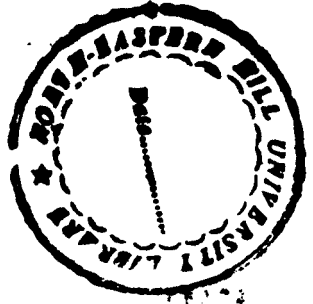


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**PROCEEDINGS OF
NORTH EAST INDIA
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

FIFTH SESSION

AIZAWL : 1984

PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to place on record that the North-East India History association has been able to maintain its tradition of holding the annual sessions and publishing the proceedings volume of every session before the next session without any interruption. Within the first five years of its existence the Association has enlisted members not only from every research oriented institutions of higher education that are spread over the north-eastern region but also those scholars from outside the region who have been doing some research on this region. In five years our membership has increased at least ten times. Our emphasis is on scientific historiography which involves an inter-disciplinary approach to a given historical problem, in the specific context of the north-eastern region of India. The membership pattern of the Association is also representative of the various Social Science and inter-related academic disciplines.

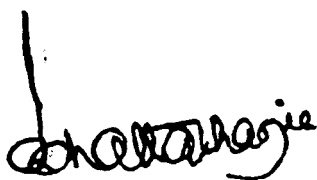
The objective of the Association has seen to encourage and promote research in the history of the region and the adjoining areas historically connected with it. We take some pride in our success on that count. The Association has been able to inspire research inside and outside its own forum. In every session so far, we have come across some scholars who presented their maiden papers. The studies presented in our sessions cover wide-ranging problems, including the issues that are currently confronting the life in the region. The research presented in the sessions have been followed up by the scholars themselves or by others in various forums and publications.

Our commitment has seen our strength. Otherwise, we have been working under several constraints, the most formidable being the problem of finance. The publication cost these days is indeed prohibitive for a non-official research organisation of this nature. And yet, we are required to publish our proceeding volumes out of our own resources. We are nevertheless, hopeful that the social relevance of our works shall some day be appreciated and some funding agency shall come forward to support our efforts. Till then, we shall take pride in the recognition of the academic contents of our works and continue to sustain all by ourselves.

This volume contains the papers that were presented at the Fifth Annual Session of the Association held at the Pachhunga University College, Aizawl on December 18-20, 1984. Professor

Sanat Bose, Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta presided over the session. Pu Saingenga, Principal, Pachhunga University College did us a great honour as Local Secretary of the session which was inaugurated by Shri Lalkhama, Chief Secretary to the government of Mizoram.

We are grateful to the authorities of the Pachhunga University College, its dynamic principal and the members of the History faculty for inviting the session and making the stay of the delegates so comfortable and so meaningful. The teachers and students of the college worked incessantly for the success of the session. This first ever academic gathering of this nature in Mizoram is indeed a milestone in the History of historical research in the region.



(J. B. Bhattacharjee)

Shillong
The 25th July, 1985

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Missionaries and Education in Mizoram

Lalrimawia

Mizoram was brought under British administration in the year of 1890, and the South and the North Lushai Hills were amalgamated eight years after the British occupation (1898). It was called Lushai Hills till 1952 when it was changed to Mizoram District by an Act of Parliament. In 1972 the District was upgraded to the status of Union Territory with a new name 'Mizoram'.

The British administered Mizoram almost nominally and made no attempt for the all round development of hills. Their primary concern was maintenance of law and order and paid little or almost no attention of the education of the tribes. In fact, they left education to the charge of the missionaries. The administration invited the missionaries to establish their Mission in the hills assuring them official help and financial support as far as practicable¹. Though the administration was not in favour of opening Schools for the tribes, but what had been attempted by it was incomparable to the work done by the missionaries. No one can deny the fact that one of the most important contributions of the Missionaries in Mizoram was in the field of Education.

Earlier, the Mizoram Youth received their informal Education in the *Zawlbuk* or Bachelor's dormitory and at home through their elders and parents. Though they had a language of their own but no letter, and no attempt was ever made to codify the rule of their language. The task was begun by F. W. Savidge and J. H. Lorrain, the Baptist pioneer missionaries in Mizoram. They started work of evangelisation and educational activities during their short stay in Aizawl (January 1894 to Dec 1897). They mastered the Lushai language, compiled a grammar and a dictionary of the language. They opened first School with two pupils on 1 April, 1895, and translated scriptures, and began regular Mizo services on 2 October 1895. The teaching was confined to the art of

writing and reading as the missionaries' first aim was to impart primary education. D. E. Jones, a Presbyterian missionary from Wales, who came to Mizoram in December 1897, made further progress towards the education of the Mizos. In 1899 the work of the school was taken over by Rev. Edwin Rowlands, an experienced teacher. The pupils were chiefly boys.

At first, attendance was extremely irregular as the young children had to help their parents in the rice field and other important domestic works. The parent considered these tasks more important than a day's absence from School. The other problems were paucity of suitable teachers, difficulties of inspection and the migratory habit of the people. In spite of these difficulties in the beginning, a number of students in those early classes did remarkably well. Some of them were among the early leaders in the area. In course of time, the school began to produce teachers as well as scholars and laid down the foundation of the present Mizo Primary School system. The art of writing and reading was a completely new fascinating experience to the people, and each new convert's ambition was to be able to read the Bible and the hymn books prepared by the missionaries. Moreover, Sunday School was the place where adults learnt to read and write. Thus in a little over a generation Mizoram had a very high percentage of people able to read and write.

The local administration also started schools in 1896-97 at Aizawl, Lunglei and Demagiri, but the standard of teaching in these schools was always lower than the Mission Schools. Gradually the government Schools became popular. The students were taught Mizo in the English character and the Syllabus was enriched as the school progressed. The local authority encouraged education by exempting those who graduated class iv standard of today from forced labour². (Instead of currency levy the British adopted a system of labour by impressment. Accordingly each house should be liable to supply one coolie to work for ten days in a year. However, certain persons were exempted from impressed labour).

However, the contributions made by the missionaries was beyond compare with those of the government. Apart from spending considerable amount on the account, the missionaries provided the best teachers. Realizing this fact, the local authority left education to the charge of the missionaries. Under

their enterprising supervision, the number of school rapidly increased as the years wore on. In 1902 Rowlands was appointed Honorary Inspector of Schools for Mizoram, but in 1905, South Mizoram was put under separate control and Savidge was appointed Honorary Inspector of schools in the year. After two decades of the missionary activities on education, the Mizo people began to take a keener desire to educate their children, and this was quite a new phase for the area.

With an attempt to improve the efficiency of the teachers, the Welsh Mission, in 1925, established a Teachers Training Department under Miss Hughes, a trained Certificate teacher with eight years experience in England. The Department achieved a considerable success. From 1936 a common curriculum was established in North and South and a common examination was accordingly held in October 1936.

Mizoram was the last territory to be brought under the administrative control of the British Indian Government and therefore, Christianity and education was introduced comparatively late. But so rapid was the progress of Christianity and education among the tribes that within a few decade it had surpassed other hills area in percentage of literacy and Christianity. No one can deny the fact that this herculean progress could be achieved mainly through the blessings of the missionaries. The All India Census Report for 1931 revealed the percentage of literacy in Mizoram as being as high as 12.9 per hundred, and this had increased to 19.3. in the 1941. During the corresponding period the percentage of literacy in the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district was 10.94 and 16.15 per hundred respectively.

It may, however, be pointed out that, the system of Education introduced by the missionaries in these hills had its drawbacks. First, the Missions did not open School beyond the Middle English Standard and there by limiting education in the area beyond the middle standrad. Secondly, the text books prepared by them failed to come up to the expectations of the Government.

It has been observed that till 1947 the local authority confined itself by and large to the spread of elementary education, and this accounts for the comparatively low level of educational development in Mizoram, when India achieved Independence on 15 August, 1947. It may however, be noted that the primary object of the missionaries was not the spread

of education of a secular character among the hillmen but spread of the Gospel was their primary objective. Moreover, the missionaries had been subjected to the direction of home authorities.

After Independence (1947) Mizoram marched forward and achieved immense progress and development in the field of Education. On the eve of inauguration of the Union Territory of Mizoram, there were 390 Primary schools, 190 Middle Schools and 80 High Schools in Mizoram. Besides, there were three Colleges, including one Government College, namely Pachhunga University College. It may be observed that it was only after Mizoram was upgraded to the status of Union Territory that substantial and meaningful progress and expansion in the field of education has been achieved. From the beginning of the Financial year of 1972-73, quite a large number of important steps have been taken to accelerate the speed of activities in the various fields of education. The much needed Directorate of Education was immediately set up and started functioning with effect from 1 July, 1972. For implementation of the various schemes, a number of State level officers, as respective head of officers, such as,

- (1) Science Promotion Officer for promotion of Science ;
- (2) Senior Research Officer for Tribal Research Works ;
- (3) Special Officer for Promotion of Scouts and Guides activities as well as Sports and Games ; and
- (4) Social Education Officer for Social education, were also appointed.

This was followed by the establishment of the Mizoram Institute of Education (MIE) in March, 1975, the Mizoram Board of School Education in March, 1976, and the State Council of Educational Research and Training in 1980. An important milestone in the progress of higher education was the upgradation of Pachhunga Government College as a constituent College of the North-Eastern Hill University on 19 April, 1979. In the same year, a Post-graduate Centre was opened at Aizawl for teaching Master Degree Courses in Economics, English and Education. From the session of 1983-84, a department of Psychology was opened. A Campus of the University has been opened at Aizawl and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and a Deputy Registrar with supporting staff have also been posted at Aizawl. Effective steps have been taken for the propagation of Hindi in the Territory. Now, Hindi

Training Institute has been established at Aizawl for training of Hindi Teachers.

Indeed, Mizoram after Union Territory, has made tremendous progress in the field of education. There are now a little over 700 Primary Schools, 300 Middle Schools, 130 High Schools, 11 Colleges and 4 Teachers Training Institutes in Mizoram. A Polytechnic College and Industrial Training Institute have also been established at Lunglei and Aizawl respectively. The students and Trainees in all these Institutions were around 1,25,000. while the strength of teachers is approximately 4,300. The percentage of literacy has come up to 59.50 as compared to 53.79 according to 1971 Census. Mizoram has yet to go a long way particularly in the field of Science, Technological and higher education to catch up with the rest of the country.

References

1. A. G. Mc Call, *Lushai Chrysalis*, pp. 199-204.
2. *Ibid* pp. 36-38.

The Paper is mainly based on the information collected locally and from the Census Records.