

CHAPTER 5
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This chapter deals with the contributions of the SDA to the society at large in Khasi-Jaintia Hills. This contribution is in the form of formal education and vocational training through the institutions established by the SDA. In addition, the SDA's contribution to health issues and relief programmes in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills are also studied in this chapter.

EDUCATION IN KHASI-JAINTIA HILLS PRIOR THE SDA

In the following discussion on the contributions of SDA to the educational sector, it is important to situate it in the pre-SDA scenario. The first few schools were started in 1833 by Alexander B. Lish, the missionary of the Serampore Baptist Mission in Cherrapunji, Mawsmail and Mawmluh.¹ After the Welsh Presbyterian Church took over the mission field of Khasi-Jaintia Hills in 1841, these schools were reopened in 1842 in the same places where Lish had started. Subsequently, in the same year the adoption of Roman script for the Khasi language by Thomas Jones proved useful. Soon after, Thomas Jones published the first Khasi book for the purpose of reading which was used as a school text for more than sixty years.² In 1854 one primary school was started in Jowai (Headquarter of Jaintia Hills).³ By 1866 there were sixty five mission schools which enrolled about 2000 students in different areas of Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Besides the Welsh Presbyterians, other Christian Missions also established educational institutions. At the turn of the twentieth century, in Shillong and other parts of Khasi Hills, education was expanding at different levels, right from primary to higher levels. Schools and Colleges were started by Christian and non-Christian missions and by the Government.⁴ Though institutions were being

¹ O. L. Snaitang, *Christianity and Social Change in North East India*, Vendrame, Shillong, 1993, pp. 66-67.

² Thomas Jones wrote the first Khasi book named *Ka Kot 'A'*. For details see H. E. Marbaniang, *Ka History Lyngkot U Thomas Jones-I U Kpa ka Khasi Alphabet (1810-1849)*, 2009, pp.23-33.

³ After the Jaintia Rebellion of 1860, Christian mission schools were directly funded by the government since many of the converts did not join hands with the rebels against the government. See, Alicia Gatphoh, "Progress of Education in Jaintia Hills till 1985", (unpublished) M. Phil. Dissertation, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 1988, p. 36.

⁴ Mission Minor School, Shillong (1870), Shillong Zillah High School, Shillong (1878), Pine Mount School, Shillong (1881), Government Boys High School, Shillong (1888), St. Mary's High School, Shillong (1915), Seng Khasi High School, Shillong (1921), Jail Road Boys High School, Shillong

started, the development was not similar everywhere in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Throughout the same period there were only Primary Schools and Middle English Schools in the Jaintia Hills. The expansion came only with the establishment of the Government Boys' High School in Jowai in 1941.

BEGINNING OF SDA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Due to their over emphasis on the imminent return of Jesus Christ, early Sabbatarian Adventists had little interest in providing education for their children. However, after 1850 efforts were made to establish primary schools under the guidance of James White and Ellen White. In 1868 Goodloe Harper Bell started a private school in Battle Creek known as the 'Select School'. The General Conference of SDA took charge of this school in 1872 and expanded it till it was renamed Battle Creek College in 1874 under the management of the Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society. From then onwards many schools were established in the United States of America and the Avondale School for Christian Workers which was established in 1897 in Australia was the first educational institution outside America. Though initially very scanty attention was paid towards establishment of elementary schools, focus was more on the training schools of church members only; however, by 1920s these schools became well-established schools at par with other public schools. Since then, a number of schools, colleges and universities were established around the globe and education became part and parcel of Adventist mission along with publication and health institutions.⁵

After 1872, the different levels of administration and working policy of SDA were in favour of spreading education through its institutions. The Education Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists set guidelines and supervised the worldwide Seventh-day Adventists educational system, from the elementary to the university levels.⁶ The educational institutions of the SDA provided

(1929), St. Anthony's High School, Shillong (1931), R. K. Mission High School, Cherrapunji (1931), St. John Bosco Girls' High School, Cherrapunji (1937), St. Edmunds College (1924), St. Anthony's College (1934), Lady Keane College (1935), St. Mary's College (1937), for details see Hamlet Bareh, *Progress of Education in Meghalaya*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1996.

⁵ Gary Land, *The A to Z of the Seventh-Day Adventists*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, UK. 2009, p.86.

⁶ Some of the guidelines which are can be mentioned here include, Overview of Seventh-day Adventist Education; General Goals of SDA Education; Selected Core Concepts of SDA Education; Distinct

for the evolvement of students in the field of academics as well as other activities. These institutions were managed by the respective local Church, Conference, Union and Division. In 1905, the General Conference of SDA adopted a “harmonious system of education” that integrates elementary, secondary and college levels and articulates teaching materials and manuals.⁷ In addition to this development, in 1909 the *Christian Education*, the first Adventist periodical about education began publication.⁸

ESTABLISHMENT OF SDA SCHOOLS IN INDIA

After the India Union Mission of SDA gained momentum in its medical works in India, establishment of church schools and orphanages in Bengal, the Adventist missionaries turned their attention to other areas. In 1910, L. J. Burgess and Georgia Burgess established an industrial school among the Giarhwal (sic) people, in the Himalayas, above Dehra Dun. In 1912 a school and church building was erected in Nazareth, a village in South India, where teachers were non-Adventist.⁹ It seems the first formal SDA school in India began when G. G. Lowry started the South India Training School (forerunner of Spicer Memorial College) in Coimbatore in July 1915.¹⁰ It was a primary school with an enrollment of 27 students.¹¹

features of SDA Education; Basic Principles of Curriculum Development; Ideas for Successful Work Experience at Home/School – Agriculture, Health Care, Small Manufacturing, Crafts, Merchandising, Foods, Services, Construction, Miscellaneous; Ideas for Successful Productive Institutional Industries – Agriculture, Non-Agricultural; Program Evaluation; Procedure and implementation; Education Code - Part of Curriculum; Syllabus for Course Study; Student Evaluation; Work Experience; Teacher Certification; Financial Aspects; Experience Record. For details on the guidelines see, General Conference Department of Education, *Guide for Work Experience Education in Seventh-day Adventist Schools and Colleges*, revised edition, General Conference Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 1983.

⁷ Floyd Greenleaf, “Timeline For Seventh-Day Adventist Education”, *Journal Of Adventist Education*, Summer, 2005, p.11.

⁸ It was renamed *Journal of True Education* in 1939 and was later changed to *Journal of Adventist Education*. In 1989 another periodical *Dialogue* was published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish that discusses intellectual issues among the Adventist college and university students worldwide.

⁹ Probably this was a church school which must have attended by non-Adventist students as well. It was here that the first baptism in the SDA institution occurred. See, “E. D. Thomas (the Tamil teacher in charge) reported 100 students. In 1913 it was reported that 15 of the boys and girls had been baptized.” See, *An Outline of Mission Fields*, Fourth Edition, Published by UM Mission Board of Seventh-Day Adventists, Takoma Park, Washington, D C., 1920, pp.118-119.

¹⁰ Floyd Greenleaf, *op.cit.*, p.12. Other schools which were established before 1915 included, The Karmatar School (1902), The Babumohal Mission School (1904), Tamil Day and Boarding School

SDA educational policy in India -With reference to the work of SDA in the field of education in India, many articles and reports have been published, mostly in Adventist literature. In these writings, the importance of education, methods on how to improve the SDA schools and in building up the teacher-student relationship were also discussed.¹² With the increase in numbers of schools around the world, The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Colleges and Secondary Schools was formed in 1928 to look after the accreditation of Adventist schools.¹³ In the *Proceedings of the Southern Asia Division Conventions and Council* held in Poona from 20th February to 7th March 1929, there were recommendations of the education department for the setting up of a Church School. Pupils should be admitted to boarding school only on the recommendation of the local mission authorities, and with the approval of the principal of the school. The admission for the non-Adventists is limited up to 10 percent out of the total enrolment.¹⁴ Gradually, admission was opened to everyone, based on merit. The conclusions arrived at the Convention and Council proved to be an important guideline towards the establishment of new SDA schools in India. It was quite helpful towards planning the establishment of the schools, admission policies, medium of instruction, selection of subjects, courses offered, etc. It also helped to establish schools according to the requirement of a region. It gave shape to a holistic development of education where schools or/and training centers were to be opened for all the age groups where keeping in view the regional requirements, economy of the people, the system/method of learning and earning was also started.¹⁵ Similarly, the works of the SDA in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills is the result of the policies and programmes of the SDA worldwide.

(1909), Mussoorie Intermediate School (1911), Santali Girls' School (1913), The Indian Christian Training School (1915). However, these seemed to be church schools only.

¹¹ In 1918 it was moved to Bangalore and in 1924 moved to Pune. See, David Trim, "At 100, Indian University Bears Imprint of Spicer and Lowry", <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story2246%20-at-100,-indian-university-bears-imprint-of-spicer-and-lowry>, accessed on 28th February 2015.

¹² O. A. Skau, "Education, What Is It?", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol.25, No.8, 1930, p. 6; some of the many articles that dwelt in these issues include: Melvin Oss, "The Teacher's Duty to Impart an Aim" and O. A. Skau, "The Assignment", *ibid.*, Vol.24, No.21, 1929, pp. 4-5; B. M. Meleen, "Let's be Thorough in Our School Work" and O. A. Skau, "Co-Operation", *ibid.*, Vol.24, No.14, 1929, pp. 4-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.12

¹⁴ "We recommend, that admission of non-Seventh-day Adventist students to training schools or departments be limited to ten per cent of the total enrolment." See, "Proceedings of the Southern Asia Division Conventions and Council", *ibid.*, Vol. 24, No.9, 1929, p.10.

¹⁵ For details on the decisions taken at the convention, see, *ibid.*

SDA AND EDUCATION IN KHASI-JAINTIA HILLS

As discussed in the previous chapters, the SDA members and missionaries put efforts to learn the Khasi language not only to get acquainted with the people but also to enable them to perform their evangelistic duties easily. The philanthropy of E. G. Hardinge proved crucial in the beginning of Adventist school in Khasi-Jaintia Hills. He donated the amount from the selling of his house before he left Shillong in 1933 for the establishment of an Adventist school in Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The money was later used to set up what was to become the Assam Training School.¹⁶ Gradually, the young Khasi converts were sent to study in other Adventist Schools located within the dominion of the Southern Asia Division of the Seventh-day Adventists. F. H. Loasby, Superintendent and the Chairman of the School Board of the Northeast India Union of Seventh-day Adventists writes: “One item of great encouragement and interest was the plan laid to send a number of our Khasi young people from Shillong to our school at Meiktila in Burma. This school was chosen rather than one of our Indian schools because of the affinity, both in race and language, of the Khasi and the Burmese people....”¹⁷ Hence, on 7th June 1938 six young members were sent to attend school works for development in Meiktila, Burma (present Myanmar). Among them were Jerlie Tariang, Sherlie Tariang, Ivorine Rynjah, Anabalene Rynjah and Clarabelle Laloo.¹⁸ They boarded the Burma steamer from Kolkata and reached Meiktila on 14th June 1938 accompanied by R. E. Rajee.¹⁹ Islora Rajee and Pearl Bridge Phanwar were sent for study at Spicer College which was then located at Bangalore.²⁰ For the few converts who were unable to go to Spicer College, classes were conducted daily in Shillong.²¹

¹⁶ Miriam Hardinge, “Beginnings of SDA Work in Assam”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol.78, No.10, 1983, pp. 4-5.

¹⁷ F. H. Loasby, “Our Work in Shillong”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 33, No. 13, 1938, p. 7.

¹⁸ Information gathered from personal interaction with J. E. Tariang, Ivorine Rynjah and J. I. Khonghat.

¹⁹ J. W. Baldwin, “Meiktila Speaks”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 33, No. 16, August 1938, pp.5-6.

²⁰ The enrolment at Spicer College was done on fields’ basis. In September, 1937 the students enrolled into the college was as follows: Northwest, eight; Northeast, three; Western India, two; Telugu, sixteen; Tamil, thirty-one; Malayalam, twenty-one; Sinhalese, five; Kanarese, nine; Burma, three; Assam, one; Abyssinia, three. Of this group five are girls—two Tamils, two Malayalis, and one from Ceylon. See, Leon B. Losey, “Spicer College Notes”, *ibid.*, Vol. 32, No. 17, September 1937, p.4.

²¹ The names above are provided to the researcher by Mr. Baxter W. Fanwar via email on February 26, 2013 in his short note entitled “My Earliest Memories of the Pioneers of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church In the Khasi & Jaintia Hills: A Personal Prospective”.

Once the SDA laid its foundation in Khasi Hills, the SDA missionaries strived to establish educational institutions, especially meant for those who had converted to their faith. The urgency to establish schools was perhaps due to the non-availability of SDA schools, and this cause a tremendous short coming for the Adventists. The Adventists found it difficult when they have to send their children to non-Adventists schools since they may have to attend even on Saturday which is a Sabbath for them. Secondly, the immediate requirement came due to the pressure by Sabbath keepers and baptized members as well as those who were already in baptismal classes, since their children had to attend classes in the schools run by the Government and other missions. It is reported in the Adventist literature that the Adventist children were teased by their fellow students.²²

The Shillong Church School - The progress in the efforts of the SDA to establish schools in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was realized to its full extent only after the arrival of more Adventist missionaries. After they were released from their work in western India, O.W. Lange²³ and his wife Sylvia Lange arrived in Shillong in August 1939.²⁴ Soon after her arrival, Sylvia Lange started a church school for the Adventist children known as Shillong Church School at a locality called Nongthymmai with enrollment of sixteen students.²⁵ The medium of instruction was Khasi. Initially, the school was limited only to the Adventists. However, within few years the door of the school was opened to all. Hence the school was not only for the benefit of the Adventist children but also catered to the needs of several other families in that locality.²⁶ The school was initially run in a small building within the premises of the SDA property, and subsequently shifted to the basement of the church building. Later on, Sylvia Lange was assisted by Mrs. Marcella Ashlock. The teachers at the initial stage were Mr. S. Kharmawphlang and Ms. Islora Rajee. Later on, other teachers such as Mr. O. Gatphoh, Mr. J.Tariang and Ms. I. Rynjah joined the school.²⁷ Since the

²² J. F. Ashlock, "We Need A School", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 33, No. 3, February 1939, p.4.

²³ Subsequently he was appointed the Educational Secretary of Assam Mission of Seventh-day Adventists.

²⁴ They stayed in a house named "Swiss Cottage", the site where the present Marbaniang Petrol Service at Madan Iewrynghep is built. Information gathered from interaction with K. B. Kharbteng, SDA Church pastor, former President of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Shillong.

²⁵ J. F. Ashlock, "Assam Notes", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 35, No. 3, February 1940, p.5.

²⁶ Hamlet Bareh, *op.cit.*, p.200.

²⁷ J. M. Steeves, "The Educational Department Biennial Report: 1939-1940", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 36, No. 8, 1941, p. 5.

school was elementary in nature, the missionaries decided to send the converts both students and teacher to obtain degree in higher education to Adventist schools in India and Burma. Therefore, in the beginning of 1940, eleven more students from Shillong were sent to Meiktila, and one student was sent to Spicer College (Pune).²⁸ By August 1940, fourteen more young members were already studying at Meiktila School.²⁹ Realising the difficulty in running of the school due to the increase in the number of students and teachers from a small building, discussions in the administrative and missionary circle was met towards finalization of a new bigger site and school.

FORMAL EDUCATION

Following this, a new secondary boarding school to be named ‘Assam Mission High School’ was planned.³⁰ Towards the end of the 1940 F. H. Loasby was accompanied to Shillong by J. M. Sleeves, Secretary of Educational and Y. P. M. V. of Southern Asia Division and E. W. Pohlman, with a purpose to discover a suitable site for the proposed School. It was proposed that the school should be situated away from Shillong; hence this was the beginning of Adventists’ venture in to other areas including rural or far flung area.³¹

The SDA initiated means for the establishment of schools and other institutions in those areas where the need was felt, away from the urban and administrative centers. After successful venture in Shillong, the Adventists expanded their activities into other areas and their next choice was Jaintia Hills. As the number of converts began to multiply, the need for a school for Adventist converts became an urgent necessity, and this paved a way for the establishment of the first regular Adventist school in Khasi-Jaintia Hills. In March 1941 O.W. Lange moved to Jowai and started a school in few rented houses for temporary, at a locality named Mynthong.³² This school was known as the Assam Co-Educational High School and was inaugurated on the 20th April 1941, with an enrolment of twenty-seven students.

²⁸ In the graduating class of 1940 at Vincent Hill School, Islora Rajee was among the eleven students. The others were B. Kisku, Hakim Din, Chaman Lal, Sastry, K. N. Abraham, and two others from Burma. See, “Spicer College News”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 35, No. 7, April 1940, p.4.

²⁹ E. D. Thomas, “My Visit to Shillong”, *ibid.*, Vol. 35, No.19, October 1940, p.5.

³⁰ J. M. Steeves, “The Educational Department Biennial Report—1939-1940”, *ibid.*, Vol. 36, No. 8, April 1941, p.5.

³¹ F. H. Loasby, “Prospecting in the Assam Hills”, *ibid.*, Vol. 35, No.24, December 1940, p.7.

³² O. W. Lange, “From India's North Eastern Frontier”, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-2.

Shortly after the school was opened, Adventist ministers and missionaries visited the school.³³ During this time, there was neither a proper road from Shillong to Jowai. It was said that Lange was the first person to drive a vehicle (jeep) from Shillong to Jowai.³⁴

The Assam Training School - The opening of the school at Jowai seems promising for more enrollments. Hence another site was needed for permanent establishment. Initially, O. W. Lange thought of establishing the school near Umiam river, a site 16 kms north of Shillong. However, other site was suggested by officials of the Government that since in the proposed location, there was a very bad type of malaria, which might be detrimental to the students. K. Cantlie, the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi-Jaintia Hills at that time suggested Lange to go meet M. E. St. John Perry, the Sub-Divisional Officer at Jowai.³⁵ Perry responded positively and sent Hamilton, a surveyor, to help find the location for the school. Finally, a land consisting of 320 acres was secured by the Adventists and leased it from the government for a period of 30 years from 1st April 1941 to 31st March 1971.³⁶ A contract for Rs.15,000 has been signed to build the administration building.³⁷ Soon after this development, the Assam Co-Educational High School was shifted to its permanent location, i.e., Thadlaskein in 1941 and was renamed Assam Training School (henceforth, ATS) under the charge of Lange as the Principal. In the year 1941, the first school to use English as the medium of learning, the Assam Training School was established at Thadlaskein (at present the area where ATS is located under jurisdiction of Khliehtyrshi village) about eight kilometers before Jowai from Shillong.³⁸ This is also ably pointed out by Alicia Gatphoh in her work, “The

³³ Adventist ministers Borrowdale, Ashlock and Hoag visited a few days after the school was opened.

³⁴ R. S. Fernando, “A Visit to Assam”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 36, No. 12, Poona, 1941, pp. 6-7.

³⁵ Perry formerly a Indian Civil Service who later became the Deputy Commissioner of United Khasi-Jaintia Districts in 1953. Information gathered from the write up supplied by M. Khongmen, Deacon SDA Shillong.

³⁶ “Draft Lease”, Revenue Department Settlement Branch Dy.No. Sell/1308, 1941. According to the clause in the Lease, the lessee had to pay annual revenue of 6 annas per bigha per month. However, it was later reduced to 2 annas after the recommendation of K. Cantlie the then Deputy Commissioner of Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

³⁷ R. S. Fernando, “Northeast News-O-Graphs: Assam”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol.36, No. 23, December 1941, p.6.

³⁸ *Gazetteer of India, Meghalaya District Gazetteer Jaintia Hills*, Directorate of Arts and Culture, 1995, p.180; Also see, Web Sources: jaintia.nic.in/influEduMissionry.html, accessed on 20th April 2013.

Adventist Training School was started by Pastor O. W. Lange who came to Jowai at the time when there was no proper road connecting Jowai with Shillong.”³⁹ It is interesting to note that during the pre-SDA period and even till 1960, there were only 4 secondary schools in Jaintia Hills out of which only one government school was established.⁴⁰ While in Khasi Hills, there were more than 30 secondary schools out of which more than 20 are deficit schools and more than 5 government schools. In addition, other Christian missions also concentrated the establishment of their schools mostly in the Khasi Hills.⁴¹

According to the report of O. W. Lange, Sir Robert Reid the then Governor of Assam laid the foundation stone of the administrative building on 2nd February 1942.⁴² The ATS started to impart some training in the selected rural undertakings, such as poultry, farming, dairying, crafts and carpentry.⁴³ Separate hostels for boys and girls and residential for staff were also constructed temporarily. The impact of the World War II was felt in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. In the middle of 1942, the students of the Shillong Church School were given a month's vacation, as many families had evacuated from Shillong for fear of air raids or probable invasion of Assam by the Japanese. The reopening of the school saw the inclusion of the students of the tenth standard from the ATS which had moved into Shillong when ATS also declared holiday. Students from ATS left the school as it was closed for some time for fear of Japanese invasion.⁴⁴ After the school reopened, C. Jensen took charge of the ATS while O.W. Lange was transferred to Shillong to take charge of the mission work since the Superintendent of Assam Mission, J. F. Ashlock went on a furlough.⁴⁵

After six years of its establishment, the administrative building of the ATS was completed; two hostels, five teachers' cottages, a principal's bungalow, a farm, quarters for farm assistants and servants' quarters were constructed. The first government officer to visit the school was Owen Rowie, Deputy Inspector of Schools,

³⁹ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.45.

⁴⁰ See, Daffodils Era Lamare, “Secondary Education in Jaintia Hills District of Meghalaya: An Analytical Study”, (unpublished), Ph. D. Thesis, North-Eastern Hill University Shillong, 2010.

⁴¹ For details see, Hamlet Bareh, *op.cit.*, pp.68-75.

⁴² “The Assam Training School”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol.37, No. 8, April 1942, p.5.

⁴³ Hamlet Bareh, *op.cit.*, p.200.

⁴⁴ F. H. Loasby, “The Northeast under the Present Distress”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol.37, No.1, August 1942, pp.3-4.

⁴⁵ O. W. Lange, “The Work in Shillong and Khasi Hills”, *ibid.*, Vol. 37, No. 23, Poona, India, December 1, 1942, p.5.

Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Rowie found the teaching methods at the ATS quite satisfactory, in his remark in the visitors' book he wrote:

The technique of teaching, the studies, equipment, and all the activities of the school have been modelled on the most modern lines of educational practice, about which we in Assam have read, but have not had much chance to see. I was especially interested in the handwriting work and the arithmetic work in the school. They have been very carefully graded to suit the ages of the children and their capacities. It has been a privilege for me to see this school, the teachers at work, and the children absorbed in their own lessons and handwork.⁴⁶

Other visitors included the Baptist missionaries who travelled from Shillong on their way to other parts of Assam used to visit ATS.⁴⁷ A. F. Tarr, Secretary and Treasurer of Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists visited the ATS in 1943.⁴⁸ In 1948, the Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clow and his wife visited the school. Among other prominent visitors have been the Bishop of Assam, the Minister of Roads, Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, Mr. Kingdon Ward (renowned botanist and explorer), the Commander of all infantry from the Shillong, Inspectress of Schools, E. N. Shullai and her Deputy, Gerald J. Christo President of Southern Asia Division, Division Treasurer, B. H. Stickle and Division Educational Secretary, C. H. Tidwell.⁴⁹ Afterwards, many prominent people from the region and Government officials visited the school. In his feedback for the school, S. Booth, Sub-Divisional Officer, Jowai observed that it would definitely be the premier school of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.⁵⁰

Cosmopolitan nature at ATS - Within the large campus of the school, more boys' and girls' hostels were constructed to accommodate the growing number of students from other parts of northeast India in the school.⁵¹ In 1944 there were

⁴⁶ J. M. Steeves, "A Good Report Maketh the Bones Fat", *ibid.*, Vol.37, No. 3, February 1942, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Information gathered from an interview with Holiwell Dkhar, oldest living minister of SDA Shillong

⁴⁸ L. G. Mookerjee, "In the Khasi and Lushai Hills", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol.38, No. 22, November 1943, p.2.

⁴⁹ O. W. Lange, "Looking Back", *ibid.*, Vol. 43, No. 7, 1948, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ "Extract from the Tour Diary of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Jowai for the Month of April, 1946. Memo No. 714, Dated Jowai, the 6th of May, 1946", A Copy of the diary was forwarded to the Director, Assam Training School, Jowai, for information, as cited in *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 43, No. 7, April 1948, p.6.

⁵¹ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*,p.45.

altogether 74 students in 1944, out of which there were nineteen Khasi and twenty-one Jaintia. The rest were from other areas of Assam and northeast India.⁵² The post-independence period of India witnessed further establishment of educational institutions. Thus the high school section at ATS was introduced after independence.⁵³ O. W. Lange reported that in this boarding school, about ten languages were spoken by the 120 students who enrolled in 1946.⁵⁴ By 1948 students from Imphal to Chittagong and Goch-Bihar areas; students representing Chins, Burmese, Lushai, Assamese, Gurkhali, Mundari, and other languages and dialect were enrolled in the school.⁵⁵ Within a short period of time, the school expanded in terms of enrollment and infrastructure. In 1969, C. A. Boykin, reported that in the admission list of the year 16 Garo, 69 Khasi-Jaintia, 3 Kerala, 44 Lushai, 1 Muhi, 40 Nagas, 1 Nepali, 2 Uroams, 1 Santali, 1 Telugu and 10 others enrolled. Of this group, 66 per cent were Seventh-day Adventists.⁵⁶ Hence, it is clear that the SDA kept the door of education open to its seekers. The table below makes it clear.

Year	Boys	Girls	Gender not mentioned clearly	Total	SDA	Non-SDA	Non-Christian	Religion not mentioned clearly	Khasi-Jaintia	Non Khasi-Jaintia	Community not mention clearly
1941	10	12	0	22	15	3	0	7	17	5	
1942	15	5	0	20	6	12	2		15	5	
1943	29	19	0	48	14	27		7	17	23	8
1944	32	16	0	48	3	16	2	11	6	26	0
1945	9	3	9	21	1	18	0	1	7	6	8
1946	9	3	58	70	4	35	1	30	15	39	16
1947	19	12	51	82	8	53	3	18	38	35	9
1948	10	5	6	21	5	11	2	3	15	2	4
1949	11	3		14	6	7	1		7	7	
1950	32	5		37	7	15	10		10	27	

ATS Admission Book – 1941-50⁵⁷

⁵² R. S. Fernando, “Assam!”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 39, No. 11, June 1944, pp.6-7.

⁵³ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.44.

⁵⁴ O.W. Lange, “From India's North Eastern Frontier”, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁵ Idem, “Looking Back”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 43, No. 7, 1948, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶ C. A. Boykin, “Northeast Students Represent 35 Languages Assam Training School”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 64, No.2, February 1969, p.14.

⁵⁷ Information collected from the Admission Book Records, Office of the Adventist Training School, Thadlaskein, Jaintia Hills and compiled in the tabular form by me.

Curriculum at ATS - In the academic year of 1951, the ATS was given the permission to send students for secondary school matriculation examination to either Jowai or Shillong. However, when it came to the curriculum, the authorities faced a problem. Usually, the ATS followed the curriculum set up by the office of the Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists, but now since matriculation should be met with the standard set by the government for several subjects; a major difference of policies existed between the two. Firstly, the Division required General History whereas, the Government required English and Indian History. Secondly, the Division stressed English Grammar whereas the Government stressed English literature. Thirdly, the Division curriculum listed more complicated and Advanced Science books than those required by the Government.⁵⁸ However, in December 1951, the ATS secured the Gauhati University Provisional Recognition.⁵⁹ However, nowhere in the records was shown how the problems regarding the difference in the curriculum was solved. Probably, later the SDA school subscribed to the regulations of the government and hence received a recognition.

Funding of SDA schools - The school was financially supported by the fund raised by the members of the SDA in the form of tithes and offerings in addition to the tuition fees paid by the students.⁶⁰ No grants were taken from the Government. But, individual donations have always been accepted. School fetes, too, were organized annually or bi-annually. Prior to 1990s, this was the same method adopted in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills too.⁶¹ There was a misconception by early leaders of the church that if any grant is taken from the government, it will take over the management.⁶² It was perhaps this perception which prompted the Adventists school management authorities to have less interaction with the Government agencies. On the matter related to foreign funds and available material to study the same, apparently Nalini Natarajan did not come across relevant documents for she mentioned that in the absence of adequate records, it was difficult to estimate the

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Assam Mission Committee of SDA held in Shillong on 18th January 1951.

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Assam Mission Committee of SDA held in Shillong on 1st January 1952.

⁶⁰ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.46.

⁶¹ Nalini Natarajan, *The Missionary among the Khasis*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1977, p. 79.

⁶² O. A. Skau, "Aided Schools and Government Requirements-Part I, India", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 24, No.23, December, 1929, pp. 4-5.

initial and later foreign aid. My researches prove contrary to it. There is no dearth of material and information about the grants. After a year of its establishment, the ATS received a donation of Rs.10,000 from the General Conference for construction of buildings.⁶³ In 1952, a saw mill was also brought to the ATS with the help of the Division office and Spicer Missionary College. R.R. Rouse was sent to make necessary arrangement for the industrial project at the school. In the meantime, the Education Minister of the Assam Province, with four UNESCO delegates, visited ATS. The Minister, who used to give us Rs.100 towards the Uplift Fund, doubled his donation after he visited the school.⁶⁴ Apart from the donations received from the members and even non-members of the SDA, the foreign aid was important for its development. Gradually the school became popular in the entire region and enrollment increased swiftly. The enrolment at ATS increased to 228 with 18 staff members in 1967. This development provided the ATS an opportunity to become one of the two schools in Southern Asia to be chosen as beneficiaries of the world-wide '13th Sabbath overflow offering on September 30'. Hence, the ATS received half of the 1967 overflow offering.⁶⁵ This perhaps benefitted the school greatly, because on 7th February 1969, S. L. Khosla, Commissioner of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District inaugurated the new administration building at ATS which was built at the cost of Rs.3,86,000.⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that a tradition is still followed by the graduating students to arrange programs to raise funds to donate to the school for developing the infrastructure or any other contributions in that matter.⁶⁷ From 1990 onwards the old perception changed and since then Adventist schools started applying for government grants. In addition to this change in the Adventist education system, teachers appointed were no longer restricted only to Adventists, preference was based on merit.⁶⁸ However, Adventist students were able to get concessions in terms of fees.

⁶³ F. S. Loasby, "The 'Scorched Policy' in Assam", *ibid.*, Vol.37, No. 7, April, 1942, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁴ P. K. Peterson, "The Work in Assam Solicits Your Prayers", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 47, No.21, November, 1952, p.6.

⁶⁵ W. F. Storz, "Build Us Stronger Buildings", *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol.62, No.6, June, 1967, p.3.

⁶⁶ Gerald J. Christo, "Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow Project", *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 64, No.4, April 1969, pp.1,4-5.

⁶⁷ Information gathered from interaction with Zimmick.

⁶⁸ Information gathered from interaction with K. B. Kharbteng, President Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (2004-2014), W. Lapasam, current President of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; A. Kharpran, In-Charge Education, Communication and Children Ministries of the Khasi-Jaintia Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, Shillong.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Besides formal education, the SDA also concentrated on the promotion of vocational technical education of its students. The guidelines of the Education Department of SDA clearly state its objective of implementation of such scheme. As per the guidelines, “The curriculum should be vocational in nature sufficiently to insure every student a worthy means of earning a livelihood.”⁶⁹ According to Gary Land, an Adventist historian, he opined that the SDA tried its best to implement a philosophy of education enunciated by Ellen White which calls for a balance of spiritual, mental and physical activity. The Avondale School was the first to have introduced agriculture, carpentry, printing and sewing in its curriculum. Gradually, other Adventist schools followed suit, and developed vocational education in which students not only learned practical and technical skills but also earned money with which to pay for their education.⁷⁰ Moreover, this helped those students who were poor in their academic studies but were able to make use of their talents and skills in non-education activities. Rapid industrial and technological developments in the United States in the early twentieth century had significant effects which undermined the viability of campus industries and the number of Adventist schools which operate such programs came down drastically. However, the same kind of operation (vocational education) continued to play important roles in newly established schools in developing countries.⁷¹ It was this same type of technical training that was also to become the first priority of Adventist education in India.

In this regard, the ATS would be the best example. Gradually more schools were started for general schooling for the Adventist children as well as non-Adventists and new initiatives was taken towards vocational training. The efforts of the SDA in the expanding horizon of education have been recognized by Hamlet Bareh who writes, “the role of education became more diversified on account of the

⁶⁹ “Selected Core Concepts of SDA Education” sub-heading h. see, General Conference Department of Education, *Guide for Work Experience Education in Seventh-day Adventist Schools and Colleges*, *op.cit.*, p.26.

⁷⁰ Gary, Land, *The A to Z of the Seventh-Day Adventists*, *op.cit.*, p.87.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.87.

coming in of the Missions subsequently Christian denominations, Seventh Day Adventist..”⁷²

The school not only offered academic courses but vocational training was part and parcel of the curriculum. This was also taken note by S. Booth, Sub-Divisional Officer, Jowai, he writes:

The school, literally, boys and girls are being brought up on a modern farm and are daily receiving practical instructions how land should be used, prepared and developed. The students of this institution, therefore, will take back to their villages an education which cannot be had in any school of these hills. They are also able to earn while learning and this is exactly what is needed to encourage thrift and economy which is almost disappearing as a quality amongst the present day Khasi and Jaintia school child.⁷³

To sum up in the words of non-SDA scholars, the school was rural oriented. The students were taught to cultivate the land and use it for farming purposes. They were also trained in dairying, poultry, carpentry and pasteurization. In addition, they were trained to drive cars as well as to repair them.⁷⁴ The farm at ATS produced enough from the sale of vegetables to pay for all seed, for most of the student labour, fertilizers and tractor operation costs. The farming industry developed more under the supervision of Jensen who made considerable progress in farm work and a number of fruit trees and other trees were planted. It was reported that the Assam State Livestock department presented the school with a pure bred Jersey bull, air freighted from Australia.⁷⁵ In 1970, the ATS recorded a rise in its financial gain of Rs.19,000 which was largely due to the school's industrial programme. This profit was mainly due to the presence of technical facilities, farm, press etc. It was said that a welder-cum-mechanic named Peter Baa, earned about four to seven hundred rupees per week for repairing three to four vehicles every day that are bought from nearby villages. From

⁷² Hamlet Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1997, p.397.

⁷³ “Extract from the Tour Diary of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Jowai for the Month of April, 1946. Memo No. 714, Dated Jowai, the 6th of May, 1946”, A Copy of the diary was forwarded to the Director, Assam Training School, Jowai, for information, as cited in *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 43, No. 7, April 1948, p.6.

⁷⁴ Hamlet Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, *op.cit.*, p.348. Also see, Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.44.

⁷⁵ C. A. Boykin, “Northeast Students Represent 35 Languages Assam Training School”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 64, No. 2, February 1969, p.14.

this industry alone a profit of Rs.9,000 was realized in a single year.⁷⁶ This showed that the project was viable since on the one hand, it generated employment opportunity to the trained ones while on the other it also provided earnings for the ATS. The farm and poultry business not only made profit but also provided essentials for the campus. Cattle and chickens were sometimes donated as gifts by the local development scheme. From this industry milk and eggs were produced which served the need in the campus and was also marketed outside.⁷⁷

The students who graduated from ATS could avail job facility in different kinds of jobs available because they were professionally trained in the school.⁷⁸ In this regard, O. L. Snaitang pointed out that in addition to academic schools, Christian missions in Khasi-Jaintia Hills introduced technical education as well. Among these institutions, 'the multi-purpose training centre of the SDA' is one. He opined that the graduates of these centres either set up their own business or were getting employed in government and private enterprises.⁷⁹ It is also interesting to note that the students were so much attached to their school that most of them after graduation preferred to return and serve in the SDA schools as teacher or in any other form of services.⁸⁰

The aspect of learning and earning - Another important aspect of the Adventists' schools such as the ATS was the opening up of job opportunity for students in which they were able to learn and earn at the same time. This is also highlighted by Nalini Nataranjan that the students who were trained in poultry, dairy or carpentry earned a stipend of 25 naya paise an hour.⁸¹ As we have learned that one of the main techniques of evangelization used by the Adventists was the spread of the Adventist literature, therefore, efforts were made to distribute and sell these literatures by training school students. As soon as the school was established, boarders were trained to sell the Adventist literature during the vocation.⁸² These students-cum-colporteur included Lushai, Manipuri and Khasi-Jaintia. This practice was done to

⁷⁶ G. J. Christo, "Northeast Union", *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 66, No.1, January 1971, p.19.

⁷⁷ L. K. Neitham, "ATS Students Speak 27 Languages", *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 66, No. 6, June 1971, p.12.

⁷⁸ Nalini Nataranjan, *op.cit.*, p.79.

⁷⁹ O. L. Snaitang, *Christianity and Social Change in North East India*, Vendrame, Shillong, 1993, p.115.

⁸⁰ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.46.

⁸¹ Nalini Nataranjan, *op.cit.*, p.79.

⁸² "Of Special Interest", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 39, No. 2, January 1944, p.8.

encourage the students to earn their own scholarships to support themselves in the school.⁸³ On the other hand they unconsciously helped to spread Adventist literature in their respective places. A monthly magazine was also printed in the printing press of the school in which several girl students were employed.⁸⁴ Students were able to earn a portion of their school fees by working in the cafeteria, in the school buildings, the press, farm, the repair shop and on the campus itself. It is also important to point out that not only the students received the training, but teachers also were involved in training sessions known as ‘Teachers’ Institute’.⁸⁵

EVANGELISTIC WORKS AT SDA SCHOOLS

Besides academic and vocational training, evangelistic programmes were also conducted at ATS in which Adventist ministers from the Conference, Union and Division offices attended very often. Most of the writings of Ellen White were used in these programmes.⁸⁶ Hence, the work of the SDA missionaries bore fruits not only in the form of producing educated people, but also they succeeded in converting quite a number of people to their faith. Most of the boarders who stayed in the hostels for a number of years gradually accepted Baptism and embraced Adventism as their faith. According to Gatphoh, between 20-25 students were baptized at the school at the end of an academic year.⁸⁷ As per the *President’s Report* presented at the Assam Section Constituency Meeting held on 4th - 8th February 1969, by 1968, there were 29 Adventist schools in all the five Circles of the Assam Section. The total enrolment in the Adventist schools reached 656 in which 44 percent of the students were Adventists. In these schools in 1968 alone 29 baptisms were conducted.⁸⁸ The baptisms in ATS were apparently brought about by the evangelistic activities such as daily morning and evening prayers and worships, weekly worship services, baptismal

⁸³ “Miscellany”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 54, No.2, January 1959, p.16.

⁸⁴ P. K. Peterson, “The Work in Assam Solicits Your Prayers”, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 47, No.21, November 1952, p.6.

⁸⁵ In 1978, the Northeast India Section Teachers’ Institute was held at ATS. Teachers from Manipur, Garo, Khasi and Nagaland schools attended. Experts from SDA institutions were called as instructors to deliver training and conduct activities. In the sessions of these programmes, evangelistic, theological and academics issues were discussed. For details see, Helen Lowry, “Adventist Training School Hosts Teachers Institute”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 73, No. 3, March 1978, p.12.

⁸⁶ D. S. Johnson, “The Assam Training School Reporting”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 53, No.16, August 1958, p.7.

⁸⁷ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*,p.46

⁸⁸ Gerald J. Christo, “Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow Project”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 64, No. 4, April 1969, pp.1,4-5.

classes, group discussions and correspondence courses.⁸⁹ In 1958, Lushai, Khasi and Garo languages have been added to the curriculum. This was an attempt to prepare the students to return to their home and work as colporteur and evangelists for their own people.⁹⁰ In 1969, the missionaries at ATS conducted the ‘Week of Prayer’ and it resulted in the forming of baptismal classes in four languages. The largest single baptism in the history of the ATS till 1969 was done during the Week in which twenty two students were baptized on 5th October 1969 along with two adults from a nearby village.⁹¹

SDA SCHOOLS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF KHASI-JAINTIA ADVENTISTS

In 1971, the indigenous leaders of Khasi-Jaintia Hills took over the management of the SDA after the departure of the foreign missionaries. The ATS was renamed Adventist Training School in 1972 soon after Meghalaya received its statehood and it also received recognition from the Government in 1974, thirty three years after its establishment. Since then SDA schools also were headed by the indigenous SDA workers.⁹² Although the ATS was the only English medium school in Jaintia Hills which was established during the pre-independence period, however, it took the longest time to be officially recognized by the Board of School Education.⁹³ The tables below provide information on the statistics of SDA elementary and secondary schools in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, prior to the formation of the Khasi-Jaintia Conference of SDA.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ K. Kharbteng, “Church Growth in the Khasi-Jaintia Conference, Meghalaya, India”, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Andrews University, Michigan, 2001, p.79.

⁹⁰ “Twenty-Eight Join Baptismal Class at A. T. S.”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 53, No.13, July 1958, p.6.

⁹¹ C. A. Boykin, “Northeast Students Represent 35 Languages Assam Training School”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 64, No. 2, February 1969, p.14.

⁹² D. R. Bankhead was the last foreign Principal of the ATS who left around 1972.

⁹³ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*, p.45. At present it is known as The Adventist Higher Secondary School.

⁹⁴ Report of the Education Department Report, First Constituency Meeting Reports of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held at Adventist Training School, 21-24 January 1998, pp.16-17.

Elementary Schools		
	1996	1997
Number of Lower and Upper Elementary Schools	7	8
Number of mission schools	7	7
Number of church schools	0	1
Number of enrollment of students	1003	1074
Number of students from homes with one or both SDA parents	220	224
Number of students from other Christian homes	630	686
Number of students from non-Christian homes	145	164
Number of students baptized during the school year	7	9
Number of SDA teachers	36	36
Number of other Christian teachers	2	2
Number of non-Christian teachers	2	2
Total number of teachers	40	40

Secondary Schools		
	1996	1997
Number of Secondary Schools	1	1
Number of enrollment of students	113	173
Number of students from homes with one or both SDA parents	32	29
Number of students from other Christian homes	81	115
Number of students from non-Christian homes	20	29
Number of students baptized during the school year	7	24
Number of SDA teachers	10	12
Number of other Christian teachers	1	1
Number of non-Christian teachers	1	1
Total number of teachers	12	14

From the time the indigenous leaders took over the administration of the SDA, they were keen to expand the mission works. This includes the improvement of the already established educational institutions, setting up of new institutions in different areas and promoting of evangelism across the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The established

schools received more attraction from local people and those outside the state, and new schools were opened in different parts of Khasi-Jaintia alongside the established churches. In the admission procedure and appointment of teachers and staffs, there was no discrimination on the basis of religion, denomination, caste, creed or gender. Members of the Managing Committee were Adventists; however, the representatives from the parents' side were non-Adventist. Initially, the main aim of the SDA for setting up schools was to foster education for the children belonging to the members of the SDA. This does not only serve the Adventist students but provided employment opportunity to eligible Adventist members in teaching and non-teaching jobs.

In the curriculum of the SDA schools a compulsory subject called Moral Science was introduced. The SDA printed textbooks are categorized as – from class KG to IV *Stories to Live By* which consist of stories from the Bible and logical lessons. From class V to XII *Higher Value Education Series* which included Bible Lessons, here the main emphasis was laid on issues of health and introduction to the principles of the SDA Church. The emphasis on the importance of health and environment helped the students to abstain from intoxicative food and drinks.⁹⁵ The impact of the health programmes conducted at the school has social significance. In this regard, in 1987, the students of Brookside Adventist School were invited by the All India Radio, Shillong to prepare a children's programme on “A Disciplined Life Style” which was broadcasted on 26th April 1987. In this programme, the students sang and spoke about the evil effect of smoking, drinking and eating unhealthy food; they emphasized the importance of Adventists' doctrine on health and temperance.⁹⁶ Moreover, as part of the extra-curricular activities, students took part in programs for District and State level competitions and participated in cultural activities or exchange programmes. The schools also initiated the formation of ‘Path Finder Club’ where students comprising of a mixed group of volunteer are given several duties to perform as part of their social activities. This club is similar to the Scouts and Guides in other public schools. Tracts and pamphlets were also distributed to villagers to spread awareness about health and cleanliness. There was also distribution of clothes to the poor as well as visitation of hospitals thrice a year. In addition, the students had a great contact with the area and the surrounding environment as teachers took them for

⁹⁵ Information gathered from interaction with Andrew Zimmick, Vice-Principal, North-east Adventist College, Thadlaskein.

⁹⁶ “News Flash”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, September 1987, p.16.

nature study, picnics, camping, etc., which were also part of the extra-curricular activities of the school.⁹⁷

At the residential schools, apart from academics, the boarders and day scholars have other activities. These include worship and prayer meetings organized every morning and evening, Bible reading is compulsory as a subject from class Kg to College. Moreover, there are chapel periods, for boarders and day scholars as well. In the Temperance Week and Annual School Sport that were organized, competitions on health issues used to be conducted. Moreover, all the SDA schools met together during the annual Inter-Adventist School Competition to compete with one another in various activities right from academics to games and sports and to socio-cultural competitions.

SPREAD OF EDUCATION TO OTHER AREAS

The spread of education was not only confined to the administrative headquarters or urban centers. After Shillong and Thadlaskein, another school was started in Mowkaiaw by Albin Roy Dkhar through the help of the office of the Assam Mission in 1940s. The Adventist mission school in Mowkaiaw had flourished since its estimated year and had served like one of the sources to spread knowledge and to shape the moral values of the people. Some of the Adventists who were taking part in teaching and other works include Mr. Albin Roy Dkhar, Mr. R. E. Rajee, Mr. O. Gatphoh, Mr. Ulster Fanwar, Mr. Sherlie Rajee, Mr. J. E. Tariang, Mr. D. Nongtdu, Mr. D. Marang, Mr. W. D Dkhar, Ms. S. Sungoh and many others. However, some years later the few numbers of enrollment became a drawback for the institution and there was no progress. It was revived only in 1980 through the efforts of Adventist ministers D. Nongtdu and D. Marang who sought help from the General Conference office and hence David Robert Winters was sent to improve the situation. The school was constructed in the year 1986-87 through the funds donated and generated by Winters. On 5th April 1988 the elementary school was inaugurated and was named “Winters Adventist English School” (later it was renamed as Winters Adventist School).⁹⁸ The school started from Nursery to class 4 and upgraded to each class

⁹⁷ Alicia Gatphoh, *op.cit.*,p.44

⁹⁸ “News Flash”, *Southern Asia Tidings*, Vol. 83, No. 9, September, 1988, p.16.

every year with a total enrollment of 50. The medium of instruction used is English.⁹⁹ It is not known when the Shillong Church School (the first Adventist school that was established in Khasi Hills) merged with the secular educational system. However, in 1976 Fred Samuel along with the teachers in the school renamed it 'Brookside Adventist School'.¹⁰⁰ It was upgraded to High School and gradually expanded as Brookside Adventist Higher Secondary School.¹⁰¹ The SDA in Sohryngkham started a school in 1950s.

The following are the some of the SDA schools which were established in post-independence period and after the foreign missionaries departed from Khasi-Jaintia Hills till 1999. These schools were managed and funded by the mission boards of the SDA and hence in the context of Khasi-Jaintia Hills, the Khasi- Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. With exception to the ATS, none of the schools had boarding facilities. The following schools are affiliated to the Meghalaya Board of School Education.

Brookside Adventist Higher Secondary School, Shillong, Khasi Hills, 1939.

Adventist Higher Secondary School, Thadlaskein, Jaintia Hills, 1941.

Sunshine Adventist L. P. School, Sohryngkham, Khasi Hills, 1949.

Hill Light Adventist Secondary School, Mynska, Jaintia Hills, 1968.

Radiant Adventist Secondary School, Mawryngkneng, Khasi Hills, 1972.

Silver Spring Adventist Secondary School, Lyngiong, Khasi Hills, 1974.

Sunny Hill Adventist Secondary School, Myllem, Khasi Hills 1975.

Winters Adventist Secondary School, Mowkaiaw, Jaintia Hills, 1988.

Lumrot Adventist L. P. School, Lumrot, Jaintia Hills, 1993.

Sunrise Adventist School, Mawlasnai, Khasi Hills 1995.

Pyrdong Adventist L. P. School, Saphai, Jaintia Hills, 1997.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

The education of women undertaken by the Christian missions brought about significant changes. Firstly, it successfully counteracted the prevailing view

⁹⁹ Khasi Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, "Ka History Ka Balang Mowkaiaw", *Ki Khubor Ka Balang Basah*, No.31, February-May 2012, pp.16-17.

¹⁰⁰ School Magazine, "Project You", Brookside Adventist Higher Secondary School, Shillong, 2012, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Hamlet Bareh, *Progress of Education in Meghalaya, op.cit.*, p.200.

prohibiting the education of women, especially in the rural areas.¹⁰² Next in significance of women's education was that it provides them with opportunities for leadership in areas where they had not previously exercised it. Since then Khasi-Jaintia women have assumed prominent role in educational and other new institutions and professions. And, as in the case of all schools, educated women also shared a role in the creation of a new tribal consciousness.¹⁰³ In this regard, the SDA also played a significant role in the upliftment of position of women through its educational institutions, the Women's Ministry and Children Ministry. It is a vital point to be noted that among the students who attended the schools, girls were also present. The table showing admission of students at ATS between 1941 and 1950 provide information about the existence of girls, sometimes they were more in numbers than boys (see Table at page.12 of this chapter). The importance of women education was shown interest by the SDA when it sent girls to study in Meiktila school in 1938. After completing their graduation, some of them served as teachers in Adventist schools in Shillong and at ATS. Girls were encouraged to take up higher education, some of them were sent to Spicer Memorial College in Pune to pursue their degrees. Girls at ATS took part in both formal and vocational education. The training in colporteur works was not limited to boys only. Girls were also fully engaged in making their own scholarship for payment of their fees and other expenses through the earning they got by taking subscription of Adventist literature.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, it was the Adventist women and wives of Adventist missionaries who started the first SDA school in Shillong.¹⁰⁵ These women of the SDA continue their support for the SDA and the mission and were given important roles to assist the administration of the SDA as well, some of whom rose to the higher positions in the SDA and were influential in many areas. For instance Mrs. Silvia Lange was appointed as Secretary

¹⁰² The myth regarding the fall of women into barrenness if they take up education prevailed in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills much before the advent of Christian missionaries.

¹⁰³ O. L. Snaitang, *op.cit.*, pp. 152-154.

¹⁰⁴ L. C. Shepard reported in 1942 that Ivorine Rynjah and Mayville Fanwar were two Khasi girls who earn scholarship by taking subscriptions for "Oriental Watchman" Magazine. See, *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 37, No.12, June, 1942, p.5.

¹⁰⁵ Georgia Burgess wrote tracts in Khasi and translated many Adventist literatures into vernacular. She also provides home school education to some of the Khasi girls who attended the services at their place. Mrs. Silvia Lange started the Shillong Church School; she supported her husband O. W. Lange in his work in India including Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Mrs. Marcella Ashlock assisted Sylvia Lange in the Shillong Church School and she also supported her husband J. F. Ashlock in his work as an Adventist minister and first Superintendent of the Assam Mission in Shillong.

Dept. of Education of Northeast (India) Union Mission during the years 1953-1955.¹⁰⁶ In Lyngiong, East Khasi Hills District, Ms. Icy Laloo started an English school in 1974. Classes were conducted in the church building and this continued for many years.¹⁰⁷ It can also be seen that a number of women were appointed as teachers and staff at the ATS and other SDA institutions.¹⁰⁸ On this matter, apart from ordination of women to serve as full-fledged ministers of the SDA, the SDA opened its doors for education of women and provided opportunity to indigenous students to explore not only Adventist philosophy and doctrinal canons but also trained them in the concepts of self-supporting, self-employment and for future endeavours.

SOCIAL WORKS

The emphasis on health, education and humanitarian works by the SDA was largely seen in its role in India since its inception. However, in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, despite the distribution of literature on health, hygiene and diet during the initial years of the mission and even in the post-independence period, there were fewer efforts to establish a health centre in the hills.

The Adventists always showed their concern for health care along with education. In the case of Jaintia Hills, with the growth in the number of students and staff at ATS, the concern for health care facilities of the residents of the ATS and the people of the area in the Jaintia Hills was sought for. This is found in the appeal made by F. H. Loasby, President of North East India Union of Seventh-day Adventists in one of the articles of the *Eastern Tidings* in 1943. To cite Loasby:

A European nurse would be of untold value to us in this school. Such a worker could not only teach such subjects as physiology and anatomy, as well as attend to sick students, but could open up a dispensary on our school estate that would be a blessing to the hundreds who pass by daily and are practically without medical aid. Such a dispensary should be followed by a small hospital on the estate. This would be a boon to thousands in this part of the country, and would be a tremendous factor in strengthening our work in

¹⁰⁶ Walton J. Brown, *Century of Adventist Education 1872 - 1972*, Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Washington, D.C., n.d., p.224.

¹⁰⁷ Information provided by K. Kharbteng and A. Kharpran.

¹⁰⁸ In 1947 women who were appointed at ATS included Clarabelle Laloo - Preceptress and Matron, N. Dass - Science, Mathematics, Linnet Lyngdoh - Vernacular classes, A. B. Rynjah - Elementary classes, D. S. Laursen - Bible and Studying Khasi, E. W. Holroyd, C. B. Israel and M. V. Broderson - Bible Correspondence and F. Juriansz - Mathematics, and Science, see, O. W. Lange, "Looking Back", *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.

Assam and in giving us a very strong and influential position in this province. The doctor who answers this call should be a missionary doctor. He might not be able to have his electric toaster and muffin and crumpet manufacturer, but would certainly have electric light in his house and hospital, too, if he brought out a couple of Win chargers and the necessary fittings. Here a doctor could do a great work among the finest people in India, in a grand climate amidst wonderful scenery. Here, in this Switzerland of the East, is scenery that cannot be surpassed anywhere in the world, and a splendid people to work with and for.¹⁰⁹

However, the desire expressed by Loasby for the appointment of a nurse, a missionary doctor, the establishment of a dispensary and a hospital did not materialize. It is indeed surprising that the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills being the first mission of the SDA in northeast India and moreover Shillong being the headquarter of the North East India Union, could not have medical and health facilities, while the same was established at Aizawl in Mizoram in 1996.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills took keen interest in promoting only campaigns on health issues and contributed to social and humanitarian activities which are pointed out below.

The first meeting of the Shillong Dorcas Society was held in January 1950. They could not do much then. However, in 1951 a Dorcas Sale was organized which brought in about Rs.200. Necessary materials were then bought and a few of the SDA members made dresses and other garments that were freely distributed to the children of poor families for Christmas. In this way help was also rendered to SDA church members who were in adverse circumstances.¹¹¹

In 1972,¹¹² a sum of Rs.1500 was donated by the North East India Section from the Disaster and Relief Fund to the victims of the fire that broke out in a main business centre of Shillong.¹¹³ A request was also made to the Division office for a sum of Rs.5000 to be distributed to the victims of the fire which destroyed the houses

¹⁰⁹ F. H. Loasby, "Northeast Union News", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 38, No. 2, January 1943, p.3.

¹¹⁰ Aizawl Adventist Hospital was established on 27 January 1996 at Aizawl. It is the first SDA operated medical institution in northeast India. <http://www.adventisthealthindia.com/Aizawl.php>. accessed on

¹¹¹ Esther Dahlsten, "The Shillong Dorcas Society", *Eastern Tidings*, Vol. 48, No.11, June 1953, p.3.

¹¹² It is interesting to note that there is no mention whatsoever in the available material of the social work undertaken during this intervening period 1951 and 1972.

¹¹³ Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the North East India Section of Seventh-day Adventists held at Shillong, 31st March 1972.

and shops at G.S. Road, Shillong, and the estimated loss from the fire was said to be around Rs.50 lakhs.¹¹⁴

Under the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), a project for community drinking water was proposed to be started at Mawpun, Ri Bhoi District, in July 1994. The project was operational on 2nd September 1996. The fund amount Rs.1,70,402.24 was received from ADRA Italy. In the same village, a well of about 8feet in diameter and 14 feet depth was dug and it was inaugurated on 17th May 1999. The fund for this project was from ADRA Norway.¹¹⁵

Temperance Rally was conducted at Shillong on 9th November 1996. The objective of the rally was to create awareness against the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.¹¹⁶

In September 1997, the SDA at Shillong donated an amount of Rs.3,800 to the victims of the Bus accident at Mawsna at Civil Hospital and Ganesh Das Hospital Shillong. The youth of the SDA organised a Gospel Concert for the same purpose and were able to raise an additional amount of Rs.5000 which was donated to the victims.¹¹⁷

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we found that the contribution of the SDA to Khasi-Jaintia society was mainly in the educational sphere. Prior to the establishment of SDA's institutions in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, there were many government schools, Christian and non-Christian missions as well. A special reference can be made of the situation in Jaintia Hills where SDA was able to establish the first school which had English as the medium of instruction. Moreover, it was one of the four secondary schools located in the Jaintia Hills. It is important to note that during the period the number of schools in Jaintia Hills was one-fourth of those in the Khasi Hills. Perhaps this may have been one reason which convinced the Adventists to start their

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Report of the Adventist Development Relief Agency, Second Constituency Meeting Reports of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held at Pine Brook, 9-11 May, 2001, pp.30-31.

¹¹⁶ Report of the Temperance Department, First Constituency Meeting Reports of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held at Adventist Training School, 21-24 January 1998, p.26.

¹¹⁷ Report of the Chaplaincy Department Report, First Constituency Meeting Reports of Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held at Adventist Training School, 21-24 January 1998, p.15.

educational institution in the area in addition to a school that they had already started in Shillong. One can also surmise that perhaps this negligence of Jaintia Hills both by the Government and the other Christian mission was due to the effects of the Jaintia Resistance¹¹⁸ against the Colonial power (1860-1862). Whether the resistance by the Jaintia was responsible for the neglect of education in the Jaintia Hills by the missionaries and colonial state is a matter that needs to be looked at.¹¹⁹ Moreover, it is also possible that the people found it difficult to convert because of their traditional faith and the antagonism with the missionaries and their educational efforts. It is in this situation that the SDA ventured into the Jaintia Hills and also contributed to the education of the people of the area.

Unlike the situation in the nineteenth century in which other Christian missions had to face while starting to establish schools in the hills, the SDA had a smooth entry. This was possible due to the path breaking work of the Welsh Presbyterians who not only had to make education attractive to the people but also faced challenges at that period of time. Steadily by providing rational explanation through schooling, the people were ready to denounce some of the beliefs which were considered superstitious and allowed their children to attend schools.¹²⁰ From the records available it seems that at the time when SDA started its education facilities, it did not have to deal so much with these issues since by this time the people understood the value of education.

Since education is one of the departments where the SDA concentrate to expand as part of its mission, the educational policy adopted by the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was according to the guidelines set forth by the General Conference. Therefore, we find that in the Adventist literatures, several articles are dedicated not only on religion, mission and health issues but importance was also given to education. Based on these guidelines and their philosophy, till the early part of the twentieth century, the SDA's primary purpose to set up schools was for the benefit of the Adventist students. However, gradually, decisions were taken to start secular education for non-Adventists as well. This change in their perspective was perhaps

¹¹⁸ For details on the Jaintia Resistance see, S. N. Lamare, *Resistance Movements in North East India: The Jaintias of Meghalaya (1860-1862)*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2001,

¹¹⁹ None of the scholars writing on education and resistance in the Jaintia Hills have paid attention to this.

¹²⁰ O. L. Snaitang, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

due to the benefit they saw from the established schools. The institutions would provide them an easy way to promote their evangelistic activities. However, in the process, consciously and unconsciously, the institutions, especially the ATS, were able to promote education to the people.

The non-availability of Adventist schools in Shillong compelled the early Adventists to send their children to non-SDA schools. It seems this was a major problem for them, and their donation for the establishment of an Adventist school speaks clearly about their grievance. Later Adventist converts were sent to study in Adventist schools outside the region. The anxiousness to set up a school of their own is reflected in their appeals through the SDA journals and periodicals. Once the SDA started its formal mission in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, no delay was made in their motive to establish a school. Few reasons can be sorted out here to analyse the urgency. The observance of Sabbath on Saturday posed a problem for Adventists who attended non-SDA schools. Another reason is the policy of segregation desired by the missionaries to separate the converts from the others in order to keep them away from former influence of their religious affinities or culture. The sending of converts to study in Adventists schools even outside the region implies that the missionaries wanted the converts to be fully aware of the SDA doctrines and philosophy. An expectation that they may return as evangelists to work among their own people also can be said to be another reason.

The pioneer among the Adventists to promote education in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was O. W. Lange and his wife Silvia Lange. Under their supervision, the Shillong Church School was established in Shillong in 1939. This school not only served the converts but also provided admission to non-Adventists. This school later became the Brookside Adventist School. In the meantime, since no formal school was established, the missionaries continued to send the converted students to Adventist schools in India and abroad. Gradually, seeing the potentiality of establishment of a school, the Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventists took interest by sending mission workers to develop the objective of setting up a secular school in Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

After Shillong, the next point of interest was Jaintia Hills. The Assam Co-Educational High School was established at Jowai on the 20th April 1941, with an enrolment of twenty-seven students. The school was shifted to its present location in

1941 and was renamed Assam Training School. Officers from the government and other renowned persons as well as Adventist workers from outside Khasi-Jaintia Hills visited the school time and again and this provided the moral support that the Adventists needed. However, due to fear of Japanese invasion, Adventist schools in Shillong and Thadlaskein were closed down for a brief period of time.

The difference in the approach of the SDA from other Christian missions towards education was the emphasis laid on both academics and vocational training. Urbanization and modern institutions have opened multiple scopes for alternative employment (other than traditional agriculture and horticulture). Seeing the need, SDA introduced vocational training towards skill development for alternative employment and earning. The ATS started developed training in the farming industry and small scale cottage industry. This opened up an opportunity for the students and those who had skills in vocational works to get trained in different type of works. It encouraged them to learn and earn at the same time. This training and earning not only benefited the trainee but helped the school financially as well. It is important to point out that the training to students to be colporteurs not only helped them to earn and support themselves but promote Adventist literature to corners of the state and beyond. This method is one of the techniques of the Adventists to gain converts. Students were able to support their studies by working in different sectors of the school campus. It is also important to note that from the training that the students received at the school, the knowledge which they gained prepared them not only to take formal education for white collar jobs but towards skill development and self-employment at rural levels. One can say that this brought in a concept towards a kind of ‘social capital’¹²¹ where Adventist students would come together to contribute something to the school for the benefit of the generations to come or devise methods to contribute to the development of their own society through their skills and techniques received at the Adventist institution.

¹²¹ ‘Social Capital’ is a concept that “describe the types of relations that exists between individuals as located within both families and communities, and that are said to exert a strong influence on levels of educational achievements”, see John Scott and Gordon Marshall, *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, p.697. another definition in the same perspective can be cited here, “network of social connections that exist between people, and their shared values and norms of behaviour, which enable and encourage mutually advantageous social cooperation.” <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/social-capital>, accessed on Also see K. R. Gupta, Gunnar Lind Haase Svendsen, Prasenjit Maiti (eds.), *Social Capital*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2008.

Trainings were also given to teachers both academically, vocationally and in religious matters as well. It is interesting to find that most of the faculty and staff of the SDA institutions, especially the ATS, were the past pupils of the schools who return and serve in the school whether as teachers or in any other form of services. The educational system introduced by the SDA was not of a competitive kind. Schools and therefore education were within the reach of rural and even poor people because the institutions established by the SDA were not in the urban centers or administrative headquarters but mostly in rural areas where provision of learning with earning facilities were also present.

Acceptance of government grants was also excluded from the educational policy of the SDA. Initially, the SDA institutions did not accept financial aids from the government since the guidelines of the Department of Education of SDA do not permit them. This was due to the fear that management will go over to the hands of the government. This distinguishes the SDA schools from other Christian schools which do not have any reservation on the matter. This also explains the difference in the school curriculum between the SDA schools and public schools. It is interesting to find that despite the good relations the Adventist missionaries had with the government officials, the ATS received the provisional recognition in 1951 and the full recognition was received from the government only in 1974, thirty three years after its establishment. However, the SDA schools are financially supported by the SDA members in the form of tithes and offerings in addition to the tuition fees paid by the students. Additional income was met through school fetes that were organized annually or bi-annually. Funds were also acquired from the General Conference, Southern Asia Division of SDA and North East India Union of SDA offices. Personal donations from non-Adventists through the Uplift Fund were also welcomed.

Being a residential school for majority of the students, many students from all over India and even Bangladesh, Nepal and Burma took admission at ATS. Though there was fluctuation in some years, yet the maximum numbers of students were Adventists. Another point to be noted was the emergence of ATS as a centre for Adventist evangelistic institution for those who were interested in the SDA and its activities. It is without a doubt that ATS played a significant role in spreading Adventism to other parts of northeast India and Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The presence of a mixed group of students from different parts of the region helped Adventism to open

its branches in many states. The number of residents in the campus increased each year. However, though appeals were made for setting up of medical facility at the school's premises, no mention was found regarding the establishment of the same.

The emphasis of the SDA on health issues was put into practice through the involvement of the students and their activities. Clubs were organised not only to promote awareness on health related issues but brought a closer interaction between them and the people. The baptism that took place at ATS every year suggested that besides academics and vocational trainings, evangelism was also widely practiced in the residential schools. However, there were no reports of forced conversion. Converts were baptised only after they were being properly educated and have the will to adopt the teachings of the SDA as their new faith. However, since subjects containing Biblical stories and programs detailing worship, prayer meetings and evangelistic meetings were found in the schools, this may signify the intention of the SDA to practice evangelism at the same time. Although the SDA could not establish any institution or centre; however, there were attempts to promote health awareness among the people. These steps of the SDA put them in a situation where their acceptability in the society had become smooth. These can be proved from the baptisms that were carried in the Adventist schools and outside.

The spread of education was not only confined to the administrative headquarters or urban centers. After Shillong and Thadlaskein, other schools were subsequently started in Mowkaiaw, Sohryngkham, Lyngiong and other areas. After the indigenous leaders took over the administration of the SDA in 1971, the management of the schools was entrusted to them. Gradually, admission procedure and appointment of teachers and staffs was more relaxed. Representative from parents and teachers side can be non-Adventist too. The old objective of providing education and jobs to a majority of Adventists met a drastic change in 1990 when government grants were accepted and appointment of teachers was now based on merit. The role played by the SDA in promoting the education and employment of women is also significant. Women teachers were appointed as soon as the schools were established.

From the discussion above, one can also see the difference between the Adventists educational institutions and those belonging to Christian, non-Christian as well as private and government. The efforts put forward by the Adventists on

agriculture and horticulture within the school campus suggests that there was a strong emphasis on sustenance on vegetarian diet, while other Christian missions have fewer restrictions. On one hand, this opened doors to people of rural areas who could see the benefits of enrolling their children in Adventist residential schools. On the other hand, the residents have to live on vegetarian diet and no canteens or shops inside the campus would keep any eatables which are considered harmful and unclean by the Adventists. However, since SDA schools admit not only Adventist students, the non-Adventists may not be comfortable with the dietary regulations as followed inside the campus. This is due to the fact that it may be hard to determine whether the dietary practices of the Adventists are harmful or healthy since intake of diet varies from one culture to another, what is harmful to one's culture can be healthy to another's and vice-versa. Furthermore, although being run and managed by the mission itself, the overall system followed within the school is almost like any other secular and public schools hence the over emphasis on dietary practices may have some negative effects on personal choice of a person.

The SDA being a global church reached the people all over the world not only through missionary works, but, social and humanitarian works were carried on in different fields like education, health, etc. In the Khasi Jaintia Hills, through the involvement of the SDA foreign missionaries and the local workers, they were able to roll the wheel of spreading and speeding up of education to the people especially in the rural areas. English schools that were set up in the remote areas rendered services to the people who cannot afford to send their children to towns and cities. For instance the ATS was the first school in Jaintia Hills to use English as a medium of instruction. The use of English as a medium of instruction not only helped the locals to communicate with the other communities but it also attracted a large number of students from outside the state to enroll in the SDA schools. However, the SDA faced problems in the educational stream since there were fewer number of qualified teachers who wanted to work in in rural areas.
