CHAPTER II

PRIMARY EDUCATION

The credit for introducing formal education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills goes to the Christian missionaries, who took it as a "white man's responsibility" to educate and civilize the 'heathens' as the Englishmen called these hillmen. The first Christian to set foot in the hills with the intent to evangelize and educate the Khasis was the Bengalee convert, Krishna Chandra Pal. Dr William Carey, the founder of the Serampore Mission, entrusted Pal with the responsibility to introduce the Khasis to the teachings of Christianity. With this objective in mind, Krishna Chandra Pal started for the hills and on the 7th April, 1813 reached Pandua, the trading centre of the Khasis in Sylhet frequented by the plainsmen and the English traders. His evangelization bore fruits with the conversion of seven men, of whom, two were Khasis named u Duwan and u Anna. It was here that the two alongwith the others were baptized in front of a huge gathering of eight chiefs and a crowd of six hundred. Having stayed eight months at Pandua, Krishna Chandra Pal returned to Calcutta never to visit this area again. Seeing the need of a Bible in the local dialect, Dr Carey started to translate the New Testament in 1813 itself and by 1824 the first Khasi New Testament was published adopting the Bengali script and the Sheila dialect. Dr Carey had to adopt the Bengali script, for, till then the Khasis were at

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15 R B D Ropmay. 'Ka Jingsdang Ka Niam Kristan' in Ka Centenary History ka Balang Presbyterian ha Ri Khasi-Jaintia Naduh 1841-1940. p 2; Pal was the first Bengali convert of Dr Carey
a pre-literacy stage having no written language nor alphabet of their own. As he was conversant with reading and writing in Bengali, and moreover his converts were Bengalees, it was much easier for him to use the Bengali script to translate the New Testament into Khasi.

The path of evangelism paved by Krishna Chandra Pal v.as soon followed by another missionary of the Serampore Mission. Alexander B Lish, who arrived at Sohra in 1832. Unlike K C Pal, Alexander B Lish, for his mission work to succeed, preferred to stay amongst the hillmen. He translated a few chapters from the Book of Matthews. More significantly, to him went the credit for opening the first formal schools—based on western model, in the Khasi hills— one each at Mawmluh, Mawsmai and Sohra. According to Rev Angell Jones in History Ka Balang (1841-1966) he reported that. Alexander Lish had prepared one or two Readers adopting the Bengali script to be used in these schools. Initially a good number of children were attracted to these schools and all in all about thir-six pupils attended them regularly. Gradually, the attraction wore off and the stopped attending schools. The reason for this fall out might have been the difficulty faced by the teacher and the taught. For Alexander Lish, his problem might have been, because, he had to learn two new languages - Bengali and Khasi. As the two differ from one another, it would be difficult for him to co-ordinate the Bengali script with the Khasi language. Again, Khasi pupils might have found it very difficult to acquaint themselves with Bengali alphabet to study their own language. Coupled with this, the outbreak of the Anglo-Khasi War (1829-1833) adversely affected the efforts of the Serampore Mission, for the hillmen looked upon the British as their enemies. Besides these local problems, the Serampore Mission was faced with the loss of her three pioneers - William Carey. William Ward and Joshua Marshman - commonly known as the "Serampore Trio". Their deaths compelled the mission to abandon their missionary activities in these hills. Moreoever. by the end of 1837. the Serampore

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Mission had merged with the Baptist Missionary Society and this, too, could be one of the reasons for closure of their missionary schools in 1838.31

At a glance, it appeared that the efforts of Alexander Lish were in vain. However, on closer scrutiny, it was found that during the few years he spent at Sohra, Lish in 1833 had translated a portion of the 'Sermon on the Mount' and a few parables of Jesus Christ into Khasi language adopting the Bengali script.31 According to William Pryse, it was Alexander Lish who first translated the Christian catechism of Dr Watts into Khasi as "Ka Kot Tikir Banyngkong" using the Bengali script and the same was printed at Serampore in 1836.32 Also, Lish in one of his reports mentioned that he had started preparing a grammar book in Khasi. Except for this note, nothing was known about the progress of the work for it was neither printed nor brought out in any form.31 Because of these efforts made by Krishna Chandra Pal and Alexander Lish, Dr R S Lyngdoh, the noted historian and litterateur asserted that, "Whatever be the outcome, the fact that the Serampore Mission was the first to start evangelization of Christianity in the Khasi Hills and also the one who attempted to lay down the foundation of writing in Khasi Language, could not be denied".34

The work of evangelization and education started and abandoned by the Serampore Mission was again taken up in 1840 by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission. Prior to this, Rev Jacob Tomlin, a missionary of Malacca, had made a proposal to the Welsh Mission to come out to eastern India to preach the Gospel, laying emphasis on the work among the Khasis here.35 The Mission decided to send Thomas Jones as missionary to India, but there was a hitch, that the Mission could not raise fund enough to pay for the fare to the east. Amidst such darkness, the owners of a shipping line offered a concession of Rs.650 - from the fare. Accepting this offer, Thomas Jones and his wife set sail from Liverpool on 25th November 1840 and after five months on sea, arrived at

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50 F S Downs, op cit. p 71 OL Snaitang, op cit., p89. SS MJUW. Ka Serampore Mission Ha Ri Khasi p55
51 S S Majaw. op en., p 55
52 W Pryse, An Introduction to the Khasia Language, pp 110. 121.
53 J H Morris, op cit., p "^
54 R S Lyngdoh, op cit., p 27
55 O A Jones, op cit. p 9 RSI >ngdoh, op cit., p 32
Calcutta where they were received by Alexander Duff and other missionaries there. Having stayed in Calcutta till Mrs. Jones recovered from the loss of her newly-born child, the couple arrived at Sohra on 22nd May 1841.  

In the beginning, Thomas Jones faced a lot of hardships. First and foremost, he and his wife had to get acclimatized to the wet climate of Sohra. Next, he acquainted himself with the local language, custom and usages. Learning from the past mistakes of Carey and Lish who wrote Khasi language using Bengali script. Thomas Jones resolved to write the same adopting the Roman script. Here, it should be noted that Dr. Carey’s disciple, Krishna Chandra Pal and Alexander Lish had been working among the Bengalees for quite a long time before they came to the Khasi hills, and, therefore, were conversant with the Bengali script. As such, they used this familiar script in the very first translation of New Testament. Different from them. Thomas Jones came to Sohra directly from England. Had he continued usage of Bengali script, first and foremost he would have to learn to read and write in Bengali. Because he did not want to lose time, he realized that it would be easier and quicker for him to use a script that he knew and have a thorough knowledge. So he decided to adopt the Roman script. This decision was received with mixed reaction by other British missionaries. Among those who had misgivings about this decision was Rev William Pryse who pointed out in the Prefatory Note to his book An Introduction to Khasia Language published in 1855 that. "It is obvious that such a small and uninfluential tribe will not be able to retain characters different from those of the larger nations of the plains which surround their hills. Should the Khasia tribe be ever brought under the influence of education, civilization and commercial intercourse, the Bengali character must supplant the Roman at a not very distant day. For the sake of the Khasis that would be very desirable". The reason for Piyse's opinion was that he himself was working as a missioner of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission in Sylhet, an area dominated by Bengali speaking people.

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10 H Bareh, His ton ami Culture of the Khasi People. p397. R S Lhangdoh, op cit., p32
12 Pryse, op cit. p
On the other hand, the great British missionary scholar, Dr. Alexander Duff along with Rev. Jacob Tomlin and many others, who being conversant with the distinct features of tribal languages gave full support to the wise decision taken by Thomas Jones.\(^{39}\) They were supportive because they knew his decision was not a whimsical one. He had a genuine reason for taking such an important decision for, he realized that Carey's disciples failed, because they had only a little knowledge of the Khasi language and moreover, they adopted the Bengali script, a script and language familiar only to them.

With their support and encouragement, Rev. Thomas Jones first and foremost learned how to speak the local dialect, that is, the Sohra dialect, to enable him to converse with the hillmen. Here he sought the help of local youths to teach him how to speak the local dialect, so do so, these youths should be those who could speak and understand English and therefore, could translate the same for him. According to Rev. Angell Jones, two Khasi youths, u Duwan and u Jungkha, who were once pupils of Alexander Lish, had taught Rev. Thomas Jones how to speak and understand Khasi.\(^{40}\) Again, H Bareh in his *History and Culture of the Khasi People*, reported that it was u Lai that, a Khasi literate along with some others had helped Rev. Thomas Jones in learning the language as well as helped him in the preparation of the "First Khasi Reader", the first book to be published in Khasi.\(^{41}\) It appeared that both the reports were true.

Having made a thorough study of the local language, Thomas Jones took two steps to achieve his purpose of spreading education among the Khasis. First he invited a few of the local youths to his residence where he taught them the basics of education. This, he did, with the objective that they would impart education to their brethren in later years. Secondly, he prepared the first book of alphabet in 1841 which was titled "Ca Citap Ngcong Ca Ctin Cassi" and the same was published in 1842.

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\(^{39}\) G A Jones, op cit. p5. 1 M Simon, op cit. p389; J H Morriv op cit. p 81  
\(^{41}\) H Bareh, op cit, p397. H Bareh. -t *Short Histon of Klue*: urature. p27. k \ Nongrum. ki *vongnok*. Suning shi ka Thoh ki Tar Khan Bota l, p3
the Baptist Press at Calcutta. In this First Khasi Reader, Thomas Jones introduced for the very first time the twenty-one letters of the Khasi alphabet using the Roman script. According to R S Lyngdoh, these letters were ABKDEGNgHIJLMNOPRSTUWY. A question arose, where is letter *c' which was used to spell even the title of this very first Reader. As a copy of this First Khasi Reader can no more be seen, we have to assume from the title spelt that 'C was used in the initial stage and later was supplanted by K*. In giving the Khasis the Roman alphabet, Thomas Jones rightly earned the name as 'Father of the Khasi Alphabet'. In this first publication, Thomas Jones adopted Welsh system of spelling by adopting the letter C to represent the sound of K and Kh in Khasi language, such as: spelling Cupha for Kpa. Citab for Kitab. Cassi for Khasi and Ctin for Ktien. He continued to experiment with the letter C when he translated and printed the Lord's Prayer in 1842. How ever, Thomas Jones soon found that the Welsh system of spelling was not adequate for the Khasi language as the letter W was a vowel in Welsh but a consonant in Khasi. Moreover, the use of C to represent the sound of K and Kh was not viable. Thus, he supplanted C by A' which represented the sounds of both A' and Kh, and IV was taken as a consonant as in the English language. This was seen in his translation of Rhodd Mam or Mother's Gift into Khasi and the same was printed in 1842.

As the newly introduced alphabet and script were adopted to read and write a new language, there were bound to be some flaws here and there which needed to be rectified. Fortunately, a few Khasi literates like u Jeebon Roy Mairom and u Radhon Singh Bern highlighted through the Khasi journal, 'V Khasi Mynta' the need to improve the form of spelling and writing the Khasi language. I' Radhon Singh Bern in the issue of March 7th. 18% of I' Khasi Mynta had suggested a change in the spelling of some Khasi words like Tohih* as Tohi* and "pdeng" as "pdeng". Next in the issue of Mał

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43 R S L
gdoh . op cit. p36
14 K \ Nongrum. f\ Vongnofi-Synhing sfu L> Thoh ka Tar k/iMi. p-i
48 I M Simon, op cit. p389
1896 he suggested the addition of two more letters "i" and "n" to the Khmer alphabet. These letters T* and "n* would go a long way in helping us to spell and read the difficult Khmer words with more precision as its pronunciation. His suggestion was welcomed not only by U Jeebon Roy but also by other Khmer literates of the period. Thus by 1896, there were twenty-three letters in the Khmer alphabet and these were •'A B K D E G N g H I f J L M N N O P R S T L W Y". Using all these twenty-three letters, U Jeebon Roy published his first book, "Ka Kot Pule Nyngkong" in April 1899 where a chapter was devoted to the Khmer alphabet.

Mere printing of books could not achieve the goal of imparting education among the Khmer people. Thomas Jones opened three missionary schools, one each at Mawsmai, Mawmluh and Sohra. To assist him in teaching the pupils in these three schools, he appointed Lurshai as the schoolmaster at Mawsmai, Nising at Mawmluh and Jom at Sohra. Expenses incurred for the construction of these schools were borne by Rev. William Hughes of Wrexham, D. Davies of Liverpool, and John Roberts of Liverpool. The latter at the time was the secretary of Home Mission in Wales. Later on, the school at Mawsmai was renamed as Larsingh Khongwir Memorial Lower Primary School and the one at Mawmluh as Nabon Sawian Memorial Lower Primary School.

The Welsh Mission wanted to start work in the Jaintia Hills simultaneously with the Khmer Hills. So, in the Autumn of 1842, accompanied by Captain Lewin and Captain Yule, Thomas Jones traveled to Jowai to explore the possibility of starting a school there. At the time they were in Jowai, Thomas Jones made use of the weekly market-day to preach about Jesus Christ and His teachings. Though the Pnars (Jaintias) listened to him, no definite reason was given as to why initiative was not taken to educate the people. Hypothetically, it might be that the mission did not have...
missionaries to spare for the work among the Jaintias or it might be they could not find a suitable house or even a plot of land. Thomas Jones and his wife who were commandering the work in and around Cherrapunjee, were later on joined by Rev. and Mr. William Lewis in January 1843. On their arrival at Cherra, it was immediately decided that Rev. Lewis would be working among the Jaintias, but for reasons unknown, he had to stay back at Cherrapunjee and assist Thomas Jones in the Cherra project.

The missionaries, who all the time were housed in the military camps at Saitsohpentelt it necessary to move out. Therefore, they requested Syiem Suba, Syiem of Sohra, to grant them a plot of land at Nongsawlia. Their request was granted and accordingly, they constructed the Mission House, the Church and the school at Nongsawlia for propagating education and Christianity among the locals. With Rev. and Mrs. Lewis taking charge of the schools, it gave Rev. Thomas Jones ample opportunity to devote his attention towards translation of the Bible into Khasi. He could complete the translation of Gospel of Matthew as 'Ka Gospel U Mathi'' and about nine chapters of the Christian Instructor authored by Rev. Thomas Charles, under the initial title 'Ka Kot Laiphew' and later called 'Ka Kot Nongialam'. These two were published during Summer of 1843. Besides these, he also brought forth a Health Reader titled 'Ka Kot Pule Shaphang Ka Koit Ka Khiah'' as well as some devotional hymns in Khasi.

Relieved of school activities, Rev. Thomas Jones ventured to teach the Khasis a variety of works, such as. carpentry, masonry, limestone quarry and smithery. He also taught them to harness benefits from trade and commerce, and the first Khasi to gain from this latter lesson was u Jungkha, who could claim to be one of the first Khasi trader to have his own shop at Mawsmai. Rev. Thomas Jones firmly believed that trade and commerce would alleviate poverty and backwardness of the people. The efforts of the missionaries resulted in some Khasi youngmen acquiring education. Of these, u Rujon and u Amor, even decided to embrace Christianity. When these two declared that they wanted to be Christians, the missionaries received the news with mixed feelings. On

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K. W Nongrum. op cit., p9
M G I. sngdoh. op cit., p1/
one hand, they were happy that their evangelization had sowed the seeds of Christian faith in these two young men but on the other hand, they feared a strong protest from their families and kinsmen. Despite these misgivings, both were baptized on March 3rd 1846. U Amor, later was appointed as a schoolteacher and since then, was popularly known as U Amor Master. In 1849, he even held the office as Secretary of the Church at Nongsawlia but could serve for only few years due to his death in August 1854.

At such a time when the missionaries were making headway in both fields - education and evangelization, the Mission from 1845 onwards passed through a storm period. A sad incident occurred on August 22nd 1845. This was the death of Mrs. Thomas Jones after giving birth to a baby boy ten days before. She was the first European to be buried in these hills. Thomas Jones who could not keep good health, had to go back to Calcutta to recuperate. This was however, a golden opportunity for, there in Calcutta he could print "Ka Gospel U Mathaios* and *Ka Kot Nongialam". His stay in Calcutta coincided with the arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Jones, the missionaries who came to serve in the Ichasi Hills. In February 23rd 1846, accompanied by Thomas Jones, they arrived at Sohra.

The shelved project for Jaintia Hills was again taken up with the arrival of the two missionaries. In the Autumn of the same year, Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Jones together with Rev. Thomas Jones and Captain Lewin, traveled to Jowai in search of a suitable site to start mission work. For reasons not known, they all returned back to Sohra. Unfortunately, Daniel Jones on his return journey suffered and died of malaria. The same day Daniel Jones passed away, his wife, who also had a malarial attack, gave birth to a baby girl which did not survive. Matters worsened when Captain Lewin too, became a victim of this dreaded and fatal disease. Coupled with these losses, the Welsh Mission suffered another severe blow- with the anti-missionary activities of Rev. Thomas Jones. This great man parted ways with the mission when he opted to take up trade and commerce as a source of livelihood. This earned him the ire of not only his co-

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M R B Ropmay, "Ka Jingsdang Ka Niam Kristan" in (V w c’w History: Ka Bolting Presbyterian HJ Ri Klinsi-Jaintia SaJuh )541 Haduh 1940. p12-13

Ibid. p13
missionaries but also of the British officials. The gap widened when he entered into a second marriage which did not find favour with the other missionaries and co-workers. Left with no alternative, in 1847 Rev. Thomas Jones left the Khasi Hills to settle in Calcutta and continued with his own private trade. Sad to record that the man responsible for giving the Romanized Khasi alphabet to these hills, did not live long, because soon after he left the mission, he died at Calcutta on 16th September 1849 at the young age of thirty eight years only. Whatever be his shortcomings, we cannot deny the fact that he laid the firm foundation of the Khasi Literature through his greatest contributions - the Khasi Alphabet and the very first Khasi Reader. To him also, goes the credit for lighting the flame of education in these hills - which since then showed signs of progress and development.

Rev and Mrs. William Lewis were the only missionaries left to carry on the mission work. Short-handed, the three existing schools suffered. Attendance was irregular and many parents withdrew their children from the schools. Despite all these hurdles, a milestone was reached with the educational interest of some Khasi girls. Among the girls attending schools, mention should be made of ka Nabon, a brilliant pupil in the school at Mawmluh. In a short period of time, she could master reading and writing both in Khasi and in English. Initially, her parents were happy with her progress in school, but when she showed signs of embracing the new faith, she was forbidden to attend school. She faced the hardships courageously and finally overcame them. Her resolute and determination finally resulted in her baptism on 16th July 1848. Completing her school education, she then served as a teacher in the school at Sheila, thus being the first lady teacher amongst the Khasis. In 1856 she married Luh, one of the Khasi converts at the time. Sadly, she passed away a year after her marriage. Another notable Khasi girl of the period was ka Bir, who was one of the girl pupils taught by Mrs. William Lewis. She, like ka Nabon, was a sincere and dedicated pupil with proficiency in reading.

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"0 Jones, op cit. p2f. J H Moms, op cit. p102
" A \ Thomas, "ka Jinjtrei hapdeng ki Kynthef in Kii Ct'tm-nan HNio\ k\: Biitmg Pr\:\hur:\r: .: Ri AAiw Jaintii\ vij\th Is-41 tittu\h IQ-10, p4>. G A Jones, op cit. p2s\ J H Morris, op cit. p12S.
and writing. Another Khasi girl, who deserved mention, was ka Phuh, also a pupil of Mrs. Lewis. Later, ka Phuh helped in teaching the girls at Mawsmai.

There was indeed tremendous success in the educational works among the Khasi boys and menfolk. Names like u Babon, u Mino and u Larsing stood out prominently. U Babon was a shopkeeper at the Sohra market who, though at an advanced age, still learned how to read and write and to master the same. U Mino too, was a shopkeeper at the Sohra market. He was the very first pupil who studied under Mrs. William Lewis and it was a wonder that he could learn so much within a very short period. But of the three, u Larsing was the most famous one. He was like a star for the Khasi converts of the said period. He studied in the school at Mawsmai. Because his father died when he was young, he came under the care of his maternal uncle. As long as his mother was in Sohra, he could attend school regularly. But when his mother had to leave for Calcutta, she pleaded with the missionaries to allow him to stay in the hostel at Nongsawlia. Unfortunate!, there was no vacancy and Larsing had to stay with his maternal aunt, a lady opposed to Christianity, who forbade him to go to school. Larsing, who longed for knowledge, related his predicament to the missionaries and the latter made arrangements for him to stay with them. Larsing, a promising pupil soon showed his proficiency in reading and writing, both in Khasi and in English. So impressed were the missionaries by his aptitude, that they took him with them when they went to Wales in December 1860. There in Wales he joined in the evangelical meetings through his songs. Many shed tears when they heard him sang the Khasi devotional songs in the Welsh tune. He left a deep impact on those whom he met. Sadly, because of his frail health, he could not withstand the severity of the winter there and died in 1863 and was buried at Chester. This visit of Larsing was another knot in the chain that binds the country of Wales with the Khasi hills.

For nearly a decade, only the three schools started by Rev. Thomas Jones were functional. It was in 1850 that the fourth school was started at Sheila. Opening of this school was the work of u Laithat, the court interpreter of Colonel Lister, the British
Political Agent at Cherrapunji CSohra). Having met and conferred with ka Nabon, u Laithat wanted to accept Christian faith and was baptised in October 1850. His one wish was to spread the Gospel in his hometown, Sheila. To realize his goal, he needed to start a school in its vicinity. Fortunately, he was promised support and financial help by Mr. Hary Inglis, an official of the British Government. As a court interpreter, he was sent on an official tour to Sheila with specific instruction to survey the area to start a school. Accordingly, a big and airy school-house made of stone was built. However, just after its completion, the school-house was washed away by a flood together with the other households. This strengthened the belief of local residents that Christianity and education was against the wishes of their gods and therefore, they were penalized. However, this opposition did not deter Laithat. He rebuilt the school, funded totally by Mr. Inglis. Though angry and frightened, the residents could do nothing due to Laithat's official position. Eventually, in 1851, the school was formally opened by Rev. William Lewis. The average number of scholars in the school was about fifty.\footnote{The summer months of 1853 saw the commencement of another school at Nongwar. As reported by William Lewis, "the number attending this school is not ascertained \textit{correal} as yet. but we infer from the earnest and urgency of the villagers. that the school must be full. This very gratifying disposition of the people was manifested by the cheerfulness with which they put up the school at their own expence. and by their frequent joumeys here to me. for the purpose of earnestly applying for a teacher.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}} In another neighbouring village, called Nongkhroh. though there were some Christian converts no school was formally started as yet. However, teaching in the vernacular was conducted in private huts or households.\footnote{ibid.}}

The year 1854 was a landmark in the history of education in the country. The year witnessed the enactment of the Wood's Despatch.1854 promulgated by Sir Charles Wood, the then President of the Board of Control, and the same was

\footnote{Letter of \textit{ibid.}}
forwarded to India through the Court of Directors. It entrusted the Government of India with ‘improvement and wider extension of education, both English and vernacular.’ The Despatch contained provisions aimed at the creation of a separate department for education, the establishment of institutions for training school-teachers, the establishment of new Middle schools and a greater attention devoted to vernacular schools for extension of elementary education. The Despatch also provided for the introduction of a system of grants-in-aid on the principles of perfect religious neutrality as well as a comprehensive system of scholarships for the students. In pursuance of the Despatch, the Government of Bengal weighed the pros and cons whether financial assistance to mission schools in Khasi-Jaintia hills be in the form of payment of teachers’ salary or in defraying pan of the cost for translating and printing suitable books either in Bengalee or in the local vernacular language. After a thorough study of the situation, the Government of Bengal was of the opinion that, "...assistance would be most usefully afforded by the grant of a monthly allowance to be expended strictly in the promotion of secular instruction in anyway which might be thought by the missionaries most conducive to that end. The grant should be made on the understanding that it might be at anytime withdrawn and coupled with the condition that the schools should be at all times open to the inspection of the officers of the Government". Though Mr. A J M Mills had suggested for the establishment of a Government vernacular school to show the people that the Government was not indifferent to the diffusion of education amongst them, the Government of India after much deliberations and assessments, concurred with the Government of Bengal to render a small monthly allowance to be spent for promotion of secular education in ways that missionaries deemed fit. The Government of India agreed with the Government of Bengal that the missionaries be made to understand that the grant could be withdrawn at anytime and also the schools should be opened to Government officers for inspection. With this concurrence of the Government of India and on its order, the Government of Bengal sanctioned "...a grant of Rs 50/- a mouth to

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62 ibid., p215-216
63 ibid., p215-216
Rev. W. Lewis ... for the advancement of education among the Hill Tribes... As the grant was given with no stringent conditions leaving no room for intervention in mission works, the missionary accepted it.

In this year 1854, the Presbyterian Mission opened another three schools - one each at Sohbar, Jowai and within the military station at Sohra. The school at Jowai marked a great beginning in the history of education in Jaintia Hills, being the first elementary school in this area. The mission sent U Luh to work among the Jaintias in the Autumn of 1854. He was among the first teachers produced through the efforts of Rev. Thomas Jones in a class conducted by him in his own house at Cherra. U Luh had written about Jowai in its darkest colours. He said that the village was in a state of constant alarm every night... However, in 1863, he died in Wales.

May be because Mr. Mills in his report dated 27th September 1853 had suggested to the Agent of the Governor General, North East Frontier, to "confer appointments on educated Cossyeahs should they be equally qualified to fill them" , the following year, two pupils who passed out of Nongsawlia school were employed in the service of the East India Company. Again, another milestone was arrived when another pupil. U Jarkha was appointed as the Post-master in Sohra.

During all these past years since the departure of Rev. Thomas Jones and the death of Rev. Daniel Jones. Rev. and Mrs. William Lewis were the only ones to continue the work towards promotion of education and Christianity among the Khasis and Jaintias. Helping hands were extended only in 1856 with the arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Robert Parry and the following year. Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Jones II arrived while on their way to Sylhet to assist William Pryse. The arrival of these missionaries coincided with the historical upheaval of the nineteenth century known as the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The missionaries and local Christians were apprehensive that those who were anti-Christians might take the opportunity to raise their voice of protest. Fortunately, the
people in the hills were no party to the revolt. Because the Khasi and Jaintia hills were not affected, in 1857 a school could be opened at Tyma followed by another at Lamin in 1859.69

Though the Khasis and Jaintias did not join the mutineers, the 1860's saw an upheaval amongst the Jaintias when the latter protested against imposition of house-tax in 1860. Coupled with the imposition of the new tax, the British Government forbade the locals to cremate their dead at the existing cremation ground citing reasons that it was a hazard to public health. Furthermore, the police party stationed at Jowai interfered in the religious rituals of the people at Jalong by snatching away the swords and spears used during the ceremony. These reasons combined together provoked the locals and they rose in rebellion against the British. However, the revolt was short-lived and was suppressed by the British in 1863. It should be noted here that the Christians in the Jaintia hills did not join the revolt. To appreciate their loyalty to the British Government and to reward the missionaries for their efforts, the former enhanced the Government's financial aid to the mission schools to a tune of Rs.500/- per month. This enhancement was a big jump, for in 1861 there was an increase from Rs50/- to Rs150/- per month where as after the rebellion it jumped to Rs.500/-. This grant would be sanctioned under two conditions - one. to allow the Inspector to inspect the mission school and two. to submit a yearly report on the progress of education. However, the Government assured that it would not interfere in the form of teaching, appointment of teachers and management of the schools. Moreover, the Welsh Mission could appoint a Sub - Inspector of Schools paid by the Government and the first to hold this office was u Jarkha.70

By 1860’s about sixty five schools were established in the Khasi and Jaintia hills having an enrolment about 2000 pupils.71 The opening of so many schools led to a dearth of qualified teachers to teach in these schools. To meet the needs of these

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69 G A Jones, op cit. p42. W Reade, 'Jinghikai Kot' in Centenary Histoni- ka Baking Presbyterian ha Ri klaw-Jainihi \ Juh 1S-fl Haduh 1940. p68.
70 G A Jones, op cit. p44
71 W Reade, op cit. p-0
schools, in 1864, the school at Nongsawlia was converted to a Normal School wherein the scholars were trained to be teachers. Though the Lt. Governor of Bengal made the proposal for starting a teacher's training school, this Normal School would be under the control and management of the Welsh Mission. To ease the financial burden of the mission, the Government paid the salaries of the Headmaster, the Second Master and the Third Master as well as gave scholarships to twenty students at the rate of Rs 4/- a month for a period of four years. The Normal School rendered great service to the public, for, the succeeding years saw a good number of trained teachers passing out and going to far-flung villages to teach in the schools and to spread education among the illiterates. Some of the villages which benefitted from the Normal School was the village Mawnai in Khasi hills and villages Mustoh, Nongbah, Shangpung and Nongtalang in Jaintia hills.

By mid-nineteenth century, the British Government realized that Cherrapunjee was not a suitable location as a district headquarter due to excessive rainfall during summer. In its search for a new headquarter, the British Government chose Shillong because its climate made the place a natural sanatorium and also because it was centrally located. Thus in 1866, the Government transferred the civil and military headquarters from Cherrapunjee to Shillong. Subsequently in 1874. Shillong was made the capital of Assam. The shift of the capital to Shillong led to the opening of schools within and around the new headquarter. Thus schools were opened at Laitumkhrah and Mawlai by the Welsh Mission.

Towards the close of the century, another Christian mission, the Roman Catholic Mission, set foot in the Khasi hills in 1876. Fr. Broi was the first Catholic priest to visit the Khasi hills to hold a weekly Holy Mass for the Catholic officials of the Government and also the Anglo-Indians. For this purpose, he constructed a small house in Shillong for an overnight stay. In course of his weekly visits, he found that the region was feasible for propagation of Christian faith. With Shillong being made

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72 W Reade. opcit. p71
73 J N Choiidhury. op cit. p324
74 G A Jones. opcit. p51
the permanent capital of the Assam Province, in 1889 the Catholic mission placed the Assam Mission under the charge of its own Prefect Apostolic whose residence was in Shillong. Accordingly, on 27\textsuperscript{th} February 1890, two priests, Fr.Otto Hopfenmueller and Fr.Angelus Muenzloher, and two brothers, Bro. Marianus Schumn and Bro. Joseph Baechle, led by Fr. Otto Hopfenmueller arrived at Shillong to start missionary works among the Khasis. His strong determination helped him to master the Khasi language within a few weeks. He translated "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" into Khasi which were needed during church services. Sadly, his missionary zeal was cut short by his demise on 21\textsuperscript{st} August 1890. Ten days later, Bro. Schumn also passed away after a severe attack of dysentery Fr. Angelus Munzloher then took over as in-charge of the mission. He resolved to continue the work of Fr. Otto in these hills. First and foremost, he began the process to survey and acquire a suitable site to set up the mission house. In 1891, Fr. Munzloher purchased the land of General Hopkinson in Laitumkhrah for a meagre amount of Rs 5000/- only. This particular plot of land was called "Lumtyngkong" by the Khasis. This year 1891 was a historic year in the annals of the Roman Catholic Mission. On 8\textsuperscript{th} December 1891, three Khasis - Ka Anna Sada and her two offsprings, ka Maria Shitmon and u Joseph Kynjun - were baptized. These were the first Catholics among the Khasis and Jaintias. Their baptism was a reason for rejoice within the Mission. Again in the same year 1891, a small primary school was started in Laitumkhrah to which an orphanage and a convent was attached. Mission works were a success as seen in the establishment of a sub-mission station and an elementary school at Umpling within a year or two. Despite Umpling being a mere half an hour's walk from the Shillong station, Fr Valentine Kartte preferred to stay among the locals and therefore, built a small hut as his residence. Unfortunately, he passed away on 1stJuly 1894, hardly two years of missionary activities in India. His demise left a void in the Umpling station.

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}M Liias. \textit{Kc) Histon Ka Balling}, pi 95
\textsuperscript{2}C Becker, \textit{Histories of the Catholic Missions in Southeast India (ISVO-IVIS)} Translated & edited by G Stddler and S karotemprel, p 158-159. H Fhas. op cit. pi96
\textsuperscript{3}C Becker, op cit. pl 73-174}
In 1893, the Catholic mission set up a mission station at Sheila, comprising a church, a primary school, an orphanage and a convent for the sisters. In the first year of its existence, the school had an enrolment of seventy boys and forty girls. The thirst for education by the locals was proved by this enrolment. To quench their thirst for education, new schools were set up in the neighbouring villages. The progressive missionary and educational activities of the priests and the sisters suffered a setback when the mission houses and school buildings were razed to the ground by the massive Earthquake of 1897. On 12\textsuperscript{th} June 1897 a severe earthquake shook these hills causing immense destructions of life and property. Sheila being located at the foot of the hills suffered huge loss and destruction. Along with all the houses and the school of the Welsh Mission, the Sheila mission station too was completely destroyed by the tremor.\textsuperscript{8} Apprehensive of another quake catastrophe, the Mission shifted the Mission station to Laitkynsew, where a primary school, a church, a convent and a church house for the priests were established. It was at this Laitkynsew mission station, that a printing press was set up to cater to the publication of necessary books, papers etc. Presence of the printing press helped in the publication of the monthy "V Nongialam Katholik". The Laitkynsew mission was making a gradual progress and development. Like in Sheila, again nature played havoc in Laitkynsew. In 1906 a famine broke out due to the poor harvest. In the Spring of 1908, Laitkynsew suffered a serious blow when a severe storm hit the region. All the buildings within the mission compound were destroyed compelling the missionaries together with the orphans to return to Shillong. Missionary activities of the Catholic mission at Laitkynsew was temporarily shelved. The works were resumed in 1911 with the arrival of Bro. Symphorian Haas who undertook the work of reconstruction. He first completed the repair works of the school building. So prompt and dedicated was he, that by 1914 two primary schools, a dispensary, a church and two substations were built.\textsuperscript{9} The Sheila-Laitkynsew Catholic mission showed the sustenance spirit of the missionaries, who raised it a third time from nature's destructions.

\textsuperscript{8} C Becker, op cit, p183-184. G A Jones OP cit. p^8S. H Flus. OP cit. pl66
\textsuperscript{9} C Becker, op at .p183,185\textsuperscript{5i-H}\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{w}}
The third mission station was set up at Cherrapunjee in 1897, a few months before the earthquake. Though the earthquake destroyed it in June, the missionaries were not thwarted. Repair works were immediately undertaken. The school building was rebuilt in 1898 and in 1899 the Chapel was completed and dedicated to Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1902, political quarrels had an adverse effect on the mission. When Hajon Manik, Syiem of Sohra, passed away in 1902, there were two contenders to the throne. Of these, one was supported by the Catholics and the other by the Protestants. The succession dispute ended in the victory of the Protestants. Consequent to this political dispute was a feeling of antagonism between the Catholics and the Protestants. A tragic sequence to this political dispute was the burning of the mission school in 1904. Though rebuilding was delayed, it was not abandoned. Eventually, in 1907 reconstruction work of the school building was completed.

Till the beginning of the twentieth century, co-education was the order of the day. Though parents and society had no objection for boys and girls attending the same school, the Catholic Mission felt that it would be far more rewarding to set up a separate school for girls where they could be given lessons on practical education. With this objective in mind, a primary school for girls was set up in Shillong by the Sisters of the Divine Saviour in 1910, a school that gives lessons on domestic science, that is, teaching the girls the art of cooking, washing, ironing, stitching, knitting, darning and embroidering. From the lessons imparted, this school was more of a vocational school than one that imparts formal education. The first primary school for girls established by the Catholic Mission, in accordance with government rules and regulations, was set up in 1913 by the German Salvatorian Sisters and a Khasi lady teacher. Besides the regular syllabus, instruction on useful home-subjects was introduced to help the girls to become good mothers in due time. With the out-break of the First World War in 1914, the German missionaries were compelled to leave the country, and the Salvatorians in Shillong left on 2T November 1914 leaving the school under the general care of the mission. Fortunately, a year later, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Chittagong Mission

* C. Becker, op cit., p 264-265
came to the rescue of the school. On their arrival on 15th November 1915, they took charge of the school and a new beginning had dawned for the little girls. The turbulent beginning was soon forgotten with the rapid progress of the school. This school, the St. Mary's School, in course of time was acknowledged as one of the best school for girls, not only in Shillong but in the whole North Eastern Region. The Catholic Mission did not restrict its evangelical and educational activities only to the Khasi hills, but extended it to the Jaintia hills too. The first contact of the Catholic mission with the Jaintias date back to 1891, when a delegation from Raliang requested the Administrator Apostolic to send a missionary to their village to give teachings on Catholic religion. Responding positively to this request two missionaries, Fr. John Gruchot and Fr. Thaddeus Hoffman, set out to fulfil the spiritual wants of the people there. With people's support combined with the hardwork and sacrifices of the missionaries, an orphanage was opened on 17th September 1894 and the chapel was constructed in 1894. The increase in the number of converts made it necessary for the construction of a church and the same was undertaken in 1895. Two years later, like in other parts of the region, this mission station too was destroyed by the earthquake of 1897. But the same were rebuilt in 1898 and work continued to function. Despite oppositions from the Welsh Mission, the Catholic Mission took a bold step in starting a Society of native mission sisters in 1912. The resident of the latter was completed in 1913 and was solemnly blessed on 6th January 1914. The girls' orphanage was shifted to the old house of the sisters and the orphanage was converted into a dispensary. The activities of the mission made enormous progress and by 1914 the centre at Raliang had 2 sub-stations and seven elementary schools at under its charge. Again by the end of 1914 the Catholic mission in the Khasi-Jaintia hills had thirty seven primary schools with 668 pupils.

The history of the beginning of education in the Garo Hills was different from that in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The initiative to promote education amongst the Garos was taken up by David Scott, the Agent to the Governor General.

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M Greta Margreat. "St Man's Down the \ ear>" in Ucghalaia Guardian. December 10.2004
V: C Becker, op cit. p210-213
North East Frontier. From his very first contact with the Garos, Scott wanted to redeem
them from their utter backwardness through education and conversion into Christianity.
To achieve his objective, David Scott on 5th June 1826 made a proposal to the
Government of Bengal, that Christian missionaries be sent to take up humanitarian
activities amongst the Garos through proselytisation that a school under the supervision
of the Christian mission be set up at Singimari to educate the Garo boys through Bengali
and the expense would be defrayed from the surplus collection derived from the Garo
markets after deducting the other expenditures of the Government. Scott believed that
education and evangelization should be the vehicles to inculcate civilized habits among
the Garos. Sure of the success of mission works among the Garos. David Scott wrote to
the Government of Bengal, "If Government would ensure them subsistence only in case
of success or my death, I would willingly take upon myself the expense in the first
instance, and three hundred pounds per annum would suffice". Permission was granted
allowing missionaries to educate and spread the Gospel among the Garos. However, with
regard to financial assistance, Bayley, the Secretan to the Government, pointed out that
the Government could not pay salary to persons employed as missionaries but if termed
as school-masters, assistance could be given in that shape. The Government of Bengal
suggested that a school and a chapel be set up at Singimari and the same be placed under
the general supervision of a missionary. David Scott accepted the suggestion and
accordingly, contacted Bishop Heber at Calcutta for missionary assistance.

Without wasting time. David Scott opened a school at Goalpara to educate the forty Garo
boys at an expense of four hundred rupees per mensem. As recommended by Bishop Heber, Valentine William Hurley, an Apothecan to the
European Invalid Establishment in Chunar was appointed as the schoolmaster at a
monthK salary of two hundred rupees. Through the Bengali medium, the boys were

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* F P P 1846, 14 March No.48-49, Agent, Governor General to the Cfg Secretan; Government of India
Dated 25th November 1845.
M N K Barooah. Dmid Scott in North East India (IS02-ISM). p177
A ChakravartN. H isf on- of Education in Assam. p124. H k Barpujari. Problem of Hill Tribes North
East Frontier 1 ol 1. p26:
taught the basic three R's, Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic along with some knowledge of general history of the world as well as the English language. However, for the intelligent pupils, provisions were made to teach them with English as the medium of instruction. The pupils were also taught the morality of the Scriptures and the doctrine of Christianity. Being too depressed at the dismal prospect of reading with the savages, Hurley resigned in October 1827 and was replaced by James Fernie, a junior teacher in the Hindu College of Calcutta, whose salary was increased to three hundred rupees per month. According to Fernie, assumed school duty as schoolmaster in July 1828 but the insalubrity of the climate proved fatal to him and he died on November 19, 1828. As it was difficult for the foreign missionaries to adapt themselves to the climatic condition of the place and to the ways of living of the local people. Scott appointed a Bengalee assistant to continue the work of educating the boys. Unfortunately, the hillmen who were superstitious by nature viewed education as an offence to their deities, and therefore, such unfortunate incidents occurred. Because the Garos were not receptive towards education and evangelization. Scott suggested that the Government for the time being, should not send any successor until and unless a missionary establishment was set up in the Garo hills. Thus the effort of starting the Bengali medium school at Singimari was a shortlived one due to the absence of dedicated teachers. Despite functioning for only a few years, the school produced Garo boys who were later employed as interpreters in the frontier markets and in the Goalpara court by the British Government.

Though the Government scheme met with an abrupt end, David Scott did not give up on the Garos. His effort to educate them was evident from the report of James Rae, the founder of Gauhati school in 1830. where in he stated that, he had nine Garos committed to his charge by David Scott, the Commissioner of Assam. Except that these were mentioned in the report, nothing more was known about them. Following this, for more than a decade, efforts to educate and Christianize the Garos was temporarily shelved by the Government and the missionaries as well. It was only in 1837. with the

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* A Clukra\am. op cit. p 124
* M S Sangma. History of Education in Garo Hills, p 16
arrival of Re\l. Nathan Brown, the first American Baptist missionary to Assam, that Major Francis Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor General and Commissioner of Assam, made an attempt to revive the work among the Garos by suggesting the establishment of a mission at Gauhati with the specific objective for Nathan Brown to work among the Garos. Though Nathan Brown concurred that there was the need to educate and evangelize the Garos, he himself would be responding to a call to work among the Shans who lived further up north of the Brahmaputra valley.\(^8\) The decision of Brown to work among the Shans was another loss to the Garos. because, in the next few years, no missionary came forward to take up mission work among the Garos nor did the Government make any serious effort to start a school in these hills.

An endeavor to start mission work again for the Garos was taken up by Major Francis Jenkins, Agent to the Governor General, North East Frontier, when he forwarded to the President-in-Council, the letter of 4\(^b\) July 1845 written by Re\l. Robert Bland, Chaplain in Assam, wherein he requested the Government to render help to the Christians of Goalpara. so as to 'enable them to take measures for the instruction of the Garrows. through the means of a Christian mission established at Goalpara".\(^a\) Along with Re\l. Bland's letter, Major Jenkins on his own. also raised the subject of providing intellectual and moral education to these hillmen. Referring to the school at Singimari set up by David Scott, the expenditure of which was defrayed from the surplus revenue collected from the Garo hats, Major Jenkins asserted that there was the same need in the 1840's to civilize and Christianize the Garos as there was in the 1820's. Jenkins also pointed out that, as the funds appropriated during the time of David Scott no longer exist due to the abolition of duties on the Garo hats, he suggested that the Government could devote a fixed amount from the General Revenue of this province and if this was not feasible, then the Government could renew the previous sanction so that the fund could be defrayed from the sum collected from the CKUTOW tributary or Muzzurana Mehals. Jenkins asserted that nothing but a permanent regular mission would be effective in

\(^{a}\) ibid, pl8
\(^{b}\) Letters Issued to Cuncernment vol 13 (Jan-Feb 1844-18-40 ) \o 104 Dated No\l. 25\(^b\) 1845
providing continuous instruction to the Garo youths. He further recommended the appointment of two missionaries in the mission, so that there would not be any break whenever one was indisposed. Because of the urgency of the matter, Jenkins on his own contacted Rev. D. Haberline, who in turn assured him of sending two missionaries from Basle, on condition of monthly support from the Government, an amount very much within the reach of the latter. He concluded his letter by stating that he doubted if any other option could be more economical and effective than the one he had put forward.91 These recommendations were not acceptable to the Government and the latter directed him to suggest other measures for bettering the lives of the Garos.

Having studied the impact of teaching through Bengali medium, Jenkins observed that the Garo lads who were instructed through Bengali language tend to be converted to Brahmanism. Even though they became less ferocious, they were yet to acquire true and proper education. According to Jenkins, civilization of these hillmen could be achieved only when schools were established and parents were induced to send their children to school. It was suggested that to facilitate the spread of education, the schools which were residential in nature, should be set up at the more popular hats to enable the parents to visit their children whenever they visit the weekly hats. In these schools the Bengali language should be taught to help the Garos to interact with their neighbours in the plains, but care should be taken to safeguard them from being converted to Hinduism. Here, Jenkins was supported by Mr. E T Dalton. Principal Assistant of Goalpara, who desired that the Garos should be taught through Bengali medium by a Bengali Christian as the Garos could speak and understand Bengali. He, however, asserted that this Bengali teacher should learn the Garo language to enable him to converse with his pupils. To help the teacher and the taught, a few books be translated into Garo using Bengali script.18

To accelerate the setting up of the schools, Jenkins in 1846 submitted an estimate for the work to be undertaken that would cost about Rs 350 -

91 ibid.
92 M S Sangma, op cit. p.M
month which would amount to Rs 4200/- per year. Further suggestions were made by British officials to raise funds for starting schools. In 1847, Captain C S Reynolds, Principal Assistant of Goalpara, recommended that out of the tributes and fines paid by the Garos to the Government, a monthly amount of Rs 38/- could be allotted for the salary of the schoolmaster and to support eight Garo boys to acquire education for the purpose of serving as teachers in the schools to be established in Garo villages. Taking note of Jenkin's recommendations, the Government in 1847 established a school with free fooding and boarding at Goalpara with the hope of civilizing and educating these fierce hillmen. Initially, the school did not arouse any interest among the Garo lads. Situation soon changed when the Garos who visited the Ronjuli market learnt that the Government would feed, clothe and teach the Garo boys in this school without payment. When the news spread to other nearby villages, five Garo lads named Omed W Momin with his nephews Reban W Momin and Ramke W Momin, along with Ramsing and Jongrin decided to join the school. Despite their parents apprehensions, the four without Ramke who suffered a fall, set out from Watrepara, their village and marched through the hills till they reached the frontier where they stopped for a midday meal. They continued on foot till sunset when they rested for the night under a tree. At dawn they set out again and arrived at Goalpara in the early hours of the day. They located the school and presented themselves to Pintu Babu, the teacher of the school. Omed, who was twenty years of age, Pintu Babu remarked that he was too old to attend school but the other three being twelve and thirteen years old were told to stay. However, Reban, Ramsing and Jongrin objected to this decision and asserted that if Omed could not stay then they too would not, because he had taken the charge to look after them. There they met six other Garo lads who had already enrolled as pupils of this school at Goalpara. Some time later, two other boys joined them. The Garo lads to cure themselves of homesickness, drank liquor, sang and danced much to the chagrin of the Hindu boys. Many a time the Deputy Commissioner had to appoint a number of peons to keep them

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93 M S Sangma. ofxii. p24. V H Sword. Baptist in...p43
out of mischief and prevent them from running away. Handicapped by the fall which broke his arm, six months later Ramke W Momin set forth for Goaipara and requested to be allowed to attend school. At first, the teacher denied him admission, but when Omed plead that his arm only was broke and was mentally alright. Finally, Pintu Babu allowed Ramke to stay after the twelve Garo boys promised they would share their ration with him till the Deputy Commissioner granted him his own. After being in school for two years, these boys were yet to acquire any form of education. Frustrated, Omed and Ramke personally complained to Lt. Agnew, Principal Assistant at Goaipara. Pintu Babu was summoned and after being questioned, was instantly dismissed and a new teacher appointed in his place. According to the Garo boys, the new teacher was diligent in his duties and that they soon learnt the basics of education. To broaden their outlook, these boys visited Gauhati at the expense of the Government. There at Gauhati, Omed, Jongrin and Ronja were enrolled into the Regiment of Sepoys while others returned back to Goaipara to complete their studies.

Meanwhile experimental schools for one year were started at the Garrow hats in the Goaipara district. Captain Agnew, Principal Assistant at Goaipara, during his inspection tour of these schools found that while some of them had a fair attendance of scholars, there were others who had little or no attendance at all. Captain Agnew suggested that the latter mentioned schools should be abolished and measures be taken up to improve the former ones. Furthermore, Captain Agnew suggested that the interpreters at Garrow hats be done away with, and revenue saved from paying them would be put to good use for improvement of the schools. Major Jenkins agreed with the proposals of Captain Agnew and. he therefore, requested the Lt. Governor to grant sanction to Captain Agnew’s proposal and further recommended that these schools be supported and managed by the Government itself.

Of all the Garo boys pursuing their schooling at Goaipara, Ramke, the brighter and more intelligent one, soon became well-versed with Bengali

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114 Y Cirea, Curo Jungle Book, p54-55
115 Lceu-3s issiu-Jto (Jovvment, vol 22 (1857-1858 ) No.63 Dated M\ 2V’ 1858
Because of his skill and proficiency, he in 1856 was sent to teach at Rongjuli school, located in Assam about five kilometres away from Garo hills. After completing a year there, he returned back to Goalpara to complete his own education. While at the Goalpara school, he was invited by Omed to pursue his studies at Gauhati. Ramke accepted the invitation and was admitted into the Gauhati Normal School. During their stay in Gauhati, Omed and Ramke were baptized on February 8th, 1863. In March 1864, they returned to Goalpara with the objective to spread the Gospel amongst their relatives. Encouraged and aided by Captain B W D Morton, then Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara, Ramke started a school at Damra in the same year, while Omed visited the villages to evangelize to and educate the tollmen. Damra was chosen for starting the school, because it was one of the biggest and most flourishing hats in the frontiers. The reason for opening the school was to help the hillmen to learn how to read and write, to enable them to read the Scriptures on their own. After putting in three years work, Omed and Ramke requested Dr. Miles Bronson, the American Baptist Missionary stationed at Nowgong, to a visit to Damra. On April 12th, 1867 Bronson arrived at Damra and inspected the school which had an enrolment of fifteen boys at the time. Following his inspection, in the same year, the school was elevated as a Normal School or a Training School for teachers and preachers. The next year 1868. Dr. Bronson accompanied by Dr. Stoddard visited the Damra school and found thirty boys in the roll. In this instance they stayed for sometime preaching at Damra and alongside supervised the construction of a building which would have a chapel and a school itself. Having noticed the progress made by this Station School at Damra, the Government accepted the proposal of Captain Williamson, the Deputy Commissioner of Garo Hills, and made a monthly grant of Rs 50/- to the school. Until 1870 the school functioned at Damra, but because of the problem of missionary supervision, it was transferred to Goalpara during the rainy season. For the next five years, the school functioned partly at Damra and partly at Goalpara.

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** M S Sangma. opcit. p27
***W Carey op cit..pl01-102: M S Sangma. op cit., p28-29
" Proceedings ofU Governor of Bengal File 84. No.2622 Dated Jul> 25th 1873
Goalpara. In 1875 the school was shifted permanently to Goalpara and thence in 1878 was transferred to Tura permanently.\textsuperscript{100} At this school, Bengali was taught and Bengali text books were used in Arithmetic, Geography and History. English was taught to some extent only and just a few acquired knowledge of it. All boys without distinction were admitted to the upper departments once they qualified for the same. It is desirable to note that admission was given to the unconverted pupils, but as Phillips remarked, I know of none for years who have passed through the school unconverted.\textsuperscript{101} Contrary to this remark. Phillips in this Jubilee Report mentioned that, of the 237 pupils studying in this school, 14 only left unconverted and of these, 6 were Hindus and 8 were Garos. From among the boys who passed-out, 103 of them were engaged in teaching or employed in some religious work of the mission. Again from among the rest, some returned to farming while there were those who were engaged in farming while teaching.\textsuperscript{102}

A hurdle was faced by the school authorities in persuading the boys to remain in school to complete the course of study. This was soon overcome, when in 1881, the authorities introduced a pledge which was to be taken by each and everyone admitted into the school. At the time the boys first joined the school, they had to pledge to remain in school until dismiss by the authorities and to take up teaching if teaching jobs were offered to them. Another difficult) faced by this school was dearth of suitable and satisfactory teachers. Only in the last part of 1880's that Mr. Burdette from Gauhati was able to recruit some better indigenous teachers than the ones in the previous years. Fortunately for the school, their headmaster had had two years training in America and therefore was fit and efficient for the desired job. One interesting character of the school was its ability to avert the danger of the learned being lifted above manual labour. This was the outcome of the strict rule that each boy should put in two hours of manual labour everyday, performing jobs needed to be done in and around the school premises. This rule not only taught the pupils about dignity of labour but it also saved the authority a considerable sum of money. The success of the Damra school was evident when us first

\textsuperscript{100} R G Phillips, op at. p70
\textsuperscript{101} ibid. p-M
\textsuperscript{102} ibid. p71-72
pupil. Fokira W Momin, the brother of Ramke, with the support of Dr. Bronson opened a school at Rajasimla in 1867. In the very first year, the school had on its roll 17 young Garo men, 13 small boys and a few girls. The next year there were 20 Garo girls studying together with the boys and by 1872, the number of girls had increased to 34.

The year 1867 witnessed the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Stoddard, the first American Baptist Missionaries in Goalpara, designated to work among the Garo hillmen. There at Goalpara they visited by Ramke, Rangku W Momin, then an employee in the Police Department in Nowgong, and some pupils of the Damra school. While the rest returned to Damra, Rangku with one or two boys stayed back to aid the Stoddrds to learn the Garo language and in turn, they themselves would learn the English language and other subjects. As the natives were keen to acquire education, Mrs. Stoddard started a small school for boys with a class of eight to ten pupils. However, the school had a short life due to Mrs. Stoddard's ill-health.

The missionaries took the responsibility of educating the Garos so seriously. that in 1868, four missionary schools were set up at Nibari, Ronguli, Rajasimla and Bangalkata and Tura under Government's patronage. Thus by 1872, there were fourteen village schools and one Normal school catering to the educational need of the Garos. In January 1873 Captain Williamson visited the schools at Nibari, Rajasimla, Rongjuli and Damra personally, where he found 13, 26, 34 and 13 pupils enrolled in the said school respectively. During his visits and interaction with the schools, he noted that the boys were taught Arithmetic and Geography in Bengali medium. Bengali texts were also taught alongside the simple Garo texts written in Bengali script. However, girls were taught only the Bengali texts. Williamson made a note that there were hardly any Garo teachers in these schools despite the presence of a Normal Training School. He recommended that the Normal Training School should be given more patronage to enable it to produce Garo teachers who in turn would set up schools for their own hillmen in the Garo hills. During these visits, Williamson found that the American Baptist Mission was

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103 M S Sangma, op cit. p30; W Carey, op cit. pi 12.
hardpressed for want of funds and he recommended that an additional grant of Rs 50/- be granted to the mission to help it to open more village schools in these hills. Williamson also observed that the missionaries confined their mission field only to the northern villages leaving those in the south devoid of education. He recommended that educational funds be made available by the Government to set up schools in the southern villages with the appointment of a Sub-Inspector of Schools to supervise these institutions. Based on the report of Williamson, the Lt. Governor of Bengal, Sir William Grey, wanted to know clearly from the American Baptist Mission "whether they will undertake the management of a Garo Normal School at Toora and of village schools in the interior of the district or whether they are prepared only to maintain a Garo Normal School at Gовалparah and to start schools on the outer border of the Garo hills and on the lowlands at the foot of the hills". Sir Grey impressed on the Mission to give an answer, so that the Government could decide on its future actions to educate the hillmen. He clearly asserted that should the missionaries opine that they were able to undertake the task and properly manage the schools at Tura and in the interior, he would consider the proposals for increasing the grant to the Garo Normal School and to assign a sum of Rs 50 - a year to each village school the missionaries maintained. If, however, the Mission expressed its inability to undertake the responsibility, he would consider the alternative of entrusting the task to any other mission or agency or he might instruct the Deputy Commissioner to open Government schools at those villages which the Deputy Commissioner might select. Furthermore, the Lt. Governor explicitly stated that whatever plan be adopted, the Government would be able to sanction only Rs 5000 from Provincial Revenue towards educational purposes in the Garo hills in the first Near." To this query, RevT J Keith, who had come with his wife to replace the Stoddards in January 1872, responded with a positive reply asserting that the mission had the ability to take up the whole responsibility to educate the Garos as books and teachers were available and also he would soon be joined by another fellow worker from America. Though the American Baptist Mission

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had committed itself to the task, yet the Chief Commissioner observed that for the mission to make rapid progress, he suggested that the Government grants be made available to the schools and be placed at the disposal of Rev. Keith. He further recommended that an efficient educational officer be deputed to Tura to start a Normal School there and to appoint one or two Sub-Inspectors of Schools directly accountable to the Deputy Commissioner till the arrival of the missionary from America.107

In December 1874, the American missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. E G Phillips and Rev. and Mrs. M C Mason arrived at Goalpara to strengthen the mission. Till then all the schools except the one stationed at Turagiri, were located in the plains. Of these mentioned ma> be made of Mohendragunge, Batajhore. Majpara, Dabreng. Totlengkura and Kodaldoha which had an average of 23 pupils on the rolls.108 Nine months later Re\ Phillips and Rev. Mason visited Tura. Accordingly, they chose the site for the Mission house and made all necessary preparations for construction of the building. By March 1877, construction was near completion and Rev. Phillips with his wife moved to Tura. leaving Rev. and Mrs. Mason to continue the task in Goalpara. With Tura as the centre of missionary activities, the mission could extend its works to other parts of the Garo hills. In 1878 the Government renewed its proposal to hand over all educational works in these hills to the mission along with grants given to the schools on condition that the Normal School be transferred from Goalpara to Tura. The proposal was accepted provided that the American Baptist Mission was given freedom to frame its own educational policies and objectives. Accordingly, the school was shifted to Tura with Ramke as the first Headmaster of the school at Tura. In November 1878, Rev. and Mrs. Mason soon joined the Phillips at Tura and settled there for better pursuance of the task. The Government sanctioned Rs 3000/- a year as grants-in-aid towards the mission with an occasional supplementary grant for the school buildings at Tura, while the mission would contribute Rs1000/- annually towards the same purpose. All the Rs4000/- should be spent only for educational purposes. With the financial aid from the Government the

107 M S Sangma. op at.. p37
missionaries assisted by native teachers could open schools at Shamnagar, Chokpotgiri and Atiabari in 1877, at Adokgiri in 1878 and at Baghmara in 1879. It is interesting to note that, though the Government had given the task to the American Baptist Mission, yet a number of schools was set up by the Government itself in a number of villages. Despite the efforts of the Mission and the Government to educate these hillmen, the Garo hills was still considered a backward area because the number of literates was very less. This was evident in the report of B C Allen when he reported that in 1880-1881 only 458 pupils in the whole district were under instruction.

The missionaries in pursuance of the task set before them, did not confine its educational work only to the Garo boys. The first instance when Garo girls attended school was in 1867, when Dr. Miles Bronson opened the village school at Rajasimla with Fokira W Momin as its teacher. But a school devoted for educating girls only was yet to be taken up, either by the missionaries or by the government. It was Mrs. Keith, wife of Rev. Keith, who first realized the need of starting a school only for girls. To this end Mrs. Keith in 1874 opened a Boarding school for Garo girls in Goalpara. Immediately, twelve girls from Rajasimla joined the school as boarders. Here, the girls were taught both Garo and Bengali texts besides other regular subjects. They were also given training in sewing. As in all cases of mission schools, the girls were taught the doctrine of Christianity. Unfortunately the school could function for little more than a year and had to be closed down on account of Mrs. Keith's ill-health. Closure of this school did not mean the door of education was closed to the twelve girls because, a few of them enrolled themselves in the boys' schools and continued with their studies. The effort of Mrs. Keith, though for a brief period, had everlasting result. One of the fruits of this school was Dobaki W Momin, a niece of Ramke, who after completing her studies married Bakal Sangma, a schoolteacher. Later Dobaki Momin assisted her husband in his school by teaching the girls and for this she was paid Rs4/- a month. She was the first Garo woman ever employed as a teacher. So dedicated was she to her duty, that at one

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1 M S Sangma, opcit., p41
2 B C Allen. Imperial Volunteer of India. W, pMO
time the school had twenty-two girls enrolled, which gradually increased in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{1} It was pleasant to note that though parents initially hesitated to send their daughters to school, in later years not only the girls but even some mothers started attending her school. The other girls who had attended Mrs. Keith's school settled down in marriage and as Christian wives and mothers, they let their light shine in their homes and among their associates.

Seeing the need of a woman missionary to work among the Garo girls and women, the American Baptist Mission requested the parent mission to send one such woman who would devote herself to the task. Their request was granted with the arrival of Miss Miriam Russel in 1879 at Tura. After a brief respite, Miss Russel soon started taking lessons in Garo language and side by side looked after the construction of a house for herself and a school-room for the girls. Though the progress was very slow, eventually the buildings were completed. But, there were hardly any girls enrolled in the school. The reasons the girls were keeping away from the school were that they were jeered at by the boys and also because their parents took it to be worthless sending their daughters to school when they were needed to help in the house and in the fields. Another drawback for the school was the ill-health of Miss Russel who had to leave Tura for a time to rest and recover. When she returned to Tura at the end of 1881 with health restored, she let it be known through the A'chikni Ripeng, a Garo Christian monthly, that she had reopened the school and that the girls could attend the same. Having been in these hills for a mere three years, Miss Russel was ignorant about the nature of the natives. Dah she waited for the parents to bring their daughters to school but none turned up. Though disappointed, she was not discouraged. She firmly decided if the girls would not come to be taught, then she would take education to them.\textsuperscript{2} Putting words into action, on December 26th 1881 she set out touring the villages to persuade girls to attend the school at Tura. She was accompanied by coolies and attendants who were non-christians except for one. After visiting about fifteen villages with no positive response

\textsuperscript{1} MR Burdene, "Work for Garo WomerTm Jubilee R.\textsc{n} 1886, p 193
\textsuperscript{2} MR Burdene, op cit., pi 94
from the natives, finally in the last and the fifteenth village that she visited, a group of girls showed a desire to meet her. Of these ten decided to joined the school and accompanied her back to Tura where they arrived on February 10th, 1882. Incidentally, except for one, all the other nine girls were orphans. At Tura the girls enrolled in the Girls' School and were instructed in Garo and Bengali medium to read, write and spell. Arithmetic was taught only through the Bengali medium. The girls were also taught the doctrine of Christianity and prayers with them were held regularly. They were also given training in sewing. Regardless of the hardwork put in by Miss Russel, at the end of the year only three girls continued to attend school while the rest returned to their villages.

Undeterred by this fall out. Miss Russel resolved to adopt a different method to make the girls acquainted with school-life and gradually could help them realize the importance of acquiring education. To achieve her objective, she spent at least one season in one of the large Christian villages and opened a school there. The Winter season of 1883-1884 saw her staying at Nishangram village where seven girls were studying in the village school there. The day after her arrival, the teacher of this school, apprehensive that Russel's presence might scare the girls, he met her and put his feelings into words. With fear in her heart, she met one of the girls and after talking with her, the girl promised to attend school. Surprisingly, the next morning, fifteen girls came to school and the number kept on increasing daily till thirty eight girls were enrolled in this school, some of them as boarders from the villages which were located at one day journey. Her dedication resulted in the enrolment of twenty-one girls at the Girls' School at Tura. In this instance not only the orphans but even those with living parents joined the school. These girls stayed throughout the year (1884-1885) and after the yearly break, returned back to continue their studies. Through her industrious work, the girls' school was well established. But in October 1885, she had to leave Tura on account of her marriage to Mr. Burdette and. therefore, had to join her husband in Gauhati. Her transfer to Gauhati had adversely affected the school and for a year the school was temporarily closed. In January 1886. Misses Ella C Bond and Stella Mason arrived at

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M= ibid, pi 95-1%: EG Phillips, op at., p 74
Tura to take up from where Mrs. Burdette had left. As with other missionaries, they spent the first year learning the Garo language and in the following year they toured the villages and were able to bring back with them twelve girls to revive the Girls' School at Tura. These two ladies reopened the school in the Spring of 1887 with an enrolment of twenty-nine girls. The same subjects were continued to be taught by Misses Bond and Mason. The subsequent years 1888 and 1889 saw an increase in the number of pupils to 35 and 39 respectively. The 1890's witnessed the growing interest in education for girls and was proved by the presence of 253 girls in the Boys' schools of this district. Interestingly, the natives of Nishangram village started a Girls' School in their village in 1892, managed and supported by the natives themselves."

As revealed in the reports of the American Baptist Mission, the mission was short staffed. Under such circumstances, the mission was compelled to unite the Girls' School and the Boys' School at Tura. The unification of the two in 1898 did not have an adverse effect on any of the schools. Instead it was found where previously the all-engrossing thought of the pupils centred on marriages, now a feeling of comradeship had existed between boys and girls, and together they showed a health} interest in school pursuits. By the turn of the century, there were twenty-five girls studying in this co-educational institution and all of them were Christians."^5

"To elevate the economy of the Garos, the American Baptist Mission in 1877 opened an Industrial Department attached to the Normal School in Goalpara. The Government sanctioned Rs 300/- for the purchase of required tools, but the speedy removal of the school to Tura interrupted the work. But Mr. Mason who saw the need of industrial development, appealed to fellow Americans to raise funds for investment in machinery and improved implements for resale to the Garos. Part of the fund was also raised by him while he was on a furlough to America."^6 On his return journey, he brought back machineries, tools and some necessary equipments and the same were resold to the Garos at a very low price. He gave his due attention to make the people

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1^4 M S Sangma. op cit., p65
1^5 ibid., p67
1^6 FGPhillipv open.. p74-75
knowledgeable of their use and eventually would help in their industrial progress. Thus by the end of the nineteenth century, through Government finances combined with efforts and determination of the missionaries, education in the Garo Hills had made a gradual progress, though undoubtedly a slow one.

When Shillong was made the headquarter of Assam in 1874 the numerous officials of the British Government together with their families came to settle in the capital. This therefore, effected a need to open an elementary school for the children of British officials in the capital, because the existing primary schools at the time were vernacular schools. Co-incidentally, the Arch Deacon of Calcutta impressed upon the Government of India to make "special arrangements for the teaching of the children of Europeans and Eurasians in this country, who are unable to send them to England for education." To fulfil this educational need of the European and Eurasian children, a Committee was formed with Rev. S B Taylor, Chaplain of Gauhati and Shillong, as the Secretary to settle the preliminaries for opening the school. The Committee recommended to rent Beauchamp Lodge as a temporary school-house with hostel facilities. Thus, the Shillong Girls' School was established and opened on 1 March 1881 with an enrolment of 4 boarders and 2 day scholars on the first day of admission. This was the only school of the kind in the province. By 31 March, another 5 girls joined the school as day scholars. Five months later, the number increased to 16 but when school closed in November 1881, only 13 were on the roll. The next year the school reopened with 6 boarders and 2 day scholars in March and the enrolment rose to 16 boarders and 8 day scholars by June 1881. During the initial years, the school imparted elementary education through an Infant department and two Upper classes. Though the standard of instruction at the time was at a lower level compared with other European and Eurasian schools in the country, the Committee was prepared to meet the demand for advanced classes whenever the need arose. The Government sanctioned Rs 4000/- towards the establishment cost of the school. The average cost of each pupil enrolled was

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11 Report on the Administration of Assam 1881-1882, p2
1111 General Report on Public Instruction in W.B. 1881-1882, p3
Rs 463-9-7, of which Rs 266-10-8 was borne by the Provincial Government. The Chief Commissioner sanctioned a special grant towards the construction of an extra dormitory. Though the cost of establishment was high, but the school suffered for want of suitable and sufficient accommodation. However, the Government did not take it to be a monetary wastage, as it was in the experimental stage and was confident that in course of time its popularity would increase, thereby ensuring an increase in the resources. Till it was destroyed by the earthquake in 1897, the school under the guidance of Mrs Jones made a gradual though a slow progress. As per records available during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Government continued to render financial help to the school annually, to tide it during these earlier trialed period.

The school was closed in 1897 after the massive earthquake hit these hills resulting in the loss of lives and property. Being the only European and Eurasian school in the province, the Chief Commissioner took immediate steps to rebuild the school but would reopen as a Government institution. Two years after the earthquake, the school was re-established on 6th August 1900 as a primary school to replace the aided one destroyed by the earthquake. The re-established school renamed as The Pine Mount School, was placed under the charge of a Lady Superintendent from England, who was appointed as the Headmistress. The reopened school was classed as a primary school directly under the control of the Government. Soon after, it was elevated to Middle school status immediately. Ironically, due to lack of pupils in the higher classes, the school was reclassified as a primary school again for a very brief period of a year only. By 1902, the school was again raised to the middle level as necessitated by requirements.

Towards the close of the quinquennium period of 1901-02 to 1906-07, the enrolment has increased promisingly.

Another school for the European and Eurasian children was started by the Roman Catholic Mission of Assam in 1909, located within the mission compound at

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* Report on the Administration of Assam, 1881-1882. p210
** Report on the Administration of Assam, 1890-95. p211
1 Report on the Administration of Assam, 1900-1901.
2 Quinquennial Review 1901-02 to 1906-07. p88
Shillong. This school, named Loreto Convent, was established by the Loreto Sisters, a Teaching Order of the Catholic Mission. The Loreto Sisters like the Irish Christian Brothers, were popular and famous for their educational works in India and abroad. It was for this reason that they were invited by the Prefect Apostolic of Assam to visit Shillong and make a personal assessment whether the area was suitable for establishment of an English school in the Provincial capital. Accordingly in 1908, Mother Borgia Irwin and Mother Annunziata, who came as delegates on behalf of Rev. Mother Provincial in Calcutta, to assess the situation submitted a report favouring the school project at Shillong. They gave the following glowing report in their publications "Palm Leaves" that. "Shillong is really a wonderful place and that it resembles more the hilly regions of England and Ireland than do the summer residences of the government at Darjeeling and Simla in the Himalayas. The roads are wide and level and the people can travel in carts and coaches. The whole locality looks very orderly. The slopes of the hills are always green. The hills are always covered with green velvet carpets. It is a country of pine trees which grow even in the crack of the rocks and by the side of the rivulets. We are delighted with the locale of the Catholic Mission. Its compound covers the whole range of a hill. The residence of the Governor lies below. To the north, the south and the east is a chain of hills which separates Shillong from Cherrapunjee. Shillong is therefore, protected from the excessive rains of Cherrapunjee, which is the rainiest place in the world. The place intended for the new school is a small forest of pine trees... Naturally the forest must be cleared and the place leveled. This will mean considerable expenses." From this glorious report of the Loreto Sisters, it definitely meant that they accepted the invitation of the Prefect Apostolic. Thus, the Loreto Sisters set up the First English school of the Roman Catholic Mission in the province of Assam.

The twentieth century witnessed the speedy progress of primary education in the state, especially with the Government giving due attention to its development and expansion. A comparative study of the progress of primary education in the Rhasi, Jaintia and Garo hills shows that the latter was lagging far behind the other two. While the

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official reports for Khasi and Jaintia hills painted a picture of progress and development, those for Garo hills as a dismal one. As Sir Nicholas Beatson Bell, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, reported that he was disappointed at the prevailing conditions of the primary schools in Garo hills. He described the reading of Garo text-books was purely mechanical without the students understanding the lessons therein. He called on the missionaries to better what they had already done. He also pointed the urgent need of publishing standard Garo text-books to ensure quality education. Despite all these shortcomings, primary education played a significant role in the overall educational development of the state, for these primary schools were responsible for the producing students to pursue the higher level of education. Thus, the importance of primary schools and primary education can never be minimized.