

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

The emergence of various social and religious movements in America in the nineteenth century such as the Temperance Movement, Abolitionist Movement, Women's Right Movement, etc., was the outcome of industrial revolution and capitalism in America which ultimately brought with them significant transformation in American lives. The socio-economic condition acted as a catalyst for religious transformation as well and the emergence of the SDA was located in this background. In addition, the disappointment brought by the Millerite Movement encouraged the reinterpretations of the Biblical prophecies which soon paved the way for the emergence of Adventism.¹ By the time the SDA was formally organized in 1863, the number of Adventist increased tremendously due to the impact of its publications and literature.² It was these same efforts that helped the SDA expand its mission to other parts of the world and subsequently established its mission in Khasi-Jaintia Hills too.

The socio-religious conditions in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills on the eve of the establishment of the SDA paved the way for the entry of Adventism into the Hills. The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Khasi-Jaintia Hills witnessed series of major events, such as the occupation of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills by the British Government, the arrival of Christian missionaries and the establishment of churches belonging to different denominations. One should not forget that the Khasi-Jaintia people were the first who felt the impact of Christianity among the tribes in northeast India. It is an undeniable fact that Christianity and the works of missionaries played a key role in bringing transformation in socio-cultural aspects of the Khasi-Jaintia.³ The only thing that the people did not realize at that period of time was that the new developments would bring significant changes in their lives. As a result of the change, rapid modernization of the people was in progress while some of the traditional practices disappeared in the process. With the shift in economy of the family, a competitive atmosphere emerged in the society, as more and more people prepared themselves for modern jobs, education and standard of living. It did not take long for

¹ Peter B. Clarke, *New Religions in Global Perspective A Study of Religious Change in the Modern World*, Routledge, London: New York, 2006, pp.94-97.

² *Church Heritage*, pp.33.

³ O. L. Snaitang, "Christian Mission and Social transformation in Northeast India", in C.V. Mathew (ed.), *Mission in Context*, ISPCK, Delhi, 2003.

the capitalistic ideas of the West to head its way into the once isolated and agricultural Khasi-Jaintia economy, and influenced different aspects of Khasi-Jaintia society. A response against Christianity can be seen through the moves which tried to give shape to the traditional religion and culture through formation of organizations and literary activities. In the initial years when Christianity was beginning to spread, some resistance was shown by the Khasi-Jaintia. There were efforts by intellectuals of Khasi-Jaintia to preserve their cultural heritage, but in course of time a large segment of the population adopted Christianity as their new faith.

Some scholars projected that for most of the contemporary problems in Khasi-Jaintia society, the missionaries and their works were to be blamed.⁴ Some opined that the Khasi-Jaintia culture is in its endangered state because of the coming of Christian missionaries to the hills. However, it is possible that the Khasi-Jaintia were attracted to the new religion of their new rulers and also the impact of the humanitarian works of the missionaries influenced them in a big way.⁵ The gentle and helpful behaviour of the Christians in a crisis also gained admiration from the people. Here one can take the case of Thomas Jones who rightly deserved the title of “Father of Khasi Alphabet and Literature” not only because he introduced the script and also produced literature, which was followed by other missionaries after him.⁶ There were other reasons also which might have made Thomas Jones popular with the local people. He was not concerned only with church works but was involved with socio-economic development of the people as well.⁷ Perhaps it would also be wrong to assume that the missionaries left the comfort of their homes and came all the way to this region of India, with its inaccessible forest terrain and other difficulties to attend to the needs of

⁴ See, Dakamon Mawroh, *Representation of Women in Khasi Literature*, published by Dianghun Mawroh, Shillong, 2008, pp.38-39. Mawroh pointed out that the Khasi underwent a period of identity crisis because of the influence of missionaries. She further stated that in the nineteenth century, the missionaries taught the converts to go against the fundamental beliefs of the Khasi.

⁵ J. N. Chaudhary, *op.cit.*, p.222.

⁶ Thomas Jones translated the New Testament into Khasi and brought out *Primers*. John Roberts translated the Old Testament into Khasi and published *Khasi Readers*. Hugh Roberts published *Khasi Hymn Book* in 1876. The Welsh Mission continued to publish religious and school textbooks. The entire *Bible* was brought out in 1891. For details see, O. L. Snaitang, *A Dictionary of Khasi Literature*, P. Khongmen, Shillong, 2011, p.72.

⁷ The Khasi were astonished when they saw that Thomas Jones could predict phases of the moon, and were surprised when he taught the Khasi economical ways to chop wood, improved methods for growing potatoes, use coal to burn lime, introduced modern carpentry and the art of distilling liquor. See, Kynpham Singh, “Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills upto 1874”, in H. Roy (ed.), *Khasi Heritage*, Seng Khasi, Shillong, 1979, pp.49-50. Also see, Nalini Nataranjan, *op.cit.*, p.64.

the colonial government. Though the government introduced many reforms especially in the educational sector,⁸ there were many instances of difference of opinions between the government and the missionaries. It appears that there were many instances where they were not in good terms with each other. This was due to the spread of secularism in the second half of the nineteenth century and attitudes of many government officials in India towards the missions.⁹ The unavoidable fact remains that without Christian missions and institutions and the contributions made by the missionaries, Khasi-Jaintia Hills or most part of northeast India would have been a backward and isolated region. On the basis of the above discussions, respecting the valued opinion of scholars in favour and against, if on one side the missionaries are blamed, they should also be credited for their pioneering works which brought modern values and ideas in the societies much before the government welfare measures.

Emotional experiences by the early converts does not entirely explain the effects of spiritual bonding, rather, one should look from another angle as to why Christianity has its strong foothold on the Khasi-Jaintia society and why it continues to gain popularity in the hills. Many forgot to look at the possibility that it might be the local people themselves who wanted a change and were ready to accept the change. The transition from a non-scripted religion to a well scripted religion must have also filled them with excitement to join the new religion. Some had individual spiritual enlightenment. Some of them did become Christian with a hope that the new religion will liberate them from harmful activities of malevolent spirits.¹⁰ The missionaries brought with them Western style of clothing, new food habits, Western medicine and so on, and overall, Western education. Others saw opportunities to gain material benefits once they aligned themselves with the foreigners. They were eager to learn English in order to secure white collar jobs and teaching posts. It is through education that the Khasi-Jaintia at that point of time learned so much about the world they have never even heard of. Gradually, it also provided the solidarity movement among the hill people and led them to a path for national integration as well. This

⁸ With the passing of the act in the Wood Despatch of 1854, an amount of Rupees 50 was sanctioned monthly to the missionaries as grants for educational work. It was raised to Rs.500 in 1861. See Mrinal Miri, (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.42.

⁹ Clive Whitehead, *op.cit.*, p.124.

¹⁰ C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, revised edition, Christian Literature Society, Madras, 1976, p.277.

political consciousness led the people to discover their identity, rights and positions and a new stimulating identity opened the doors of opportunity for the Khasi-Jaintia who took active participation in modern political movements, though this was not the conscious objective of missionaries or church leaders.¹¹ Thus when the Adventists established its mission in Khasi-Jaintia Hills it did not really have to experience major hostility either to their propagation of their faith or to their educational ventures. The previous Christian missions had paved the way for the people's acceptance of SDA. Though the SDA was the last among the foreign denominations, it did not lack behind in its efforts to gain a foothold in the Hills and in the process, contributed to the socio-cultural change in Khasi-Jaintia society.

Adventism established its mission in Khasi-Jaintia Hills which was then under the state of Assam in the early twentieth century. The same method of distribution and selling of Adventist literature which was adopted when the SDA began its initial works in India was also applied in the case of Khasi-Jaintia Hills as well when F. O. Raymond arrived at Shillong in 1913. However, there was no mention whether he was engaged in his work with the English, Americans and Welsh or only with the indigenous people. Despite the information provided by Raymond, there was no intention from the Union office of the SDA to send a mission to Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Further progress rather came accidentally when E. G. Hardinge was transferred to Shillong in 1915. Though as an isolated member of the SDA Calcutta, his presence in Shillong opened the doors for Adventist workers to set foot in Khasi Hills. The Non-SDA sources which highlighted the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills could not trace this development. Most of these works approximately mentioned the establish years in the 1930s while some attributed the beginning of SDA in the Hills to 1950s. The dedication of the Adventists towards the spreading of their literature is evident from the fact that even Hardinge who was not a colporteur or an Adventist mission worker, was considerably involved in distribution of the literatures. It was also through the reports in the SDA publications that attracted the SDA workers from different parts of India to visit Shillong both for vacation purposes and spreading of Adventist

¹¹ An example that can be cited in this regard was the formation of the Khasi National Durbar in 1923. Many prominent leaders and statesmen came together to gather all the chiefs of many Khasi states, headmen, priests and religious leaders. For further readings on this, see J. K. Tariang (ed.), *Ka Thup Jingkyrmaw iaka Khasi National Dorbar*, Executive Committee Khasi National Dorbar, Shillong, 2007.

literature. The efforts put in literature were not limited only in towns and administrative headquarters but also in rural areas. This kind of evangelism was rarely practised by other established denominations.

L. G. Burgess and Georgia Burgess, the first regular SDA missionaries to the Khasi-Jaintia Hills who arrived in Shillong in 1931 also started their works with the same spirit. After the first SDA church was established in Shillong in 1938, the membership rose extensively as a result of the baptism conducted both in the church and in its educational institutions. Though it does not practice proselytization through preaching on a large scale but it was able to attract many converted Khasi to join the SDA mainly due to the influence of its literature.

One of the important conclusions drawn from this chapter was the special place that observance of Sabbath or worship of God on a Saturday, is for the SDAs, unlike other Christian denominations who observe the same on Sunday. The emphasis laid by the SDA in this regard is also unique since a link was created by the SDA between attainment of salvation and observance of Sabbath. This doctrine has been applied in drawing people into the SDA faith, even in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Furthermore, In total opposition to Christian beliefs that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was the final atonement of human sins, according to the doctrines of the SDA, the atonement started when Jesus Christ entered the 'Holy of Holies' in heaven on 22nd October 1844 to complete the atoning work. Again, unlike other Christian denominations which believe in the existence of heaven and hell, the concept of hell does not exist in the beliefs of the Adventists. This subsequently provides the SDA a standpoint on the theory of 'annihilationism', a phenomenon that Satan and his followers will be completely annihilated after the Biblical 'Judgement Day'. However, it is surprising that most of the Adventists in Khasi-Jaintia Hills have little understanding of these doctrines. Christian festivals such as Good Friday, Easter and Christmas, which are observed and celebrated by both Protestants and Roman Catholics are absent from the religious observance of the SDA. This provides the members of the Church a separate identity which differentiates them further from other Christians.

The contribution of the SDA to Khasi-Jaintia society was mainly in the educational sphere. As soon as the mission of the SDA was regularized with the

arrival of full time missionaries, the SDA made efforts to establish school not only in Shillong but in the rural areas too. It is also apparent that the idea of setting up a school was based on the requirement that Adventist missionaries, workers and converted Khasi to send their children to an Adventist school. This was partly due to the fact that in other schools, Saturday used to be opened and hence became a major problem for Adventists. Another reason was because Adventists students who attended these schools were mocked by other students and were called by names such as the 'jews', the 'sabbatons' and other names. In addition by setting up of a school the members of SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills would feel safe and secure to remain within the denomination and their children would get Adventist teaching and ways of living right from their childhood. It may also have been one of their objectives that by setting up a school, other non-Adventists would get attracted to send their children and in turn would be influenced by Adventist doctrine and teachings, especially in the rural areas. This can be regarded as one of the method adopted by the SDA. 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. These steps of the SDA put them in a situation where their acceptability in the society had become smooth.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The study found that beginning from the nineteenth century, after the establishment of mission by one Christian denomination, several of its branches sprang up and subsequently other denominations followed. This can be witnessed in both cases, foreign and indigenous Christian missions which emerged in the early part of the twentieth century. Whether this was a competitive politics or simply the aspiration to expand their respective missions may give ample room for further studies. In the twentieth century, the traditional social, economic, political and religious lives of the tribes continue to face the impacts of these

developments. It was also during this time that indigenous churches and non-Christian missions made their mark in the Khasi-Jaintia society. It was in the background of multiplicity of missions and missionaries that the SDA opened its branch in Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

2. The emergence of several denominations in Khasi-Jaintia Hills during the first half of the twentieth century must have prompted the early converts to join the SDA too. In the case of other denominations one may say that it was a feeling of dissatisfaction with their previous churches, ambitions of holding higher offices in the ministry etc. to change the denominations. However, in the case of SDA, the fear of committing a sin if not observing the Sabbath day along with the factors mentioned seem to encouraged for conversion to the SDA. This is due to the fact that other denominations who worship on Sunday do not lay emphasis on the observation of Sabbath. It is also interesting to find that in some parts of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills; the converts were attracted to the SDA due to the contribution of some Adventists in the field of education and medical works (See cases of Worbuehl of Kyndongtuber and Dr. R. S. Laloo of Cherrapunjee).
3. Shillong was the choice of missionary activity for the SDA. Probably unlike the Roman Catholics, they were motivated by the following reasons: Firstly, the Christian missions established in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills prior the SDA had made Christianity acceptable to the people and this smoothen the path for the SDA. Secondly, Shillong was then the capital of Assam, therefore being the administrative headquarter it was easier for the missionaries to carry out their works.
4. Unlike other Christian denominations that proselytize both Christians and non-Christians, the Adventists focused and reached out mostly to the Christians. Statistically, Shillong and other parts of Khasi-Jaintia Hills registered a large number of Christians and this attracted the SDA missionaries to start their mission in the region.
5. The selection of suburbs by the early Adventists in Shillong to settle and conduct their mission activities revealed the fact that they wanted to stay away from

confrontations with other Christian denominations. Services and meetings were conducted in the residences of the SDA missionaries and for many years no location was chosen by them to start as an office or center of their works.

6. In its attempt to establish a mission in India and Khasi-Jaintia Hills too, the SDA inaugurated its work by the distribution and selling of Adventist literature. It seems the emphasis on publication of literature as the dissemination of information on the philosophy and activities of the SDA was more important than construction of church buildings. This distinguishes the SDA from other Christian missions whose first priority was to evangelise, convert and erect church buildings. The literature included various periodicals, magazines, books and pamphlets but most importantly were the writings of Ellen White which were translated into vernaculars. There was no mention about the translation, circulation or distribution of the *Bible* by the Adventists in Shillong whether in English or vernaculars in those years.
7. Again the impact of literature as part and parcel of Adventist evangelism in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was significant as years passed by. E. Dhorom, R. E. Rajee, Albin Roy, Ivorine Rynjah, Olington Gatphoh, Everwell Morton Kharsyntiew, Albin Roy Dkhar, etc. were among the early Khasi-Jaintia converts who were influenced by the SDA's literatures. Eventually, the use of vernacular literatures helped to spread the SDA philosophy which soon made the acceptance of Adventist faith smooth.
8. It is also important to note that the spread of Adventism in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was largely due to the efforts of the indigenous Adventists. Being the members who were ready to dedicate towards the cause of spreading Adventism among their own people, they offered help in various ways and means. Most of the translation works of Adventist literature into vernacular was done by the Khasi-Jaintia Adventists. They were also involved in distribution and selling of the literature as well as procuring funds from non-Adventists in Shillong and other areas. After the formal establishment of the SDA, the evangelistic programmes carried out in different parts of Khasi-Jaintia Hills was mostly done by the indigenous workers of SDA. However, some of the indigenous Adventists who had been involved in

the evangelistic and other activities of the SDA for decades were not given higher responsibility or ordination. The real intention behind their transfer from one place to another within a short duration remains unknown, however, one cannot rule out the possibility that the fear of the SDA missionaries that if a person stay in one single place for too long, he or she may have strong attachment with the people and may go out of the direction of the headquarter.

9. Claims made by L. G. Burgess, an Adventist missionary in Shillong, that the Khasi bought the Adventist literature because of their interest in religion more than politics is not convincing. On the one hand, although majority of the people especially in Shillong have converted to Christianity, however, this does not mean that they kept themselves isolated from political issues. It has to be considered that during these formative years of the SDA in Shillong, no major political agenda was going on in the Khasi-Jaintia society which could stop the people from attending the church services regularly. Interestingly, the Khasi-National Durbar was founded during these years and thus seems to negate the observation of Burgess. On the other hand, Burgess might have compared the tide of the Indian freedom movement which was more intense in other parts of India to that of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.
10. It is interesting to note that during the inception of the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, many Khasi-Jaintia people, while not converting to the SDA faith, did support the SDA in their activities for humanitarian causes.
11. From the accounts of the missionaries and workers we also found that there was opposition from the Khasi-Jaintia against conversion to Adventist faith. Gradually, the writings of Adventist missionaries in Khasi language, in which some Khasi helped them, changed the situation.
12. The rapid spread of SDA literature created an alarm among the other denominations due to the fact that the SDA propagated their doctrines through the literatures. Since the main motive of the Adventists was to win over Christians into their fold; many Christians saw Adventism as a challenge to their faith in the Khasi-Jaintia hills. This can be proved from the argument which took place

between one of the indigenous church leaders of the time, J. J. M. Nichols Roy of the Church of God and L. G. Burgess, in the articles that were published in the periodical of the Church of God *Ka Jingshai Gospel*. As told to the researcher, the arguments during the meetings between Roy and J. F. Ashlock (SDA missionary), in the latter's house shows that the local church leaders were against Adventism in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The opposition against SDA as a faith in the hills continued even in the post-independence period.

13. The socio-economic and cultural characteristics of individuals defined their attraction to a particular religious group. Most of the Adventist leaders in America during the early years of the SDA came from lower socio-economic background. Hence in order to fill up the gap of class distinction, the leaders of SDA attempted to introduce norms on the activities and behaviour on the members to compensate for deficiencies in lower social status. This can be witnessed in the incorporation into their doctrines, such as the prohibitions of certain food items and the distaste for possession of ornaments. The SDA's emphasis on vegetarian diet and prohibitions of its members to consume tea, coffee, pork and other food items may have proved difficult for the Khasi-Jaintia people who had been used to these kinds of foods and drinks. It is interesting to note that Ellen White suggested that milk, cream, butter, and eggs should be avoided. She also advised avoidance of cakes, sweet puddings, pastries, jellies, jams as well as spiced foods, soda, mustard, pepper, pickles besides many others since they cause indigestion and pollute the mind of a person. However, in Shillong, some of the best bakers belonged to the SDA. Perhaps they were not aware of White's teachings or maybe her instructions are not followed anymore. Besides health and hygiene, the philosophical teachings of the SDA have impacted not only in spiritual matters but the social life of the Khasi-Jaintia Adventists experienced tremendous change. SDA members were not allowed to wear any kind of jewelry and to participate in the cultural festivals of the Khasi-Jaintia. This was discordant with the lifestyle of the Khasi-Jaintia people since they love to adorn themselves with jewellery especially gold.

14. We have also observed that unlike other denominations, who generally stressed on importance of spirituality, the SDA places equal importance on health and

temperance. The Adventists are of the view that their emphasis on the health and temperance issues were based on the instructions of Ellen White who claim to have received them through her visions. However, a movement on dietary reform had already been started by Sylvester Graham, a non-Adventist in the 1830s in America. His emphasis on vegetarianism and temperance movement later influenced the beliefs of the early Seventh-day Adventists, including White and William Harvey Kellogg, and other non-Adventists health reformers such as Mary Gove Nichols, Amelia Bloomer and Catherine Beecher. Moreover, the socio-economic background in the early years of her ministry must have convinced her to prescribe food items which were of lower prices and simple way of living to the Adventists. The use of persuasion on other Adventists puts the SDA in a position of being a highly conservative sectarian group having cultic behaviour. The dietary practices of the SDA later had a significant effect on the Adventists in Khasi-Jaintia Hills too. It was also propagated by the Church that the maintenance of a healthy body is especially significant in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

15. Again, in the case of the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, the early converts as well as those in the succeeding years belonged to different socio-economic background. The social and psychological influence of the SDA on the lives of its members was not only in spiritual aspects. The beliefs and practices of SDA have challenged the social, cultural and economic practices of the Khasi-Jaintia Adventists. Moreover, there were limited attempts by the SDA to promote acculturation, however, a new set of habits and practices introduced to its members provided a distinctive culture which set them apart from other Khasi-Jaintia and subsequently led them adopt a new form of cultural identity. Since in Khasi-Jaintia society, particularly in the rural areas, conversion to any religion not only affects a convert alone but the family and clan too, hence this posed a challenge to the converts to continue with the SDA which has already been seen as a strange denomination by many.

16. The Khasi-Jaintia way of counting days in the pre-colonial period was different from that of other communities. They have eight days in a week (importance was given to market days). With the arrival of Christian missions, the number of days

in a week was reduced to seven days, following the Gregorian calendar. Eventually, Saturday became a day of cleaning and washing (*Sngi Saitjain*) and Sunday was observed as a worship day (*Sngi U Blei*). Market days which fall on Sundays were shifted to Saturday. Given the importance of market days in Khasi-Jaintia society, the observance of Sabbath on Saturday by the Adventists put the converts in a difficult situation. Either they have to leave their works on Saturday or violate the principal regulation and authority of the SDA. Hence the concept of Sabbath had significant impact on the SDA adherents in Khasi-Jaintia.

17. Despite the restrictions by the SDA, it is found that a significant number of members of SDA in Khasi-Jaintia society did not do away with the traditional beliefs and practices, for example: The practice of staying at home for the family members of the deceased continuously for 3 days and 3 nights after the day of funeral still exists in practice among some Adventist families. Majority of the members still believe in the concept of sacred groves and *U Thlen*. The SDA conducts marriage in the Christian style of marriage; however, it is also accompanied by certain traditional rites which are still being followed by the members. Inheritance, divorce and residence pattern after marriage were followed according to traditional customs and sometimes it depends on the wish of the couples. In connection with the matrilineal system, the SDA, however, made some alterations. The minister's wife adopts her husband's surname in the documents and other church related activities, while the children adopt the lineage from the mother. It was explained to the researcher that this was deliberately done to avoid confusion while they travel outside the Khasi society and made work easier since SDA is a global church and most of the times they interact with the people of patrilineal societies.

18. We found it strange that after the death of Ellen White, the ordination of women was dropped. Prior to her death there were women ordained ministers in the SDA. However, today, women can only hold the position of deaconesses around the world and in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills too. The supporting role of deaconesses especially during baptism and communion distinguishes the SDA from other denominations.

19. There was a gradual growth in the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills during the initial years due to the following reasons. The withdrawal of members from the Church who reverted to their previous faith amounted to excommunication from the SDA. Some Adventist workers also left because they were prevented from holding important positions in the church administration and ministry (see case of R. E. Rajee). Again, others who withdrew themselves from the SDA were habitual mavericks (such as E. Dhorom) and some were dissatisfied with diet restrictions. Another reason was the discontentment of the SDA against those who speak against the church doctrines, particularly against Ellen White's teachings. Some Adventists got married to those belonging to other denominations who refused to adhere to the constitutional obligations of the SDA. Moreover, if married to a non-Adventist, the couples were required to be baptized first before their marriage. This may not be acceptable to the other partners. The Khasi-Jaintia way of marriage was not aligned with the doctrines of the SDA. The Khasi-Jaintia acceptance of marriage without legal rites was also considered an apostasy. Members who were excommunicated on these grounds were required to go through all the processes of conversion and follow certain set of regulations and formalities to re-enter into the SDA.
20. Following the orders of the Government of India in 1967 which made it compulsory for the foreign missionaries from the Commonwealth nations to get the permission to enter India and also restrictions on the movement of the missionaries that followed thereafter, most of the missionaries of Welsh Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church left Khasi-Jaintia Hills between 1969 and 1970. This seemed to have affected the SDA missionaries who left Khasi-Jaintia Hills in 1971. However, it was informed that the reasons for the departure of the SDA missionaries from the Hills was mainly due to the reorganization of appointments done by the Southern Asia Division of SDA which required the shifting of missionaries from established areas to other new fields and some of them were required to continue their works in higher strata of leadership. Another reason was that the SDA Assam Section saw the capability of the indigenous workers to take up leadership.¹²

¹² Information gathered from personal interaction with K. B. Kharbteng, President Khasi-Jaintia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (2004-2014).

21. A major change took place in the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills in the year 1971 when indigenous leaders took charge of the SDA administration. Perhaps the growing political consciousness towards creation of Meghalaya had an impact on the SDA as well. There seem to be a general opinion that in the earlier days when the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills was run by the foreign missionaries, management was strict and hence, more efficient.¹³ However, this could be a personal thought which may not carry any significant truth. After 1971, there was a growing interest on the activities of the SDA both in theological and social aspects, hence even when the growth was gradual, it does not mean that it was insignificant.
22. One of the major contributions of the SDA in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills was in the field of education. Till the early part of the twentieth century, the main objective of the Adventist missionaries was to provide educational facilities to the SDA members only. Gradually this approach changed. Non-Adventists were also admitted and appointment of teachers and staffs became more relaxed. The spread of education was not only confined to the administrative headquarters or the urban centers but to rural areas such as Thadlaskein, Sohryngkham, Mawkaiaw, Lyngiong, Nongpoh, etc.
23. Maximum numbers of students were Adventists, yet there was fluctuation in some years. With the increase in enrollment in the school and the growth in urbanization, the school attempted to provide employment opportunity too. Not only formal education but vocational training was promoted. Training in the farming industry and small scale cottage industry started. Besides encouraging the students and those who got talent to learn and earn at the same time, the school also benefitted financially from these small industries. Again, the importance of Adventist literature was not forgotten, students were trained to be colporteurs and this not only helped them to earn and support themselves but promote Adventist literature to corners of the country and beyond. Trainings were also given to teachers both academically, vocationally as well as in religious matters.

¹³ This we found evident in the work of Nalini Natarajan. As told by a Khasi gardener at the church building in Nongthymmai to her, "he remarked that the maintenance of the garden and bungalow was better when the American missionaries were at the helm of management." See, Nalini Natarajan, *The Missionary among the Khasis*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1977, p.79.

Whenever, there were vacancies, most of the past pupils of the school used to return and worked either as faculty or staff.

24. Another finding shows that 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 made through organised school fetes 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 in the form of donations and personal donations from non-Adventists were gathered through the Uplift Fund. Due to the fear that management will go over to the hands of the government, no grants were taken from the Government. This led to strained relations with the Government. This can be witnessed that despite the good relations that the Adventist missionaries had with the government officials, we found that the some of the educational institutions of the SDA such as the Assam Training School received provisional recognition till 1951 and the full recognition was received from the government only in 1974, thirty three years after its establishment. After 1990, SDA schools in Khasi-Jaintia accepted government grants too.

25. It is surprising to note that so far the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia Hills, being the first mission field of the SDA in northeast India had not establish health care facilities while an Adventist hospital was established in Mizoram in 1996. However, though the SDA in Khasi-Jaintia could not establish a health institution, humanitarian works were carried by the members of the SDA through health awareness programmes and social works. The emphasis on health issues was also witnessed by the involvement of the students of Adventist schools through various clubs (Pathfinder club, etc.). This helped the Adventists' attempt to establish a closer interaction with the indigenous people.
