education to the hill tribes who did not possess a written script necessitated the publication of primers at the initial stage. Gradually, with the progress of school education to higher levels, there was a need to publish books in the vernacular languages. Both Khasi and Garo languages were recognized as the medium of instructions in their respective schools. While Khasi was adopted as the only medium of

⁴⁹⁶ S Majumdar & T Mark, *Educational Administration in Meghalaya, Structures, Processes and Future Prospects*, PP 70-73, 79-81.

instruction in the schools of the Khasi and Jaintia hills, in the case of Garo hills, Bengali was the language adopted with Garo language taking a second place. Till the end of the nineteenth century, Bengali medium and Bengali text-books were adopted in the schools in the Garo hills alongside some simple Garo text-books. Even the earlier missionaries published Bengali text-books and Garo text-books using the Bengali script. Under such instances, naturally, the educated Garos would hardly be enthused to write and publish Garo books.

On the other hand, the Welsh missionaries replaced the Bengali script by the Roman script in writing the Khasi language in Roman character was now used in the schools and for all purposes and the American Baptist Mission did the same for the Garos. The common script for the indigenous language helped its speedy growth and the scholars were inspired to produce quality literary works in their own language. This development eventually contributed to the growth of local literature. The process was reinforced further by the policy of the Calcutta University to encourage Vernacular languages alongwith English and of the government to make only two languages necessary, that is, English and the Vernacular. The pattern of education which gradually emerged in the first half of the twentieth century provided for Vernacular Education at the lower and primary levels and English at the secondary level, but with a provision for the vernacular language as a compulsory subject. In case of the Khasis and the Garos, they were now relieved of the burden of multiple languages and multiple scripts. The Roman script became the only script, while in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills the Khasis and Jaintias could be free of external influences in matter of languages, so was the case for the Garos in the Garo Hills. The society ultimately became uni-lingual and these accentuated the development of literature.

Appendix D

Inclusion of the Khasi language in the list of vernaculars recognized by the University for the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations and the recognition of Khasi as a second language for Khasi girls instead of a classical language.

No. 69.

No. 119 – 3 – 1-4, dated Shillong, the 8th July 1912.

From – J.R.CUNNINGHAM, Esq, M.A., Director of Public Instruction, Assam,

To – The Second Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

I have the honour to bring before you, for the consideration of the Chief Commissioner, the conditions at present subsisting with regard to the Matriculation and subsequent study as Khasi students in the University of Calcutta. Revisal appears to be called for in the interests of the Khasi people and of the development of their language and literature. It is unnecessary at this stage to discuss the claims of the Khasi to encouragement as an educationally progressive people. I content myself therefore by inviting reference to the Appendix in which will be found a statement which shows a total of more than 10,000 Khasi children at school in the various stages of instruction. Nor need I advance a case for the conservation of the language. It might possibly be politician in the interests of administration and progress to assist the language of backward races in the plains to give place to that of the people amongst whom they dwell. But the Khasis live apart from their neighbours in a country of their own, and there are no significant indication of a merging of the people.

2. Prior to the introduction of the new University Regulations, Khasi was recognised by the University as a second language for the purpose of Entrance Examination. The Student desirous of advancing his education beyond the vernacular stage and obtaining the High School Leaving Certificate recognised by Government, could

achieve his end without studying more than two languages – his own and English. The examination in Khasi leading him as it did to the study of his own language, naturally reacted upon the language to its progress as a medium of literary expression and as a factor in the advancement of the people.

3. Under the new Regulations this has been altered. Khasi is no longer included in the list of alternative vernaculars; it is now necessary to the student to qualify himself in a classical language in addition to English, the necessity has been imposed upon him of qualifying himself for an English paper more advanced than that set to the ordinary matriculate, and in the general weight of the linguistic work required of him the study of his own language is neglected.
4. I proceed to state the present conditions more fully for the information of the Chief Commissioner. They will be found in Chapters XXX, XXXI and XXXV of the University Regulations.
5. The requirements of the Matriculation Examination in the matter of languages are that each candidate should pass in English, and in one classical and vernacular language. For convenience of reference, I note on the margin the classical and vernacular languages which are at present recognized. The examination in the vernacular is confined to composition. Candidates, whose own vernacular is not included in the list, are allowed to take instead an alternative paper of a somewhat advanced character in English. Finally, it is provided that the examination in English shall include the translation of passages into English from one of the vernaculars stated in the marginal list, in which it will be noted that Khasi is included.

5. The first result of the conditions now imposed is a discouragement of higher education amongst the Khasis who have to undergo a more difficult test than the forward races of the plains; the second that, as already indicated, the study of the vernacular is neglected and an influence essential to the normal development of the people is thus stunted in its operation.

7. The case for the inclusion of Khasi in the list of vernaculars for the Matriculation Examination has already been before the Syndicate. Reference may be invited in this regard to the correspondence resting with Eastern Bengal and Assam Government memorandum No. 2171E., dated the 29th August 1908, communicating the refusal of the Syndicate to recommend its recognition. The only reason adduced for this decision was that the Khasi did not possess a sufficiently advanced literature, there being hardly any standard works written in the language. It was further pointed out that, if Khasi were included in the Matriculation Course, students would be under a great disadvantage when they proceeded to the Intermediate Examination for which Khasi could not possibly be recognized. It may be explained in this connection that the compulsion of the vernacular or its alternative paper in English continues to the Intermediate Examination, the intermediate papers being in all respects on the same lines as laid down for the matriculation.

8. The lack of an extensive or a classical literature in Khasi is not, I venture to think, a reason sufficient for its exclusion from the Matriculation list. The first purpose of the Regulations, with regard to examination in the vernacular, would seem to be to secure that candidates should prove their ability to express themselves literately in their own language. The examination comprises a translation from English into the vernacular, questions on composition and an essay under given heads. In each aspect it can scarcely be questioned, in view of the list of publications which I now annex, that Khasi is sufficiently advanced for the

purposes of this or indeed of a much higher examination. The Intermediate Examination, as I have stated, is exactly on the same lines, and I confess myself unable to see any good reason, why a language which has proved itself in so many and such various tasks of translation and original composition should not be regarded as a suitable subject of examination for an Intermediate candidate. The only question which could arise is with regard to those sections of the Regulations which provide – as well for the Matriculation as for the Intermediate Examinations- that in the case of each of the vernaculars the Syndicate shall prescribe a small number of standard works to be read as models of style. The publications in Khasi are certainly no so numerous as to offer a wide range of selection, but I venture to think that they are sufficient and there can be little doubt that the range would be extended as the influence to the recognition made itself obvious in an increased literary output. In this matter much might be effected by the sympathetic interest of the Board of Studies. The doubts which may be raised by the words “standard” and “style” are germane also to the case of languages which stand already upon the list.

9. But even if Khasi were no to be admitted to the list of vernaculars recognized for the Intermediate Examination, I would press strongly for its inclusion in the Matriculation list. Many students it will be borne in mind, bring their education to an end at the school-leaving or Matriculation stage, and, while in the event of its exclusion from the Intermediate list those who pursued their studies further could not offer Khasi for that examination and would have to take a somewhat advanced paper in English in its stead, I am unable to see that the compulsory study of their own vernacular up to the end of their school course could place them under a serious disadvantage or indeed prove anything but beneficial. The insistence on a higher standard of qualification in English would not operate so hardly at this more advanced stage and would in any case help to secure the success of the candidates in their subsequent progress to the Degree. It much remembered in this connection that, itself, the Intermediate cannot well be so; and a slight increase in

the difficulty of the Intermediate course could not be regarded as disadvantage, if it improved the prospects of success in the Degree.

10. On the grounds which I have adduced, I venture therefore to recommend to the Chief Commissioner that the Hon'ble the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta may be moved to recommend to the Senate the inclusion of Khasi in the list of vernaculars recognized for the purposes of the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations in Chapter XXX, section 9, and section 7 of Chapters XXXI and XXXV of the University Regulations.
11. In view of the functions of the University – as stated in Chapter IV, section 19 of the Regulations-in the matter of encouraging research in the vernacular literatures and languages and fostering their growth, the sympathetic consideration of the Ho'ble the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate may be relied upon.
12. A further recommendation arising naturally from the preceding is that female candidates for the Matriculation and Intermediate Arts Examinations, whose vernacular is Khasi, may be granted a similar privilege to that allowed to Bengali female candidates in the footnote section 9, Chapter XXX, and section 8, Chapter XXXI of the Regulations, and permitted to offer themselves for examination in Khasi instead of in a classical language. Two Khasi girls have already matriculated and there are at present 14 being prepared for presentation.
13. Before closing this letter I would comment on a point which attracted the attention of the Chief Commissioner when he recently visited the Shillong High School. He found there Khasi boys and boys of other hill tribes studying Latin. Despite the apparent incogruity, I fear there is at present no suitable alternative. As will be seen from the list of classical languages noted on the margin of paragraph 5, Latin is more nearly allied to their course of studies than any of the other languages permissible. It must be of help to them in their study of the

English courses being correlated in respect of both thought and language. Sanskrit which is the only possible alternative is an undesirable subject of school study for pupils to whom the thought and the religion of which it offers to those who have not had a preliminary grounding in one of the Sanskritic vernaculars. I admit however that the teaching of Latin to schools boys of the hill races cannot be defended apart from the compulsion of the University Regulations. The remedy seems to lie in the settlement of a special course or courses of studies for hill pupils or the elaboration of alternative curricula for a general School Final Examination which shall be recognized by Government and by the University. It will probably be difficult for Assam to take the University with it in the latter regard, unless Bengal moves in the same direction. The subject will in due course engage consideration.

No. 70

APPENDIX I

Number of Khasi children at school at the various stages of instruction

Boys or Girls	Stages of instruction			Total
	Primary	Middle	High	
1	2	3	4	5
Boys	9,169	249	35	9,456
Girls	844	83	14	941
Grand total of Khasi children at school				10,394

List of books and newspaper published in the Khasi language

Books

1. Ka Baible Khasi (The Bible in Khasi) published by the Welsh Mission.
2. Pilgrim's Progress by Mr. Lewis

3. Ka Kitab Pentateuch (The Pentateuch)
4. Ka Jingphla ka Jingngait (Confession of Faith) by Rev. J. Roberts, D.D.
5. Ka Histori U Jisu (History of Jesus Christ) by ditto.
6. Ka Jingshai (The Light) by Rev. J. Jones
7. Ka Lynti ka Hok (Way of Righteousness) by Rev. M. Joseph
8. Ka Kitab Nyngkong (First Reader) published by the Welsh Mission.
9. Ditto kaba Ar (Second Reader) ditto ditto
10. Ditto kaba Lai (Third Reader) by Rev. J. Roberts, D.D.
11. Ditto kaba Saw (Fourth Reader) by ditto.
12. Khasi Arithmetic by U Nissor Singh.
13. Khasi Mental Arithmetic by Nissor Singh and Barnabas.
14. Ka Kot long ne "Wan sha U Jisu" (Come to Jesus) published by the Welsh Mission.
15. Ka Kitab Khasi Nyngkong (Khasi First Book) by Jeebon Roy.
16. Ditto kaba Ar (Second Book) by Jeebon Roy.
17. Ditto kaba Lai (Third Book) ditto
18. Ka Niam Khasi (Religious rites and ceremonies of the Khasis) by Jeebon Roy.
19. Ka History of India by Jeebon Roy.
20. Ka Ramayan Charitra by ditto.
21. Ka Chaitanya Charitra by ditto.
22. Ka Buddha Deb Charitta by ditto.
23. Shaphang Uwei u Blei (About one God) by Jeebon Roy.
24. Ka Hitupodesh by Jeebon Roy.
25. Ka Niam U Blei (God's Religion) by H. Kissor Singh.
26. Ka Kot Jingtylli ba lyngkot shaphang ka Niam U Blei (A Book about the religion of God in the form of question and answers) by U Robin Roy.
27. Ka Kot Service ia ki nongiap (Funeral Service) by H. Kissor Sing.
28. Ka Jingngait ki Unitarian (The belief of the Unitarians) by H. Kissor Sing

29. Ki Service bad ki Jingrwai ki Unitarian (Services and Hymns of the Unitarians) by H. Kissor Sing.
30. Ka Spah bakordor by Nilami Chakravarty.
31. Ka Jingsneng tymmen, Part I (Old man's advice), by Radhon Sing Berry.
32. Ditto Part II ditto, by ditto.
33. Ka Kot Jingphawar (Khasi Book of Proverbs) by U Rabon Sing.
34. Ka Kitab Puriskam (Khasi Folklore) by Rabon Sing.
35. Ka Jingkyrsiw (Awakening) by Sib Charan Roy.
36. Ka Bhagabad Gita by Sib Charan Roy.
37. Chhanakya Niti Darpana by Sib Charan Roy.
38. Hints to the Study of Khasi language by Nissor Sing.
39. A Hand-book of school management in Khasi by L. Lewis.
40. Ka Kitab Jingduwai by Fr. G. Abele.
41. Ka Niam U Blei bad ki niam ba la thaw da ki briew by Rev. Fr. G. Abele
42. Baible History by Rev. fr. C. Bohnheim.
43. Ka Jingiapher hapdeng ka niam Katholic bad ki niam Protestant by Rev. F. G. Abele.
44. Ka Jingim U Martin bakhuid by Rev. Fr. G. Abele.
45. Ka Kot jong ki bapang by ditto.
46. Balei nga long U Katholic? By ditto
47. Ka Jingim U Fransciscus Xavarius Bakhuid by Fr. C. Bohnheim.
48. Ka Jingim ka Khristina bakhuid by ditto.
49. Ka Jingbatai ia ka Katechism by Rev. Fr. P. Steinheir.
50. Ka Jingim bad ka Jinghikai U Martin Luther by Rev. Fr. G. Abele.
51. Ka Jingbatai mon ka Baible by Rev. Fr. G.
52. Ka Kitab Nyngkong, by ditto.
53. Ka Kot ABK by Rev. Fr. C. Bohnheim.
54. Ka Jinghikai jong ka Niam Khristan by Rev. Fr. A. Munzloher.
55. Ka Kot Jingduwai bad Jingrwai by Rev. Fr. Igantius Betham.

56. Ka Kitab Jingduwai land (Prayer book of the Church of England), a translation, by H. Gatphoh.
57. Ka Jingkha khun (Childbirth), a translation, by Hormu Roy Diengdoh.
58. Ka Lynti ka Jingkhuid (Way of Holiness) by J.M.Roy, B.A.
59. Ka Balang U Blei (The Church of God) by ditto.
60. Khasi-English Dictionary by U Nissor Sing.
61. Anglo-Khasi Dictionary by Rev. H. Roberts (before the printed list).
62. Ka Niam ka mynsiem U Khasi (The religion of the soul of the Khasi) by U H. Kissor Sing.
63. Ka Jingiakren U Khasi bad U Khristan (A dialogue between a Khasi and a Christian), an extract from U Nongphira, by H. Kissor Sing.
64. Ka Rukom Jer bad Pynkyntang (Service of Baptism) by U H. Kissor Sing.
65. Ka Jingshem U Khasi ia ka Niam Khristan (The experiences of a Khasi regarding orthodox Christianity) by U Hormu Roy Diengdoh.
66. Ka Pop bad ka Jingpynim (Sin and Salvation) by H. Kissor Sing.
67. Ki Rules ka Sengland ki Unitarian (Rules of the Unitarian Union) by H. Kissor Sing.
68. Ka Jingiathuh Lyngkot ia ka History ki Israil (Brief note on the history of Israel), a translation, by U Harrison Roy.
69. Ka Jingbatai Lyngkot ia ka Shithi U Juda (a brief commentary on the Epistle of Jude) by U Harrison Roy.
70. Ka Jinglong Blei U Jisu Khrist (The Divinity of Jesus Christ) by Rev Siang Blah.
71. Khasi Geography by u Wellington.
72. U Nongiarap (Helps to the study of the Bible) by U Wellington.
73. Ka Jinghikai ia ka Niam Khristan Katholik (Teachings of Catholic Christianity, larger edition) by Rev. Fr. D.M. Danderer.
74. Ditto (small edition) by ditto
75. Ka Kot Jingduwai (Prayer-book) by Rev. Fr. Bohnheim.

76. Ka Kot Jingduwai Bakhuid (Holy Prayer-book of the Church of England) by Rev. Firminger.
77. Ka Jingiathuhkhana Bakhuid na ka Testament Barim (Sacred stories of the Old Testament), translation, by Sympot Sing and published by Bishop Copleston.
78. Ka Jingpynkoit U Blei (Divine Healing) by J.M. Roy, B.A.
79. Ka Jingkha pat (Regeneration) by J.M. Roy, B.A.
80. Ka Jingsait kjat (Feet-washing) by ditto.
81. Ka Jingrwai ka Jingpynim (Songs of Salvation), Part I, by J.M. Roy. B.A.
82. Ditto, Part II, by ditto.
83. Ka Jingkynud Bathiang (Sweet Musics) by J.M.
84. Ka Kitab Niam Khein ki Khasi, la pyniasoh bad ki ain, ki adong bad ka rukom hiar pateng (Khasi Religious Rites, Laws, Rules and Customs of Inheritance), Government Publication.
85. Ka Savitri (Life of Savitri), a translation, by U Hari Charan Roy.
86. Ka Jingjarap U Nongai dawai (Helps to a Dispenser of Medicine) by B.K. Sarma Roy.
87. Ka Jingpang Kynthei (Woman's Illness) by B.K. Sarma Roy.
88. Shaphang ki Siem Lich, Nongkhlaw (About the Chiefs of Nongkhlaw), by B.K. Sarma Roy.
89. Ka Histori U Abraham (Catechism on the History of Abraham) published by the Welsh Mission.
90. Ka Histori U Isaak (Catechism on the History of Isaac) published by the Welsh Mission.
91. Ka Jingkylli Nyngkong ka Jingiathuhkhana Babha (First Catechism on Bible narratives) published by the Welsh Mission (before the printed list).
92. U Nongialam (The leader-A catechism on the fundamental doctrines of Christianity) Published by the Welsh Mission (before the printed list).
93. Ki Jingrwai Seng Khasi (Songs of the Khasi Association) published by the Seng Khasi Mawkhar.

94. Ka Drama Khasi (Drama in Khasi) by U Dina Nath Roy.
95. Ki Rul ba la khreh na ka bynta ki nonghikai skul (Rules for Mission teachers) published by the Welsh Mission.
96. Ka Katikir Banyngkong (The First Catechism) by the Welsh Mission.

Periodicals

- i) U Nongialam Khristian (Christian Leader) Published by the Welsh Mission.
- ii) U Nongphira (Watchman) by Sib Charan Roy.
- iii) Ka Ing Khristan (Christian Home) by Roman Catholic Mission.
- iv) Ka Jingshai ka Gospel (The light of the Gospel) by J.M. Roy, B.A.
- v) U Lurshai (The Morning Star) by Christian Volunteer Movement.
- vi) U Jaintia (Jaintia's Newspaper).

No. 72

No. 1453E., dated Shillong, the 6th August 1912.

From – Major W.M. Kennedy, I.A., Second Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

To – The Registrar, Calcutta University.

I am directed to forward, for the favourable consideration of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University, a copy of letter No. 119-3-1-4, dated the 8th July 1912, and enclosures from the Director of Public Instruction, Assam, recommending the inclusion of the Khasi language in the list of vernaculars recognised for the purposes of the Matriculation and Intermediate Examination, and the extension to female candidates for these examinations, whose vernacular is Khasi, of the privilege allowed to Bengali female candidates, viz., that they may be permitted to offer themselves for examination in Khasi instead of in a classical language. The Chief Commissioner is in entire agreement with these proposals, and trusts that the Syndicate may i.e. able to see their way to accept them. It is very desirable that the Khasis should not be handicapped in their efforts to improve themselves, and that they should atleast be placed on an equal footing with other races as regards the tests which they have to undergo.

2. I am to enquire whether the Syndicate would be prepared to entertain a proposal on the lines indicated in paragraph 13 of Mr. Cunningham's letter with regard to the teaching of Latin in the Shillong High School. Should the Syndicate be of opinion that the Director of Public Instruction's suggestion is worthy of further consideration, he will be requested to submit definite proposals regarding a special course of study for pupils from hills districts. It has struck many persons, besides the Chief Commissioner, as very strange to find Khasi boys in the Shillong High School learning Latin, and Sir Archdale Earle ventures to hope that the Syndicate will be their way to support some alternative.

No. 73

No. 1600, dated Senate House, Calcutta, the 7th September, 1912

From – The Assistant Registrar, Calcutta University,

To – The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Education Department.

I have the honour, by direction of the Hon'ble Vice – Chancellor and Syndicate, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1453 E., dated the 6th of August 1912, with which you forward a copy of letter No. 119-3-1-14, dated the 8th July, 1912, and enclosures, from the Director of Public Instruction, Assam, recommending the inclusion of the Khasi language in the list of vernaculars recognised by the University for the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations and the extension to female candidates for the aforesaid examinations, whose vernacular is Khasi, of the privilege of offering Khasi at those examinations in lieu of a classical language.

2. In reply I am directed to state that Khasi is already included in the list of vernaculars from which passages are set in the first paper in English at the Matriculation Examination for translation into English and that the Syndicate are prepared to recommend the addition of Khasi to the list of vernaculars prescribed for original composition at the Matriculation Examination. But, while fully

appreciating the difficulty of Khasi students with regard to their second language, the Syndicate do not see their way to propose to the Senate the inclusion of Khasi in the list of classical languages. As a practical solution of the difficulty, however, the Syndicate suggest that Khasi female students for the Matriculation and I.A. Examinations be allowed to take up an advanced paper in English in lieu of classical language. If the above suggestion commends itself to the Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner and on his signifying his approval of it, the Syndicate will proceed to make their recommendation to the Senate for the necessary modification of the Regulations.

No. 75

No. 227-3-1-4, dated Shillong, the 4th October, 1912

From – J.R. Cunningham, Esq., M.A., Director of Public Instruction, Assam,
To - The Second Secretary to the Hon'ble the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum No. 2197E., dated the 18th September 1912, in the correspondence with regard to the recognition of the Khasi language for the purposes of the Matriculation and the Intermediate Examinations of Calcutta University, forwarding for advice a copy of a letter which has been received from the Assistant Registrar, Calcutta University.

2. The proposals with which the Assistant Registrar's letter deals were briefly as follows :
 - i) That Khasi should be included in the list of vernaculars recognized for the purposes of the Matriculation Examination. (The examination in the vernacular, it will be borne in mind, is confined to Composition).
 - ii) That Khasi should be included in the list of vernaculars recognized for the purposes of the Intermediate Examination. (The examination is confined to Composition and Translation).

- iii) That female candidates for the Matriculation Examination, whose vernacular is Khasi, may be granted a similar privilege to that allowed to Bengali girls and permitted to offer themselves for examination in Khasi instead of in a classical language. (This examination would presumably extend to Grammar as well as to Composition).
 - iv) As in (3) – for the Intermediate Examination. (This examination would presumably extend to Grammar as well as to Composition and Translation).
3. The Syndicate have been good enough to indicate their willingness to recommend the first of these proposals to the Senate.
 4. In regard to the second proposals, they have expressed no opinion.

The recommendation may again be pressed upon them.

5. To the third and fourth proposals the Assistant Registrar's letter, if I understand its terms aright, informs us that the Syndicate are opposed. They are unwilling to recommend that the privilege already conceded to Bengali girls should be extended to the Khasi Hills and have suggested as an alternative that, in lieu of a classical language, Khasi girls may take up an advanced paper in English. The reason of the Syndicate is probably that they do not regard the language as a sufficiently advanced in its structure or in its literature to be a subject suitable for inclusion as literary language in a University Course of Studies. It should be borne in mind however that it is the language native to the candidates and that it is a language in course of development. As indicated in my previous letter, it has proved itself adequate to the creation of a literature which, small as it must necessarily be, is yet varied, and marks the progress of a hill nation, a few years ago entirely uncivilised to a degree of civilization which in at least one important manifestation—female education—is more advanced than that of many of the enlightened races in the plains. At the present stage of their course, it is just this

aspect of the language, the literary aspect, which is most important to the Khasis, and I would urge that the Syndicate should be requested to reconsider their decision and to recommend to the favourable consideration of the Senate the extension to Khasi girls of the same privilege both in the Matriculation and the Intermediate Examinations-that of preparing themselves for examination in their own instead of in a classical language-as has been conceded to those who vernacular is Bengali.

No. 76

No. 3388E., dated Shillong, the 28th November 1912.

From – Major W.M. Kennedy, I.A., Second Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

To – The Assistant Registrar, Calcutta University.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1600, dated the 7th September 1912, intimating the willingness of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University to recommend the addition of Khasi to the list of vernaculars prescribed for original Composition at the Matriculation Examination, and to ask you to be so good as to convey the thanks of the Chief Commissioner to that Body for their courtesy in acceding to his request in this respect.

2. The Syndicate are unable to accept the proposal that Khasi should be added to the list of classical languages, but suggest as a practical solution of the difficulty that Khasi female students for the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations should be allowed to take up an advanced paper in English in lieu of a classical language. In this connection, I am to forward a copy of letter no. 227-3-1-4, dated the 4th October 1912, from the Director of Public Instruction, urging that Khasi should be included in the list of vernaculars recognised for the Intermediate Examinations should be permitted to offer

themselves for examination in Khasi instead of in classical language. The Chief Commissioner regrets to have to trouble the Syndicate again in regard to the further concessions asked for in my letter No. 1453E., dated the 6th August, 1912, but the subject is of so great importance to the educational advancement of the Khasis, that he is constrained to press for a consideration of the decision at which the Syndicate have arrived. The proposals made by the Director of Public Instruction have Sir Archdale Earle's full approval, and he would urge that the weighty reasons given by Mr. Cunningham in support of them are deserving of the careful consideration of the Syndicate before a final decision is reached. Of all the hill tribes in this province the Khasis are the most progressive, and the most eager to avail themselves of the educational facilities afforded to them. It is, therefore, in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner eminently desirable that the educational path should be smoothed for them, so far as is practicable, with due regard to the necessity that the education imparted should be liberal and adequate. As the proposals put forward by the Director of Public Instruction are calculated to secure the result indicated, I am to express the hope that they will meet the acceptance of the Syndicate.

Sources : Assam Secretariat Proceedings, Education Department, Education- A,
June, 1915
