

THE 'PROTESTANT ETHIC' IN THE KHASI SOCIETY

SUBMITTED IN PART - FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

My Beloved Mother

(Late) Mrs. Floriemina Wanniang

Who Passed Away

On The 25th June 1993



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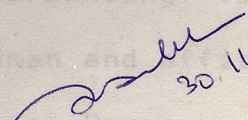
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN


This is to certify that the thesis entitled 'THE
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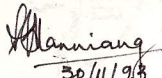
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Preface

There are certain persons I am indebted to for enabling me to complete this study. My special gratitude goes to my parents, especially my (late) mother, who was and will always be a source of inspiration to me. Personally, I would also like to express my wholehearted gratitude to Rev. Dr. & Mrs. L. Pohsngap for their especial help and encouragement after losing my mother. Without them I would not be able to finish my thesis. I am sincerely obliged to my supervisor, Dr. T. B. Subba and to other teachers of the Department too. My gratitude also goes to Rev. Dr. O.L. Snaitang, Mr. Bit Marbaniang (Investigator, Census Office, Shillong), the Headman and office-bearers of Jaiaw Laitdom Durbar, my friends--Persara Lyngdoh and Joplin Nongdhar, and all the respondents.

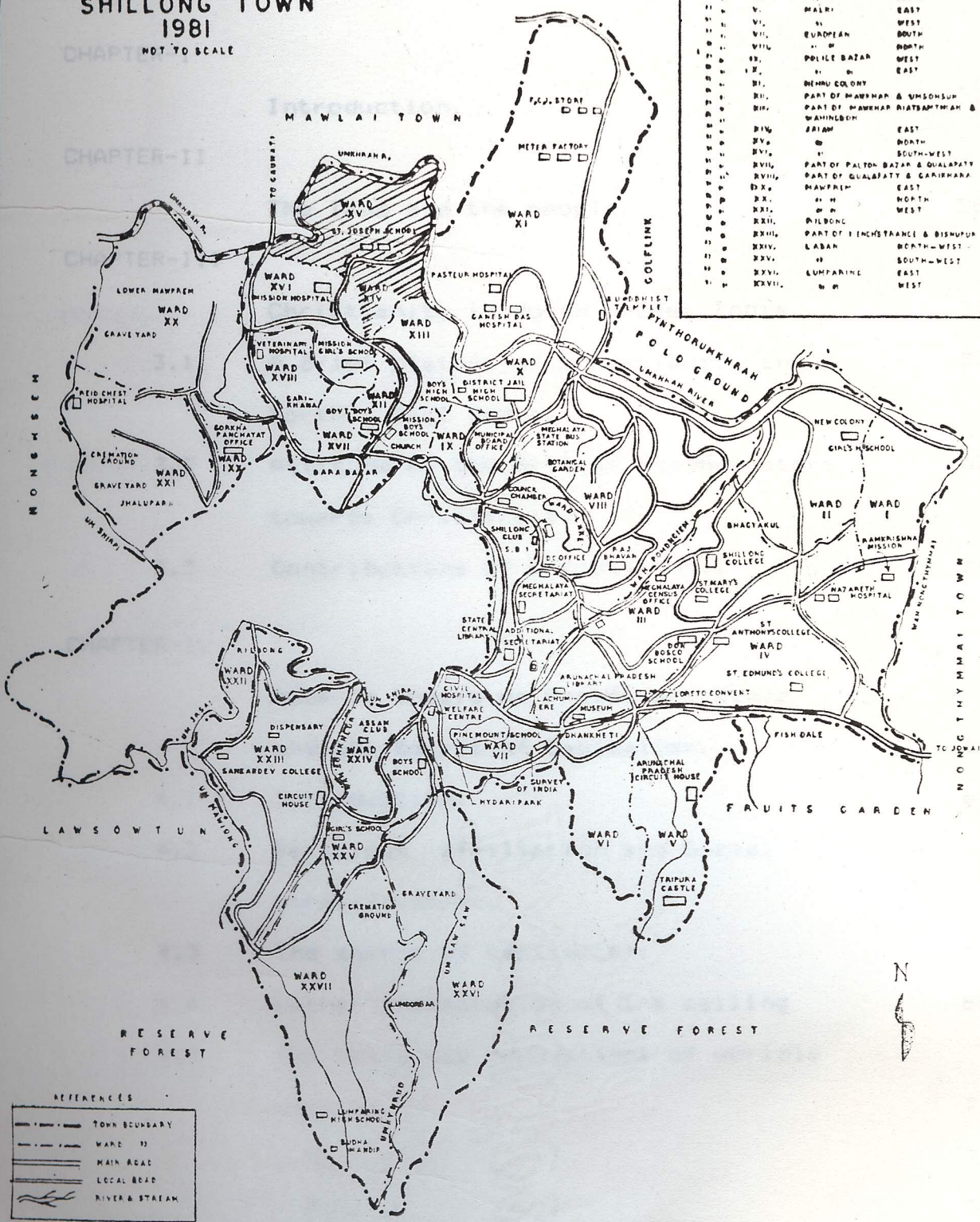
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MEGHALAYA SHILLONG TOWN 1981

CHAPTER-1
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THE SHADED AREA IS THE AREA WHERE THE STUDY HAS BEEN CONDUCTED.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1904 and 1905, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was published in the form of two articles in the *Archiv für sozialwissenschaftliche und Sozialpolitik*. The first section was published in 1904.

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and in their wake the secular, civic and voluntary assoc. Bibliography flowered. On his return to Germany, he resumed writing at Heidelberg and finished the second part of it.

The questions posed by him still have a universal significance opening up new avenues for research. He was the first to formulate a theory of the modern religious thought on social issues which has influenced the world. He undertook a comparative study of the social relations and influence of different religions. His articles were an attempt to test the generalization that Western Christianity as a whole and, in particular, the Calvinistic varieties of it which acquired an importance as a result of the Reformation, had not only facilitated the

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1904 and 1905, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was published in the form of two articles in the *Archiv für sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. The first section was published in 1904. Again, in New York, Weber searched the library of Columbia University for materials to be added to it. Perhaps the United States was for him what England had been for the previous generations of German Liberals - a model of a new society. The Protestant sect there had their greatest scope and in their wake the secular, civic and voluntary associations had flowered. On his return to Germany, he resumed writing at Heidelberg and finished the second part of it.

The questions posed by him still have a universal significance opening up new avenues for research. Max Weber was the first to formulate a theory of the movement of religious thought on social issues which took place then. He undertook a comparative study of the social outlook and influence of different religions. His articles were an attempt to test the generalization that Western Christianity as a whole and, in particular, certain varieties of it which acquired an independent life as a result of the Reformation, had been more favourable for the

growth of capitalism than the other creeds. His object was to examine the influence of certain religious ideas on the development of an economic spirit or ethos of an economic system. The major emphasis in Weber's work on the Protestant ethic is not on direct religious injunctions about different types of economic behaviour but on those broader attitudes inherent in the ethos of each which influence and direct economic motives and activities. Weber's work was greatly influenced by the predominantly German intellectual background. From detailed historical studies, Weber went on to embrace questions of a general theoretical nature. His standpoint in his writings were borrowed from many sources. He tried to take advantage of the possibilities offered by both the natural and the spiritual sciences: and he thought that the highest level of understanding social phenomena could be reached when the understanding is adequate both causally and at the level of meaning.

Weber's doctoral dissertation (1889) deal with the legal provisions governing trading enterprise and gave special attention to the Italian mercantile cities (as Genoa and Pisa). He showed that commercial capitalism developed there entailed the formulation of principles of law regulating the mode in which the distribution of risk and profit should be apportioned among the collaborators in a business enterprise. Some two year later, his second work

was concerned with Rome-providing a detailed analysis of the evolution of Roman land-tenure, and connecting this the legal and political change.

These writings indicated the birth of Weber's intellectual development and manifested the principal focus of his later work: the nature of capitalistic enterprise, and the specific characteristics of Western capitalism. He was aware of the complicated nature of relationship between economic structures and other aspects of social organizations; and all forms of crude economic determinism must be rejected. Weber also published his studies dealing with the two facets of the modern German economy (i) an investigation of the condition of the peasantry to the east of the Elbe and (ii) the operations of financial capital in Germany. These later studies analysed the character and effects of modern commerce; and the conclusions derived from them had a lasting influence upon his work which lead directly into these themes explored in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

Weber did not suggest the connection between the Reformation and modern capitalism as other writers before him did. The characteristic Marxist explanation derived from Engel's writings held that Protestantism was an ideological reflection of the economic changes incurred with the early development of capitalism. Marx was of the

opinion that the Protestant Reformation was a by-product of the rise of Capitalism.

Weber rejected this viewpoint and began from the apparent anomaly: the identification and explication of which constitutes the real originality of the Protestant ethic. While religion is concerned with the immaterial aspect there is a relationship between Protestantism and modern capitalism. This cannot be fully explained by taking the former as the result of the latter but through the character of Protestant beliefs and codes of behaviour it can stimulate economic activity. As Protestantism differs in certain forms from other religious forms, so also does modern capitalism from those prior to it.

Protestantism, founded by Martin Luther, was originally a religious movement aimed at the religious restructuring of the world. According to the Protestant concept of 'calling' the only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asecticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world.

Capitalism is a system of profit-making enterprises bound together in market relations, which has developed historically in many places and at varied times. The rational character and the rational organization of the

free labour are the main distinguishing marks of modern mature capitalism and Weber contends that its rise was affected by the emergence of Protestant ethic, especially Calvinism.

Weber showed the correlation between Protestantism and the growth of modern capitalism; and the terms of comparison are the 'spirit' of modern capitalism and the 'spirit' of Protestantism. The word 'spirit' connotes system of maxims of human conduct. These maxims of religious and secular conduct were so far in agreement that Weber believed that the rise of the Protestant ethical orientation was a necessary, though not, sufficient condition for the emergence of modern capitalism. He stated this also by extending his research to other non-European countries and concluded that specific economic conditions do not guarantee the rise of capitalism; but that at least one more condition is necessary- that which belongs to man's inner world. A specific motive power, the psychological acceptance of values and ideas favourable to change is therefore indispensable. He is of the opinion that the psychological condition enables the development of capitalism. He tries to explain that the economic behaviour of a social group can sometimes be understood in terms of its vision of the world. In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism he showed how a way of conceiving the world orients action in the world.

The Khasis of Meghalaya are a matrilineal tribe. Ownership of property is traditionally passed from parents to daughters. The youngest daughter usually gets the lion's share as she is the custodian of the family property, taking care of her parents in their old age, etc. Ownership is also invested in the clans, villages and chiefs. Nowadays especially in the urban and some rural areas, there is a trend of bilateral inheritance system where both males and females inherit property. The man is regarded as the bread-earner of the family and the female as the keeper of the hearth/^{and} home. But today, with modernization, both males and females play an equally important role in the economic upliftment of the family and of the society at large.

The Khasis have an indigenous religion but with the advent of Christianity, majority of them have been converted into Christianity which comprise of numerous sects and denominations like the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Church of God, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Church of Jesus Christ, and others; besides the Roman Catholics.

Modernization has begun in these hills with the advent of Christianity. New economic avenues are opened up for the people which were unheard of in the past. The British administrators and the Christian missionaries came in the early nineteenth century and remained here for long

enough to be able to impart education and provide training to the people to carry out different types of work besides agriculture. Education has played a major role in creating a new class of people among the Khasis, the educated class, who are not only in salaried jobs but also engaged in various entrepreneurships. In such a situation, it is worthwhile to examine Weber's thesis with regard to the relationship between religion and economic growth.

Survey of Literature

R.H. Tawney (1926) has studied the religious thought on social issues during the three centuries from the later middle ages to the early eighteenth century. It is a historical study of ^{the} bearing of the religion of the reformation on social and economic thought. It is an account of medieval theories of social ethics, and the examination of the impact on traditional doctrines of the new forces released by the economic and political changes of the age of the Reformation. Continental reformers like Luther and Calvin are discussed in this book and it has a chapter on the Puritane Movement also.

Max Weber (1930) comments that it is the change of moral standards and not the strength of the economic self-interest, which converted a natural frailty into an ornament of the spirit, and canonized as the economic

virtues which in earlier ages have been denounced as vices. The creed associated with the name of Calvin is the force behind it and that Calvinistic theology enhanced the development of capitalism. With a wealth of learning and philosophical insight, Weber examines the connection between religious radicalism and economic progress. His essay is confined to the part played by religious movements in creating favourable conditions for the growth of a new type of economic civilization. He is careful to guard himself against the criticism that he underestimates the importance of the parallel developments in the world of commerce, finance and industry.

Ephriam Fischhoff (1968) in his review points out that Troeltsch accepted Weber's theory as to the relation of Protestantism to capitalism, developed and popularised it so that it is not infrequently termed the Weber-Troeltsch theory.

Weber's thesis was accepted for the most part by church historians and to a certain degree by the economic historians. It was criticised by misinterpreting his essay as setting up a causal hypothesis deriving capitalism from Calvinism - in short, as supplanting the materialistic hypothesis with a spiritual one. The whole Weberian thesis had been bedeviled unfortunately by various extrascientific valuations and frequently has been the victim of partisan

contention depending on the economic orientation and religious affiliation of the writers in question according to Fischhoff.

As a conscious reaction to the Marxian hypothesis, Weber's essay naturally overstates the consistency and efficacy of ideal factors; a part of the revolt against the mechanization of man had the increasing dominance of the economic factor common to the generation before him. The emphasis is on the crucial importance of religious beliefs in the emergence of a morale favourable to capitalism.

Another writer, R. Hooykaas (1968) shows that the scientific production in quality and quantity of the Protestants (especially the Puritan group) surpassed that of the Roman Catholic authors in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. Though there is nothing in the dogmas of the three main divisions of Western christianity against scientific research yet the degree of encouraging scientific research differs among them.

In his articles, Hooykaas has tried to expound how the religious attitude of so-called "ascetic" Protestantism, which more or less stood under Calvin's influence, furthered the development of science. The general priesthood of believers is perhaps the only

specifically Protestant doctrine that was sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, used to back up science. Again, the love for experimental science and the technological interest of the Reformed were closely interwoven with their ethical evaluation of the manual labour. Thus, according to him, Calvinism or puritanism or ascetic protestanism generally promoted the type of thinking that help in arousing a sustained interest in science.

Charles and Katherine George (1968) has surveyed the compatibility between an important segment of Protestant opinion and the practices and ideas of nascent capitalism. The material in question consists of the writings and preachments produced by English Protestants in the seven decades between 1570 and 1640. Within these temporal limitations the literature has been intensively analysed and has been constantly considered in the differing perspectives of Roman Catholic thought and the teachings of the other Protestant schools. They pointed out that there is no area in Christianity to which one can turn where the two conceptual elements - both the rejection of worldly goods and the acceptance and defence of them - are not present in some combination of relative rank and emphasis; and that despite their evident opposition,

neither pole of the antithesis is ever completely eliminated.

The solution to this ideological tension in Christianity to the Roman Catholic has been the construction of a double standard of morality by means of which the two emphases are separated to a large extent and placed in a hierarchical relationship to each other. One emphasis become part of the way of life of the saint - the saintly cleric typically - who is indubitably heaven-bound. While the other becomes part of the way of life of the ordinary Christian who, if he does eventually reach heaven, will probably do so only after a further period of purgatorial trial and training. The triple monastic vow of poverty, obedience and chastity by the upper level of Roman Catholic morality signaled the wholesale turning from worldly wealth and power which is felt to be essential for the truly dedicated soul.

The standards of the lower level of Roman Catholic morality become such that the principal business of whose deity is to protect the health, support the battles, and promote the economic and social advancement of its adherents. There was active, positive spiritual hallowing of worldly success besides moral allowance. This second level of morality, in practice, amounted to the

acceptability of the way of the worldly - in terms of the proprieties of worldliness at the time; though not in any sense ideal, as a Christian way of life through the acknowledgement of the institutional supremacy and spiritual leadership of the visible church. There are historical reasons though no logical reason as to why Roman Catholicism could not have provided a defence for the ideology and practices of a capitalistic and bourgeois society as it did in fact provide for the ideology and practices of a feudal and aristocratic one. This double standard was so profoundly rooted in their doctrine that any life in this world, whatever its nature or function was bound to be viewed as of second quality in comparison to the life church and cloister.

Protestantism in all its forms, initially and consistently demolished this barrier between the two levels of morality. The constant contention is that there is only one way to go to God and this must lead directly from earth to heaven. They endeavour to solve the tension between Christian spirituality and materialism by cutting off both the extremes of the double solution characteristic of Roman Catholicism and proceed to occupy a single position and there is both a materializing of the spiritual and the spiritualizing of the material. In an effort to achieve the utmost spiritual fulfilment, the ordinary domiciles and usual occupations of the world are being undertaken by

them. The world is looked upon in terms of its temporal blessings as essentially good and apt for the service of the most christian man, provided that he uses right.

In English Protestantism, the world as evil and the world as good depends in the long run upon the manner of man's life in the world, and the saint lives his entire life finally and entirely in its midst. Their acceptance of life and of all other worldly conditions as a feasible setting for the most strenuous spiritual life, and poverty viewed as an evil to be questioned or even as a problem to be solved rather than cherishing it as an accepted social condition; a commendation for some status of economic moderation in between wealth and poverty as dangerous extremes; the doctrine of the calling, which is of two kinds - a General Calling which is God's call to the faith and the Particular Calling which God enabled and directed on to some special course and condition of life, to employ oneself and exercise the gifts He bestowed which is different in variety according to the quality of particular persons, emphasizing the positive, creative and enjoyable aspects of labour instead of the penal quality of labour, especially manual labour and relaxation, rest and recreation are thought essential of Christian's regimen of life. The equality of callings in regard to their moral aspect and spiritual aspect lend credence to Weber's

emphasis on the importance of this doctrine.

This doctrine among the English Protestants of aforesaid seven decades has little to justify the application of the label 'capitalistic', to it, but it does not deny or diminish the extent of the break which this doctrine represents from the social theory of medieval Roman Catholicism. In it is found the ideological watershed between the ancient medieval and modern mind and linking it particularly to capitalism which is merely one aspect of modernity, is to limit and weaken rather than to strengthen its real potentiality. Charles and Katherine George concluded by linking this doctrine to capitalistic coloration in the face of certain social pressures and in heads of certain groups, but with the English Protestant pronouncement in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, its scope is much greater and its reach is socially much more profound - as a viewpoint whose primary focus is not business activity but productive toil, it is not so much a bourgeois as an antifeudal, not so much a capitalistic as an industrial ethic.

Sidney A. Burrell (1968) touched on the historiographical development of the ideas that Calvinism and capitalism are linked and endemic characteristics of the rising middle class. Secondly he considered the role of

the seventeenth century Scotland which was a kind of archetypical Calvinist society in this controversy.

Ernst Max Weber. Burrell emphasized, was a critic and not a supporter of Marx's or Sombart's view by rejecting the idea that religious ideas were only ideological manifestations of particular social conditions. Ideas for Weber were, at least in part, autonomous entities with a power to affect social changes, and he proved it by citing what seemed to him clear historical evidence that capitalism was a result, rather than a cause of the Reformation. He believed that Calvinist theology, in particular, contained certain elements which were peculiarly conducive to rationalized, individualistic economic activity undertaken for profit: not simply for the purpose of enjoying the fruits thereof but rather as a duty, as part, indeed, of a new sense of ethical obligation. Burrell gives a brief description of the Scottish Covenanting rebellion (1637, 1638) and infers that firstly, there was a society which, though formally and extensively Calvinist, did not conform in its economic and social manifestations to the commonly accepted view of such a society. Scotland was not a country with a thriving, bustling "middle class" made up of merchants or capitalist squires but an economic backwater in contrast with its wealthier western European neighbours. Secondly, Scotland, which is far less highly developed politically and



economically than England, was the first to challenge the King's policy of Thorough.

Emilio Willems (1968) studied the forms of Protestantism that can be traced back to to proselytic beginnings in Brazil and Chile and showed how proselytism of the Protestant missionaries brought culture contact by transmitting normative behaviour pattern and ideologies by forming a religious community which would be able to embody these norms and furnish structural support to put them into practice. Its rapid expansion accompanies, in time and space, cultural transformations, and the largest concentrations of Protestants are found in the regions which showed the highest rate of culture change and the smallest in the most traditional bound areas. Conversion is seen as a solution of personal problems; which are in turn reflections of a social order in transition. Conversion described as rebirth and the development of industrial society opening up avenues of social mobility and education led to the changes in economic behaviour, political behaviour, family structure and increased social mobility. Comparing them with the non-Protestants, the Protestants have gained the reputation of being reliable, conscientious and industrious. Industriousness, pride and thrift were often mentioned subjectively to explain improved economic conditions there.

Herbert Lüthy (1968) examines the pros and cons of

the Weberian thesis and to him the trouble begins with the terminology. What the problem is actually about is subject, on both sides of the equation ; to misunderstanding and confusion. The exclusive power of Weber's thesis derived from the correlation of two concepts , Protestantism and Capitalism. Weber spoke not of Capitalism but of the 'spirit' of Capitalism, just as he wrote not about Protestantism as a theological doctrine but about the Protestant 'ethic'. This was a warning that has been invariably ignored . His great and questioning mind was never particularly interested in the facts of history nor even in social and economic systems but rather in the detection of the ultimate impulses behind man's attitudes and behaviour.

The word 'Capitalism' or 'spirit of Capitalism' connotes no less than the entire inner structure governing Western society's attitudes - not only its economy but also its legal system, political structure, institutionalized science and technology, its mathematically based music and architecture. The rationality characterized by its economic modes of operation , work discipline and accountancy methods permeate all fields of social behaviour , the organisation of labour and management as well as the creative sciences , law and order, philosophy and the arts, the state and politics, and the dominant forms of private life and tamed every form of resistance offered by pre-

rational human nature, magic and tradition, instinct and spontaneity. The Reformation substitutes these with the Bible as the authentic truth and the motives behind human behaviour are generated, into the very heart of religious belief. To Lüthy, this is what the Reformation means for Weber, and this is the knot with which he linked economic theory and religious doctrine. It is the liberation of man from spiritual submission and fear of man that the true and deep connection between Calvinism and modern industrial society lies. It is the same connection that links rational Calvinist religiosity with positive science, and the Calvinist community with modern democracy, and that all else is but by-products.

Michael Walzer (1968) showed how Weber thought that Puritanism had sponsored a significant rationalization in behaviour especially in work: it has trained men to work in a sustained, systematic fashion, to pay attention to detail, to watch the clock. Thus, the Calvinist ethic, in this sense, is related to that long-term process which culminates, but does not end, in a rational-legal (bureaucratic) society. In addition to this, he argued that Puritanism had produced an extraordinary and apparently irrational impulse toward acquisition, which is more directly connected with the rise of capitalist economy. The anxiety induced by the theory of predestination is the source of both impulses, toward rationalization and endless

gain; but the two are different from one another, and it is at least plausible to the first without the second.

Stanislav Andreski (1968) agreed that Weber's works are focussed, on the problem of the conditions which permitted the rise of capitalism. He pointed out that the originality of his approach lies in his conceived brilliant idea of throwing light on this problem by concentrating on cases where capitalism failed to develop.

Weber's data as well as those supplied by other investigators show clearly that the Protestants occupy prominent positions in business in disproportionate numbers, in countries where Protestants and Catholics live intermingled. France with the minority Protestants influencing business and Germany predominantly Protestant in the economic life of the country even though it has a more or less balanced population, failed to lend support to Weber's thesis, though they do not contradict it. In Ireland and Prussian Poland the economic inferiority of the Catholics could be possibly explained by the fetters imposed upon them by their Protestant rulers. Predominance of Protestants in American business could be due to their descent from old established population while the Catholics came recently as poor immigrants, but this explanation failed to hold for Canada and Holland. In Holland, the case is significant because there the Catholics were a minority

relegated to a politically subordinate position but with ample opportunities for business activities. Nevertheless, they furnished far fewer successful businessmen than either the Protestants or the Jews. The data thus unambiguously suggest that Protestantism is more conducive to business activity than Catholicism, even if we allow for the influence of other factors. This can be adduced from the argument from covariation. Again by using as the units of comparison states, instead of sections of populations located in the boundaries of one state he pointed out that capitalism developed furthest and fastest in predominantly Protestant countries. Today, the economies of the English-speaking countries, dominated by Protestants, continue to represent the furthest stage in the evolution of capitalism. This thesis applies in full only to the situation where accumulation by private individuals constitutes the driving force of economic development. Once the giant concerns and thrusts enter upon the scene and the 'plowing back' of their undistributed profits becomes (jointly with the financing by the state) the chief form of investment, worldly asceticism loses its importance because most of the saving becomes then in a sense "forced"

Another way in which Protestantism may have stimulated the growth of capitalism indirectly was by fostering the civic virtues required for the smooth functioning of the state. It must be noted, on the other

hand; that all the so-called underdeveloped countries are conspicuous for the lack of public spirit which makes poverty difficult to eliminate. Andreski accepted Weber's thesis as valid in that Weber regarded Protestantism as a factor which fostered the development of capitalism, and not as the cause thereof.

David Little (1968) considered the question whether, in roughly sixty years, Max Weber has been dispensed with or whether ^{there} are suggestions in his method that can be of service for the study of religion and society. He found that Weber made an abiding contribution not only to the systematic study of society but to the investigation of religious phenomena as well. The key concept of order drawing on Weber provides a useful bridge for relating religious-moral language to issues of social organization. The work helped to underscore the significance of Weber and to supplement and revise his work in an appropriate way.

S.N.Eisenstadt (1968) has gathered together the writings of sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists. This is about Max Weber's provocative thesis about the role of Protestant values in the emergence of modern capitalism. It showed a continuing relevance of Weber to the understanding of modernization process by (i) reexamining Weber's Protestant ethic in the light of contemporary sociological analysis and (ii) applying it to contemporary non-Western as well as Western

societies. The essays collected in this volume can be divided into the three parts. Firstly, there are essays dealing with the exposition of Weber's thesis within the context of his general sociological analyses. Secondly, those essays deal with the various specific aspects of his thesisⁱⁿ the context of Europe and America, and Thirdly, they deal with attempts to test the applicability of the thesis or of its derivatives, or which apply a similar approach, to non-European settings.

Charles P. Loomis and Zona K. Loomis (1969) considered the socio-economic changes in India and sought answers to the following questions:-

(i) Under what conditions can India hope to become an industrial nation?.

(ii) Does such a process require a radical break with tradition? and

(iii) Are there some aspects of Indian tradition which are favourable to industrial development?

The essay presented the exchange of ideas on the role of religion in helping or hindering change based upon Max Weber's idea concerning India and Ascetic Protestantism in its bold outline. The divisions dealt with certain aspects of culture, such as the cognitive (knowledge), the expressive (feeling) and the evaluative, along with the structural concepts of society such as caste, power, etc. Social processes as communication, socialization, etc. as

related to time, space and size of organization were also included.

Here it is necessary to recall the first seminar organized by the National Institute of Community development in 1966 at Hyderabad on "Max Weber's Theory of Religion and Socio-economic Change" and "Marxist Sociology and Ideology in relation to Indian Materialism". The objective of this seminar was to encourage discussion, exchange of ideas, analysis, criticism and development of understanding of social and economic development and change.

Anthony Giddens (1971) analysed the works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber. Important aspects of their ideas are analysed and interpretations of their writings are given. The main aim of the writer is to dispel some of the obscurities and misunderstandings about their thoughts. His work is to set a precise, yet comprehensive analysis of the sociological ideas of these writers; and to examine the main points of divergence between Marx's viewpoints and of the other two authors. The study is directed at disentangling some of the complex intellectual relationships among the three authors.

Literature on Christianity and its influence on the Khasi society are also available but no research has been done to correlate religion and economic development among them.

Nalini Natarajan (1977) has written about the coming of Christianity in Meghalaya and the contributions of works of the Christian missionaries for the upliftment of the Khasi people. Pre-missionary Khasi society, Khasi indigenous religion and an analytical and descriptive picture of contemporary Khasi society are studied. She says that the missionaries works have a lasting impact on the Khasi individual, on the Khasi society, and they have affected the Khasi cultural dynamics and structural integration. The prime factor which induced and fostered silent and mammoth changes was the work of the missionaries for nearly a century or more. The Khasi 'Niam' began loosening its hold and a new advance culture with a blend of the old and new has evolved. The impact of the missionaries on education, literature, law, politics, social life and economic development has been brought out by her. The authoress is of the opinion that the training of the local people in the organizational work of the Church, and the inculcation of the Christian doctrines of rationality, austeriy and simplicity have contributed to higher efficiency in their economic pursuits.

Gordon Marshall (1980) is perhaps the first to attempt an investigation of the relationship between Calvinism and the economic ethos of modern capitalism in Scotland. It is an investigation of the Scottish pastoral theological material on the one hand and the Scottish

business records for a period extending from the Reformation (1560) to the Act of the Union (1707) on the other. The problem of relationship between Calvinism and economic ethos of modern capitalism is investigated in a sustained and rigorous way in Scotland, which is one of the few cases meeting the stringent requirements of a test of Weber's Protestant ethic and the Spirit of the capitalism. On provisional examination, Gordon Marshal concluded that the test-case of Scotland vindicated Weber's argument.

Amena Nora Passah's M.Phil. Thesis (1984) is mainly concentrated on the locale and people, the arrival and establishment of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission, its expansion and organization, and the contribution: female education, theological education, language and literature, translation of the Bible and medical aids.

J.J.Roy Burman (1988) analyses the role of Christianity in reinforcing their ethnic identity, particularly, so at the time when the region was being politically and economically incorporated into a large political-economic entity of a nation-state. Christianity is seen at the negative side by the author. It has, in fact, acted as bridge between tribal non-differentiated system and a complex administrative mechanisms of the nation-state.

Objective

The objective of this study is to reexamine Weber's

thesis on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism in the Khasi society.

Method

Jaiaw Laitdom, an urban locality in Shillong, was selected as the universe. It is a large locality having mixed Christian denominational resident pursuing varied economic pursuits. Since I would examine the role of the Protestant ethic in the economic development of the Khasi society, this place was expected to be suitable as it predominately represents the Khasi community.

The total number of the households within it was ascertained from the local headman and a systematic random sample was done. Questionnaires written in the local language were served. The questionnaires has both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Observation was also made alongside.

The accumulated data were then analysed to see if there existed relationship between the Protestant ethic and the Spirit of capitalism in the Khasi society.

Plan of the Study

The first chapter is an introductory chapter where the review of literature is also presented.

The next chapter is mainly on land and the people, followed by a chapter on the history of Christianity in North-east India with special reference to Meghalaya.

Then, Weber's thesis is explained. This is

followed by another one where primary data collected from the Khasi society are presented to see the applicability of Weber's thesis in the Khasi society. And the last chapter is the concluding one.

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