2.00. Language and Literature

The Khasi language has been spoken by the people since time immemorial. Through this medium communication was made possible, myths, legends, folklores and folktales and other important cultural aspects of the people were preserved. The preservation was done by narration when the members of the family were gathered together around the hearth in the quiet of the night. The arrival of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist missionaries provided the Khasis with the written language. Using that medium books were written and published at first, mainly religious in nature. The religious books were mainly for the purpose of propagating and spreading Christianity. As time passed, books on other subjects were written and published in order to spread education among the Khasis. The development was gradual upto 1960s, but in the 1970s there was a sudden leap in the field of published books and today it has emerged as one of the developed language in the North Eastern Region. Although the development was noticeable yet it was mainly in the literary fields. There seems to be a neglect on the part of the educated Khasis about their language, the reason being that most of the educated Khasis of the 19th Century were of the
opinion that literature and language were synonymous. Such an understanding persisted even today among some of the educated Khasis. No real attempt has been made by any Khasi scholar of the Khasi language to correct the view and to make a clear distinction between language and literature. It was only in 1991, that H. Warmphaign Sten, distinguished language and literature in his *Shaphang Ka Ktien Khasi*, and devoted the very first chapter for the purpose. In spite of the attempt made by H.W. Sten, still the misunderstanding continued. Our attempt in this chapter therefore, is to clearly distinguish language and literature, to discuss the different features of languages and literature; to study how literature enriches language and to show that the two depend on each other for their growth and development.

In the present day, the development made by science cannot be ignored. It has in fact, penetrated and ruled every field of study, because different subjects are studied today scientifically. The study of language is no exception, in fact, it is called linguistics, the scientific study of language. The science of language deals with the history and scientific investigation of language. When the history of Khasi language is studied we face with a problem because the history prior to the year 1813 is shrouded with mystery. Nevertheless, we shall examine the views of the poets and
some other writers who wrote later on the issue and also some other cultural aspects. Regarding the scientific investigation of the language, attempts will be made to trace its origin and to show the development of linguistic study.

2.01. Definition of Literature

Before we discuss the different genres of literature in Khasi, attempt shall be made to define literature as seen by scholars in general and the scholars at home. While searching for the definition many books and dictionaries are referred to and consulted. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, literature is viewed as the "writing whose value lies in the beauty of form or emotional effect."¹ The form as seen here could be interpreted as poetry, drama and fiction; and how these affect the readers and listeners. While the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, says that literature is "(the writing or the study of) books, etc. valued as works of art (drama, fiction, essays, poetry, biography, contrasted with technical books and journalism)."² From the above definition we draw these points, literature is the writing and studying of books;

these works are valued as works of art, hence literature is an art; the different branches of literature included are drama, fiction, essays, poetry, biography; that is, two more than the branches of pure literature. It is interesting to note that even the books on technical and journalism are placed in the list of literature. The same dictionary also gives the meaning of literature as, "books dealing with a special subject ... and material describing or advertising." The definition mean that when advertising agents go around to advertise their company's products they also give out their literature listing their products. Thus, out of the two definitions found in the same dictionary, the first meaning is closer to the definition we are looking for our purpose. Walter Pater, as quoted in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, referred to literature as, "the matter of imaginative or artistic literature ... transcript, not of mere fact but of fact in its infinitely varied forms." The description given by Walter Pater is clear for those persons who already knew what literature is and also its different branches. But Walter Pater is clear about the source of literature, that is, the

3. Ibid.
imagination. The product of imagination is brought out in various forms like poetry, drama and fiction.

When we analyse the term literature by its etymology, we find that the word is derived from the Latin word *littera* which conveys several meanings, "letter of the alphabet, a letter, written records and literature."

Summing up the meaning as given by the different dictionaries, we have literature is, the knowledge of what is written, which first and foremost include mankind's entire body of writing, then coming down to the body of writings belonging to a given language or a particular people and then finally to the individual pieces of writing. But to use the word *written* when describing literature is itself misleading for one may rightly speak of oral literature or the literature of the pre-literate period. Although oral literature is of immense importance yet, in our research only written literature will be taken into consideration for it is visible and could be proved when required. Another reason why written literature is taken into account is because the organisation of words to create the different kind of literature gives pleasure, it elevates and then it is transformed into an experience.

2.02. Literature as seen by Different Writers

In this section we shall discuss the view on literature as presented by the different writers. Plato (c.427-347 B.C.), the Greek philosopher in his famous book *The Republic*, regarded poetry (a branch of literature) as a mere "representation" and the Greek word for it is *mimesis*. Plato argued that what poet and painter produce are unreal. Writes he:

> the productions both of the painter and the poet are imitations of a life which has itself only secondary reality, and neither painter nor poet have any knowledge of what they imitate... poems are second hand, unreal, and tell us nothing about life.  

Thus, according to Plato, poetry is harmful because it is based on falsehood and is concerned with appearance. Plato also used other phrases to condemn the theory of imitation, one of the phrases is, "third remove from the throne of truth," he also states that, "the art of representation is something that has no serious value." Plato condemns Homer, Hesiod and the other poets as those "who have always made up fictions and stories to tell men." In the above statement,

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7. Ibid., p. 425.  
8. Ibid., p. 431.  
9. Ibid., p. 131.
the word 'fiction' come into play and it is accepted by the present day writers as the basis of all literary works. Plato also speaks about the different types of literature available in his days, they are 'epic, lyric and tragedy' and also "drama". The view of Plato on poetry and forms of literature is based on his theory of the World of Ideas. According to that theory everything in this World is only a representation of the real that exist in the World of Ideas. T.S. Dorsch, has this to say on Plato's theory. Writes he:

According to this theory everything that exists, or happens, in this world is an imperfect copy of an ideal object or action or state that has an ideal existence beyond this world. The reproductions of the poets (and artists) are therefore imitations of imperfect copies of an ideal life; they are third-hand and unreal, and can teach us nothing of value about life.

The demands made by Plato form the literary artists to represent life as it is, is an impossible task to achieve. The literary artist is not in a position to represent reality as it is, but he is capable of representing reality more or less than what it is found. Although Plato failed to present an agreeable view on literature, nevertheless, he has presented literature as a fiction and also that...

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10. Ibid., p. 133.
11. Ibid., p. 433.
literature is an imitation a view which he refuted basing on his theory of ideas.

Aristotle studied under Plato and was aware of his views on literature and the literary artist whom he condemned and equated with mad men and in some other place as a man between a philosopher and a mad man. Aristotle took the views of Plato as the starting point, chalked out his own way and then drew his own conclusions with arguments. According to Aristotle the different types of literature are, "epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy also and Dithyrambic poetry, and the music of the flute and of the lyre in most of their forms." According to Aristotle, an epic poetry is, "an imitation in verse of characters of a higher type." An epic is narrative in form and the action it presents has no limit of time. On tragedy, Aristotle wrote the following words,

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purification of these emotions.

15. Ibid., p. 23.
He also writes that, "... Tragedy ... is an imitation in verse of characters of a higher type." Aristotle defined comedy in the following words, "an imitation of characters of a lower type." Dithyramb as described in the Literary Terms A Dictionary, "is a Greek choral song, probably sung at the sacrifice of Dionysus." In the same book we find these lines, "Aristotle says that tragedy was, in origin, associated with the dithyramb." Thus, dithyramb is associated with tragedy, it is a song and it is also an imitation. The music of the flute could be attributed to a branch of poetry called elegy, and pastoral elegy is common among the Greek. The flute is an instrument used by the shepherd (pastor) while tending their flocks. The music of the lyre is another branch of poetry called lyric, in Greek it is called ulyrikos because it is sung with the accompaniment of the lyre.

Aristotle agreed with Plato when he stated that the different types of literature "are all in their general

16. Ibid., p. 21.
17. Ibid., p. 23.
18. Ibid., p. 21.
20. Ibid.
conception modes of imitation." The modes of imitation in each type of literature differ "in three respects - the medium, the objects, the manner or mode of imitation." The medium of imitation which is common to all branches of literature is the language of men, while in the tragedy and comedy it is by the characters on the stage. The manner in which the language could be presented is in the form of prose or verse or a combination of both and also by narration. The objects of imitation are men in action either of a higher or a lower type. The other objects to be imitated according to Aristotle are manners, passions, events, natural objects and members of nature. In short the objects of imitation is the nature with all that is in it including human nature.

Plato condemns literary artists because of the imitation they follow; Aristotle supports them and their imitation and also puts forward a strong argument in favour of imitation. Writes he,

... the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood ... he [man] is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated.  

22. *Ibid*.
Further, Aristotle states that, "Imitation, then, is one instinct of our nature." Thus, the view that literature is a mode of imitation is strongly recommended and defended by Aristotle. Speaking on imitation R.A. Scott James presents his view. Writes he:

Imitation distinguishes what we call creative literature from literature which is didactic. The term is the equivalent, almost, of our word representation, except that the latter, is modern parlance, has come more and more to mean the exact imitation of objects seen by the eye or distinguished by the ear. Imitation, for the Poetics, is the objective representation of life in literature - what in our language we might call the imaginative reconstruction of life. 

Although the view of R.A. Scott James appears to be personal, nevertheless, it cannot be ignored, because it gives us his view of imitation.

W.H. Hudson discussed literature at length and offered this view. Writes he:

Literature is composed of those books, and of those books only, which, in the first place, by reason of their subject-matter and their mode of treating it, are of general human interest, and in which, in the second

24. Ibid.
place, the element of form and the pleasure which form gives are to be regarded as
essential.  

From the view of Hudson we note that people are interested in literature because it contains the things that are common to them. Since they are common to people they give pleasure and that pleasure is derived from the form of literature the people are interested in. Hudson in another paragraph viewed literature as a subject which have a general appeal and that general appeal "yield aesthetic satisfaction." Hudson also said that people cared for literature "primarily on account of its deep and lasting human significance." Thus, it is clear that according to Hudson, literature has to have aesthetic value and also create a lasting human interest, otherwise, any work that do not offer those fall out of the term literature. Hudson also offered another definition of literature. Writes he, that literature is, "a vital record of what men have seen in life what they have experienced of it." If the above definition is accepted, then the current day scientific fiction which present characters in the other planets and heavenly bodies then falls out of literature. A

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
view that is agreeable and acceptable offered by Hudson is "literature grows directly out of life,\(^{30}\) and that life is the source of literature. Life is, in fact, the basis of literature. By the term life we mean to include everything that exist in the world including nature. The interest in man and nature gave rise to a school in literature known as the Romantic Movement.

W.H. Hudson, in his discussion divided literature into three categories. Writes he:

We have, first, the literature of self-expression, which includes the different kinds of lyric poetry, the poetry of meditation and argument, and the elegy; the essay and treatise where these are written from the personal point of view; and the literature of artistic and literary criticism. We have, secondly, the literature in which the writer, instead of going down into himself, goes out of himself into the world of external human life and activity; and this includes history and biography, the ballad and the epic, the romance in verse and prose, the story in verse and prose, the novel and the drama. And, thirdly, we have the literature of description, not in itself a large or important division, since description in literature is ordinarily associated with, and for the most part subordinated to the interests of self-expression or narrative, but comprising in the book of travel, and the descriptive essay and poem, some fairly distinct minor forms of literary art.\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 11.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 13.
From the above it appears that Hudson accepts under the term literature all the different types of creative writings and from his view we could branch literature out in the following manner. Under the heading poetry we have, lyric, poetry of meditation, poetry of argument, elegy, ballad, epic, romance in verse, story in verse and descriptive poem. Under the heading fiction we have romance in prose, story in prose and novel. The other branches of literature are, drama, essay, treatise, literature of artistic, literary criticism, history, meaning literary history not history as a subject and biography.

The view of Hudson on literature was later on taken by Rene Wallek and Austin Warren when they stated that literature is everything in print.\textsuperscript{32} Such a view on literature can include all types of writings, but from its subject matter scientific studies falls out of the term 'literature' since they deal with objective truths which require proving. The study of history is also out of the list because they study real happenings and events. Biography in the strict sense is out of the list because they present a study of the historical persons. Thus, as we finally understand here, the term 'literature' includes the imaginative literature and

under this heading we have poetry, fiction, and drama with their own branches.

Matthew Arnold as quoted by W.H. Hudson, defined literature as "a criticism of life." When we look out in the text of Arnold, we find that he speaks only for poetry, writes he, "In Poetry, as a criticism of life under the condition fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty...." It appears that Hudson, took Arnold's view to mean that a literary artist has also to be literary critic and to write critically. In order to be critical, it requires of the writer to have a personal experience, writes Hudson, "Personal experience is the basis of all real literature." If the view of Hudson is accepted, then there will be a demand from the literary artist to have a personal experience before he writes anything. But real literature is not only a personal experience, it should teach as Plato puts it; then it should please as Aristotle puts it; and also it should have the sublimity, it is this sublimity that carries the reader to the heights which is unknown to him. Sublimity is the real experience that a piece of literature can give to a reader.

2.03. Literature as viewed by the Khasi Writers

From the later part of the 1930s onwards many Khasi writers came forward to offer their views on the different aspects including literature. Their views were recorded in the newspapers and journals which were published in the Khasi Hills. On literature, Owen Rowie took the view from the book of William J. Long who compared literature to a sea shell which a child gather from the sea shore and listens.36 As a sea shell produces different kind of sounds to the listener so also literature produces different kind of experiences. William J. Long, also presented another idea on literature. Writes he, "Behind every book is a man; behind the man is the race; and behind the race are the natural and social environments whose influence is unconsciously reflected."37 From the above view it is clear that the natural and social environment are affecting the literary artist consciously or unconsciously. The background from which the literary artist comes also is another important factor. Expanding the idea of William J. Long, Owen Rowie added another important idea that in the term literature, the oral traditions which are passed on from the forefathers

37. Ibid., p. 2.
are included. Such oral tradition by itself is insufficient, so, the literary artist supplement that by his personal knowledge and wisdom. Owen Rowie was also aware that in the strict sense of the term, literature, consisted of fiction, poetry and drama. He also accepted that literature is the mirror of the society.

Dewi Singh Khongdup sees literature as a friend who consoles when he is worried and it lifts the thinking of the reader. The idea of Khongdup, seems to have been borrowed from Matthew Arnold. Writes Arnold, "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." However, what Khongdup sees about literature is the function rather than what literature is in reality.

R.T. Rymbai sees literature as the musical instrument which is well tuned and produces different melodious music. As music enhance the mind of the hearer to a different world so is literature. The different types of literature presented by R.T. Rymbai are, prose which is

38. M.G. Lyngdoh (Ed.), Na Ka Thiar Ki Longshuwa, (Prose), (Shillong: Khasi Authors' Society, 1984), p. 5.
used in the novels and short stories; poetry; drama and plays; essay and literary criticism. What we observed is that the title essay could have been placed together under the heading of prose.

H.W. Sten, another Khasi writer of the modern period, who continues to contribute towards the growth and development of Khasi literature, language and literary criticism has his own view on literature. Writes he,

For the purpose of this exercise I am prepared to permit fables and essay also to be included in the common name literature because those genres too reflect the literary culture of the community which the authors take as their target. In a real sense I admit only poetry, drama and fiction in their various forms to have a claim for being branches of literature. My reason has all these years been that only those literary genres which allow a free play of the mind of the authors to dominate the works can be designated as pure literature.

The exercise Sten was performing was "Culture in Literature." The reason why Sten was prepared to permit fables and essay under the term literature was perhaps that these fall under the section called prose and to be more specific under the branch called fiction. Sten borrows the

42. Ibid., p. 3.
phrase "free play of the mind" from Arnold's "The Function of Criticism" but he explains it as a practising poet, novelist and dramatist. Sten is of the opinion that only those writings which allow free play of the mind fall under the term pure fiction. Hence, according to him, the branches of pure literature are poetry, drama and fiction and these could have many sub-branches.

In the search for a definition of literature we have come across many viewpoints of other scholars. Literature as we understand here is a term given to those writings in which the author used his imagination which perhaps could be equate to the free play of the mind. But the literary artist has to pick and choose those relevant points which are essential for his work. The literary artist has also to attune his works to the past and current events and using them he could perhaps see the future. The literary artist has also to keep in mind the cultural background and the effects it could leave on his product. Under the heading literature, we are prepared to accept poetry, drama and fiction with all their branches as pure literature. Nevertheless, we propose that even literary criticism could be included under literature. In literary criticism, the views and opinions of the critics on a particular work are given and a literary artist who readily accepts criticism
grows to attain a certain height of perfection. For a better appreciation and understanding of literature literary criticism is essential. Thus, in our opinion the term literature could include under its wings poetry, drama, fiction and literary criticism.

2.04. The Meaning of Language

The term language carries with it several meanings today. Interestingly, we hear the phrase good language, foul language, language of the film, language of the press and so on. From the scholar point of view, language is seen in three branches, the spoken form which is universal in every community; the written form and sign language. Every race possesses a language which is used for communication between the members of that race. The spoken language was of immense importance before the written form came into existence. Among the Khasis the spoken word was considered sacred in the era called sotti juk. It has the power to bind and to heal, it is also a command to be executed. A truthful utterance was enough to prove one's point at the time of misunderstanding. But once the written form came into existence it carried more conviction and assume more importance than the spoken form. Still we believe that the spoken form has its value, the conversation through the telephones, the agreement made verbally, the appointment
agreed upon are by the use of the spoken word and sometimes it may not be face to face. It is interesting to note that most linguist of the present day, prefer to study the spoken form of the language. They believe that oral approach is justified by the fact that historically it is evident that speech must have preceded writing. We agree with the view that speech preceded writing and the case is true with Khasi; the Khasis spoke Khasi prior to the event of the Christian missionaries. The written form came into use only in 1841.

The written form is visible everywhere, there are the newspapers in different languages, books in different languages and the study of the written form goes on in different languages. Sign language assumes importance when secret communication became a necessity. The language of the traffic police to the drivers is a sign language; for teaching and communicating to the deaf and the blind they used sign language.

We have seen the three branches of language but still we have not found a definition from the linguist's point of view. J.F. Wallwork offers his views on language. Writes he, language is,

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an interrelating series of different systems - systems of sounds, system of grammatical patterning, systems of word meanings, systems of reference to non-linguistic events, all in turn combined and closely enmeshed in larger systems."\(^{45}\)

Thus, it is difficult to give a precise definition of language because it functions when a number of systems are put together. Wallwork sees the purpose of language and its different uses. Writes he, language is used for,

(i) phatic communication (i.e., as a social regulator); (ii) for ceremonial purposes; (iii) as an instrument of action; (iv) to keep records; (v) to convey orders and information; (vi) to influence people; (vii) to enable self-expression; (viii) to embody or enable thought.\(^{46}\)

In the search for the meaning of language we come across Louis H. Gray, who offers his view. Writes he,

One may, then, attempt to define language as follows. (1) In its broadest and most general sense, language may be said to be any means of expressing emotional or mental concepts by any living being or beings whatsoever, and of communicating them to, or receiving them from, other living beings. (2) In its specific and usual sense, language is such expression and communication to or from human beings by means of speech and hearing, the sounds uttered or heard being so combined in systems evolved,

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 13.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 12.
conventionalised, and recognised by common usage at any given period in the history of the human race within a given community or within given communities that they are mutually intelligible to all approximately normal members thereof. (3) In special and derived senses, the term may be applied to other means of expression and communication between human beings, as by gestures, signals carved or written symbols, and the like, or even to sentiments supposed to be conveyed to or between human beings by means of inanimate objects."

The first part of the definition describes language as a mean of expression and communication between human beings. It also deals with the communication between the animals and also the birds. The author in the definition sees it from the angle of any ordinary person who is interested to know the definition of language. In such a definition only the verbal expression is included and it totally leave out the written form; but we know some linguists are interested in the study of the spoken form of language. The second part of the definition deals with written language; in this section the language is studied synchronically and diachronically. The section also states that a particular language is accepted in a particular community by convention and common usage and that is the foundation why one language differs from another. This particular part of the definition is

important for the linguists who study the written language. The third part of the definition deals with signs, gestures and symbols which are used in communication. Such systems of communication are important for the physically handicapped. They are also used extensively by the armed forces.

Although the definition is lengthy, nevertheless, it is a good definition of language. It explains language from the viewpoint of an ordinary man, without neglecting the scholar's point of view and also accepts the existence of the other systems of communication which are of extreme importance in today's world.

Louis H. Gray offers another view on language. Writes he, "The word 'language' is ambiguous in that it includes at least three distinct aspects which must be carefully distinguished, and which are best differentiated by the French terms langage, langue, and parole ('language', 'tongue' and 'speech').48 In language (langage) the entire process of speech production, that is, from the human vocal cords to the auditory part which communicates emotions and ideas is taken into account. In tongue (langue) the specific form of speech which is evolved and accepted the convention by a particular community is taken into account. In speech

48. Ibid., p. 15.
(parole) the sum total of the speech processes whereby one individual expresses and another comprehend is taken into account. Thus, in the term language three important factors combine together, language, tongue and speech; to these let us add meaning because any language has to be meaningful in order to gain acceptance. The similar view is expressed in different words by Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Mary Louise Pratt. Write they, "Language is mainly symbolic in that the relations between the sound sequences and their meanings are conventional and have to be learned."\textsuperscript{49}

Ferdinand de Saussure contributed certain views on language. According to him, language is a well defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts. It is because of the above characteristic that language became acceptable as a mean of communication in a given community. The other views are, language could be localized, studied separately, homogeneous and concrete.\textsuperscript{50} He also offered a definition of language. Writes he, "Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic.


rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. All the systems mentioned above are important in language, but language by itself is the most important. The basis for the written language is sign and by sign we mean the letter which are used to represent the sound of a language. The term language in the present context includes in it several branches and these could be treated as the wings of a language. Language as it is today is not confined to speaking and writing but it has crossed beyond those boundaries; in fact, we have several types of languages for achieving different ends. We have the mathematical language in dealing with mathematics, computer language in dealing with computers and so on.

Language as we have seen is first of all the basis of all human relationships. It is not a finished product but it keeps developing and expanding in different ways. The invention of the written language came to be one of the most important inventions man has ever made in the world. By the use of language the history of a people are preserved, facts remained and fiction created. Thus, language became a powerful tool not only in spreading ideas but also in uniting the whole human race.

51. Ibid., p. 13.
2.05. Relationship between Literature and Language

We have discussed at length what literature and language are when treated in isolation. But as stated earlier, the two are to be taken as the two sides of a coin. Language is used as the means of propagating human relationships, while literature is a form of human expression. The word expression as taken to mean here is the use of the written language by a literary artist to bring out his literary ideas. Thus, literature came to be described as the collection of the best uses of language. The development of literature is closely tied up with the development of language. If that is true, literature has helped in the growth, development and progress of a language. The literary artists by their works have enriched the language by adding new words and new forms of expressions. The spoken language grow into a written language and reached a stage at which literature was produced, this paved a way to a convention which was accepted later in a particular language. Each language has its own sets of rules and principles, these grow and become familiar by their appearance in literary usages. When language develops literature grows and books become available easily for people to read, and by reading books the use of language improves.
Every language has its own limitations and that is particularly true when it comes into translation from one language to another. To supplement the limitations either words, terms or phrases are borrowed and by the system of borrowing the language is greatly enriched. In the process of borrowing the foreign words get absorb in another language. Literature needs language as the foundation to build, to develop new thinking and it springs out by the use of language. By using the language and his creative faculty, the literary artist draws us closer to what we believe when he presents in his work people and places which resembles us.

Literature and language cannot be separated and a single truth will remain that language comes first because it is present with the people long before the written language came into existence. Nevertheless, the existence of language gave rise to oral literature and when the written language is born it gave rise to a written literature.

2.06. The Nature of the Khasi Language

Each language we have in the world has nature and it is that nature that distinguishes one language from another. In this section we shall present some aspects of the nature the Khasi language possesses.
The Khasi language persists because there are Khasis who speak it and because our forefathers had used it long time ago and we, following in their footsteps are also using it. But the way we use the language now is not merely in the spoken form but also in the written form. Through the written form books and records are preserved for the future generations.

The Khasi language is not a stagnant language, it grows by borrowing from the languages of the people the Khasis came into contact. The Khasi language has borrowed a number of nouns from other languages, and technical terms from other languages, like drama, fiction, criticism, etc. It is up to the scholars to search whether it has borrowed verbs, adjective and some other classes.

The Khasi language also lends to the languages it came into contact. We have in Assam a name Lumding, which means in Khasi a hill that produces fire. The name Kamakhya, it appeared to have derived from Ka Mei Kha, meaning the mother of the father, and Gua, could have originated from Khasi kwai, meaning a betel nut. Even the English word pang, seems to have originated from the Khasi word pang, meaning pain. This field requires more investigation and discussion with other scholars.
The Khasi language possesses some sounds of its own which have to be analysed from the point of view of phonetics and phonology. The Khasi language is strong in nasalised sounds like [m] [n] [ŋ] [ŋ]. It has a number of minimal pairs like [ban] [bän] [bun] [bůn] [pun] [pūn] etc.

The Khasi language through the years have also made some semantic changes. The word kpu, which means bread made out of rice, cannot be uttered in public places because it has been corrupted to mean private parts of a woman. It is to be noted that the Khasis are afraid to pronounce the English word understood, because the underlined parts is a foul word. In the semantic change we notice the fertility of the human brain, the language change as people changes.

The Khasi language does not agree fully with the rules followed by other languages, it has something of its own. Its verb does not undergo a morphological change to show time. Its adjective or qualifier generally follows the noun it qualifies. Its noun does not change to show gender and it depends heavily on the function words, like u, ka, la, sa, ki, etc.

The Khasi language has a number of expressions which allow the speaker to hide the obvious by giving effect to euphemism. Such expressions as Bam kwai ha dwar u Blei, and...
u la leit sha shnong ka Jawpaw, they literally means he is dead; the phrase u ingkhong shyllangmat, means a traitor of his own country.

The Khasi language has its own structures some of which are phonemic, morphemic, class, phrase, function and clause structures. For a person who wishes to learn Khasi, trying class structure will be the easier method.

The Khasi language have a number of words which have a combination of meanings. Sohaaw has the combination of soh, meaning fruit and saw, meaning red, literally it should have been red fruit, but semantically it means tomato.

The Khasi language is universal in the four districts of Meghalaya that is, East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Ri Bhoi districts. In these four districts it is used in public meetings, offices of the District Council, and the church services of the different Christian denominations.

Khasi language is translatable in order to make other people belonging to other language understand what we mean.

Through the years the use of dialectal variation has been done by different Khasi writers. These writers have
brought in words and phrases which the standard Khasi do not possessed. In the course of time these words have become part and parcel of the standard language.

The Khasi language tends to contract certain lengthy phrases, like *Kyrkhu U Blei* (God bless you) into *Khublei*.

2.07. Development of Language Studies by the Khasis

From the time the Khasi language received its written form, a number of study has been done by the Khasis themselves on their language. In this section we will make the list of those studies in order to show the awareness of the Khasis.

1896 _____, "Ki Dak (Alphabet) Khasi" in *U Khasi Mynta*.
1900 Nissor Singh, *Hints on the Study of Khasi Language*, (The book was meant for non-Khasis).
1929 Mondon Bareh, *Khasi-English Course and Grammar*, (The book was meant for non-Khasis).
1931 Job Solomon, *The Reader's Companion*. (The book was meant for non-Khasis).
1971  D.F. Basaiawmoit, *Ka Grammar Khasi.* (For the Middle English).
1974  _____, *Ka Grammar Khasi.* (For the High School and College).
1976  Juanita War, "Ki Jait Iing Jong Ki Ktien Ka Ri India" in *Improved Instruction in Khasi.*
1976  H. Bareh, "Ka Nongtymmen Ka Ktien" in *Improved Instruction in Khasi.*
1982  I.M. Simon, "Ka Thymmei Jong Ka Ktien Khasi" in *Ka Thiar Ki Nongthoh,* Vol. IV.
1990  Hectorius Marwein, Ki Verb Khasi.
1993  M.B. Jyrwa, Ka Jingpule Shaphang Ka Ktien.
1994 SCERT, Seminar Papers on the Standardisation of Khasi Writing.
1995 -----, "Language Planning", in Khasi Studies, Vol. IX, No. 3.
In the chapter we discussed about language and literature and we find that for most Khasis the two are synonymous. They believe that studying literature means studying language and there are no differences. We find that among the Khasis, Sten was the first to draw a clear distinction especially in his Ka Histori Ka Ktien Khasi (1980), Ka Grammar (1987, rpt. 1993) and Shaphang Ka Ktien Khasi (1991). In the last book mentioned above he made the Khasis aware that the two are different and equal importance have to be given. We discussed the definition given by various scholars on literature and on language. We also discussed on the views of the Khasi scholars on literature and language. On literature some views offered by the Khasi scholars seems to have been borrowed from the English while Sten offered his definition that in the term literature only
poetry, drama and fiction with their branches should be included. On the difference between language and literature we find that they are the two sides of a coin and that they cannot be separated. However, among the Khasis, attention has to be given for the development of language and treat language on a different scale not same as literature. The development of literature does not necessarily mean the development of language, issues on language have to be treated on their own. We also discussed the nature of the Khasi language and find that the Khasi language has something of its own. It is a language which is developing hence it requires the attention of the local scholars to develop in the right direction. We were made aware also about the development of language study by the different Khasi scholars from the year 1896 to date. This is important because it tells us the importance the native speakers give to their language.