ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The North-East Elementary Education

JAYASHREE ROY

This is a comparative study on the history of elementary education in the North East Region of India, concerning the variables with emphasis on ethnic movements, decentralization and the role of the community in enhancing education in mostly Mizoram and Nagaland. The period covered is from a historical perspective till today.

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Dr. Jayashree Roy, currently a senior faculty member of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, studied at the Sarah Siddons School, London, from where she obtained her GCE from the University of OXFORD, UK and LSSE from London. On returning to India, she read at the Presidency College Universtiy of Calcutta in History Honours and Modern History specializing in Indian Economic History. She Audited Area Studies-The Middle East from the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA and completed Diploma in Development Administration from University of Rome, Italy and Italian language from Perngia. Was a deligate to cultural mission to Ex Soviet Union. Attended courses at Uniersities Palermo Bocconi Meteponto Community Centre, Italy. Was a visiting lecturer at Poland and visit lodz, Cracow, Gadanz and Warsaw. Was also a resource person for University of Pavia Italy. Widely travelled, has been specializing in comparative studies both from the CIE University of Delhi and Department of History, Delhi University, from where she has completed her doctorate degree. Has been a consultant to USEFI, UNESCO, Commonwealth Secretarial, NCERT, MHRD, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and State Governments. Has numerous publications to her credit both national and international.

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JAYASHREE ROY

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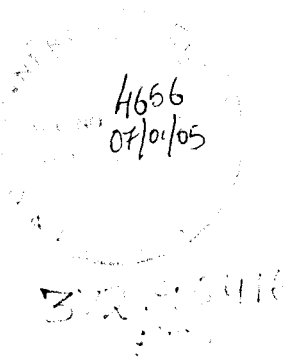

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Introduction

Universalisation of Elementary Education and its quality has been a major concern for all developing countries after the Second World War. However, unlike China and a few countries of South East Asia, India still has to enroll, retain and give quality education to all its children between the ages 6 to 14 years. It is not that this sector was neglected in the pre-independence period, but that primary and middle school curriculum which was often irrelevant to the socio-economic needs of school children failed to attract the children to schools. A colonial bias in curriculum, with emphasis on English and bookish knowledge of social studies, maths, and environmental sciences had little to do with the participation of economically deprived children employed in agricultural, industrial and household labour. Nor did the curriculum teach these children anything needed by their local environment. This "alien" education, therefore, failed to retain children in schools after Class I. Though as far as regions in India are concerned, the North East has a higher level of completion rates of primary school children, nevertheless it has also pockets of backwardness among illiterate tribes living in remote areas. A history of the development of elementary education in India with reference to the North East may throw some light on the causes of success or failure of universal elementary education policy.

In this book I have tried to trace the origin of modern education in the North East, analyze the growth of elementary schooling facilities, study the position of female literacy and girls' education in the context of educationally forward and backward tribes in districts, the effects of decentralization and the role of local bodies in primary education through

case studies of Mizoram and Nagaland and finally to see as to how far the ethnic, or political movements of the region have either encouraged the growth of education or have adversely effected it.

A Brief Resume of Elementary Education Policy from the Nineteenth Century to 1992

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, several types of indigenous schools existed, the "schools of learning" included the Pathshalas for the Hindus and Madrassa for the Muslims. Although they were separate schools, they had several important features in common, for instance, both received pecuniary assistance from rulers, chieftains and opulent or religious citizens. Both were staffed by learned teachers, some of whom were authors of repute, but most of whom received very low remuneration. In both, instruction was mostly given gratis and no regular fees were charged. Both were medieval in character, imparting classical language as the medium of instruction (Sanskrit in one case and Arabic or Persian in the other). In both cases the teachers were rewarded either by grants of land made by rulers, by occasional voluntary presents from pupils and members of the public, by allowances paid by wealthy citizens and by payments in the form of food, clothes and other articles. Some of the teachers who taught gratis also provided their pupils food and lodging.

Generally speaking, the schools had no special buildings of their own. Where these existed, they were built either by the teachers themselves or at the expense of the parents or friends or by subscription from the people. In most cases, however the schools were held in the local temple or the mosque and not infrequently in the houses of local magnates or patrons or the teacher themselves. The students entered school at a fairly early age and studied as long as they desired, often for as long as twelve years or more. The state however, had nothing to do with the day-to-day functioning of these schools.[1]

The Hindu schools of learning were conducted almost exclusively by Brahmins and the majority of the students came from the same caste. In the Persian and Arabic schools, teachers were generally Muslims, and a Hindu teacher was a rare phenomenon. However, several Hindus attended Persian schools conducted by Muslims because Persian was then the court language.

There also existed what is known as "Indigenous Elementary Schools", which was the main agency for the spread of mass education. It was a humbler but far more useful institution where instruction was limited to the three 'Rs.' although it catered to the requirements of other

upper castes, it had no endowments either from the state or from the public. Its teachers were ordinary, and, very often knew little more than what they imparted. These teachers also received less money than the teacher in the "schools of learning", except in those cases where the teachers were maintained by a rich person. Their earnings consisted of small collections or occasional presents from parents of children who attended the schools. Sometimes the teachers followed some other profession or trade for their own survival.

The indigenous schools were hardly adequately equipped. They had no buildings and classes were held in the house of the teacher or the patron of the school, often in a local temple and not infrequently under a tree. There were no printed books and the slates or pens used by pupils were of such quality as could be easily made in the locality. The instruction hours could also be adjusted to local requirements. The size of the school was small, the number of pupils varied from one or two to ten or fifteen. Consequently there were no class hours or period of admission. The student could join the school at any time and study at his/her own pace. The student was also free to leave the school as and when he/she had obtained the desired knowledge.[2] In the bigger schools, the senior pupils were appointed to teach their juniors. This model was adopted by Dr. Bell, the Presidency Chaplain at Madras, and later extended to England in the form of what became known as the monitorial or Madras system. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic and accounts. There was no fee in the modern sense, but each parent of the child attending school, made some payment to the teacher either in cash or in kind.

One of the chief merits of the 'indigenous system' of elementary schools was its capacity to adapt itself to the local environment. Their main defect was the exclusion of girls and Harijan pupils. Another was the lack of training of its teachers. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the indigenous system of education was fast decaying, because of the inability of Indians to support education owing to their poor economic conditions.

Adams report indicated that Indian national system of education could be built upon the foundations of indigenous schools. He had maintained that to whatever extent such institutions may exist, and in whatever condition they may be found, they present the only true and sure foundations upon which any scheme of general or national education ought to be established.

The East India Company accepted the responsibility for the education of Indians only in 1813 when the Charter Act stipulated that

rupees one lakh should be set aside for education.

After 1765 when the Company became a political power in India, the educational policy underwent a change. The Company felt that it must do something for the education of the Indian people instead of directing its attention exclusively to European and Anglo-Indian children. Politically too, it was a successor to Hindu and Muslim rulers after the Battle of Plassey. Initially it sought to establish Madrassas and Pathsalas by giving pecuniary grants to learned Pandits and Maulavis and by endowing institutions of higher religious studies. The Company wanted to educate sons of influential Indians for higher posts to make them eligible in the government and thereby win the confidence of the upper classes and consolidate its rule in India. The Company in its desire to establish higher centres of learning for both the Hindus and the Muslims started the Calcutta Madrassah (1775) by Warren Hastings and the Benaras Sanskrit College (1791), by Jonathan Duncan, the Resident.

Side by side with the Company's efforts to educate natives, a number of missionaries organised other educational activities. As pioneers of private enterprise in education the contribution of the missionaries is significant. For the North East India the Danish missionaries were of no significance as their work was confined to Madras. The work of the Serampore missionaries in Bengal both at Serampore and Chinsura were done under the protection of the Dutch settlements. Dr. Carey, a representative of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1793 worked among the Bengalis in Malda and Calcutta. In 1799, two other missionaries—Ward and Marshman arrived in Calcutta, with the original objective to join Carey in his work in North Bengal, but the East India Company did not permit them to do so, hence they settled down in Serampore. All these three came to be known as the Serampore Trio.

The Serampore Trio did not come to any serious conflict with the Company's officials. There was a slow growth of missionary enterprise prior to 1813, when the Company became the official political power in India, it became conscious of the political importance of maintaining strict religions neutrality and this realization made it abandon all their earlier efforts to "teach Christianity".[3] Incidents like the Sepoy Mutiny at Vellore had made the Company (by 1800), keep the missionaries out of its territories. In the same way, the adoption of the Orientalist policy in education, between 1781 and 1791, deprived the mission schools of sympathy and support of the Company which they had enjoyed thus far. Charles Grant in his "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals,

and the means of improving it", pointed out that Hindus were generally concerned with themselves and were apathetic towards others. He suggested that English language should be adopted as a medium of instruction and that the situation in India would improve only if Indians were first educated and then converted to Christianity. They were to be taught Western knowledge and enlightenment.

In the meanwhile two things happened simultaneously. While the missionaries agitated in England for a change in the Company's educational policy, the officials of the Company in India wanted to spread Oriental education beyond the Calcutta Madrassah and Benaras Sanskrit College. The Orientalists wanted larger funds to revive and improve classical learning. Lord Minto, Governor-General of India, from 1806 to 1813, personally an admirer of Oriental literature, felt that, that kind of study would enrich Indians. It was against this background that the Charter Act of 1813 was passed. It discussed as to whether the missionaries should be allowed to go to India and work in the territory of the Company for the spread of education and for teaching of Christianity, and whether the Company should accept the responsibility for education of the Indian people. The Act clearly stated that although the missionaries were free to preach within the Company's territory, the Company was ultimately responsible for educating Indians. Henceforth, missionaries arrived in large numbers in India and a comparatively large amount of money was secured by the Company for educational activities among the Indians.

The period between 1813 and 1854, the year of Wood's Despatch, was one of consolidation of British power in India; hence education was not a major concern. It was also a period in which Indians were eager to imbibe western liberal scientific education. The importance of English language was also growing at that time. On February 2, 1835, Lord Macaulay came out with his Minutes advocating Western learning and English language. He felt that it was England's duty to teach Indians Western knowledge through English. Macaulay won the support of Lord Bentinck and Lord Auckland. In 1844, the Government announced its policy of giving every encouragement to educated westernised Indians by employing them in Government service.

From 1833 to 1853, the Government concentrated on the spread of western knowledge, securing properly trained servants for public administration of the country. It also believed that education of the upper classes of society would contribute to the development of a governing class in India. Education would gradually filter down to the masses and, that this upper class natives would ultimately educate the

lower classes in their mother tongues. This was also a period of religious neutrality. It was a time when the relationship between the Company's officials and the missionaries was very cordial, and hence the missionaries contributed largely to the spread of western education. Three types of modern schools were developed, namely, (a) mission schools with their insistence on Bible teaching; (b) secular schools conducted by Indian social reformers which were more popular among the natives, and (c) government schools which were also secular. A large number of British non-officials, mainly businessmen, also assisted in the spread of western education. David Hare (1775-1842), a humble watchmaker and jeweller from Calcutta, started the Hindu Vidyalaya or College with the object of providing good English education to the sons of Hindu gentlemen. This became in 1854 the Presidency College. It emphasized secularism. Among the enlightened Indians of that period was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833); but neither David Hare nor Ram Mohan had any impact on the North East India which was left to missionaries as elaborated in Chapter I of the Book.

In 1854 Charles Wood, the then President of the Board of Control, in his Education Despatch suggested new schemes. The first step was to create Departments of Public Instruction in each of the five provinces, namely Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the North-Western Province and Punjab. They were placed under Director of Public Instruction assisted by an adequate number of Inspecting Officers. The Despatch also dealt with university education, but for school education the network of graded schools was an important issue. Below the University and affiliated colleges came the high schools where instruction was either given in English or in a modern Indian language. At the very bottom stood the indigenous primary schools. The Despatch thus rejected the "Downward Filtration Theory" and recommended that modern Indian languages were to be the medium of instruction at the secondary schools. The inclusion of indigenous schools was of importance as the Despatch thought of a national system of education. A grant-in-aid system was also recommended for the Provincial Government which was to be framed according to their own needs.[4]

The Despatch did commend the work of missionary schools which were to be given government grant-in-aid. Teachers training became important and the necessity of providing suitable school books in Indian languages was realized.

The need to establish schools of industry along with vocational colleges was an attempt to link education with employment.

The general feature of the Victorian era (1854-1902) was one of tranquility. In general the Indians were also somewhat sympathetic towards the British rule, though by 1902 national sentiments and movements once again challenged the British dominance. With the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, with leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, criticism about the un-British character of the Indian administration began to surface. What was important for India as well as for the North East was that the centre of education had shifted from London to Calcutta. It was also a period of financial stringency with the result that education could not avail of liberal grants. However, private Indian enterprise in this field grew and special taxes were collected for education. Primary schools of the modern type also grew in numbers. In the North East, education of the tribes also grew.

As far as primary education is concerned the Despatch of 1859 recommended that the Department of Education should rely mainly on government schools for the spread of mass education. It was argued that elementary education should spread as widely as possible through schools directly controlled by the government. Ultimately each province was allowed to develop along its own lines. In Bengal, the system of primary education had been built entirely upon the indigenous school system. The Despatch of 1859 also suggested that local taxes should be imposed to meet the cost of mass education. Accordingly local taxes were imposed in all provinces to meet local expenditure including education. In rural areas, the land revenue provided the basic expenses. The local taxes in rural areas took the form of a cess on land revenue, except for Bengal where the existence of Lord Cornwallis' Permanent Settlement provided a different model. In the urban areas, the tax on houses was imposed and collected through municipalities. Although a local cess on land revenue was introduced in Assam in 1879, no cess on land revenue was imposed in Bengal even up to 1882. The Despatch of 1859 gave importance to the training of teachers for primary education. In Bengal, large government grants and adoption of the agency of indigenous schools helped the province to achieve considerable expansion of elementary schools.

The Indian Education Commission of 1882 referred to the spread of elementary education. As far as policy was concerned it stated that:

(i) Primary education be regarded as the instruction of the masses through vernacular in such subjects as will fit them for their position in life and not be necessarily regarded as leading up to the university.

(ii) Selection of persons to fill the lowest offices under government would give preference to candidates who can read and write.

(iii) The State should devote itself to the spread of elementary education.

(iv) Primary education be extended in backward districts, especially to those areas which were inhabited by the "aboriginal races"(tribes) by extending grants-in-aid to those who were willing to maintain them.

Primary education became the responsibility of the districts and municipal boards.

Further, that indigenous schools deserved encouragement and incorporation in the official system. Instruction in primary schools should be adapted to the environment and should be simplified and practical subjects such as Indian methods of arithmetic and accounts should be introduced. Managers should be free to choose the textbooks and utmost flexibility given to reading hours of the day and seasons of the year. Instruction should be made through the mother tongue. The Commission also recommended that a specific fund be created for primary education. The accounts of primary education fund in municipal areas should be separated from those of rural areas. Local funds had to be utilized mainly for primary education.

Lord Ripon accepted the recommendations of the Commission and hence the concept of local self-government was adopted. It does not mean that there was a devolution of authority in administration and decentralization of financial resources but a recognition that popular education was the means by which alone progressive communities could cope with the increasing problem of government. Primary education was declared to be an obligatory duty of local bodies.

The main achievements of the period 1854 to 1902 were the construction of school buildings; improvement of teacher training and qualification of teachers; admission of girls and pupils of low-castes; use of printed books, adoption of new methods of teaching and improvement of the curriculum to include kindergarten, drawing, object lessons, geography, history, singing, recreation, hygiene, agricultural, science, second language, physical exercises and manual work.

The period after the Victorian era (1902-21) was characterized by certain features, namely, involvement of larger finances; more active role of the State in education; vigorous attempts at qualitative improvement in all types of educational institutions; unprecedented expansion in almost all branches of education as well as the growth of militant nationalism. As far as finances were concerned the stable relationship between the central and provincial governments contributed to the growth of education. Central funds flowed in abundance due to

the increase in world trade and commerce to which India was also a partner. The earliest of these grants was sanctioned by Lord Curzon. Between 1902 and 1918-19 the grants amounted to Rs.500 lakhs as non-recurring and Rs.300 lakhs as recurring. Larger finances were also available for education due to the improved condition of provincial governments. The local boards and municipalities also prospered during this period adding to their ability to assist in financing education. The other sources of increased finance were available under heads like endowments, donations, subscriptions, etc. Thus the total expenditure on education from both private and public sources which was only Rs. 401 lakhs in 1901-02 became Rs.1,837 lakhs in 1921-22.

Prior to Lord Curzon, the State only limited itself to providing grant-in-aid to private institutions. But now it was held that the State had a duty to maintain a few institutions of every type as models. A more vigilant policy of inspection and supervision of private schools was now adopted. Factors both in England and India were responsible for the State's commitment to education. In England the Balfour Act of 1902 was enacted to control private enterprise in elementary education and also improve its quality. In India too, the rise of native intelligentsia and political consciousness demanded greater responsibility of the State to improve the quality of Indian education. The fact that Western education was held largely responsible for the growth of nationalism led the British government to exercise greater control over private schools. The control of the State over private schools came to be resented by the nationalists. In 1921, under the system of dyarchy introduced by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the control of the Education Departments in the provinces was transferred to the Indian ministers.

As far as qualitative improvement was concerned, Lord Curzon, instead of accepting the principle of compulsory education at the elementary level wanted quality improvement. However, there was unprécedented expansion of elementary education between 1901-02 and 1921-22. In 1901-02 there were 97,854 primary schools and by 1921-22 that grew to 1,55,017. The number of primary school students also expanded from 32,04,336 in 1901-02 to 61,09,752 in 1921-22. This expansion was largely due to the social and political awakening among the Indians. Whereas quality improvement was due to official enterprise, quantitative expansion was due to Indian initiative. Lord Curzon introduced the kindergarten methods and object methods in primary schools.

In order to make primary education compulsory G.K. Gokhale, a nationalist leader, introduced a Bill in the Imperial Legislative Assembly,

quoting the Compulsory Education Acts of England, 1870 and 1876 and the Irish Education Act of 1892. But the Bill was rejected by the government on the ground that financial constraint and administrative difficulties would not allow its implementation. Gokhale's work was taken up at the provincial level by Shri Vithalbai J. Patel in Bombay, and was extended to the Bombay Municipality between 1905 and 1922 where emphasis was given to the training of teachers and this was accepted as the State's responsibility. Thus, 38 per cent of the primary school teachers in Bombay were trained by 1922. The salary of a primary school teacher also grew from Rs. 8 to Rs. 33 per month. The primary school curriculum underwent a change to include subjects like School Gardening and Nature Study. Some improvement was also done to school buildings and equipment.

The most significant feature of this period was the growth of the idea of a "national education". So far, western education and teaching of English had been emphasized in primary schools, now the demand was for Indian management, introduction of a spirit of sacrifice on the part of the founders and teachers of institutions, provision of Indian religious education, lower fees and emphasis on classical and modern Indian languages. The demand was for "Swadeshi" education. It was felt that inculcation of love and reverence to the motherland should be an integral part of education. Mahatma Gandhi's Wardha Scheme of Basic Education became popular as it taught craft as central to the process of learning. The craft taught in basic schools was based upon local needs and hence Gandhiji attempted to link education with the world of work, making it more vocational and related to the agricultural activities of the country. Primary education, according to Gandhi also had to be financially self-sufficient by the sale of crafts taught in schools.

Under 'Dyarchy' (1921-37) there was a rapid development of mass education. Compulsory Education Acts were passed in Punjab, United Provinces, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1919; Bombay, Central Provinces and Madras in 1920, Assam in 1926 and in rural Bengal in 1930, but it had no impact in Mizoram and Nagaland. The provincial governments transferred power to local bodies and local self-government institutions had to provide for primary education in their areas. The local authorities were free to enforce primary education at their own wishes, but an educational cess was imposed in order to meet the expenses of primary education. However, the government assisted the local authorities with finances. The age of compulsory education varied from province to province between 6 and 10, 7 to 11, and 6 to 11 years of age. The Acts made provision to penalise the parents who did not send their children

to school. During this period the Muslims made attempts to spread education, untouchability was condemned, and hence a greater number of lower castes participated in primary education.

Provincial autonomy came into existence in 1937. Primary education was made compulsory and in Bombay it was extended to several municipal areas and in all the villages with a population of 1,000 or more. Opening of schools in school-less villages, sanctioning of additional grants to local bodies, opening of additional girls' schools, and sanctioning of additional posts for teachers in existing schools were the main features of the education scene between 1937-47. Gandhiji's Basic education was accepted throughout the country and tried out. North-East India, however, remained unaffected by this, especially the tribal states of Nagaland and Mizoram. As far as deployment of primary teachers were concerned there was to be one teacher for every 30 pupils in pre-basic school and for every 25 pupils in junior basic schools. The minimum qualification for a teacher was to be the High School Certificate followed by a training of two years.

After Independence the First (1951-55) and the Third (1961-65) Five Year Plans laid emphasis on the expansion of primary education, but compulsory education was only made a fundamental right for the child in 2001. The salary of a primary school teacher rose from Rs. 380 a year in 1946-47 to Rs. 800 a year in 1960-61. More teacher training institutes were established.

The period between 1947 and 1961 was characterized by the partnership between the Central Government and the States in sharing the responsibility to educate. The local bodies continued to play an important role in primary education. Overall the two major concerns of elementary education were quantitative expansion of education activities and quality improvement in terms of teachers' qualification, syllabus, teaching methods and textbooks.[5] Basic education was adopted as the national pattern of education. Enrolment of school children was also a major concern in this period and between 1946-47 and 1965-66 there was 250 per cent increase in enrolment of children in the primary stage and 378 per cent in the middle schools. As far as teachers' qualifications were concerned, matriculation was a must for the primary stage and graduation for the middle stage. Thus, by 1960-61 there was 36.3 per cent increase in the number of matriculate teachers. The percentage of trained teachers also increased. The salaries of primary and middle school teachers increased to Rs.873 and Rs.1,585. Schemes like the midday meals were introduced in schools.

Prior to the attainment of the status of UTs and Statehood, hill areas such as the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills (now Meghalaya), Lushai (now Mizoram) and Mikir Hills comprising of 13,12,939 (1961 census) population were a part of Assam. Primary education grew and by 1960-61 there were 15,979 institutions with 10,46,530 scholars.[6] Basic education also grew in Assam for which teachers were sent to Delhi, Jamia Millia, Wardha and Sevagram for training. For the hill areas comprising of Scheduled Tribes, the Sixth Schedule was introduced giving the Districts Councils autonomy in planning and management of primary education. Special grants were given for the construction of school buildings, hostels, teachers' quarters and scholarships to the tribal groups by the Central Government and 97 per cent of the ST population benefited from these.

After Independence, the Constitution of India in its Article 45 (Part IV) under the Directive Principles of State Policy made provision for 'Free and Compulsory Education for Children'. It said that 'The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.' This emphasis on compulsory and free education was largely responsible for quantitative expansion of educational facilities between 1950 and 1980. Further, under Articles 15 and 17 under Fundamental Rights: Prohibition of Discrimination on Grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or Place of Birth, protection of the educational interests of the weaker sections of the Indian community, socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and Scheduled Castes and Schedules Tribes was given special importance.

Education was to be secular, but by Article 30 (1) all minorities, whether based on religion or language had the right to establish and administer educational institutions according to their choice. Hence throughout the North-East three types of primary and upper primary schools grew namely, government, aided and private schools. In the Concurrent List Entry No. 25, education was made the joint responsibility of the State and Central Government and hence numerous centrally sponsored schemes were provided to the states for quality improvement of primary schools such as the Operation Black Board, Mid-day meals scheme, Non-formal Education, Hindi teacher for the middle school for non-Hindi speaking areas.

In the First Five Year Plan (1951-56), emphasis was given to the Gandhian model of Basic Education which incorporated a rural based

craft into the curriculum of elementary education. However, the Kothari Commission better known as the Indian Education Commission 1964-66, introduced 'Work Experience' to mean something wider than rural craft from the middle school onwards. It also stressed on the three-language formula which entailed the mother tongue or regional language, English as a link language and Hindi, or an Indian classical language or European language in schools. The students of primary schools had to be taught either in the mother tongue or regional language and in two languages at the upper primary stage such as the mother tongue and the official or semi-official language. It is due to this language policy that English became important in the North Eastern States. The Commission by laying emphasis on health education also helped the Central Government to introduce measures like free medical check-ups for students and free vaccination.

In order to uplift the weaker sections of society the Central Government started supplying the states with free textbooks and stipends which some of the North Eastern Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children benefited from. Residential tribal schools and staff quarters were sponsored for remote areas, which taken together enhanced the expansion of educational facilities in elementary schools. In 1986, the Central Government had come up with yet another package to boost the elementary sector of education for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in its Programme of Action, in stating that not only all these category of students need to be enrolled and retained up to Class VIII, but they have to perform satisfactorily. Several other incentive schemes were also introduced such as pre-metric scholarship in addition to uniforms, books, and stationery. Moreover, constant micro-planning, which is, planning at the grass-root level, was also emphasized for ensuring enrolment, retention and successful completion of courses. The document stressed on the need to employ teachers from Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes. The preparation of primers for Classes I-II in tribal languages was considered a necessity. Infrastructural facilities in educational institutions were one of its concerns.[7]

In 1992, the Government of India came up with some other policy initiatives. The drop out rates for the years 1987-88 for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India being high for Class I-VIII (68.81 for SC and 80.01 for ST), in addition to the post-metric scholarship, grant-in-aid to voluntary organizations was given in order to encourage them to open schools in remote areas. Further, book banks, coaching and allied schemes were encouraged. Educational complexes were set up for low literacy areas. For the tribal areas it was suggested that

educational plan be implemented in an integrated manner – pre-school education (through Balwadis), non-formal education, elementary education and adult education. Decentralization and giving responsibility to local bodies to look after primary education was considered very important.[8]

The North-East Region

Historically speaking the North-East region comprising of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland and Tripura remained in relative isolation from changes in the colonial policy on elementary education. Even, when the British arrived in Assam, in the nineteenth century, most of Assam's population could hardly read or write. The Ahoms had kept education confined to the priestly class and the aristocracy learnt Sanskrit literature in 'Tols' taught by Brahmins.[9] Western impact in the hill areas of Assam, such as in present day Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland and in the hill areas of Manipur, was felt because of the presence of Christian missionaries. The large number of converts in these regions took to learning the Bible in a few tribal languages and hence literacy and learning of the three 'R's took place resulting in what many social scientists feel was "detribalization". Though allowing the indigenous system of education to prevail, the British started educating Assamese youth with the hope that they would be able to occupy junior administrative posts, although Bengalis were retained in higher government positions. In 1835 the first English school was set up at Gauhati followed by the one in Sibsagar in 1840.[10]

In fact there was no noticeable progress of education in the region by the colonial rulers before the Charter Act of 1833, as David Scott, the agent to the Governor-General for the whole eastern frontier, favoured oriental learning rather than western education. He feared that undue attention to western learning would hurt local sentiments.[11] Hence indigenous schools were given grants and their pass-outs were even absorbed in government jobs.

The prejudice against female education in Assam, hindered the growth of separate schools for girls.[12] It was because of this dismal condition of girls, that, in 1917, the Calcutta University Commission recommended "Purdah" schools. Grants began to flow for girls' education and a number of scholarships were introduced for enhancing the qualification of women teachers. Provisions were also made for training of junior and senior vernacular teachers in Silchar and Nowgong. As a result of these government efforts and the growth of the idea that

female education would contribute towards getting a good bridegroom, female literacy grew from 0.59 per cent in 1861 to 19.63 per cent in 1961 for the entire state of Assam. However, in 1904-05 the percentage of girls attending school in Lushai Hills (70) and Naga Hills (1.41) was better. The matriarchical and matrilineal character of the Khasi and Jaintia hills, where girls participation in socio-economic affairs prevailed, the demand for girls' education was more and in the same year, that is, 15.28 per cent. However, this demand for female education in that area, now Meghalaya state, decreased substantially as can be seen in Chapter III of this thesis.

Since by 1961 as many as 97.33 per cent of Mizos had embraced Christianity, the gap between male and female education was less in Mizo Hills. In fact this trend was seen as early as in 1939-40 where the percentage of girl students was 4.2 as against .8 in Naga hills.

In general, the British followed a policy of non-interference in tribal areas of Nagaland and Mizoram. They felt that it was not worth their while to meddle with the feuds and fights among tribal leaders but at the same time in 1851, Lord Dalhousie in his Minute of February 20th, had stated that the tribals would be encouraged to trade as long as they remained peaceful with the British.[13]

As discussed in Chapter I, a combination of missionary and Government efforts enhanced the literacy levels of the hill areas of Assam. In the Mizo hills, where most of the population was Christian, literacy percentage grew steadily came from 1931 onwards. Though Christianity first to Khasi and Jaintia Hills, in 1820 (Now Meghalaya), nevertheless, its growth became slow when compared with Mizo Hills. According to1961 data, of the rural areas of Mizo Hills there were 512 primary schools with 30,604 students, 90 junior basic schools with 9,346 students and 93 middle schools with 6,657 students.[14] These figures show that the percentage of Mizo population in primary schools was high (i.e., 5+ years of age). The average teacher-pupil ratio was also favourable 46:1. In the Mizo hills where 49.78 of its population was literate by 1961, parents wanted their children to participate in elementary education. The creation of their native language or Mizo tongue helped the different ethnic groups to unite, thereby asserting their own identity.

In 1963, the Assam government had initiated a special scheme for the educational development of Mizo Hills in which 200 additional posts of primary school teachers were sanctioned. This certainly helped the growth of elementary education in the area, as compared with the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills. In fact, the economic condition of the Khasi and Jaintia as well as that of Assam's Muslim population was so poor that

the children worked in fields and could not even help in household work. These economic conditions explain the educational backwardness of these areas when compared with Mizo Hills, where children were enrolled in schools.

Another factor behind the growth of literacy and participation of children at the elementary level is the growth of the 'Mizo' tongue or a language derived from Lushai, but used by all groups of people. Ethnic minorities living in the Mizo Hills such as Chakma Kuki, Lakher (now Mara) and Pawi (now Lai) speak the Lushai or Mizo language. Even as early as in 1961 census, out of 10,000 rural population 7,878 spoke Mizo and 8,702 urban Mizos spoke the same. Chapter I traces the historical development of elementary education in the north-eastern region from colonial times till 1947 in detail.

One of the special characteristics of this region is the rise of ethnic or separatist movements which have had an effect either positive, as in the case of Mizoram or negative as in the case of Nagaland on the development of elementary education from the 1960s to 1980s. The isolation of the region encouraged the development of incredibly complex sub-systems, and of people who were largely unaffected by the mainstream Indian culture for centuries. While retaining their traditional life style the tribes of the hill regions remained for years busy with inter-feudal warfare.[15] The region's economy varied from place to place, and although 'slash and burn' method of agriculture prevailed in backward areas, yet modern types of terrace farming, use of advanced implements in farming, were also begun. However, there were very few industries except for tea, oil and a hydro-electric projects and local handicrafts in wood, bamboo and weaving of cloth.

During the 1950's there grew a conspicuous peripheral protest and dissent mobilization against the regional and national power centres. This is evident in the movements initiated by Naga Confederation of tribes. One of its features was to combine and unite various sub-groups, distributed among the different administrative units to form one coherent unit. In the case of the territories occupied by the Naga confederation of tribes (present day Arunachal Pradesh) the cry was for a separate and distinct territorial status. There was a demand for the recognition of respective language/ dialects as medium of communication in education.[16]

The North-Eastern Frontier Tract, renamed North-Eastern Frontier Agency in 1954, came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs. In 1965 its administrative jurisdiction was transferred to Ministry

of Home Affairs and by 1972 it became a Union Territory, which in 1987 was called the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

In 1954-58 the Naga Hills and the Tuensang Frontier Districts were a part of Assam, which in 1963 was renamed as the State of Nagaland. In 1960 there was all round opposition to the language bill in the hill regions of Assam and hence the Administrative Re-organisation Commission in its report in 1971 recommended the reorgnization of states. The districts of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia were separated, and in 1972 they formed the state of Meghalaya. In the same year the Union Territories of princely states of Manipur and Tripura were also given full statehoods. The Lushai hills were renamed as Mizoram and became a Union Territory, and by 1987 it was given full statehood.

"The type of regionalism that developed in the region was a form that challenged the inevitability of integration and assimilation into the national mainstream".[17] The hill areas were kept away from development and maintained their traditional systems of economy with minimum communication facilities. These ethnic groups were confined to their respective territorial limits. The majority Mizo group of tribes also began to express their demands for autonomy and separation from Assam state in the 1950s and 1960s. Details of whose development, along with the Naga separatist movement will be dealt with later.

Several causes have been attributed to the rise of insurgency movements in the north-east. According to Dr. B. Dutta Roy 'the insurgency in the north-east India is the result of the total lack of agriculture, industrial and other developmental works. There is a perception gap between the government and the people of the region. . . .' The region is also to him, and other scholars, a victim of easy money poured by the centre which 'has affected the ethics and social structure of the people instead of sustained development.[18] Today insurgency is often seen as an 'armed rebellion by a section of people against a legally constituted government which also demands political, economic and social change led by a disciplined and highly motivated cadre of leaders who on the one hand strives to mobilize and motivate the masses and on the other tries to erode the authority of the government'[19], however, its roots were far deeper embedded in the body politics of Assam government, before 1950.

While citing the economic underdevelopment of the region, Sukhendu Mazumdar also attributes the causes of insurgency to population growth, unemployed youth and influx of Bangladeshis and other population from Indian states. In fact, he along with many other scholars has referred to the involvement of Pakistan, Myanmar, China and Bangladesh where insurgent outfits take shelter and are trained in

military and guerilla warfare.[20] Influx of Bengali Hindus and Muslims, as a result of the addition of Sylhet district to Assam in 1874, had created both language and identity problem[21] which a century later, resulted in the "anti-outsiders" or and "vai" (Mizorams) movement. To the Mizo, the domination of professions such as medicine, engineering, law and higher government jobs by the "vais" led to an anti-Bengali or rather anti-Sylheti feelings from the 1970s. As a result of this the demand for education became stronger - so that Mizos could throw out these outsiders and manage their own affairs by employing only Mizos. Thus, the tribal identity became a major factor behind the insurgent or ethnic movements in this region. This was also due to the fact that after obtaining statehood, there were many more government jobs available for the native Mizos. Deori Omen points out that since independence development of other regions had kept the North-East totally out of the picture. However, in 1972, the creation of separate states and UTs, gave these north-eastern tribal states a sense of their own identity. Thus, progress in education, health services, supply of essential commodities began to flow.[22] Prof. Roy Burman holds that the lack of productive investment coupled with the 'geopolitical consideration of foreign powers due to its strategic location' that had led to the failure of the Indian government's policy to 'link up resource mobilization and developmental investments, like horticulture, were the facts that led to the frustration of educated local youths who joined separatist movements. In particular, in Nagaland the problem of manpower planning and reconciliating the career-interests of the local youth is responsible.[23]

L.S. Gassah feels that many of the political parties of the North-East arose as pressure groups with the aim to achieve social and economic goals and welfare of the people. Though traditionally the tribals needed to preserve their customs, traditions, the customary laws, language and religion as distinct identities, yet at a later stage, which was the beginning of the twentieth century, they acted as pressure groups to voice the exploitation of their tribal or colonial masters.[24] In the case of Mizoram, the feeling against the exploitation by the "Lals" or tribal chieftains was certainly one of the major features of the rise of Mizo regionalism.

In fact, Gassah, while tracing the development of the political parties in the North-East, says that while some of the parties managed to survive, others went underground or even disappeared. Those who formed their regional base, like the Mizo National Front, Assam Gana Parishad and Naga National Council, remained distinct, not joining with

Indian national parties like the Congress. Autonomy was always demanded by them as a right to exercise their freedom in choosing their own parties and programmes.

In fact that ethnicity, culture and politics are closely related comes out quite clearly in M.M. Agarwal's book which refers to the movements of Phizo in Nagaland, Laldenga in Mizoram and to the students' movements in Meghalaya.[25] Nationalism among the tribals and Assamese, as has been pointed out, could also be due to the lack of science education and the natural fear that the area would be dominated by better-educated central bureaucrats and the Marwari and Punjabi traders.[26] Hoksie Sema, one of the more prominent Naga leaders, and Chief Minister after Nagaland attained statehood, said that in Nagaland "it was a struggle between cessionists views on the one hand and national integration on the other.[27] He further said, 'politics that widens the mental horizon and ensures peace and progress and promotes the welfare of the people must be preferred over politics of hatred and bloodshed'. To him the modern Naga 'is slowly becoming alienated. He has no roots either in his home, his village, or his society. His education is not even remotely related to his culture, environment and the traditional value system . . . which is reflected in the frustration of the youth.' To him education of the state had to be made employment oriented with more emphasis on technical and vocational institutions, to inculcate pride in the ethics of work leading to self-confidence and self-reliance engaged in productive activities.[28] This then being one of the major causes for the Naga youth joining different insurgent groups; the case of Mizoram however is somewhat different.

In the 1980's inspired by Phizo and the Naga separatist movement, the Mizo leader Laldenga declared that 'Historians claim that we, the Mizo people are Mongoloids originating from time immemorial, from the southern part of China and migrating towards the present habitat between India and Burma through the Shan State of Burma in the 15th century' – Nehru had said that 'the tribal areas are defined as being those along the frontiers of India, which were neither of India, nor of Burma, or of an Indian state, nor of any foreign power'.[29] When in the 1960s, the Indian Government undertook the 'Regrouping of movement of the Mizo National Front as well as accelerated economic development in the district,'[30] it helped the developmental projects. From interiors the villages were shifted to the main roads and were named as PPVs or "Protected and Progressive Villages" mainly on the Silchar-Aizawl highway. Hence the district administration could do a lot for the

development of these villages together with the educational efforts of voluntary organizations such as the Young Mizo Association, which ran its offices in the new villages as well as the Mahila Samity and Women's Welfare Organization.

The district authorities provided rice, wheat, salt, kerosene and other essential commodities from Assam. They assisted the people shift from 'Jhumming' to terrace cultivation, develop piggery, poultry and cottage industries as subsidiary occupations. Almost sixty-five per cent of the Mizo people benefited from this; as a consequence, there was a great scope of educated youth to get employed.[31] From a self-sufficient economy in which the Mizo built their own houses, procured rice and vegetables from their own 'jhum' and hunted for meat, there grew an economic change in the programme called "Grow More Food" (1957-58). Irrigation projects were started and some conservation measures were initiated. During 1970s when Mizoram was declared as a Union Territory agriculture was given the topmost priority. Under the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) Mizoram's outlay was 1,567 for agriculture, 390 for irrigation and power, 312 for industry and mining 1,163 for transport and communication, 1,043 for social services including education and 84 for miscellaneous, in lakhs of rupees.[32]

This regrouping of the villages, by shifting their location from hill tops to roadsides enhanced the growth rate on enrollment and participation of primary school children in 1952-53 by 20.3 per cent, with not much difference between boys and girls (19.4 boys and 21.6 girls). Further, from 1968 to 1971, there was an annual percentage growth rate of 10.8.[33]

The demand for education and its link with employment was revealed in Mizoram as early as in the 1970s, quite contrary to the case of Nagaland. The total number of posts in the agricultural programme grew from 4 in 1972 to 17 in 1973 for Class I Officers; 31 to 36 for Class II Officers; 347 to 660 for Class III officers and from 217 to 351 for Class IV officers. This was despite the existence of numerous political parties in the state, none of whom interfered with the development of education and government sector in employment during the time when the state was made Union Territory.

After 1971, the Budget estimates for industries increased from 767 to 4,554 thousands rupees in 1974-75 with Class I and II created for the industrial sector. Although, unlike increased agricultural production between 1960-61 and 1972-73, growth in the industrial sectors was extremely slow in the seventies. Roads developed and with it the number of vehicles increased from 14 in 1951 to 1,824 in 1974. By 1966, a small

airstrip was also constructed, not too far from Aizawal town. Each village had its own pharmacy and often primary schools were upgraded to middle schools. In the Directorate of Education in 1975 there were 23 Class I posts; 51 Class II; 2,215 Class III and 240 Class IV. By 1974 voluntary agencies like the Mahila Samity and Women's Welfare Agency had stated 60 village libraries, though mostly in Aizawl district (57). Thus, by 1980 the number of government Employees grew to 18,058, that is, 265 for Group 'A'; 692 for Group 'B'; 10,131, for Group 'C' and 6,970 for Goup'D'. Due to this increase in the availability of jobs on the service sector the female participation as 'main workers' basically involved in agriculture had also reduced.

Whereas in 1971, there were as much as 45.61 per cent main female workers, it had reduced to 41.21 in 1981.[34] According to 1981 census series 31, in Mizoram only 72.11 per cent of the states' main workers were engaged in agriculture. Agricultural labour was only 2.56 per cent. In 1980, the marginal workers in the urban areas was as high as 60 per cent indicating the growing urbanization in the state. Main workers engaged in household industry was merely 1.28 per cent and other workers were 24.05 per cent.

As pointed by researchers on Mizoram, that because of the UT status and the obtaining of statehood, urbanization took place in a rapid way. The state allocated liberal resources due to which there was an expansion of basic facilities such as roadways, electric power, water supply, educational institutions, hospitals and dispensaries all of which helped the state to be linked with other parts of the country.[35] This encouraged mobility of the local people and expanded the demand for education, as Mizos needed to communicate with the outside world.[36] Commercialization of the Mizo economy and the growth of industry and trade made the different political parties unite together in their sole demand for educational development, regardless of their changing political stands. A feature which Nagaland never had since the 1960s. In fact, by the 1980s among the tribal population in Indian Administrative and Allied Services from the North-East, the Mizos dominate in almost all fields.[37]

The growth of young age population from the 1960s had created financial and infrastructural problems of education and hence rose the need to link education to manpower needs of the economy.[38] As pointed out by Guha Roy, educational policy may discourage youth from entering the work force at an early age. This point was reflected in an interview with a Naga marine engineer at Kohima in 1990 by the investigator in which the former voiced his frustration at not obtaining a job in

Nagaland, after pursuing his higher studies in South India. The fact, that in Mizoram there is employment for most educated youths and not in Nagaland had become very obvious in interviews that were carried out with the employed or unemployed youths of both these states.[39] That the Naga service sector had not grown as fast as that of Mizoram so as to absorb the Naga educated youth, is spelled out clearly in later Chapters of the book where case studies are dealt with.

The roots of insurgency or a separatist movement among the tribals could be traced back to the British days when they were kept out of touch with the main currents of political development in the rest of India, the introduction of western values and a feeling of alienation spread by Christian missionaries. The money economy introduced and imposed on the tribal society upset the traditional agrarian practices. And since no economic inputs were undertaken in order to re-adjust these tribals into a new economic order, frustration grew. They were, therefore, 'restless people, uprooted from their traditional moorings and striving for social, economic and political equilibrium'.[40] In fact, the Indian Constitution by reorganizing the tribal states made the Lushai Hills, Naga Hills and North Cachar Hills 'Excluded Areas' without any representation in the Provincial Legislature of Assam but administered by the Deputy Commissioner of Assam. The Constituent Assembly set up under the Chairmanship of Gopinath Bordoloi, the premier of Assam, recommended the establishment of administration in hill areas based on the concept of regional autonomy in all matters affecting their customs, laws of inheritance, administration of justice, land, forests, etc. which ultimately took the form of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Sixth Schedule aimed at providing the tribals with a simple and inexpensive administration of their own, though they were to function as a part of Assam without threatening the unity and integrity of the state. Thus, six autonomous districts were created in Assam. These were: United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Lushai Hills, Naga Hills, North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills with a District Council in each of them with 24 members, three-fourths of whom to be elected on adult franchise. There was only one autonomous region: the Pawi-lakher Region which after Mizoram attained statehood has been split up into the Chakma, Mara and Lai Autonomous District Councils in the Chhimtuipui administrative district of Mizoram. Manipur and Tripura, being Princely States, remained Part 'C' states and NEFA retained as a Frontier Agency later known as the UT and the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The Part 'C' states under the direct administration of the Chief Commissioner, and under the Government of India had little in common

with the District Council which was accountable to the State/Provincial Legislature.

Following the feeling of misgivings and distrust for the Assam government by people in the hill areas, the Government of India set up the States Reorganization Commission in 1955. This Commission did not advocate any change in the status quo, despite the economic neglect of the hill areas by the Assam Government. Despite several Commissions, the resentment of the hill people grew leading to the creation of Nagaland in December1963, and Mizo District in 1954, and State in 1987 when the Mizo consciousness of statehood grew. As Horam points out, in the early 50s and 60s it was believed that there was nothing wrong with this region and that people with 'Swollen egos' demanded special attention. Further that the area had no special needs and hence their difficulties were nothing special than to of other parts of India. The people nursed imaginary grudges.[41]

The fact that even after 1950 the Central funds never reached the target groups is reflected in insufficient roadways, drinking water, erratic power supply, lack of irrigation and other indicators of underdevelopment in the hill states of the Northeast. There was a sense of insecurity among the people who felt that they will remain 'aliens' in their own country and despite the rise of insurgency movements the 'common man' was often sandwiched between government forces and insurgents resulting in the violation of human rights by the killings of innocent people.

In the 1950s there grew a demand for a separate hill state comprising of Manipur, Tripura, Cachar and Lushai Hills. In 1954, the States Reorganization Commission which visited Assam was boycotted by the Nagas and the demand for independence grew. However, the Hill State idea continued and acquired a concrete shape when Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills, the Mikir Hills and the Mizo Hills held a conference in Aizawl (the Aijal) and demanded a separate state in the hill districts of Assam. A new political party named Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) was thus born in 1955, with the charge that Assam Government had shown apathy towards the hill people. Thus, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Shillong in 1957 to restore the confidence of these people after which three prominent members of EITU, Capt. Williamson Sangma (Garo Hills) Larsing Khyriem (Khasi and Jaintia Hills), and Lalmawia (Mizo Hills) were appointed as Minister, Deputy Minister and Parliamentary Secretary in the Assam Government. Nagas however demanded a separate statehood. The Assam Official Language Bill in 1961 made Assamese the official language of the state and led to protests

among hill leaders, leading to the resignation of the Assam government. All the political parties existing in the hill districts in 1960, got together and formed the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) demanding that all hill districts should be separate from Assam. However, the Assam Government did not pay any attention to these demands.

While in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur the ethnic discontent was openly secessionist, in other places it was different. As for example, in the Northeast there were three distinct regions: Assam valley, Purbanchal and Meghalaya – Mikir region. The Purbanchal covering an area of 94,800 km., consisted of Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizo Hills, Cachar district and a fifth of Haflong Tesit of Assam state and a part of Arunachal Pradesh. Attempts of tribals like Nagas, Mizos, Tripuris and others to seek independence through foreign aid were attributed to the racial factor.[42] Geo-political forces have been responsible for splitting the tribals and non-tribals psychologically as well. While the Pakistani and Chinese involvement in insurgency movements are public knowledge, the testimony of an erstwhile secret agent, John Smith, reveals that the CIA had extended help to the underground Naga movement in the 50s, along with the KGB. The issue of foreign involvement gets further complicated in 1965 when the Pakistanis attempted to open a second front by offering help (through East Pakistan) to Mizo National Front.[43]

Saroj Chakraborty, while advocating against the secessionists movements, feels that they 'would undermine the democratic right of India, secede border regions themselves which would eventually fall into bondage to international imperialism, maintained that 'ethnic integration and democratic alliance between our nationalities' would be required to put an 'end to the estrangement and isolations of the border regions.[44] He wrote, the 'Central Government must become no less near and dear to the masses of the border regions' and suggested several measures through which the Central Government can bridge the gap between mainstream Indian life and that of border areas.

The Mizo and Naga Movements

The Mizo and the Naga separatist movements started with many common traits but took different turns due to the historical development of their societies. As pointed out by researchers both were anti-Assamese movements and the assertion of their tribal identities, their Christian religion with 'God' as their saviours. The church or religion being a part and parcel of their societies, allowed for a close nexus between the aspirations of the political parties and that of the local churches. For

both, the Hindu character of India after 1947 left the tribals bereft of any socio-economic development. In fact, they longed for an extension of British rule and their existence as separate states within the British Commonwealth, rather than become a part of Assam till 1960s. However, in Mizoram, Mizo regionalism or ethnic identity is different from that of the Nagas. As stated earlier, the different tribes living in the geographical unit of Mizo Hills were first of all "Mizos" and "Christians" and then a part of the numerous political parties that existed in their territory. To them there was one aim which was becoming a separate state having its own language, legislature and the practice of customary laws. The slow absorption of ethnic minorities such as the Brus,Riang,Chakmas, Maras and Lais as a part of the 'Mizo consciousness due to the spread of Christianity had helped to unite them together in attaining statehood in 1987.

As far as Nagaland was concerned, the personality cult of their leaders mattered more than that of a Naga identity. With the existence of almost 16 tribes, including subtribes, there was no language in common and the Naga political leadership remained confined to their tribal identities such as Sema, Ao, Angami, Thangkhul etc. Moreover, territorially, their leaders wanted a greater Nagaland comprising all Nagas, inhabiting areas beyond present day Nagaland, such as parts of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. More than their Mizo counterparts, who also have a sizeable Mizo population living in Manipur and across the border to Myanmar, the Naga leaders wanted an 'autonomous' status away from the Indian Union. In education, the fragmented leadership of the Naga separatist movement hindered their progress and this is true even today when the state, busy with infighting among different political factions, has failed to avail of many educational benefits from the Central Government's pool for development funds; especially from bodies like the North-Eastern Council. Because of the very fact that even after a decade of attaining statehood, the Nagas are suspicious of the Centre, they abstain from taking a share of the North Eastern Council's fund flow to the different states. The Council which was formed by the Planning Commission in 1971 as an Advisory body for all the seven states had as much as Rs.33 lakhs for the Fourth Plan period 1969-74. This grew to 575 crores in the Seventh Plan period in the 1980s.[45]

There is a paucity of literature on the origin of the Mizo and the clan-distinction is more or less absent in them, in contrast to the Nagas, except for the Lai, Chakma, Brus Riangs and Maras. In fact the process

of socialization and modernization have almost wiped out these distinctions, although these groups are less and varied in literacy as compared to the "Lushai", the prominent Mizo group. Though the clan dialects have much in common, yet these are not always totally "assimilated" with the "Mizo tongue" or Mizo Language.[46] (Mizo tongue is often referred to as the Lushai or Duhlian language.) These tribes were ruled by their 'Lals' or Chieftains who were bound by customary laws, which meant that it was their duty to protect the life and property of the villagers, to frame the general policy of making allotment of lands for cultivation, and to administer justice according to customary laws. Besides being a general supervisor of the village, the 'Lals' had to pay special attention to the maintenance of the village paths and water resources. The normal form of penalty he could inflict upon an offender was a fine, paid in cash or kind, ranging from rupees 5 to rupees 40 or its equivalent, in the form of pig or *Mithun*. Initially the British Lushai relationship was one of hostility, evident in the killings of Europeans and taking a small girl called Mary Winchester as captive. Hence more than promoting commercial interests, initially the British wanted to refrain from hostility so that the Mizos would not attack their territory. The Mizos, therefore, began to interpret this British attitude as one of love and respect for tribal traditions and values.

But in real fact the British, barring the missionaries, had no interest in the Lushai and left them where they were in 1947. There was yet another side to the Mizo movement at this stage, that being the idea of a "Crown colony of Eastern Agency" comprising of hill areas of Assam and Burma suggested by Prof. R. Copland, a constitutional expert. This idea of an independent state between Assam and Burma was also welcomed by A.R.M. Mc Donald, Superintendent of Lushai Hills during 1943-47.[47] Since this idea never took proper shape, the Mizos had to remain content with the status of "regional autonomy" under the state of Assam for some time. The colonial indirect rule in which the "Lal" or the Chief still retained his position deteriorated the relations between the Lals and the commoners. It led to social tensions among the emerging elite in the area; the Chief and the traditional elite class. The Lushai Hills as an "Excluded Area" meant that it was governed by the orders and regulations of the Governor of Assam, hence the provincial government and legislature were not responsible for its administration.[48] At the time up to the transfer of power by the British, the Lushais (Mizos), were not prepared to decide on their political future as regards joining either Burma or Pakistan. Some leaders of the Mizo Union wanted

to stay within Indian territory but at the same time maintain "regional autonomy".

The anti-chief feeling among commoners grew even prior to the formation of a political Mizo party. On April 9, 1946, the Mizo commoners formed the first political party with the bare aim to abolish chieftainship. This mass based political movement demanding 'regional autonomy' put an end to chieftainship. The fact that the Mizos wanted to remain within India is also an interesting difference compared to the Naga movement which will be explained later. But certainly the different political leaders united together against Assam government took advantage of every social service scheme which was available to them. The call among the political parties was for a united Mizo struggle comprising of all ethnic groups and for the protection of their identity.

As Lalchungnunga points out, the abolition of chieftainship is the right step in the modernization of the Lushai Hills.[49] In July 5, 1947 the United Mizo Freedom Organization was formed, with the objective of joining Burma instead of India, as they felt that they would be able to enjoy greater autonomy. But the Mizo Union submitted a "Draft Constitution of Mizoram" to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee stating the following:

(a) When India becomes independent, the present Lushai Hills District will be 'federated' with the province of Assam and be connected therewith in certain subjects which shall be decided by negotiations between the provincial legislature and the Mizo National Council;
(b) There shall be a Legislative Council of 27 members... when those areas to Cachar District and Manipur State occupied by the Mizos are incorporated into Mizoram, the number of members will be increased;
(c) No Non-Mizo will be qualified to be a candidate for election;
(d) There shall be a National Court to be called "The Mizoram High Court";
(e) Any provincial legislation may be applied to the District only with the sanction of the National Council (of Mizoram) with any modifications;
(f) All the above items shall be subject to revision after ten years.

In August 1947, at a meeting at Aizawl under the Chairmanship of Mr. L.L. Peters, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, the Lushais said that if they were to enter the Indian Union then:

(i) the existing safeguards to their customary laws and land tenure should be maintained.

(ii) That the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 and the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 should be retained until such time as the Lushais themselves through their District Council or other parallel District Authority declare that these can be abrogated;

(iii) That the Lushais will be allowed to opt out of the Indian Union when they wish to do so, subject to a minimum period of ten years.

The Bordoloi Sub-committee (1947) generally agreed to the demands made by the Mizo Union and leaders of other Mizo political parties, on matters of regional autonomy for all tribal customs etc., but nothing was known as to what the Committee felt regarding opting out of Indian Union. Thus, according to the Sixth Schedule the Mizo Hills were given District Autonomy.

After independence the Assam government continued to neglect the Mizo Hills which consequently led to an acute economic crisis. In 1959 the bamboo plants flowered all over, multiplying the rats, as a consequence there was a great famine or 'Mautam'. Upon the failure of the Assam Government to adopt insufficient relief measures, the Mizo Union MLAs, who had joined the Congress earlier, left the Congress Legislature, and came out openly for breaking with Assam. This demand of the Mizos showed in strength during the Village Councils education in 1960 in which the Mizo Union with the platform of separation from Assam was as many as 280 village councils out of 3000.[50]

This was also the beginning of Mizo National Front. At the beginning the MNF was a welfare organization calling itself the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF), which once formed in 1960 was a collection of young workers who collected donations and rendered relief to the famine distressed people. Their work in the remote villages is praiseworthy, as the District Administration was unable to reach these areas. When famine was over, the MNFF dropped the word famine and became the MNF in 1961. The role of MNF in Mizo politics is remarkable. As a political party its objective was the creation of an independent and sovereign state of Mizoram. Their voice gradually became that of the entire people of the Mizo District. Their leader Laldenga, originally a clerk in the District Council and an ex-Havildar in the Army, quickly won the confidence of most Mizos across all political parties.

In fact, delays on the part of the Assam Government to send relief measures discredited the Mizo Union, and the Mizo National Front henceforth emerged as the saviour of the Mizo people. The Mizo Union had also parted company with the Congress Party on differences over the State language issue of 1960, and over the poor efforts made in giving famine relief. It was at this point, Prof. Roy Burman points out,

that the MNF started double-talk and sought to exploit the differences between the Assam Government and the Mizo Union held District Councils.[51] However, the Mizo Union continued with their demand for a separate Hill State within India, while the MNF preached for a sovereign independent status and even sent its workers to East Pakistan for training.

During this time Nagaland was in trouble, and the then Prime Minister Nehru suggested the Scottish pattern of autonomy, protecting and preserving the identity and culture of the hill people, be implemented. After Nehru's death, Lal Bahadur Shastri appointed a Commission, which openly stated that the economic factors were the root cause of difference between the hill and the plain areas of Assam.

Though there were many common causes such as, neglect of hill areas by Assam, and Central Government, and a feeling of 'alienation' among the people, yet the Naga insurgency movement began on a different note. The Nagas, like the Mizos, had no written history in the pre-British days. However, Nagas were not unknown to the Kings of the Indo-Gangetic plain. They were often known or 'kiratas' in the Vedas and epics. The history of Kings of the Kamrup is silent on the Nagas (i.e., from fourth to twelfth centuries A.D.) Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom Kingdom, had entered Assam from Burma 1228 through the Tirag area of Arunachal Pradesh. The Ahoms first contact with the tribals Pradesh. The Ahoms first contact with the tribals were with the Aos and Lothas.[52] Despite clashes between the Ahom and the Naga tribes, in general, the Ahom maintained a cordial relationship and the Nagas paid tribute to the Ahom Kings in the form of Mithun and other commodities in return for revenue-free land and waters (beels). The British (from 1832-1850), undertook military attacks on the Nagas, later from 1850s, following a period of non-interference, they steadily tried to establish their authority over Naga hills from 1866 onwards.

In 1918, Naga club was founded in Kohima and Mokokchung, consisting of village chiefs and government officials to discuss the social and administrative contentious issues. The Naga Hills District Council, with the aim of uniting the Nagas, was established by Sir Charles Pawey in 1945. The Council met at Wokha and changed its name to Naga National Council, with the political objective to achieve autonomy for the hills, within the province of Assam and to train the people for self-government.[53] At first, there was no talk of separation from India, but its stand changed from June 1947, an ultimatum that the Naga Hills world cease to be a part of India, once Indian independence was attained,

was issued. But the Naga leaders were divided in their opinions. While one group favoured immediate independence, some moderates favoured the continuance of governmental relations with India in some modified way, until they were trained in the running of a modern state. Yet a third group wanted to bring Nagaland into the position of a mandatory state under the British Government for a specified period of time. The idea of a 'Crown Colony', quite separate from India, was floated abroad and also that the United Kingdom with contributions from the Indian Government should meet the expenses of the Nagas.

While these events were taking place, in 1947, a delegation went to Delhi, carrying the view that Naga Hills, after their independence should be kept outside the Indian Union. As a result of prolonged talks between the Naga leaders and Sir Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam, a point memorandum was drawn up. Its preamble recognized the right of the Nagas to develop themselves according to their freely expressed wishes. It went on to establish that all cases, of civil or criminal nature, between the Naga's and Naga Hills tribes should be disposed of by duly constituted Naga Courts according to Naga customary laws. Gradually the extremists gained more control of the Naga National Council (NNC) voicing the opinion that Naga people ought to be treated as one with the rest of India and special efforts ought to be made to protect them from any danger of exploitation from outside, while at the same time they be given full opportunities for development, in their own particular way of life.

Nagas, however boycotted the General Elections of 1952, and a wide support of independence was taken by obtaining thumbprints of villagers. Civil disobedience movement became the nature of the political protest. In 1956, the insurgents founded the Naga Federal Government, but it was not supported by a wide range of people. Its constitution stated that 'Nagaland' was a people's sovereign republic. This had been from times immemorial. That there ought to be a Parliament with a strength of 100 M.P.s, the President be elected by the people and the cabinet consist of fifteen High Ministers. That Nagaland maintain a permanent military neutrality, and there be no standing army. It said that education was to be in the hands of the people.

In Nagaland the insurgency movement started in 1955. The Nagas were, perhaps, the earliest frontier tribes to come under British jurisdiction. Both the Ahoms and the British rule over the Nagas were bereft of any economic benefits. Their small states ruled by Chieftains were kept intact by the Ahom "Posa System", in which the plain people had to pay a small payment to the hill people and the latter never changed

them. The Nagas instead gave them small territories (pieces of land), called the 'Naga Khats' for their cultivation.[54] Earlier in 1945, the Nagas had said that they were neither ready to join a democratic constitution nor compete with Indian politicians. That, they were dependent on the British, and considered themselves comfortable under the British Raj. It seemed as if an implicit trust had grown between the British and the Nagas.[55] It was far too costly for the British to administer the hill areas directly, and the Nagas interpreted this differently, feeling that the British had respected their independence and left them alone to govern their country. The Nagas looked across the Manipur border where some Naga tribes lived, felt that all these areas contain Nagas and would be theirs someday. In fact, most of the early Naga leaders as Christians, trained by the Baptist American Missions felt that their religion had something to do with their political aspiration. Nehru, himself, had realized that these Christian Nagas would not have anything in common with Indian culture. The idea of independence was already in the mind of the Nagas.[56] It sprang from the spread of education where there was a shift in the social, cultural, economic and ideological aspects of Naga life. Christianity brought them close to 'God' and by 1947 major Naga tribal languages like the Augami, Ao, Lotha, Sema had been translated into Roman scripts, for Bibles and the grammar books.[57]

Saroj Chakraborty rightly points out that 1947 had brought with it a new awakening among the elite of hill tribes. Money economy had perpetrated the hill area which few of the tribal leaders benefited from. They also had access to higher education and the articulate sections among them were restive and demanded 'self-determination'. Doses of self-government that was given to them, made the people of the hill districts demand autonomy. Ultimately they were allowed to hold elections and establish their statehood.[58] But the movement of the Nagas was based on personality cults and was different from the Mizos.

Refusing to join the North Eastern Council in 1971, the Nagas under their Angami leader Zapo Phizo had an underground Federal Government of Nagaland with him as their head. Phizo was supported by the British, and was given asylum in London, from where he maintained relationship with Kaito Sema whom he installed as leader of the insurgents. After the Chinese aggression, in 1962, Kaito contacted the Chinese Ambassador in London and made a secret agreement to train his rebels in collaboration with the British Agents and the CIA. Several Naga Youth escaped to Peking where they received training, money and hospitality, returning to India via Burma. In 1957, Nehru held a Peoples' Convention at Shillong and since then the successive

Indian governments have been trying to erode the mass base of the underground Nagas.

Unlike Mizoram, Nagaland's insurgency movement was more personalized and grew around the cults of political parties. Due to the frequent change of governments since 1963, the Nagas were not able to concentrate on developmental activities, of which education is a part.

Nagaland did not participate in the National Freedom Movement and therefore, Congress and other parties were not formed in the state prior to independence. Naga National Council, NNC, the first political party and a regional party formed in the area in 1946, prior to which in 1945 the Naga Hills District Tribal Council was formed in 1945 and which later became the NNC. Initially as a social and cultural organization it rapidly changed its colour and became a political mouthpiece of the Nagas, under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo. It organized a plebiscite on the status of Naga Hills and boycotted the elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly. It spearheaded a non-violent movement and the underground violent struggle with the help of Federal Government of Nagaland (1956) and Naga Army for Naga independence.

The first All Tribes Naga People's convention was organized in Kohima on August 22-26, 1957 with 1750 delegates and 2000 visitors representing all tribes.[59] The second and third Naga People's Conventions were held in Ungma and Mokakchung in 1958 and 1959. The differences with Nehru were apparent and resulted into the 16-point agreement and the formation of Nagaland state. The Naga People's Convention was the forerunner of the Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO), which fought first Nagaland State Assembly Elections in 1964 and won against the D.P.N. (Democratic Party of Nagaland) and NFG, another party. Under the Chief Ministership of Shilu Ao, it sought to bring peace and initiated a programme for the general welfare of the Naga tribes. It wanted a Nagaland state as part of India by following constitutional methods.

In 1969 election manifesto, NNO promised modernization of agriculture, a communication network, free medical facilities, expansion of education, integration of contiguous Naga areas, and a stable and clean administration. Apart from promising implementation of the 16 point agreement, more emphasis on the development of Tuensang, separate university and high cost, protection of the rights of the minorities and reservation of non-gazetted and non-technical posts for the locals, it emphasized economic development programmes, such as agriculture, small scale industry, power to rural areas and youth welfare.

In 1969 it defeated the United Front of Nagaland (UFN) with the support of 7 independent MLAs and hence it once again came to power with Hoksie Sema as the Chief Minister. In 1972, the U.F.N. became the U.D.F. or United Democratic Front in 1974 elections with the help of independents and 4 N.N.O. The U.D.F. formed the Ministry with Vizol as the Chief Minister. Further defection took place, and hence after 10 days President Rule was imposed on the State for 32 months. The N.N.O. merged into Indian National Congress during this time.

The D.P.N. or the Democratic Party of Nagaland was formed in 1963 as the first opposition party with Kevichusa as its Chairman. The leader of the D.P.N. joined the U.F.N. from 1969 onwards. In 1972, Mr. S.C. Jamir of the U.D.F. jointed the U.F.N. along with N.N.O. Since the political manifesto of all these parties were the same, i.e., stressing the social, economic and educational development, they merged together and formed the N.N.D.P. or the Naga National Democratic Party, and they installed the NNDP ministry in June 1980 remaining in power till the next elections of 1982. During 1982 and 1987 elections Congress (I) ministries were formed and NNDP functioned as the recognized opposition the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. In matters of social policy and development the NNDP continued the policy of old UDF. Novel features were the formations of Village Development Boards and Village Development Funds.

Huska Sumi a former MLA was against the merger of UDF with NNP and hence the Nagaland People's Party or the NNP came into existence. It talked of a mass movement and of "Nagaism" and the establishment of a new social order based on the principles of justice, equality and liberty.

The Naga People's Council or NPC was formed due to defection of 13 Congress MLAs joining hands with the N.N.D.P. wanting to form a ministry, however in August 1988 Presidents Rule was once again imposed upon the state.

The picture of Mizoram is singularly different. The Mizos had gone forward to develop their hill territory all along. As explained earlier, urbanization and the expansion of the service sector had already created a demand for education after 1971. This phenomenon continued till late 1980s. And even now the educated Mizo are assets to the community. From 1952 to 1972 the only Mizo Party represented in the Assam Assembly elections was the Mizo Union as a part of the EITU with Lalmawia as Minister of State and A. Thanguma as the Chief Parliamentary Secretary. But in 1960 the latter refused to resign with

other EITU members, instead he shifted his alliance to the Congress Party. This was the first time that the Mizo evinced interest in coalition parties. In fact as history records, unlike Nagaland where coalition parties was a feature, the Mizo have had only two coalition governments, that is, in 1972 in its first General Elections and in 1986, when the Mizo Peace Accord was signed. However, there were intra-party coalition between the Mizo Union (Mizo Union Council of Mizo Union of Pachhunga and R. Vanlawma) and the Mizo Union Rightwing of Lalsawia; the Congress factions of Dengthuama and Hrangchuema; People's Conference (A) of Chief Brigedier T. Sailo and People's Conference (B) Thargridema; and MNF (Laldenga) and MNF (Democratic of Chaungzuala. After the Mizo Union Ministry was formed in 1972, a merger took place on May 3, 1974 between the MU and the Congress, with Chhung, a senior Congress leader at the head. In the second General Elections in 1978, the Peoples Conference got the absolute majority and Brig. T. Sailo took over as the Chief Minister.

A mid-term election was held in April 1979 after Brig. Sailo's ministry lost its majority yet he was able to complete his five-year term. In 1984, a Congress (I) Ministry was sworn in, May 3, with Lalhanhawla as the Chief Minister.[60] But soon (by 1986) the Mizo Peace Accord was signed ending the twenty years' insurgency movement in Mizoram and an agreement was signed with Laldenga that a coalition Congress (I) and MNF government would be formed headed by Laldenga in 1987.

Thus, whether it was the party of Brig. Sailo, nor Lalthanhawla or Laldenga no differences were made regarding the educational policy by these parties. However, an interview with Mr. Zoramthanga[61] in 1993 has revealed that he disagreed with the formation of 'School Complex'.

The basic hypothesis of this study is that educational development is linked to the political, social and economic forces of the times especially in the North Eastern States. Its rationale is to find out how far these forces had a positive and/or negative effect on elementary education.

The specific objectives are to (i) trace the history of elementary education in the region; (ii) to understand the roles of the Christian missionaries and Colonial Government in the spread of literacy and elementary education; (iii) to study the expansion of educational facility; (iv) to link female literacy and the elementary education among girls in different tribal areas; (v) to review the process of decentralization of education and the role of local bodies by the aid of case studies on Lai Autonomous District Council of Mizoram and village education

committee of Nagaland, in order to gauge the participation of local community in making primary education more responsive to local needs.

The methodology used in this study requires linking up educational development with political, social, and economic factors in an overall historical perspective, so as to ascertain how far the growth of elementary education is a product of these variables. It is largely based on empirical findings although some secondary sources of data have been made use of available in NCERT's First to Fifth All India Educational Surveys. Interviews with prominent leaders of Mizoram, Nagaland and educationalists from other North-Eastern States have been important inputs. Village level household surveys, conducted for obtaining primary data on causes of dropouts and non-enrolment of elementary school students in Meghalaya, (Barapari, East Khasi Hills district) Nagaland (Phesama, Kohima district), Manipur (Toubal district) have been sustentative source of information. The role of the community in enhancing the participation of primary school children has been gathered through visits to the Lai Autonomous District Council in Chhimtuipui district of Mizoram and the role of the Village Committee in Kohima district of Nagaland.

The present study maintains what in comparative education is generally known as the "problem approach" based upon George Z.F. Bereday's Comparative Method of Education. According to this approach it furnishes information to educational planners with a set of alternatives from which to select an appropriate policy. As no such study on educational development of the elementary stage has been conducted for the entire region, from the 1960s to 1980s, it was felt that this kind of study would be of both research value and contribute to policy formulation for the North East. Individual educational problems pertaining to each state and each level exists, but no such comparative analysis of different variables are available. As far as history is concerned the 1960s is a watershed in this region. It was at this time that the states developed their own identities, manifest even today. However, the rapid expansion of facilities educational and other, taking place in the two decades, is reflected in the picture of growth present today. Mizoram being one of the highest literate states in India only next to Kerala. On the other hand due to political instability, the Nagas have remained more backward.

Based on numerous field visits to all the seven states as a part of my official work I have taken the opportunity to visit villages and households to collect primary information. For secondary information I have used Delhi, Shillong, Aizawl, and NEHU Campus Libraries.

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