CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMERS AND LITERATURE

Primers are the basic necessities for the promotion of education among the people. Without Primers, no literature can develop. That is why, Primers are mostly considered as the first requirement for the growth and development of education. Primers form an integral part of elementary education, both inside and outside the school.

When elementary education was introduced in the Khasi and Jaintia hills by the foreign missionaries and in the Garo hills by the British officials, there was no Primer nor any kind of Reader which could be used in the schools. Because of the urgent need for publications of Primers, the foreign missionaries attempted to meet this requirement. This was a no easy task, as the tribes did not have a script of their own and they were yet to learn how to read and write. Despite absence of a script, the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos who settled in the plains or who inhabited the region bordering the plain territories were privileged to some form of education enabling them to read and write their own languages adopting the script of their close neighbours, that is, the Bengali script.

The Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos possessed no written literature during the pre-British era. The first attempt to convert the oral Khasi language into a written one was undertaken by Dr. William Carey of the Serampore Baptist Mission at Calcutta. As early as 1813, Dr. Carey undertook the task of translating the New Testament of the Bible using the Bengali script. With the assistance of a few persons who were conversant with Bengali and Khasi languages, a few copies of the Gospel of St. Matthew was translated and printed in 1817.\(^5\) These few copies were distributed

\(^{15}\) E W Dkhar, Primary Education in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, p50; H Bareh, A Short History of Khasi Literature, p25
among the Khasis living in the plains who could read and understand Bengali script. Dr. Carey persisted with the process of translating the New Testament and eventually, in 1831,* an edition of 500 copies of the *Khashee New Testament* was printed in Bengali characters and published.\textsuperscript{126} Though the two were the first printed books in Khasi language, they could not be taken as literary contributions to Khasi literature, because these translated works were unintelligible to the Khasis. The form of language and expression used was imperfect and the script adopted could not be easily deciphered.\textsuperscript{127} A copy of *Khashee Sew Testament* is still seen in the Serampore Library.

A missionary of the Serampore Baptist Mission, Alexander B Lish was credited with the first attempt to print Primers for the formal schools set up by him in the Khasi hills. Absence of Primers and Text-books in Khasi language, instilled in Lish the need to prepare some Readers for use of the school children. Towards the close of 1832, Alexander B Lish had prepared short reading lessons in Khasi adopting the Bengali characters and also in English. Being a missionary, he gave due importance to translation of Christian literature. As such, he translated some of the Christian parables and the Sermon on the Mount and also revised the translated Gospel of St. Matthew which he published in 1833. It is also said that Lish had attempted to write a Khasi Grammar, but this was never published nor could it be traced anywhere.\textsuperscript{118} Besides the aforesaid publications, he also translated Dr. Warf’s First Catechism for Children into Khasi, again using the Bengali character. The translated version was published in 1836.\textsuperscript{179} The Catechism was meant for the use of the Cherra Mission School. The publications of Alexander B Lish were in Bengali script and therefore, is unintelligible to the Khasi of today, because the Welsh missionaries had supplanted Bengali script by the Roman in

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\textsuperscript{*} W Prse had stated that 1831 was the year the *Khiishee Testament* was published, while J H Morris had written that it was published in 1824.


\textsuperscript{118} E W Dkhar, op cit., p51; J H Morris, op cit. p59.

\textsuperscript{179} W Prse. op cit, p 110.121; S S Majaw. op cit. p56
totality. Furthermore, closure of the schools in 1838 made these publications redundant, for they were not taught in the schools of the Welsh Mission.

With the coming of the Welsh Christian missionaries, Bengali script was abandoned and replaced by the Roman script. Rev Thomas Jones, the first missionary of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists Mission, on his arrival at Sohra, was aware of the fact that previous attempts had been made by the Serampore Baptist Mission to reduce Khasi into a written language. Foreseeing the difficulties to be faced by him and future missionaries should he continue with the Bengali script, Rev. Thomas Jones decided to adapt the Khasi language with the Roman characters, a script known to the missionaries. He argued that his decision would help the Khasis in the long run, as they found it difficult to learn through the Bengali script. This decision was not unanimously acceptable to all. Foremost among those who criticized this decision was W Pryse, who wrote in the Prefatory Note to *An Introduction to the Khasia Language* that to extend education and civilization to the Khasis, Bengali characters should be used as to ensure development of trade and commerce with its neighbouring States. But missionary scholars like Dr. Alexander Duff and Rev. Tomlin, appreciated and supported the bold decision of Rev Thomas Jones. Khasis of the present generations accept this as a wise decision, for it opened the floodgates of English education to the people and helped in acquisition of western knowledge. Thus, to Rev. Thomas Jones goes the credit for laying the foundation stone of Khasi literature. By virtue of his hardwork, Rev. Thomas Jones, within a span of few months could master the Khasi language in the Sohra dialect. Confident of the success of adopting the Roman script to write Khasi language, by the close of 1841, he could introduce the Khasi Alphabet in Roman character. The introduction of the Romanized Alphabet was a landmark in the history of Khasi literature. For this remarkable contribution, he was rightly called the "Father of Khasi Alphabet". In 1842. Rev. Thomas Jones brought forth the First Khasi Reader titled *Ca Citap*.

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Nyngcong ban hicai pule ci din Cassi. This Reader of eight pages was intended for the use in the three elementary schools set up by Rev. Thomas Jones. Therefore, he devoted a portion to the Khasi Alphabet. This Reader can be called the corner stone of Khasi literature. However, one Reader alone would not served the purpose of educating the pupils. Therefore, in the same year, he translated Rhodd Mam, or Mother's Gift. The translated version was published under the title Ka Jingai ka Kumi ia la ki Koon in 1842. Both the two books were printed at the Baptist Press, Calcutta. We concur with J H Morris when he stated, "...they may rightly be regarded as the beginning of Khasi literature." 

Gi\ing evangelization a priorin over education. Rev. Thomas Jones in 1842 translated and printed the Lord's Prayer. Ka Jingduawai U Trai, a prayer expected to be learned by the Christian converts and was made compulsory in the mission schools. The endeavour of Rev. Thomas Jones to equip the schools with text-books, resulted in the publication of a book on health, titled. Ka Koi Pule Shaphang Ka Jingkoit Jingkhiah. He also extended his efforts towards the publication of a booklet on Christian catechism entitled ka km Tikir. which comprised the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. With the arm of Rev. and Mrs William Lewis. Thomas Jones could devote more time towards the translation of the New Testament and also the Christian Instructor. In 1843. he could complete the translations and printing of nine chapters of the Christian Instructor, an excellent compilation of Christian doctrines by Rev. Thomas Charles, and in 1846. Ka Gospel u Moihi. a translation of the Gospel of Matthew, was published at the expense of the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society. Rev. Jones did not stay for a long period in these hills, but to him went the credit for laying the foundation of the Khasi literature and opening the door to its future greatness. On careful study of these earliest Khasi publications, we find that they were religious in nature. Except for the First Khasi Reader and the Health Book, the rest of the publications were aimed to impart

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1. J H Morris, op cit., p80
2. I M Simon, op cit., p390. W Prasse, op cit, p21
3. J H Momi, op cit., p80
ecclesiastical teachings to the learners. One cannot blame Rev. Thomas Jones for this, because he came to these hills for missionary purposes, and opened elementary schools to serve this purpose.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the period witnessed a good number of Christian publications along with the translation of the Bible. These publications were the concerted works of other missionaries, such as, William Lewis, Thomas German Jones, Hugh Roberts and of the earliest Khasi converts like, u Juramon and u Larsing. These publications chalked out the start and growth of Khasi literature, which at the time, was mostly prose in character, for, only a few hymns and verses had been translated. It was only when Dr. John Roberts translated a number of English poems into Khasi and composed a few of his own, that Khasi poetry could be classed as poetry in its truest sense.

As the missionaries' main objective was propagation of Christianity, they, worked diligently to complete the translation of the Holy Bible. Rev. William Lewis devoted much of his time to the difficult task of translating the Bible, a very difficult task indeed, considering paucity of Khasi vocabulary. Despite all odds, the prepared manuscripts were readied in 1852 and the same were accordingly sent to the Committee of the Calcutta Auxiliary of the Bible Society. And in 1855, one thousand copies of the Four Gospels and the Books of Acts in Roman character were published. An important contribution to Khasi literature was made by W Pryse through his publication entitled *An Introduction to the Khasi Language*, published in 1855. Interesting to note that though W Pryse was a Welsh missionary in Sylhet he was acquainted with the Khasis and their language. It was a blessing to the Khasis when the youthful widow of (Late) Rev. Thomas Jones gave him free access to the 'various Khasia fragments left by her lamented husband' he came across a skeletal work of a Khasia-Anglo Vocabulary prepared by her deceased husband. With this in hand, Rev. Pryse published this grammar book which

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gave a good description of the Khasi language, its formation and vocabulary. This publication can be termed as one of the earliest specimen of secular literature, which the latter scholars frequently referred to. To the missionaries, the need of the hour was a complete translation of the Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments. To facilitate speedy progress of Bible translation, a Committee of the missionaries was formed comprising of Revs. G Hughes, Jerman Jones, J Roberts and Dr. Griffiths, who were assisted by some educated Khasis. Soon after, by 1891, translation of the Bible was completed and published volume wise. The missionaries then desired to print a Khasi Bible inclusive of the Old and the New Testaments and this was accomplished in 1897. The translation of the Bible was the joint-effort of Rev. Thomas Jones, Rev. William Lewis, Griffith Hughes, John Jones, Dr. Griffith. Robert Evans, Hugh Roberts, Dr. and Mrs. John Roberts; assisted by some Khasi translators, namely, Rev. Khnong, Rev. Ksanbin, Sympot Singh and others. The translated Bible served as a corner-stone for future works on Khasi literature, because the Bible comprised within it, idioms and phrases, proverbs, sermons, doctrines, allegories and also historic incidents.

A significant publication during the nineteenth century was the Anglo-Khasi Dictionary compiled and published by Hugh Roberts, Principal of Cherra Normal School, in 1870. During his ten years tenure as Principal, he started preparing a Grammar Book. A Grammar of the Khasi Language for the use of schools. Satire Students. Officers and British Residents. Though this book could be published only in 1891, there was no doubt that it served a great purpose in putting forth rules and guidelines for Khasi compositions which helped to enrich the growth and development of Khasi language in latter years. This book rendered great help towards orthography, that is, spelling the words correctly and towards etymology, that is, formation and

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140 K w Nongrum, op cit., p39; W Reade, op cit., p74.
141 H Bareh and R S Lyngdoh gave 1871 and H W Sten gave 1875 as the year of publication of this Anglo-Dictionary.
142 W Reade, 'Ka Jinghikai Kot', in Centenary- History- Ka Baking Presbyterian 1841-1940, p74
pronunciation. It also helps in learning the syntax, that is, the grammatical arrangement of words to show their relations and connections as well as the etymology which means learning the meanings of the words. This Grammar Book of Hugh Roberts can be referred to as the basic foundation for studying Khasi language.

Khasi literature gradually matured under the prolific pen of Dr. John Roberts, who had made many contributions in this field during his long period of service from 1871 till his death at Cherrapunjee in 1908. Dr. John Roberts was a great scholar in theology and English literature. His close association with local people of Cherrapunjee while serving as Principal of the Theological and Normal Institutions, gave him the opportunity to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Cherra dialect thereby making him an eloquent and fluent writer of Khasi literature. His deep spiritual insight, literary creations and versatility of outlook earned him the credit as one among the great writers in the land of the Khasis and Jaintias. In 1884, he compiled and published the Third Reader, a collection of interesting animal fables as well as lessons on character building and formation of good habits. This Reader also consisted of about eighteen pages of Khasi vocabulary with English meanings. His proficiency as a writer was proved by his ability to inculcate in some of these fables the indigenous outlook of the Khasis. More profound and richer was his publication of the Fourth Reader, a book comprising not only stories and fables, adventures and lessons but also a number of Khasi phrases and fables. The Fourth Reader, published in 1895, was of primary importance as he was able to extend the size of the Khasi vocabulary with English meanings to about 55 pages. Moreover, Dr John Roberts had incorporated in the Fourth Reader several imitatives of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and some of the 'Khasi Phawars' or Oral Verses chanted during important occasions like bone-burial ceremony (Thep Mawbah), archery competition (Siat Thong), bear hunt (Shad Dngiem) and others. Through this book, Dr John Roberts also attempted to familiarize the pupils with some scientific knowledge such as studies on elementary bodies, their composition and functions. He

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142 History- and Culture of the Khasi People. p399; S S Majaw, op cit., p71-72.
143 S S Majaw, op cit., p 55.
144 J Roberts. Khasi Fourth Reader, p ii.
also enlightened them on the cyclic motion of water and the varied stages of man's activities. A chapter "Ka Jingwan Kiew Ki Phareng Ha Ri Khasi" gave a brief description about the Anglo-Khasi War. This Fourth Reader also contained some Biblical stories, which again proved the assertion that evangelization was the primary objective of the missionaries. The prose translations of the 'Vision of Mirza' and 'The Noble Revenge' revealed his quality as a superb essayist.  

Dr John Roberts was fortunate to get the assistance of two renowned Khasi men of the period viz., u Ruton and u Mondon Bareh. The former rendered a great service towards Khasi literature by aiding Dr Roberts in the compilation of Khasi words and phrases as well as phawars and fables. In later years, Dr Roberts was associated with Mondon Bareh, who as a student of the Cherra Theological Institution and even after his student days, greatly helped Dr Roberts in translation works. The Khasi re-translation of the Pilgrim's Progress started by Dr Roberts and assisted by Mondon Bareh was written in a picturesque novel form where in, the language used, revealed the quality of words adopted to fit the English original. Unfortunately, Dr Roberts died in 1908 before the assignment could be completed. The remaining portion was completed by Mrs Roberts and Mondon Bareh. The completed text titled, Ka Jingiaid Pilgrim, was then published in 1910. These publications show that Dr John Roberts had qualities of an essayist, dramatist, novelist and a poet.

The pioneering literary work of foreign missionaries acted as an incentive to the educated Khasis to venture into the realm of writing both prose and poetry. Among the Khasi literary figures, the earliest writer was u Babu Jeebon Roy Mairom whose writings emphasized protection and upholding the indigenous culture from extinction and the exposition of Khasi monotheistic belief. Jeebon Roy Mairom was the son of Ram Singh Rani, believed to be one of the earliest Khasis to receive English education prior to the coming of the Welsh missionaries. He joined as a civil servant of the British Government and retired as Extra-Assistant Commissioner. Jeebon

145 Ibid., p22-30.  
Roy Mairom deserved a special place in the history of Khasi literature, for he was the first Khasi to enter the realm of writing and printing. His venture into the literary world was in 1897 when he published his first work *Ka Niam Jong Ki Khasi* meaning 'The Religion of the Khasis'. This book threw light on the varied aspects of Khasi religion. A faithful believer in the indigenous religion, Jeebon Roy wanted to apprise his countrymen the advantages and disadvantages ushered in by the Christian missionaries. Furthermore, in the Preface, he appealed to the readers to maintain the security of the Khasi religion against the onslaught of new teachings. To preserve and strengthen Khasi culture and Khasi religion, Jeebon Roy started the Seng Khasi, an organization of indigenous Khasis who still retained the indigenous religion. To help understand the faith and belief of the Khasis, he published a booklet in 1900 entitled, *Ka Kitab Shaphang Uwei U Blei* which espouse the Khasi doctrine of One God. It was his efforts in preservation of Khasi indigenous culture, religion, rites and rituals through literature that influenced subsequent Khasi writers. Another commendable aspect of Jeebon Roy was his contributions to education. An educationist to the core. Jeebon Roy saw the paucity of Readers in the schools. He therefore, published three Khasi Readers titled, *Ka Kot Pule Nyngkong*. *Ka Kot Pule Ba Ar* and *Ka Kot Pule Balai*. These were published in April 1899, May 1899 and November 1899 respectively. All the three were meant to be used in the schools. The first Reader served as a primer and contained the Khasi alphabet of Thoman Jones with the addition of two more letters. I and N, needed for correct spelling and pronunciation of Khasi words.

Besides his own compositions, Jeebon Roy translated some Indian classics into Khasi, such as, the *Hit- L'podesa* Part I in May 1898, Part II in November 1898 and Part III in March 1899. He also published in June 1900, a translated version of *Ramayana*, where he gave a short and brief account of the life story of Rama and Sita. He titled it *Ka Ramayon*. This was soon followed by the publication of *Ka Kitab Chaitanya*.

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in September 1900. In the same year, 1900, he published the History of India in Khasi which enlightened the readers about the historical developments of our nation. A distinctive feature of Jeebon Roy's translations was that these books that he translated into Khasi were written in Sanskrit. This, therefore, meant that Jeebon Roy was a master of Sanskrit. A far-sighted person, Jeebon Roy wanted the Khasis to be conversant with the languages of their neighbouring states and not to be confined only to Khasi and English. For this to materialize, in March 1897, he published Ka Kitab Nyngkong in Khasi - Bengali with the assistance of Dinonath Biswas and Benaik Chundra Chatterji. This booklet was intended to help the Khasis and the Jaintias to learn how to read and write in Bengali. Despite the smallness in size and volume, these publications of Jeebon Roy were indeed priceless contributions to Khasi Literature and thus, he can be called as the First Litterateur among the Khasis. An educationist and a philanthropist to the core, Jeebon Roy foresaw the need of a printing press with easy access to the people. He, therefore, set up and opened Ka Ri Khasi Press in 1896 under the management of his son, Chandranath Roy. Through this printing press, he hoped to inspire the educated Khasis and Jaintias to write and publish books in Khasi Vernacular. The publications of many Khasi books, newspapers and periodicals

Another prominent Khasi writer of the nineteenth century was Rabon Singh Kharsuka, who initially was a columnist to the Khasi periodicals in circulation at the time, and later an author of three publications, namely, Ka Kitab Niam Khein Ki Khasi, Ka Kitab Jingphawar and Ka Jingiathnhkhana Puriskam. Except for the last one which was published in 1908, nothing was known when the other two were published.

Having cleared the pathway for writing, the Khasi language was soon blessed with a host of literary writers who followed the footsteps of their predecessors and started contributing towards enrichment of the Khasi literature. Notable among the great writers in these hills were Ondromuney Khamgapkynta, Radhon Singh

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150 H Bareh, op cit., p36-37; K W Nongrum, Ki Kot Khabor bad Ki Kot Khasi, p41-42;  
152 Ibid., p14?  
153 Ibid., p29.31.35.
Berry Kharwanlang, Sib Charan Roy and others. As mentioned earlier, Radhon Singh Berry was a noted columnist and writer who had truly enriched Khasi literature. Through his famous publications, Jingsneng Tymmen I & II, he succeeded in highlighting the concepts of teaching by means of couplets, a method commonly used by the Khasi orally. Another renowned writer of the time was Ondromuney Kharngapkyneta. He was a brilliant student who stood first in both the Middle English and Entrance Examinations. For his achievement, he was awarded a Gold Medal by the Chief Commissioner of Assam and therefore, was the first Khasi to receive this Honour. Ondromuney Kharngapkyneta first joined government service as an Instructor in the Jaiaw Training School and later was appointed as a teacher in the Shillong Government High School. He completed his teachers' training course at the Teachers' Training College in Dacca. He retired as a Sub-Inspector of Schools in 1940. Because of his proficiency in writing, St. Edmunds College invited him as a visiting Lecturer of the Department of Khasi. with which he was associated till 1959. As an educationist, he greatly contributed to the growth and development of Khasi literature. He brought forth books aimed to render help to the school going children. In 1925 he published Ka Geography Khasi followed by Ka Arithmetic Khasi I in 1926 and Ka Arithmetic Khasi II in 1931. He also published Ka Geography, Mathematical and Physical in 1932. All these publications were used as prescribed textbooks in the schools of Khasi and Jaintia Hills till today. Besides the above, he contributed articles to be published in local newspapers and journals. He was also a popular translator of many devotional hymns from English to Khasi.

It is interesting to note that one of the earliest writers of Khasi literature, Sib Charan Roy, ventured to translate some of the Holy Books of the Hindus, such as the Bhagavad Gita published in 1903 and the Chattakya-S'iti-Darpana in 1902. Among his major publications Ka Niam Tip Biei Tip FillVu, published in 1919, deserved our attention. The philosophical and ethical discourses contained in it showed the high

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17 H Bareh. 4 Short Hision- of khau Literature. p44-45
standard Khasi literature had touched within a short span of time. Sib Charan Roy had
thirteen publications to his credit, which not only espoused the Khasi monotheistic belief
and philosophy but also touched on the social and ethical aspects of life. His publications,
undoubtedly, contributed enormously to the growth of Khasi language and literature.

Khasi literature during the twentieth century witnessed a tremendous
growth in the hands of modern Khasi writers whose publications were educational,
informative and historical. Dr. Homiwell Lyngdoh's *Ka Pomblang bad Ka Thang Syiem*
published in 1928. J. Bacchiarello's *Ka Dienjat Ki Longshwa* published in 1930-31 and
Rash Mohon Roy Xongrum's *U Khasi Hyndai* published in 1959 were rich sources of
information on Khasi culture. An attempt to highlight the political system of the
Khasis was made by Fr. G. Costa in his work *Ka Rui Jong Ka Ri Laiphew Syiem* printed in
1936-37. Khasi legends, fables and folklores were preserved in written language
through the prolific pen of Primrose Gatphoh, Mondon Bareh. Victor G. Bareh, Fr. H
Lilias. F.M. Pugh. S J Duncan and D S Khongdup. Primrose Gatphoh had eleven
publications to his credit while Rev Fr. H. Ehas and Frank M Pugh had thirty-one and
thirty-four respectively. Mondon Bareh had seven publications. D S Khongdup eight. S J
Duncan three and V G Bareh also three publications to the credit. Though most of these
publications were on Khasi legends and folklores, quite a good number were devoted to
Khasi grammar and language, geography and history. The 1960's saw the attempt of
some Khasi writers to dwell on the sociological concepts of Khasi society. Of these
mention may be made of B M Pugh's *Ka Kot Rep. J Darningston's / Thymmei Ka
Longbriew* and Rev Fr. Sngi Lyngdoh's *Ka Riti Kin n Jew ba la Buh u Longshwa jong ka
Ri-Bhoi* which dwelled on the socio-economic life of the people and the immense
potentialities available therein. The decade also witnessed the publication of books on
education, intended as references for teachers. These were. *Ka Jinghikai ban Pynklain*

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157 H Bareh. op cit., p. 57-58. R S Lyngdoh. op cit., p. 57-58

159 H Bareh. op cit. 11. 11, 31-19
160 H Bareh. op cit. p. 32. 34. 36. 46. 48. 51. 54
161 H Bareh. op cit., 141-142
ia ka Met by Homandel Sawian aimed to guide the Physical Instructors of the schools, Ka Kot Psychology by Garlinwel Bareh published in 1972 and UNongiarap ia ki Nonghikai Skul-rit, Kumno ban Hikai, aimed to guide the teachers in their efforts to impart education and to help in the all-round development of a child. Though earlier publications stressed on religion and society, for development and growth of any literature, books on language and vocabulary were a must. At the turn of the century, this void was filled by the grammatical works of Nissor Singh in his three publications - Hints on the study of Khasi published in 1900, the Khasi-English Dictionary published in 1903 and the English-Khasi Dictionary published by the Provincial Government were treasure houses for learning the Khasi language. The post-independence period saw the printing of more books on Khasi grammar and language, such as, Ka Jingiar ka Ktien Khasi, Part I & II by F M Pugh, printed in 1966 dealt with vocabulary, idioms and Parts of speech needed for writing correct grammar in Khasi. Another Dictionary worth the name was Ka Dien shon hi by I Kharkongor. published in 1968, provides not only Khasi meanings to Khasi words, but also tried to improve the Grammatical works of previous Khasi grammarians. Though drama writing was yet to reach an average standard. Khasi writers like Hari Charan Roy initially experimented with translations from the Mahabharata. entitled Sa'itri which he printed in 1910. In 1957. Victor G Bareh. composed and published the drama of U Tirot Singh, wherein he portrayed the art of guerilla warfare of the Khasis, the sacrifices of the Girls and womenfolks during the war with against the English, the heroic acts of the warriors and the arrest of Tirot Singh. This was soon followed by the translations of Frank M. Pugh from renowned plays of Shakespeare, such as. As You Like It . Romeo and Juliet and the Taming of the Shrew which were published in 1961. 1963 and 1964 respectively. And in 1967 Frank M.Pugh presented a drama. Ka Scruangka ia ki san Xguf ba la iap. which portrayed the social vices prevalent at the time and their detrimental effects on a family. Another noted dramatist of the 1960's was Mondon Bareh. whose drama V Mihsngi. depicted the

\[1\] Ibid., p\[54-1\&5.
\[2\] Ibid., p82-85; K. \& Nongrum. op cit., p39.47.
degenerating moral conditions of the 1920's which showed the negative roles of husbands and wives led to the collapse of the family and at the same time depicted constructive characters which helped in uplifting the moral and ethical life of the people. As there was dearth of text-books in Khasi, most of the afore-mentioned publications were used as prescribed text-books for schools and colleges.

During the nineteenth century, thrust was on prose and essay form of writing. Poetic writing was limited only to short verses and translation of devotional hymns. Except for Dr John Roberts who brought forth a few poems, other missionaries did not give due importance to Khasi Poetry. His famous composition was the hymn 'Ri Khasi Ri khasi' now adopted as the Khasi anthem. Another original poetical composition was the poem "Kaba Beh la Ki Nongshun' meaning chasing the evil spirits of laziness, wickedness and deception. Besides these, he also translated other English compositions such as the Psalm of Life, the Burial of Moses and some excerpts of Julius Ceasar. His attempt to preserve the traditional poetic form called phauars earned him a place as a leading poet of Khasi poetry. His poetical contributions gave Khasi poetry some regularity in accent and measure, containing appropriate wordings and eloquent force. Contemporaneous with Dr John Roberts, a non-Khasi, Sheikh Mohammed Amjad Ah. who was a Muslim, came forward to compose a poem, to fulfill the need for Khasi Poetry in the functional schools of the period. His original composition, Ka Myntoi, was printed by the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, in 1888. Ka Myntoi was the first poetical book to be ever published in Khasi. In the Preface of this publication, he wrote, 

"The want of an elementary poetical work in Khasi for the use of Khasi children has long been felt. There are doubtless, many persons more qualified than myself to supply the want, but as none of them have come forward, I thought it best to lead the way by printing the following few pages which are the first of a series intended for the purpose. I am conscious of the numerous faults and imperfection of my work and am well aware that I am not at all disciplined in the art of authorship.
Still I hope that these few pages may be treated with kindness as an encouragement, at least to Khasi poetry, and I may be allowed ample quarter on account of the poorness of the language."

This poetry book of S M Amjad Ali consisted of eighteen poems with different themes. Besides these, he also compiled about thirty three Proverbs which served as lessons in the day to day life of the people. As admitted by him in the Preface, there were some flaws in the spellings of some words, not coherent with the pronunciation. Inspite of all these imperfections. S M Amjad Ali rightfully earned the credit as the pioneer of Khasi poetry and Ka Myntoi deserved to be hailed as a milestone in the realm of Khasi poetry. Despite the efforts of Dr.John Roberts and Sheikh Mohammed Amjad Ali to compose and translate poems and hymns, Khasi poetry was yet to reach the universal standard of poetic world in the truest sense of the term.

The courage to traverse the rugged road of poetry writing by Dr.John Roberts and S M Amjad Ali triggered the minds of talented Khasi writers and they too. had the confidence to follow in their footsteps. Within the ring of Khasi writers of the nineteenth century, Morkha Joseph Chyne and Radhon Singh Beri Kharwanlang should be called the earliest poets of Khasi literature. Morkha Joseph Chyne composed the famous and popular Khasi elegy, U Sier Lapalang, which expressed the mother's love and affection for her son. This elegy consisting of fifty-one verses of four lines each was first published in the Khasi monthly. U S'ongkit Khitbor, December 1891. No attempt was made by the poet to publish it as a poet book. After a gap of seven years from its first appearance. H James Tham, son of Morkha Joseph Chyne, collected his father's poems composed between 1880 and 1916 and published them in 1967 as a poet book, entitled, Ka Rungkap na ki Poetry Khasi. This eleg was the first poet to be written in Khasi language by a Khasi poet reflecting Khasi theme and the traditional Khasi outlook.

"^ Ibid. p 53-54
Khasi poetry touched the crown of glory during the decadal period from 1930 to 1940. This decade witnessed the emergence of talented Khasi poets whose original compositions combined with translations, contributed to the progress and development of Khasi poetry. Among the Khasi poets of the time, the name of Soso Tham stood peerless and unrivalled by any other. Serving as a teacher in the Shillong Government High School, Soso Tham saw there was a dearth of Khasi poetry in the school syllabus. Taking the bull by its horns, he decided to fill in the gap himself. Venturing into the unknown world of poetry writing, Soso Tham in the beginning was yet to acquire the art of composing poems. Therefore, he first translated some simple English poems, such as 'The Little Star' by Jane Taylor, 'My Mother' by Ann Taylor and 'Lucy' by William Wordsworth. These were soon followed by translations of 'The Last Rose Of Summer' by Thomas Moore, the 'Destruction of Sennacherib' by Lord Byron and William Cooper's 'John Gilpin', to name a few. It is worthwhile to note that these translated poems were published in the Khasi newspapers and journals in circulation at the time. Learning the art and style while translating the English poems emboldened him to start composing poems on his own. Eventually, in 1925, he printed his original compositions in a book titled, Ki Poetry Khasi.\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{**} This publication was acknowledged as the 'first poetry book\textsuperscript{*} to be published in Khasi and Soso Tham was rightly called the 'first Khasi poet'. In 1931, this poetry book was reused and renamed Ka Duitara Ksiar. Responding to the tug of poetic composition, Soso Tham gave vent to his literary talents and composed poems which revealed his love for nature and human kind. Of all these multifarious poems, the one that immortalized him was the poem Ka Sngi Barim u Hynniew Trep\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{°}, a poem that portrayed his patriotic feelings and called upon the people to revive the past glory of the Khasi race. This masterpiece of Soso Tham was published in 1937. The greatness of Soso Tham as a poet can be seen in the theme, style and composition of his works which laid down the basis of modern Khasi poetry.\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{°}

\textsuperscript{1}\textsuperscript{°} H Rareh. A Short History of Khasi Literature. Revised c i. p72.
Contemporary with Soso Tham, was D.Nihon Singh Wahlang, whose poetic work, *Ki Sur Khasi* came out in 1930 consisting of Khasi nursery rhymes, hymns and a few translations from English poetry. Following in his father's footstep, Primrose Gatphoh brought out a series of poetry books, mostly comprising nursery rhymes, intended for the use of school children. His valuable contribution to Khasi poetry was *U Sier Lapalang*, composed in the form of an epic and published in 1936.\(^7\) The post-independence period witnessed the blossoming of Khasi poetry, in turn, Khasi literature, in the hands of numerous Khasi poets. Of these recent works, mention may be made of Victor G.Bareh's *Ki Poetry Khasi* published in 1957. Frank M Pugh's *Ka Phawar Rwai Khasi* printed in 1962. Bajubon R Kharlukhi's *Na La Rympei* published in 1964. S.Khongsit's *Ki Sur Ha La Ri* published in 1968 and B.Chedrak Jyrwa's *Na Pongshai ki Puramit* published in 1970 and *Na Nengpei ki Sur Myllung* which came out in 1971.\(^\)\(^7\) The ability of Khasi poets to pen on current situations was seen in the works of Phrenly Kharduia, titled *Seibor Meghalaya*, published in 1973. This poetry book comprising of eleven simple poems dwelt on the prevailing social and political conditions and exhorted the people and the leaders to remove ignorance and public grievances.\(^7\)\(^3\)

Besides publications of books, Khasi literature was enriched by the numerous newspapers printed and circulated from time to time. Newspapers were the medium of communications between the educated class and the masses. They played a major role in the development of the social, political, economic, educational and cultural of the people. To facilitate the printing of newspapers as well as the required books, a printing press was a necessity. The Welsh missionaries were the ones who realized the need of a printing press to print books required by the schools, the Mission and the churches. Encouraged by the British officials' assurance to give Government books and paperworks for printing, about 1861, the Welsh Mission set up the first printing press at Sohra, but could not operate it as no one was familiarize with its function. However, the arrival of Griffith Hughes made it operational, because he had worked for a few years in

\(^7\)
K. w Nongrum. op cit. p-W.
\(^\) K. w Nongrum. op cit. p29.-R 51. H Bareh. op cit. p17. 124-125
\(^\)
H Bdeh. op cit.. p2\(\)
a printing press. Accordingly, a thousand copies of *Ka Kot Laiphev*, was printed as well as numerous copies of other needed books were also published. But, the Mission could not sustain it, and the machine was sold to the Government in 1874.\(^\text{174}\) Ironically, while the press was in their possession, the Welsh missionaries made no efforts to publish a newspaper. It was fifteen years after it was sold to the Government that Rev. William Williams of the Welsh mission published the first Khasi newspaper named, *U Nongkit Khubor*, in 1889. This was a Christian paper printed at the Star Press in Calcutta. Being published by a Christian mission, in the beginning articles were Christian oriented and aimed towards propagating Christianity. Besides foreign missionaries, some noted Khasi writers took the opportunity to have their own articles published in this paper. Initially, the local writers wrote along Christian lines and used excerpts from the Bible. In course of time, secular writings were also published. An article by Morkha Joseph in 1891. It was Rabon Singh who first wrote a non-Christian article entitled 'Ka Jingkyndiah Sang' published in the January issue of 1893. The article acted as a warning to readers to keep in mind the do's and don'ts of everyday life so that no evil can befall on them.\(^\text{175}\) It can be stated that this article acted as an incentive for Radhon Singh Bern to compile and write about the Khasi tenets and lessons which were handed over orally from generations to generations. In the same year, Rabon Singh published another article, 'Ka Niam Khasi' in the January issue of *U Nongkit Khubor*. By this article, he wanted to open the eyes of his coemperans Khasi converts regarding the actual meanings of Khasi rituals and sacrifices. He continued to use the paper as a mouthpiece to educate the people about the Khasi do's and don'ts. He was credited to open the door to subsequent Khasi writers to highlight Khasi culture, customs and usages. Another Christian newspaper of the period was *Ka Paieng Kristan* published in 1896. This paper was edited by L Donkha and its main contributor was Evangelist T Jobin Ro. However, the paper was short lived one. for its publication.

175 R S Lyngdoh. op. cit. p.19
was stopped in October, 1903. Thirty-five years later, Dr. Homiwell Lyngdoh Nonglait, the nephew of L Donkha Lyngdoh Nonglait, launched a monthly which he named *Ka Pateng Khristan* with the hope to revive the earlier forgotten monthly edited by his maternal uncle. Under his editorship, the monthly grew from strength to strength, and its circulation continued till today. Another monthly of the Presbyterian Church, *U Xongialam Khristan*, edited by Rev. J Roberts and Rev. J C Evans, came out in July 1902 and was printed at the Ri Khasi Press. More than ten years later, a quarterly periodical *Ka Seng Presbyterian* was published by Mondon Bareh in 1915. By its very name, the quarterly dwelt on Christian teachings and ideologies. For reasons unknown, publication was stopped after a brief period in circulation.

At the turn of the century, other Christian missions besides the Welsh Mission, came forward to publish their respective monthlies. In 1902, Rev. Fr. G Abele edited a Khasi monthly, *U Nongialam Katholik*, printed at the Catholic Mission Press in Laitk*nsew*. Both religious and secular articles were published along with some photographs in certain issues. The Catholic mission next brought out *Ka ling Khristan* in 1907, with the object of promoting Christian teachings. Interestingly, a supplement of this paper in the name *VMawshiang* was sometimes printed alongside it. This must be the first monthly that had some photos printed in it. Another Christian denomination that published its own monthly was the Church of God. Rev. J M Nichols Roy, the founder of this denomination, edited *Ka Jingshai Ka Gospel* and was first published in June 1905.

Over and above these monthlies published by the churches, there were some Christians who published their own newspapers, such as, *U Lurshai*. published once a month by the Christian Volunteer Movement. Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It first appeared in April 1910 with Wilson Reade as the editor. Literary contributions by eminent writers of the time, like Dr. Homiwell Lyngdoh, Soso Tham and DNS Wahlang helped in its rapid progress. Other contemporary Christian newspapers printed and

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1. ibid., p13
2. R S Kngdoh, op cit., p13
3. k w Nongrum, op cit., p3.
circulated were T.Rodborne's *U Nongialap* in 1930 and L Gatphoh's *Ka Jingshisha* in 1925. Both these papers aimed to spread Christian teachings and tenets.  

Publication of Khasi newspapers was not limited only to Christian missionaries and Christian Khasis. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, non-christian Khasis came forward to print secular newspapers and periodicals to educate the people in all walks of life. Undoubtedly, *U Khasi Mynta* was the first secular paper to be published in Khasi language. This paper edited by Hormurai Diengdoh which first appeared in March 1896, enlightened the people about Khasi society, culture, religion, customs and conventions, and most importantly it enriched Khasi literature. *U Khasi Mynta* immensely contributed towards the development of Khasi alphabet, for it was in through this paper that educationists painstakingly discussed the need to modify the alphabet to suit Khasi language and speech. This eventually resulted in the introduction of T and "n". The paper also acted as a platform for education, where articles like 'Ka Rukom Hikai Kot" by Hajom Kissor Singh, 'Ki Dak Khasi' by Nelson Dkhar, and 'Ka Jingthoh Shiteng Dak' by R S Berry were published in its various issues. Later in 1903, u Sib Charan Roy edited another newspaper 'U Xongphira' (The Watchman ) which remained in circulation for about fifteen years. Later, Sib Charan Roy published his second monthly in 1928 under the title *U Xongpynim*. Literally meaning Revival. *L' Xongpynim* adopted the same style of writing as in *U Xongphira*. The 1930's witnessed the publication of a series of monthlies, secular in nature. These were *U Jingtip* which was first printed in 1930 and edited by S G Nalle and *Ka Jingshai Jong Ka Ri Khasi-Pnar* published in 1931 and edited by Mondon Bareh. These were soon followed by O S khongwir's *V Ieit-Ri* published in 1933. D R Pohshna's *U Paidhah* first printed in 1933. A S khongphai's *Ka Jak* published in 1933 and Edingson Blah's *I' Xongkit Khubor* printed in 1934. Here, it should be noted that U Nongkit Khubor edited by Edingson Blah was not the same monthly which was edited by Rev.W Williams. These monthlies though considered secular in nature, but at times articles on Christianity or on Khasi indigenous
religion did appear from time to time. Many a time these newspapers aimed to keep intact
the cultural heritage of the Khasis and at the same time called upon the people to revive
their ancient glory.

The post-independence period was a period of progress and
development in the field of journalism. Remarkably, the first newspaper to be launched
just after Independence in 1949, was one by the Khasi womenfolk through a women's
organization, Ka Synjuk Kynthei. They named the newspaper Ka Rympei meaning The
Hearth in consonance with the connotation of a woman with the home. Not only was it
edited by a lady, Mrs. M Manik but contributors too, were mostly women. This proves the
development of education among women. Between 1950 and 1972 about thirty
newspapers were published in the Khasi and Jaintia hills. Prominent among these were U
Pyrman, Ka Pyrta u Riewlum, U Nongsain Hima, Jowai Mail, U Shabuk, Ka
Unitarian, U Nongprat Lynti and Ka Sur u Paidbah. These newspapers covered a wide
range of topics, political, social, economic, educational, philosophical and cultural. They
played a leading role in awakening the spirit of patriotism and imbibed the spirit on
oneness among the people. A significant point to be noted during this period was the
publication of a newsletter by die United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District Council titled.
Ki Khubor na ka District Council, which first appeared in 1959. This newsletter, besides
giving information on the functions and progress of the District Council, also enlightened
the public on the rules and regulations of the Council.

A study of the progress and development of Khasi newspapers, we
find that the newspapers of the pre-British period were published on a monthly basis.
None of them were printed daily or even weekly. Among the latter publications, V
Pyrman was the first newspaper to be printed weekly. From then onwards, most of the
Khasi newspapers were published on a weekly basis coinciding the day of issue with the
weekly market day.

Garo is a language of the indigenous people inhabiting the Garo hills.
As Khasi is the spoken and written language of the Khasis and the Jaintias, similarly.
Garo is the spoken and written language of the Garos. Garo language is one of the Bodo
group of Tibeto-Burman (of Sino-Tibetan) type of languages. The Garos called their language, Mande Ku'sik or the language of men and also A'chik Ku'sik or the language of the hillmen. The Garo language consists of a number of dialects such as Chisak, spoken in the northern hills of the present East Garo Khasi Hills, Dual spoken in the southern villages located on the banks of river Simsang, Matchi spoken in the central part of the Garo Hills, A'beng spoken in the western hills including Tura town, Kotchu spoken in the north-eastern hills, Chibok and Ruga spoken by a handful in the east and the south, Atong spoken in southern hills and Me'gam spoken by Garos living on the border areas with western Khasi hills. These varied dialects, except for Chibok, Ruga and A'tong- which are not intelligible to the others, the rest bear certain resemblances with one another. Of all these dialects, A'we became the standard language and lingua franca of the Garos because the American Baptist Mission chose and developed this dialect as the medium of instruction in the schools and as the language of Garo literature.¹⁸²

Till the arrival of the British, the Garo language did not have a written script. The first ever attempt to put Garo in a written form was taken up by John Elliot, a Commissioner of Dacca during his visit to south Garo frontier in 1788-1789.¹⁸³ But Elliot merely collected and compiled Garo vocabulary, giving them their equivalent meanings in English. He used Roman character to write the words and these were published in the Asiatic Researches volume III in 1799. The effort of John Elliot made the English officials noticed the potentiality of Garo language long before the Garo hills was constituted in 1866. Impressed by its vocabulary and syntax, William Robinson, a British Education Officer in Assam, made a reference to Garo language and its grammar in an article entitled 'Notes on the Language spoken by various tribes inhabiting the Assam Valley and its Confines' published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society) of

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¹⁸² H Bareh, op cit., p6; M S Sangma, History of Garo Literature, p 5-7

The need to learn the language was felt when in 1864, the then Viceroy of India, Lord Lawrence gave directives that the medium of instruction in the schools should be either in English or in the indigenous languages of the hill people, expressed in Roman character. However in the case of Garo hills, this directive was not fully implemented, for even though Garo language was adopted as the medium of instruction but the Bengali script continued to be used side by side with the Roman script till the end of the century.

The need to print grammar books and primers in the Garo language was realized by W J Williamson, the first Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills District, when this district was formed in 1866. Although Garo vocabulary and Garo as a spoken language was given due importance by the British officials, it’s yet to figure as a written language. Rev. Phillips reported that as early as 1867 an untitled phrase book was printed by an Assam Educational Officer and another untitled book on vocabulary was published by a Bengali gentleman. Sadly, names of these two gentlemen were not known, as gleamed in the Annual Reports available in the Church library at Gauhati. Only in 1868 that Garo entered the world of written languages with the publication of the Garo Primer, the Brief Outline of Grammar and Phrases in English and Garo by Rev Miles Bronson, an American Baptist Missionary in Assam, who adopted both Roman and Bengali characters. Besides these, he drafted a Reader and a Cathecism to be used by the Garos. The works of Miles Bronson was carried further by Dr Stoddard, the First American Baptist Missionary designated to work among the Garos. Dr Stoddard too, compiled and published three primers for the Garos as well as a Reader, Cathecism and a book of Hymns. The concrete step to publish books in Garo language was taken by Rev T J Keith, the second Baptist missionary designated to work among the Garos. Rev Keith made a substantial contribution to the development of the language through his outstanding works, entitled Dictionary- of the Garo Language - Garo and Bengali -

\[\text{\textsuperscript{142}} \text{H Bareh, op cit., p5; M S Sangma, History of American Baptist Mission, pl63} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{163}} \text{A Chakravarty, op cit., p64; Bengal Education Proceedings 18\textsuperscript{14}, Resolution of January S. 1844} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{184}} \text{E G Phillips, "Historical Sketch of the Garo Field" in Jubilee R\textit{port}, American Baptist Mission. 1886} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{185}} \text{ibid.,} \]
An M Une Grammar of Garo Language (Si ng Mr -
T r s p u b l i c a t i o n s w e r e w r i t e n i n B e n g l i script, because
T " I — L f, st learned the Bengali language for prosecuting ^
T n g T ^ ^ ^ S t o d d a d a n d K e i u w e t e f o n u n a t o g t h e h e l p a n d c o -
O m s o n T ^ O m e d , the firs, Garo converts and also the ** Garo literates. To
operation of Ramke an a u m e ^ ^ s was translated and facilitate evangelization among the Garos, the Gospel of St .
published in 1875. This was soon followed by the PUDUKU
1876. The translating and printing of these Gospels were the works of Keith and his Q ^ O
 collaborators – Omed and Ramke. By virtue of his contributions, though in the Bengali
script. Rev Keith could be called ‘the father of Garo written word’.
The determination ^ A p o s t l e s being u a n s l a t e d and published by M C M * 1 : 8 9 0 and ally
New Tesumen, was Kanslated and brought ou, n 1897. The b n book Achikni Ringani
. Pastor’s handbook — « * " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 

^HBarc h o p M .. p . 0 : M S S a n g m a , o p c i t . , p 1 6 4 .
^B a n * , o p * , P i I
^M S S a n g m a , o p c i t . , 1 6 5 : M C M a s o n , ^ R e p o r t ^ T u r a ^ i n M M ^ * * * - ^ n n - ^ n i n l l
Papers of the Second Triennial Conference, 1889, p35.
Part II of the Mental Arithmetic. In the same year, 1890, Rev E G Phillips published Chanani Kitap a book on primary Arithmetic. This was soon followed by the publication of Grammar Part III by the American Baptist Mission Union in 1892. Rev E G Phillips reprinted the Primary Arithmetic in Garo in 1897. He also compiled and published A 'chik Grammar in 1900.¹¹

Not only the foreign missionaries, but some Garo scholars did make a significant contribution towards the development of Garo literature. Of these, the most significant contributor was Rev Ramke Momin who prepared and compiled the Bengali-Garo Dictionary which was published in 1887. This dictionary went a long way in aiding future scholars and its usage continued for many many years.¹² He also composed many poems for Garo Readers. Being a missionary himself, Ramke translated some books of the Bible into Garo while at the same time he composed hymns and translated some hymns into Garo. Another notable Garo scholar was Bakal Sangma who published the Ansengani Rama in 1896 which was the translated version of The Way of Health. In 1900, Rupsing Sangma, another Garo scholar brought out the Bengaliko Sfachengani which is an Introduction to Bengali for Garo pupils.¹³ With these stocks of schoolbooks, the written Garo language entered the new century and Garo thus began to be used as a co-medium of instruction in the schools. However, the Bengali primers continued to be used at the primary stage of education in these hills. It is important to note that till the end of the century, the Garo text-books, grammar, dictionaries and even translations of the Bible were written using the Bengali script and alphabet. Even Rupsing Sangma's An Introduction to Bengali and E G Phillips' A 'chik Grammar which were published in 1900 were written in Bengali characters.

But usage of Bengali script caused problem in spelling the indigenous words correctly and writers filled this gap by opting for loans-words from other neighbouring languages. Moreover, the missionaries could not sufficiently and

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¹¹ H Bareh, op cit., p 11-12
² M S Sangma, 'Beginning and Growth of Garo Literature' in NEIHA, Third Session. Imphai. 1982
¹³ H Bareh, op cit., p 11; M C Mason, "Report from the Tura Field" in Minutes, Resolutions and Historical Reports of Sixth Session of American Baptist Missionary Conference, 1900. p32.
effectively explored the indigenous terms as they had to learn two alien languages simultaneously. To combat those problems, it was felt that a switch over to a script already known to the missionaries would save time and energy. Thus, it was necessary to use Romanized script and alphabet for writing the Garo language. The change from Bengali script to a Roman one was welcomed not only by the missionaries but also by the Garo pupils in particular, as they would then have to learn only two languages instead of three. Furthermore, the change to Romanized script helped in faster printing and publication as printing facilities in Bengali was lacking in these areas. With this switch to Romanized script, a number of school books and Christian publications were printed during the turn of the century. Some of these earlier Romanized publications were the *Katongni Janera* compiled by M G Momin and the *Anchihgni Kam* by E G Phillips. Other school text-books worth mentioning were the *Achik Grammar* (1900) and *An Outline Grammar of the Garo Language* (1904) which were regarded as the best Grammar books of Garo language till today. Perceiving the need of extensive use of English language. M C Mason brought forth a new publication entitled *Introduction to English for School Pupils* which aimed to replace Rupsing Sangma's *Introduction to Bengali for School Pupils*. Subsequently, to meet the need of the pupils a number of text-books concerning other subjects too were published. Regarding Christian publications the Garo hymn book translated by E G Phillips and Ramkhe Momin using the Roman alphabet was printed in 1900. This was soon followed by the translation and publication of *Four Gospels* in 1904 and the whole *New Testament* in 1912. A considerable progress was also made in the publication of Christian literature such as *Sengba, Gisik Ratani, Kandikigipa Nama Kata Binaranga and An 'chichi Bregimin* to name a few.

No doubt the radical change from Bengali script to a Romanized one did bring with it some problems such as, teachers who were trained to use the Bengali script then had to be acquainted with the newly adopted script. Moreover, with the imposition of the new script to be adopted by pupils and teachers alike, at the initial

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stage, it was not possible for the Mission to publish all the required school-text books using the Romanized script. Therefore, some school text-books in Bengali script continued to be used till a suitable replacement was published. This difficulty was no impediment to progress as both foreign missionaries and the local ones left no stone unturned to fulfil the needs of the schools and that is why within two or three decades, sufficient textbooks in Garo language adopting Roman script were printed and published.

The missionaries and the local educationists worked in harmony to publish the relevant text-books. This was seen in the publication of the *Chanani Kitap Bak II* by Rev. Phillips in 1908 which was re-edited in 1916, the *Skichen Bak II* by M C Mason in 1920 and the *Maharani Victoriani Kata* by Toding Marak in 1913 to name a few. Interestingly, a Khasi Deputy Inspector of Schools in-charge of Garo hills, A Macdonald, published a *Teachers' Manual* in Garo in 1916 which acted as a guideline for school teachers in the Garo hills. From the 1930's onwards a series of primers and school-books were written and printed. Remarkably, it was the Lady Missionaries who came forward to write and publish the same. Among the Ladies, Miss C A Wright compiled a good numbers of the text-books, such as, the *Rikki Tikki* and *Aro Gipin Galporang Suurini Rani* which were printed in 1920 and the *Sonuni Chongipa Bari* and *Katongni Janera* both printed in 1932. Another Lady whose contributions was by no means less in importance was Miss. L M Holbrooks who published the *An chichi Breginin, Aesopni Golporang, Poraiani Kitap* and *Skishengani Kitap*, published in the 1930's. Besides these two ladies, Mrs. Phoebe Momin published a *Cookery Bak Part II* in 1932, which was required as a school-book for Home-Science subject. Miss A V Blakely Matron published a book on Hygiene titled, *Angni Dongchakipa*, in 1936. Not only the ladies but the men too brought out some worthy text-books, such as, *Garo Geography of Assam and India* by Samson Sangma and *Garo History Part-I* by Jobang D.Marak in 1934 and 1930 respectively. Being books on specific subjects, they had undergone through a series of editions as required from time to time. The most important publication of these years was the *Itihasni Katarang*, which was a compilation by Jakme D Shira, Solomon Raja. Do'bipa.

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*MS Sangma. op cit., pi68-169.*
L M Holbrook and Mrs. Aron N. Sangma, and was edited by G A Wright and Modhunath G Momin. This book printed in 1934 dealt with great persons of history like Buddha, Ashoka, the Mughals, the world conquerors and patriots and heroes. It can be equated as a history of the world.

In addition to school text-books, Garo literature was enriched by the transformation of traditional tales handed orally from generations to generations into a written form. Earliest work of the kind was the Garo Folk-lore Part I by Jobang D. Marak and Samson Sangma which appeared in 1927. This was a collection of Garo folk-tales which attempted to preserve the adventures, achievements and heroic deeds of their forefathers. On his own, Samson Sangma brought out the A'chik Golporang in 1939, which written on the same theme. This first publication was very sketchy but meaningful. It was edited time and again, and its fifth edition was quite voluminous. Another great contributor to folk-lore writing was Dewan Singh Rongmuthu's Apasong Agana which recounted the unity of the Garos despite belonging to different groups.

The decadal of India's Independence was a period of growth and development in the field of Garo literature. During this period a host of Garo educationists felt the need to fill the gap of required Garo text-books in different subjects. Without reservations, they rose the occasion and published the much needed text-books containing lessons on history, geography, prose and poetry, science, hygiene etc. The period, therefore, witnessed a flourish of Garo literary figures, like Harendra W Marak. N M Marak, Kenneth Momin and D S Nengminza. H W Marak was credited for a series of books on Garo language, namely, the Gital English Composition, Hindi Gachal Garo-English-Assamese Dictionary and the Garo Primer. D S Nengminza's publications mainly dealt with Garo language, grammar and composition. Some of his publications were. The School Dictionary, Second book of English Grammar and Translation, Hindustanchi Nengrae Aganggrikani Choi English-Garo Dictionary and Boys' own translation, Garo to English. Similarly. N M Marak's English-Garo-Hindustani Kusiko

197 HBareh, opcit., pi7-18.
198 Ibid., p24-25.
Altauai Agangrikani and Kenneth Momin's *A 'chik Composition Designed to Help Students for Learning Grammar* were another commendable works on Garo language. Besides publications on the study and understanding of Garo language, H W Marak, D S Nengminza and S Basu published primers on Arithmetic. D S Nengminza printed the *Primary Arithmetic Bak I and Bak II* and the *Chanani Skichengani*, H W Marak printed the *Garo Arithmetic, Gital Tangka-paisa* and *Metric Weights and Measures*, and S Basu printed the *Arithmetic Primer in Garo*. All the afore-mentioned publications were published between 1947 and 1972. This exhaustive list of publications of Garo school-books proved the adeptness of Garo writers in writing books as situations demanded.

Like the Khasis, the Garos printed newspapers to transmit writers' thoughts and ideologies to the people. The first Garo newspaper was the *A 'chikni Ripeng*, a Christian monthly launched in 1880 by the American Baptist Mission. Another Christian monthly, the *Seng'ba* was printed by the Catholic Mission. Both these monthlies were Christian oriented in their writings, aimed to disseminate Christian teachings to the readers. Rev. E G Phillips in his report at the Twelfth Biennial Session of the Baptist Mission lauded the efforts of two Garo church workers, Jobang D Marak and Madhunath G Momin started the *Phringphrang*, a small monthly in September 1912. During the middle of the twentieth century, some educated Garos started a literary bi-monthly *A'chik Kurang* to which they contributed poems, essays, satires and translations from published works which later were incorporated in the school and college text-books. This was the start of printing of secular literature. Soon after a weekly titled *A 'chik Sangbad* was published by N Marak and a quarterly named *Nok Dangni Ripneng* was edited by B K Sangma. An educational quarterly, *A 'chik Kurang* had already been in circulation during the past years. In the long run, it led to the development of socio-political and literary writings which in turn enriched growth of Garo secular literature.

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199 Ibid., p20-22; P C Kar, "Garo Language and Literature" in *The Assam Tribune May*, 91991.
201 P C Kar, op cit.,
In the Khasi-Jaintia hills and the Garo hills, missionaries were motivated in developing vernacular literature to enable the earlier converts to read and understand the Bible and other Christian literatures. This was the reason that earlier Khasi and Garo literatures were mere primers bearing Christian outlooks, for the motive of the missionaries was to impart elementary education to help propagating Christian teachings and tenets to the local converts. Thus Vernacular literature was closely linked with Christianity in the beginning. In course of time, secondary schools were opened and this naturally led to publications of text-books required at this level of school education. This in turn brought the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos into contact with Indian and Western literature. Initially, the local literature was a translation of the latter which paved the way for original writing in later years. All these publications in whatever form they might be, without a doubt, enriched Khasi literature and Garo literature respectively. With these in hand it was possible to introduce Garo and Khasi as one of the Modern Indian Languages at the high school and college levels. The establishment of the North Eastern Hill University further helped in the advancement of these literatures with the creation of the Khasi Department and Garo Department within the School of Languages.