CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
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1.1 A PROFILE OF MEGHALAYA

1.1.0 THE LAND

Meghalaya, a narrow strip of land with an area of 22,429 sq. km. is strategically located in the north-eastern region of the country. One of the smallest states in India, it is bounded by Assam in the north and east and has the international boundary with the neighbouring country of Bangladesh in the south and west. In 1970 Meghalaya first attained its independent identity, within the state of Assam. At that time it comprised two of the hill districts of Assam, namely the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills, with district headquarters at Shillong and Tura respectively. In January, 1972 it attained full statehood by the North – Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act.

1.1.1 GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Meghalaya literally means “The abode of Clouds”. It lies between 25° 47' North and 20° 10' North Latitude and between 89° 47' East Longitudes. Meghalaya consists predominantly of mountainous terrain with narrow valleys in between and strips of plains in the south-west and north, skirting Bangladesh. The area may be broadly divided into (a) the central plateau between the altitude of 900 to 2,000 metres; (b) sub-mountainous region below 900 metres, which merges gradually with the plains in the west and north; (c) the foothill region, stretching southwards from the central plateau to the plains in Assam and Bangladesh.
About 37 percent is covered by forests. The most important trees found in these forests are Sal, Nahan, Champa, Gomani and Bamboos. Besides pine and other trees are also found. The temperate forests are willow, Binch, Magnolis, Oak and Beech. Medicinal plants and orchids are widely distributed in the state.

Wildlife abounds in the forests of Meghalaya. Elephants are found both in the Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills. Other animals like the tigers, leopards, sambars, deers and the golden cats are found in various parts of the state.

The state is rich in natural resources, particularly minerals like silimanite, limestone, coal, dolomite, fire clay, felspar, quartz and glass sand. Ninety-five percent of India's total output of silimanite is produced in Sonapahar in the Khasi Hills district. This deposit reported to contain the world's best silimanite.

The climate is sub-tropical at medium altitude with tropical influence in the low altitudes of the southern and western sides of the state. The central plateau has a temperate climate. Rainfall is generally high, ranging between 2,000 to 5,000 mm. The Cherrapunji-Mawsynram belt in the southern slope of the Khasi Hills is reputed to have the heaviest annual rainfall in the world, however, this rainfall is scanty in the dry winter months from November to February.

1.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The population of Meghalaya, according to the census of 2001, is 23,06,069. The district-wise details of the state's population is shown in table 101.

There are various religious groups in Meghalaya following Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and some form of tribal religion. The majority of the population, however, practices Christianity.
The scheduled tribes constitute approximately 85 percent of the total population. The main three scheduled tribes – the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos speak different dialects which are recognised by the state government. The official language of the state is English which serves as the lingua franca for the various language groups. Khasi and Garo, however, are the main languages spoken in Meghalaya. The other languages commonly spoken in the state include Bengali, Gorkhali, Nepali, Hindi, Assamese, Koch, Rabha, Mikir, etc.

Table 1.0.1 The District-wise Population of Meghalaya, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District-wise Population of Meghalaya</th>
<th>Year 2001</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaintia Hills</td>
<td>295 7</td>
<td>149 4</td>
<td>146 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Khasi Hills</td>
<td>661 0</td>
<td>333 2</td>
<td>327 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ri-Bhoi District</td>
<td>192 8</td>
<td>99 3</td>
<td>93 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Khasi Hills</td>
<td>294 1</td>
<td>149 2</td>
<td>144 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Garo Hills</td>
<td>247 5</td>
<td>126 3</td>
<td>121 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Garo Hills</td>
<td>515 8</td>
<td>259 4</td>
<td>256 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Garo Hills</td>
<td>99 1</td>
<td>51 0</td>
<td>48 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.1.3 ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

After the attainment of statehood, during the initial years, in 1972, the state consisted of two districts, three sub-divisions and twenty-four community development blocks. Subsequently, for effective administration, the state was divided into five districts. With the creation of the districts of Ri-Bhoi and South Garo Hills in
1991, the total number of districts rose to seven. The districts are further divided into sub-divisions for effective, decentralised administration.

Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is located in the East Khasi Hills district. Meghalaya has 12 towns, the largest number of towns is in the East Khasi Hills district. West Garo Hills district has the largest number of villages with a total of 2,064 villages.

A unique feature of the administrative set-up in the state is the three Autonomous District Councils (ADC) of the Khasi Hills, the Garo Hills and the Jaintia Hills. These are local bodies which have been set up under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and firstly, have their own legislative power to look after the welfare and interest of the tribals and secondly, they preserve their cultural and legal traditions. According to the Constitutional provisions, the ADCs are empowered to (a) make laws in certain subjects including primary education, (b) raise revenue, (c) impose/collect taxes, and (d) regulate/control trading within their respective jurisdiction.

1.1.4 OCCUPATION

More than 85% of the people live in the villages and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The area available for cultivation is however, limited to about 8% only of the total geographical area. The food crops cultivated are rice, wheat, maize, millets, etc. Commercial crops like potato, oil seeds, cotton and sugarcane are also cultivated. Meghalaya is renowned for horticultural crops like orange, pine-apples, banana and arecanut. The turmeric of the state is famous for its quality.
Besides agriculture, the people are also engaged in animal husbandry, fishing and poultry farming. Though rich in mineral resources, only a small percentage of the population is engaged in industries as the state is industrially backward.

1.2 SALIENT FEATURES OF GARO HILLS – THE AREA OF STUDY:

1.2.1 THE PLACE

The Garo Hills Civil districts of Meghalaya comprise a tract of about 9,689 sq km, lying between 89° 49' and 91° 2' East longitude and 25° 9' and 26° 1' North latitude. It is bordered in the east by West Khasi Hills, in the north by Goalpara district of Assam, in the west by Assam and partly by Bangladesh and in the south by the plains of Bangladesh. The whole region forms a short of undulating plateau with plenty of flat lands and valleys with altitude varying from 100 – 1400 metre above sea level, Nokrek being the highest point, i.e. 1418 metre.

Until the 22nd October 1976, the area comprising the Garo Hills constituted a single administrative district with its capital at Tura. But later on, the district was bifurcated into two districts in October 1979. These districts have as in 1982 the following sub-divisions (with dates of creation in brackets):

West Garo Hills
1. Baghmara Sub-division (December 1976)
2. Dadengre Sub-division (August 1982)
3. Ampati Sub-division (October 1982)

East Garo Hills
1. Resu-Belpara Sub-division (April 1982)

In 1992, South Garo Hills District had been created with its headquarter at Baghmara.
According to 2001 census, the population of the Garo Hills is 8,62,473 and has 90.41% of the population living in the rural areas depending on agriculture as its livelihood.

1.2.2 PHYSICAL FEATURE

There are three important mountain ranges in three districts of Garo Hills. These are described below.

1.2.3 TURA RANGE:

This is one of the most important mountain ranges in the West Garo Hills. There are many mountain peaks located in this range. One of the mountain peaks is the Tura peak. The height of this peak is 873 metres. It is located on the south of Tura Town Hills. The distance is 5.64 kilometres from the town which has a lovely path climbing to the peak. This peak is popular for its beauty and pleasant location.

Another peak is called Nokrek peak. The height of this peak is 1,418 metres. It is also located far east of Tura Town and it is famous because of its height. This is the highest peak in the districts. There is no habitation around this peak. The state government has preserved the whole mountain range as a citrus sanctuary, as unusual citrus fruit is available in this region; local people call it “Me. mang Narang”.

Chitmang peak is the second highest peak in the whole district. The height is 1,029 metres. This peak is locally called Waimong. ‘Wai’ means god and ‘mong’ means very big. So this peak is the place of the Great God.

Balpakram Hills is adjacent to the Chitmang Peak. Its height is 863 metres. This hilly area, situated in the south eastern corner of West Garo Hills is about 200 sq
km in extent with a maximum elevation of 1,206 metres. The deep gorge that cuts into the plateau forms a natural channel for strong winds blowing in regularly from the south, hence the name ‘Balpakram’ which means “blowing across”. Balpakram plateau has several salt–licks and for this reason it is infested with wild animals of all kinds, mostly elephant which discourage human habitation by destroying cultivations and dwelling houses. A wild life sanctuary has been set up in this area by the Government of Meghalaya to ensure the preservation of several species of wild animals.

1.2.4 ARBELLA RANGE:

Arbella peak is 999 metres high. It lies on the northern side of Asannanggre village on the Tura Gauhati Road. The name of this peak is Sonabal. Most of the peaks of this mountain range fall in the East Garo Hills district.

1.2.5 RANGGIRA RANGE:

This mountain range lies on the western fringe of the district and ends in the Halliday-ganj village. The height of this peak is 673 metres. Some of the peaks of this mountain range are Haslong which is 1,025 metres high and located near Rongjeng in East Garo Hills district.

1.2.6 RIVER:

The principal river is the Someswari which the Garos call Simsang. It rises in the north of the Tura Town and falls into the Kangsa river in Mymensing. Other important rivers flowing towards the south and falling into Bangladesh are the Bugai, Nitri and Maheshkali while from the northern side of the watershed the Krishnai, Dudhrai, Ildek, Jinjiram and other small rivers fall into the Brahmaputra.
The western parts of the district are flanked by large marshes which are based as Fisheries as well as by the permanent cultivable lands. On the whole, the general appearance of the district is wild but picturesque.

1.2.7 CLIMATE

Among the constituent units of the state of Meghalaya, the Garo Hills are of comparatively low elevation. The climate is accordingly much warmer than in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Rainfall though inclined to be as heavy as 826.00 mm in June month, is also much less than in the other districts to the east. The hills are occasionally visited by destructive storms but these are happenings of rare frequency.

1.2.8 THE PEOPLE:

A great majority of the people of the districts are the Garos who constituted one of the major original inhabitants of the districts. Other original inhabitants of the districts are the Rabhas, Hajongs, Kochs, Rajbansis, Dalus, Meches and the Kacharis.

The Garos are the stock known as the Tibeto-Burman, which drifted into Eastern India and Burma across the Plateau of Tibet. Their language still remains some similarity with Tibetan; and some of their ideas, such as sentimental value they attach to gongs, are identical with those prevailing in Tibetan villages. The Garos entered the Garo Hills from different directions and settled down in different regions for centuries. These isolated settlements resulted, in the long run, in the evolution of certain regional linguistic and cultural variations amongst them. Thus in accordance with these linguistic and cultural differences, the Garos are divided into eleven groups, namely, the A.kawes, the Chisaks, the Duals, the Matchis, the Matabengs, the Chiboks, the Rugas, the Garos or Gangchings, the Atongs and the Me.gams. But however, today, with the progress in education, transport and communication, these
original differences are fast disappearing. The Educated Garos today like to call themselves only as “A.Chik” (a Garo word by which they call themselves) and not by those divisional names.

In complexion the Garos are not very dark, and they possess the Mongolian type of feature in a more marked degree. As a people, the Garos, both men and women, are short, the former averaging 5 ft. 1 ½ inch and the latter 4 ft. 10 inch. In build they are rather lean and winy than stoutly made, and a fat man is quite a rarity.

1.2.9 PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE:

Garo society is matrilineal, and inheritance is through the mother. All children, as soon as they are born, belong to their mother’s ma.chong (clan), whence Dalton’s term “Motherhood”. In the matrilineal society of the Garos, property passes from mother to daughter. Although the sons belong to the mother’s ma.chong (clan), they cannot inherit any portion of the maternal property. Indeed, males cannot in theory hold property other than that acquired through their exertions. Even this will pass on to their children through their children’s mother after they marry. Among the Garos any of the daughters even the eldest, if there are many, may be chosen as the nokna or heiress, having proved her fitness to occupy this privileged position by her dutifulness to her parents. In case there are no daughters, the family can adopt any other girl, usually one having the closest blood relationship to the adoptive mother, first preference being given to one of the “non-heir” daughters of the woman’s sisters, who are of course, among the closest female relations a woman can have.

Inheritance of property among the Garos is generally linked with matrimonial relations, and although men may have no property to pass on, they have an important say in deciding to whom it should pass. If the heiress (nokna) is unmarried, as she
often is sense selection generally takes place before she gets married, the father will try to get a young man from his own lineage, commonly the son of his own sister, as the husband of the heiress. Such cross cousin marriages are common. The nephew thus becomes in a sense the co-heir (a.kim) with his prospective bride, and the father’s ma.chong (clan) retains the right to control over his wife’s property. Of course, he cannot sell it or dispose of it but he has every right to make full use of it.

1.2.10 RELIGION AND CASTE

Christianity is largely confined to the Garos. It can indeed be stated that the vast majority of Garos profess only two beliefs that is, they are either Christian or Songsarek, the indigenous faith of the Garos, which in the local tongue is known as Songsanek.

Garo society is entirely casteless.

1.2.11 OCCUPATION

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Garos. Much of the Garo Hills consist of hilly areas, plain areas being found only in the outer fringe bordering Goalpara district in the north - west and Bangladesh in the south - west and south.

Wet rice cultivation is practical in the plain areas while in hills, the population practice jhum or shifting cultivation. Cereals like maize and millets are sown. Rice is of course their staple cereal food. Besides food crops, cash crops like cotton are grown in many parts of the Garo Hills. Jute and Mesta continue to occupy a leading position among cash crops. More recently, coffee and rubber have also been introduced as the more important of new cash crops.
1.2.12 ECONOMIC SCENARIO

Since independence, various schemes have been adopted by the central and local governments for economic development. The district council was created under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India to preserve the traditional way of life of the people, to protect them from exploitation by others and to make them leaders of their own progress. The tribal development blocks came into existence to ensure speedy development. Incentives provided by cash crops and efforts made to popularize terrace cultivation have yielded some results. The communication bottleneck, soil erosion and loss of fertility are however, among the problems retarding prosperous economic growth.

The occupational mobility is a noticeable phenomenon. The literacy rate is on increase and the educated gentry is involved in professions other than traditional agriculture. The multi-tier democratic political system has converted many into whole timers in politics. The growth of population and markets inspired many to set themselves in business. Poultry, diary farming and bee-keeping are also practiced.

1.2.13 CHANGE IN SOCIETY

There is distinction between life in the rural areas and in the urban areas. The acceleration of development work in recent years, particularly after 1950, has contributed greatly to the material progress of the people everywhere, though the impact has naturally been greater in the town areas. The rapid spread of education has inevitably brought about a change in the vocational pattern, with many young people turning away from agriculture and taking up other types of work, either with government or in business undertakings. The trend is bound to have an effect on village cohesion in the foreseeable future.
In short, the Garos today face the same challenges that tribal communities elsewhere have to face, but in spite of the rapid shift of influence to the urban elite, the backbone of the tribe is still the rural population and many of the rural folk are shrewd enough to appreciate what is best for them. This fact may help to balance the swing from one extreme to another – from a generally conservative form of society to an ultra-modern one.

1.3 SET UP OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN GARO HILLS

The first school was established during 1826 to 1829 with the efforts of an Englishman – David Scott, at a small British outpost in the Garo Hills. In the next few years, more schools were set up for the Garos with the sole intention of reforming their fierce habits rather than that of educating them.

Gradually, with the arrival of the American Baptist Mission in the Garo area, the entire educational enterprise was handed over to them along with some financial aids. They were also given the liberty to run the institutions as they wished, despite the fact that their main objective was proselytisation.

Between 1911 and 1951, education in this district made slight though still insufficient progress. According to the 1951 census, the percentage of literacy in this district was 7.3% compared to the All India average of 16%. An upward trend was apparent after independence, the most remarkable progress achieved being in the field of Primary Education. As a result, literacy spread at a faster rate than in the plains, during the 1951 – 1961 decade.

The increase in literacy has been due to the rapid increase in the number of educational institutions.
The state since inception in 1972 has witnessed a great deal of increase in the number of institutions and students. It is time that education serves its very important purpose to meet the overall requirement in those vital fields in particular. Therefore, the concepts, principles, techniques and methods of education have their foremost importance. There has been a tremendous increase of primary institutions, especially after the Assam State Government had handed over the primary education in the Districts to the three Autonomous District Councils of the State. Consequently there was also an increase of the higher institutions of learning.

The formal transfer of primary education to the Autonomous District Councils, along with the modalities and conditions of such transfer was initiated by the then government of Assam in August, 1958. This transfer to the Garo and Khasi Hills District Councils took effect in the early 1960s; in the Jaintia Hills District Council it took effect in 1967. The various conditions, specified by the Assam Government during this transfer, may be categorised into six broad areas like: (a) finance; (b) staff; (c) teachers’ training; (d) inspecting staff; (e) curriculum and text books; and (f) buildings, furniture and equipment.

The State Government was to provide finance for the expenditure incurred on: (a) the maintenance of lower primary schools; (b) the grants-in-aid to the lower primary schools; and (c) the councils to improve primary education, as funds may permit. The district councils were to provide, from their own resources, the excess expenditure incurred by them for the proper maintenance and expansion of primary education in their own jurisdiction.

The progress of primary education under the management of the three district councils may be classified under two distinct time periods: firstly, the period when these areas were a part of erstwhile Assam, that is, up to 1972 and secondly, the
period under the state government of the independent state of Meghalaya which varies for the three ADCs and is 1972 – 80 in the case of Garo Hills. During 1961 – 72 the growth of primary education was slow but steady. There was a rapid progress in 1972 when Meghalaya, carved out of the erstwhile state of Assam, attained the status of an independent state.

The table 1.0.2 shows the number of Primary Schools and Teachers in the Autonomous District Councils (1980 and 1990-91) in Garo Hills District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADC</th>
<th>No of Schools</th>
<th>No of Teachers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garo Hills Districts</td>
<td>1588</td>
<td>1628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Educational Administration in Meghalaya, Structures, Processes and Future Prospects by Srilekha Majumdar, Torist Mark, Niepa-Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd

1.4 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

Primary education provides foundation to children for higher education and therefore primary stage of education is a very important stage. In the opinion of the present investigation, education at the primary level in the three districts of Garo Hills is far from satisfactory. Some of the reasons for this state of affairs are dearth of adequate number of teachers in the schools, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of communication particularly in the rural areas due to the existence of large scale terrain, non-availability of adequate funds for primary education, absence of regular inspection of the schools by the staff, high rate of dropouts at the primary stage, etc.

1 Hamlet Bareh, Progress of Education in Meghalaya, First Cosmo Edition, 1996. Published by Mrs. Rani Kapoor, Cosmo Publications for Genesis Publishing Pvt. Limited, 24-B, Assam Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi – 110002, India
The investigation in view of the above felt the need for a study on the administration and financing of primary education in the three Garo Hills Districts, to investigate into the present system of administration, and financing of the primary education and to identify the problems in relation there to. Again no other study on the same subject was undertaken by earlier researchers in Garo Hills. Hence, the present study is justified.

The present study will throw a light on the present system of administration and financing of primary education in Garo Hills, investigate into the related problems and suggest measures for improving primary education in the districts.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem for the present study has been stated as follows:

“Administration and Financing of Primary Education in the Garo Hills Districts of Meghalaya.”

1.6 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY:

The key terms used in the present study are defined as follows:

Primary Education

Education, in general and primary education in particular, are essential inputs in the process of economic and social development of an individual as well as of nations. It provides foundation to children for higher education and therefore primary stage of education is a very important stage. The basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic are acquired at this stage. Values are intensalised and environmental. Elementary education is the most crucial stage of education as it lays the foundation
from the personality, attitude, confidence, habits, learning skills and communicating capabilities of pupils.

In the present study Primary Education means an education which consists of Classes I to IV, and the children belonging to age group from 6 to 10 years old. At this stage the education plays a pivotal role in the total development of the child. The major objectives of education is to develop the child into a self reliant, healthy adult who fulfils his day-to-day needs adequately and is physically, mentally, emotionally and socially a mature unit of the society. For such all round development of the child’s personality emphasis has to be laid not only on the scholastic and intellectual development but also or personal and social development by putting him in situations where he may get opportunity to work with his hands and develop proper attitude towards work and workers. In addition, there is an urgent need to bridge the gap between the world of work and world of school. This gap could be bridged by an early initiation of the child into the processes and skills of work, which could be possible through work experience.

**Administration**

Administration may be described as the art of “getting the things done”. The administration is thus conceived as “section oriented”. The administrations are described as those persons who “perform”, “take charge of”, “accomplish” or “manage”. Knezevich considers “Administration as a means to an end.” The educational administration thus is a means to attainment of the ends of education. The nature of educational administration thus depends on the goals which are set for education.
Financial Aspects

The financial aspects include the sources of revenue, conditions of grants-in-aid, types of grants, payment and withdrawal of grants, income and expenditure, fees, fines, donations, procedures and evaluation of finance, salary of teaching and non-teaching staff, maintenance of the school education, scholarship of the students

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Following are the main objectives of the present study

(i) To study the development of primary education in Garo Hills Districts of Meghalaya

(ii) To study the existing system of administration and financing of primary education in Garo Hills Districts

(iii) To investigate into the problems of primary education in relation to administration and financing

(iv) To examine the role played by local bodies and voluntary organisation in the field of primary education

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

1 The study was delimited to the Primary Schools in the three districts of Garo Hills with Classes I – IV

2 The study was further delimited to the following aspects of Primary Education (i) Administration (ii) Financing of present primary education in the three Garo Hills Districts of Meghalaya
3. The study was restricted to the selected Government Officials, heads and Assistant teachers, NGOs from different types of Primary Schools in Garo Hills Districts, Meghalaya for the purpose of data collection.