CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BCM EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE BMS

I. THE ADVENT OF THE BRITISH AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF MIZORAM UNDER THE BRITISH RULE

As an overview, it should be noted that the transition of Mizo society from a nomadic life style to a settled modern life style has been due to several factors among which, one defining factor was the advent of the British. With the British conquest, culminating in the arrival of the missionaries, a new era began in the history of the Mizo; affecting their lives socially, economically, educationally, politically and religiously. In a way, the advent of the British in Mizoram had opened a new chapter in their lives.

Until the latter part of the 19th century, the Government policy concerning the Mizo was marked by non-interference. However, the Mizo’s natural proclivity for daring feats and their preoccupation with struggle for their existence found, in the settled habitations within the British territory on the fringes of their hill, an ideal hunting ground for them.¹ The newly established Tea Gardens in Cachar and elsewhere offered added attractions to the Mizo. On many occasions, the Mizo murdered tea-garden native workers, carrying off the heads of the victims as trophies. In the course of those raids, Chittagong, Sylhlet, Cachar, Manipur and Tripura became frequent targets of the Mizo. Almost two decades prior to 1854, the Mizo had raided the

¹Scarcity of food and fertile land, and the need to obtain weapons may have led the Mizo to venture into the plains.
neighboring plains nineteen times. These frequent raids on the neighboring tribes prompted the British to intervene by sending a military expedition against the Mizo in 1871-1872. From the records available, it is found that a few years prior to the final Lushai Expedition (1889-90), the Mizo conducted seventeen raids into British territory with varying intensity and results. Such raids into the plains gave rise to massive British punitive expeditions into the hills. One of the reasons for sending such a military expedition was the murder of James Winchester, a tea-planter. The Mizo carried off his six-year-old daughter, Mary, as their captive. The military expedition to rescue Mary Winchester began to open up the Mizo hills to the British. As a result, villages were burnt and chiefs held responsible were fined and punished.

The story of the British annexation of the Mizo Hills abounds with a series of raids and counter-raids. The British Government at first tried to follow a policy of appeasement towards the Mizo and presented gifts to the chiefs who were responsible for armed incursions [sic]. However, all attempts by the British authorities to establish and maintain friendly relations with the Mizo proved futile. They continued to carry on their raids. Thus, the British Government was provoked into sending expeditionary forces to punish the Mizo chiefs for their aggressive raids.

The British expeditions were originally on punitive missions. The last military expedition led by the British against the Mizo was known as ‘Chin-Lushai Expedition’

---

2B. C. Allen, *Gazetteers of Bengal and North East India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1979), 7; See also R. G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-72* (Gauhati: Spectrum Publications, 1980), 37; Also A.S. Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978), 16. The British authorities in Cachar dispatched a series of punitive expeditions against the Mizo raiders. The first was in 1844; under the Commander of Captain Blackwood, and because of the repeated raids, the action for expeditions by the Government took places in 1871-72; 1888-89 and 1889-90 against the Mizo.


in 1889-1890, following which, came annexation of the Mizo hills under British control. Fortified out-posts were established in the midst of disturbed administration. Thanzawna mentioned that at certain periods, the Union Jack was found flying over villages like Darzo, Tuipang, Tlabung, Chhipphir, Khawlek as emblematic of the supremacy of the British Raj in the course of their search for suitable sites for administrative headquarters. Eventually, only Aizawl and Lunglei continued to be the seats of administration for the maintenance of law and order. By 1890, Mizoram came under British occupation.

The professed policy of the Government at that time was to stop the feuding among the Mizo chiefs and the incessant harassment of the British subjects in the plains by the Mizo. The ruling chiefs were first subdued and then forced to surrender. The Mizo suffered heavily, they had to surrender their guns and there was a great loss of property. By the end of 1890 the British had destroyed all the offending chiefs and villages. However, they followed a policy of non-interference and allowed the chiefs to continue their rule over their small respective territories, leaving internal matters to them.

On April 1, 1898, the Chin-Lushai Hills Conference, by the proclamation of the British India Government, amalgamated the South and the North Lushai Hills as the Lushai Hills District under the charge of a superintendent. With this amalgamation, Aijal (Aizawl) became the center of administration of Lushai Hills and Lunglei was a sub-divisional headquarters. The District Commissioner controlled the Lushai hills

---

7By 1914, nearly all of the hill areas of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh were brought under the British administration.
through the Superintendent and not through the Chiefs. Major John Shakespeare was the first superintendent stationed at Aizawl as a representative of the viceroy of India.9

The occupation of Mizoram by the British with their administrative system brought peaceful conditions, enabling the missionaries to spread the Christian faith among the Mizo. This was epoch-making for the history of Mizoram, as it led to the introduction of Christianity and the introduction of educational facilities each of which played an important role in the development of Mizoram. These changes under the British marked the end of a long period of isolation for the Mizo and an end to warfare and raids.

Again in 1935, Mizoram was declared, along with others, as “Tribal Area” under the Provision of the Government of India Act, to be excluded from the operation of the Provincial Legislature.10 The method of administration was that of minimal interference. The aim was to maintain peace and order. The Superintendent was not supposed to interfere in the internal affairs of the villages and the administration of the chiefs who ruled their territories in accordance with the customary and traditional laws of the land. However, the status of chiefs was greatly affected. The traditional rights of chiefs were repealed, the land possession of the chiefs were reverted to vest in the Government. Chieftainship in Mizoram was finally abolished in 1955 by an Act of the Government of Assam.

---

9Under the Government of India Act of 1935, hill areas of Assam were divided into ‘Excluded areas’ and ‘partially excluded area.’ The Lushai hill district was termed an excluded area. This implied that the Lushais were outside the direct control of the Provincial Legislature of Assam and the Superintendent represented the Viceroy of India. In fact the sole aim of the British authorities was to retain the tribal areas on the eastern parts of India as ‘property of the Crown’. So, the Superintendent and the Governor in Assam Province, with the blessings of the British authorities and the Parliament, kept the Lushai areas away from the popular rule, under their political agents and special appointed Superintendents.

The 1890s marked the beginning of a settled administration in the District. The program of development under the British began to take shape with regard to roads, bridges and waterways to serve the purpose of the administrators. With the Independence of India, the Lushai Hills District became one of the Districts of Assam and the Deputy Commissioner replaced the Superintendent. By an Act of Parliament, called the Lushai Hills District Act of 1954 (Act 18 of 1954), the name of the Lushai Hills District was changed to Mizo District on the 29th April 1954. A District Council was established according to the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution. The following year the traditional chieftainship was abolished and was replaced by the Village Council.

Subsequently, with the implementation of the North Eastern Reorganization Act (1971), the Mizo Hills District was upgraded to a ‘Union Territory’ on January 21, 1972, with a 33 member Legislative Assembly and the Lt. Governor as the administrative head. Thus ‘Mizoram’ (land of the Mizo) is a new name for the hilly regions formerly known as the Lushai Hills Districts.\(^{11}\)

The first public bazaar and retail market at Aizawl were established in 1910. They facilitated the growth of business and commercial enterprises. In 1939, the government introduced the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries in order to boost income

\(^{11}\)R. N. Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram 1947-1986* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1987), 2. Furthermore, consequent to the passage of the Constitution (53rd) Amendment Bill and the State of Mizoram Bill (1986) by Parliament on August 7, 1986; the Union Territory of Mizoram became the twenty-third state of the Indian Union on February 20th 1987. The State of Mizoram Bill provided for a forty member single chamber Legislative Assembly. For administrative purposes Mizoram was divided into eight districts, namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Champhai, Mamit, Kolasib, Serchhip and Lawngtlai. Each of the eight Districts is under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner. There are 23 sub-divisions in each district and each sub-division is under a Sub-Divisional Officer. The Governor is the administrative Head of State. Mizoram State has a Legislative Assembly of forty elected members including a Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The Chief Minister heads the Council of Ministers of State. The Chief Secretary heads the Secretariat and the Secretaries and Directors assist him. Mizoram is accessible by air, by road and by train via Silchar. A train-link has been established at Bairabi. The first airport at Lengpui, forty kilometers west of Aizawl was opened in September 1998.
generation and to foster healthy competition. Unfortunately, the backwardness of the people did not enable them to exploit the opportunities and the pace of economic growth remained slow. The fact that the Lushai hills were constituted as an Excluded Area meant that no economic reforms were possible. In economic terms, the condition of Mizoram was unstable and unproductive during British rule.

On a critical note, the British Government evinced little interest in the internal affairs of the Mizo. They constructed temporary roads linking important administrative centers, and villages. They seemed to have only two goals, that of administering the area and receiving taxes from the hill tracts. Other development plans and welfare measures, which would have involved expenditure from the government, seemed to elicit little initiative on the part of the British. With the Independence of India, Mizoram has stepped towards development and even more so since its inauguration as a Union Territory and finally as a full-fledged state.

A. The State of Education in Mizoram Under the British Administration

During the early period of British rule, no supportive measures were taken by the British for the development of an organized system of education. Upholding the status quo, the British had no interest in innovation and imposing structures or values alien to the colonized people. The British Government policy in India in general was to maintain religious neutrality. At the beginning, the government had no intention of

---


13 Under the Government of India Act 1935, Lushai Hills was excluded from the purview of the new constitution. Accordingly, the Mizo hills district was treated as an “Excluded Area” and was placed under special responsibility of the Governor General in his capacity as the Crown representative. After Indian Independence, Lushai Hills hitherto an excluded area was brought under the new scheme of administration based on the recommendation of the North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas.

14 Verghese and Thanzawna, A History of the Mizos, 317.
providing an education for the Mizo, as A. Porteous, a political officer of North Mizoram in 1897 opines:

I desire to point out that although it is now seven years since Aijal has been occupied, nothing whatever has yet been done by the government in the way of commencing to educate the Lushais.\textsuperscript{15}

In spite of the initial disinterest in programs for education on the part of the British, the Political Officer took a step in favor of Mizo education in 1896 by applying for financial sanction from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

\textbf{B. Government-Run Schools}

As a follow through of the Political Officer's initiative, the Government opened schools for the children of its employees in 1893\textsuperscript{16} at Aizawl. The teacher was a military police havildar (petty officer) whose school had an average attendance of fifteen children. Hindi was the medium of instruction,\textsuperscript{17} and sixty-eight students attended. Hluna notes that the government did not prescribe any regular education among the Mizo for which, later on, the Superintendent, Mr. J. Shakespeare was compelled to write to the Director of Public Instruction of Assam with a view to making the instruction more systematic.\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, government schools for the non-Mizo children of British public servants were opened at Lunglei and Demagiri in 1894.

\textsuperscript{15}Aizawl Record File, No. 277 dated 17\textsuperscript{th} July 1896 from A. Porteous, Pol. Officer, North Lushai Hills to the Secretary of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Shillong, cited in J. V. Hluna, \textit{Education and Missionaries in Mizoram}, (Gauhati: Spectrum Publication, 1992), 57. (Henceforth A.R. No. so and so).

\textsuperscript{16}Hluna, \textit{Education and Missionaries in Mizoram}, 57.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid. 57.

\textsuperscript{18}A. R., No. 470 G, Dated Aijal 17\textsuperscript{th} August 1901, letter from J. Shakespeare to the D.P.I., Assam cited in Hluna, \textit{Education and Missionaries in Mizoram}, 59.
These schools were maintained by the subscriptions given by the military police, accompanied by an annual grant of Rs.100.\(^1\)

The government school at Lunglei seemed to have made good progress with regard to rudimentary teaching. Commenting on this, Shakespeare, the superintendent of Lushai hills, in his inspection, noted on 24\(^{th}\) November 1898, that he was very pleased to see the progress made especially with the Mizo pupils who were admitted into the school since April 1898. The superintendent had deputed an interpreter from Aizawl to start teaching the Mizo how to read and write. The teacher made good progress in Mizo dialect and managed well with his pupils especially in teaching simple arithmetic.\(^2\) After the initial neglect, the British administration seems to have made concerted efforts to further the cause of education in Mizoram with slow but steady signs of positive effect.

**C. The Medium of Instruction for the Mizo Children**

According to Porteous, the then administrative officer at Aizawl, a proposal was made to the Commissioner of Assam for the education of Mizo children, which included the introduction of Bengali as the medium of instruction. The motive behind this move was to facilitate trade transactions and establish an official language.\(^3\)

Kalijoy Kavyatirtha,\(^4\) the then teacher also strongly supported the use of Bengali as the medium of instruction since study materials on science, philosophy and

---

\(^1\) A. R., No. 35G Dt. 15. 4. 1898, from Major Shakespeare, Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, cited in Hluna, *Education and Missionaries in Mizoram*, 57.

\(^2\) A. R., No. 2 Collection, iii, Political, General Department Inspection Remarks on the Lunglei Subdivision, 24\(^{th}\) November 1898, cited in Hluna, *Education and Missionaries in Mizoram*, 59.


\(^4\) He was the first teacher employed by the Government to teach Mizo boys at Aizawl on 21\(^{st}\) August 1897. He was also responsible to submit his report to the then Political Officer at Aizawl, which he did accordingly. According to his report there were 68 students. These students were taught to read and write. Seven of them could work out sums on addition and subtraction and three of them could solve sums of multiplication.
other subjects were available in Bengali. Moreover, according to him, learning Bengali would enable the Mizo to read Bengali newspapers to have an idea of the civilized world.\textsuperscript{23} As regards the medium of instruction in schools among the hills people, the Governor-General-in-Council in 1864 laid down the policy that instruction should be given entirely in English or in the indigenous languages of the hill people expressed in Roman script.\textsuperscript{24} 

Apparently, the Government was in favor of giving education to the Mizo through the medium of Bengali in view of the absence of written characters. The first two Mizo who were taught Bengali were Suaka and Thangphunga, who became the \textit{Chaprasis} in the office of the Political Officer.\textsuperscript{25} It appeared that the British Government was paying little interest to the indigenous system of education, and wanted to substitute it with a system that would serve their purpose to employ the Mizo in their administration. Thus, under their patronage, only a few students benefited from the educational facilities.

What has been said above in relation to the state of education in Mizoram under the British Government needs to be understood as merely a summary of the existent system of education providing the necessary background for the introduction of the missionary enterprise in Mizoram in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The presence of Government schools undoubtedly served as an eye-opener for the idea of school among the Mizo. Though the benefit of schooling was not clearly seen by the

\textsuperscript{23}A.R., No. 3 Misc. Collection – 111 Political (General Branch) from Kalijoy Kaviathirtha to the Political Officer, Dt. 5th April, 1898, cited in Hluna, \textit{Education and Missionaries}, 58. Additional demand was made that a teacher should be able to learn Mizo within 18 months and this should be the condition for appointment and for receiving an increment in the salary.

\textsuperscript{24}Hluna, \textit{Education and Missionaries in Mizoram}, 62. The lowest post in the Government service.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 62. As regards the medium, the general opinion of the British Government at that time was in favor of the adoption of Bengali characters because of its association with the hill regions in the Northeast. In North Cachar and Mikir Hills, and Naga Hills, Bengali was taught as the vernacular language with a simple introduction to English.
Mizo population on a large-scale basis as yet, it did create awareness among a few Mizo of what education and schools “looked like.” This initial exposure to education challenged the missionaries to take up educational activities enthusiastically. The state of the Government School seems to come across as a prototype for the Christian missionaries to embark upon their mission of education right from the beginning of their ministry in Mizoram.

II. MISSIONARY EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISES IN NORTH MIZORAM

The politically settled situation in Mizoram paved the way for the entry of the Christian missionaries at ‘their own risk.’ They not only propagated the Christian faith, but they also rendered valuable service, laying the foundation of a modern educational system in Mizoram. The Mizo soon found they were in the presence of two powerful forces, one was the government, and the other was a missionary; the latter had come into the Mizo hills with a definite purpose to preach Christianity. The history of education in Mizoram bears witness to the significant role played by the missionaries over the past century. The following description will focus on the missionary enterprise in Mizoram, particularly that of the BMS in educational ministry.

A. The Arrival of J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge

The first missionary ever to reach the soil of Mizoram in 1891 was Rev. William Williams, who worked in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (Meghalaya) under the Calvinistic Methodist Mission.\(^{26}\) He had heard about the Mizo and their earlier habits of raiding. Therefore, he had come to find out the prospects of doing missionary work among the Mizo. Williams saw the state of the people and returned to his station with a

deep conviction of the need for ministry in Mizoram. Unfortunately, he died of typhoid shortly before his dream materialized.\(^{27}\) Meanwhile, Lorrain and Savidge, the then missionaries of the Indian Aborigines Mission (also known as Arthington Mission\(^{28}\)) who waited at Silchar (Cachar), had set their minds on going to Mizoram. Owing to the outbreak of a rebellion within the Mizo hills, they waited through 1893 for the situation to improve.

The arrival of Lorrain and Savidge at Aizawl, Mizoram on January 11\(^{\text{th}}\), 1894, formed a nucleus for the missionary educational enterprise. This date is very important in the history of the Church in Mizoram, it has been regarded as the day when the Gospel first came to Mizoram. At first, the duo tried to enter Tripura for their missionary venture, but permission was denied by the Maharajah. From thence, they went to Chittagong, one of the stations of the BMS. Here, they came to learn about the “unreached” Mizo living in the neighboring region. From that point on, their goal was set to reach Mizoram with the message of God.

They wanted to enter Mizoram from the southern region, but the authorities denied them access. Shifting to the northern region, they then moved to Silchar. The authorities at Cachar also refused to permit their entry into Mizoram. In spite of these initial setbacks, Savidge and Lorrain attempted to learn Mizo language. They obtained language-books including Thomas Herbert Lewin’s “Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the Lushai Dialect” (1874) and Brojo Nath Shaha’s “Grammar of the Lushai Language” (1884). These books were very helpful in their earliest efforts to learn Mizo words and phrases.

\(^{27}\)Ibid.

\(^{28}\) Robert Arthington, a millionaire, organized a missionary society of his own to bring the gospel to the untamed tribes. His organization was called Arthington Aborigines Mission.
By the early part of January 1894, Savidge and Lorrain finally made the
difficult journey to Mizoram and came to Fort Aizawl.\(^9\) The initial response of the
British officer in command was a curt, "I can’t do anything more for you, I have orders
not to help you... but you can go anywhere you like."\(^9\) Having obtained permission to
stay, they surveyed the land with the local people. They selected a site for a mission
station at *Thingpui Huan Tlang*, constructing there a small hut with bamboo walls from
which they could carry out their educational programs. This marked the arrival of the
first resident missionaries and the commencement of Christian missionary work in
Aizawl, Mizoram.

**B. Background of the Missionaries**

Lorrain was baptized at Highgate Road Baptist Church, North London. His
church membership throughout his later service was at Lansdowne Hall in West
Norwood.\(^3\) Prior to his missionary service, he served as a telegrapher in the London
Post office. He left his job in December 1890 to become one of the first missionaires of
the ‘Arthington Aborigines Mission’ and came to India.

Savidge belonged to the Wesleyan Church. However, he too was baptized in
1890, at Highgate Road Baptist Church, North London where he became a member.
He was a graduate and a schoolmaster in England before he joined the Arthington
mission. Lorrain arrived at Calcutta in 1890, while Savidge came in 1891 with the
conviction he had come to serve the native people. Lorrain and Savidge met at an
evangelistic campaign program at Brahmanbaria,\(^3\) a New Zealand Baptist Mission
station. Both of them became life-long comrades and co-workers in the educational

Press, 1944), 4.
\(^3\) Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T and
T Clark, 1992), 270.
\(^3\) Hluna, *Education and Missionaries in Mizoram*, 41.
ministry of Mizoram. They formulated their work plan and started towards fulfilling their objective in harmony and mutual understanding for the Mizo people.

C. Introduction of the Mizo Alphabets

In order to achieve their ministerial goals, it was essential that they master the native dialect. Learning the language is an essential part in the process of church planting as language and culture are so intertwined. Therefore, speaking the language of the native people is of primary importance to the missionaries. This applies very closely to the principle of identification for church planting. Thus the first and most critical part of their plan was to adopt the principle of identification. They endeavored to identify with the people by learning the native language. Lorrain reminiscences, "We set about learning the language in real earnest and from the time we began to speak fluently the people looked upon us as their friends." It was imperative for them to learn for the presentation of the gospel in their own language and in their context.

The missionaries spent their time with the Mizo as much as they possibly could. This was perhaps because the missionaries, especially the Protestants, who believed that preaching and teaching in the vernacular was the most effective method, and therefore, they gave priority to the study of local vernaculars as the basis for the formulation of their educational programs. It hardly mattered even if it would take them a long time to master them, because the native vernacular was the most effective medium of communication, whether through preaching or education. Having learned the native language, they wanted to be involved with the people, to have a role in terms of enlightening their minds by means of offering school education. They planned to

---

32 Laldena, Christian Missions and Colonialism, 91.
make a lasting impact upon Mizo life by providing an educational foundation for the people.\textsuperscript{35}

The absence of an alphabet in Mizo presented a big challenge, but they met it with determination. Lorrain confirmed this when he said, "It therefore fell to our lot to transcribe the language to writing in such a way that our system could be readily adopted by the Mizo people."\textsuperscript{36} For this purpose, they took up the incredible task of transcribing the Mizo language to a written form.\textsuperscript{37}

The Mizo maintained a traditional story that they once possessed a written language given by God. This was believed to be on parchment, but it was lost due to negligence and a dog had eaten it up. The first book ever written about the Mizo language was "Progressive Colloquial Exercises in the "Lushai Dialect" and a "Grammar of the Lushai Language."\textsuperscript{38} Although Lewin organized and tried to make sense of what he heard, the scripts were confusing and unclear for a Mizo reader. For instance, some of the words, \textit{Tchem tadroi}, for "Chemtatrawt," \textit{tsect} for "she"\textsuperscript{39} did not aptly communicate a real Mizo accent.

Working with the deficit in Lewin and Brojo Nath's pioneering works, Savidge and Lorrain were able to transcribe the Mizo language into a Romanized script within

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{35}Lorrain, \textit{Dictionary of the Lushai Language}, vii. The Mizo, having no written language, whenever they desired to commemorate the prowess of the dead they, resorted to symbols. On the memorial pillar of a man who had killed an enemy in battle, they curved a human figure; if he had killed a tiger they cut out a representation of that animal.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., \textit{Dictionary of the Lushai Language}, v.
\item \textsuperscript{37}David Kyles said even before the missionaries learned the Mizo language, they spoke the language that was understood everywhere-"the language of love." They visited the sick and suffering, giving them help and comfort as much as they possibly could. One of the Mizo youth they visited regularly was a bed-ridden invalid, Taibuanga by name, who later became the first convert of the missionaries in Mizoram. Thus, love in action was the motivating factor in witnessing the gospel even before the missionaries learned the language. Ministering to the real need of the people involved learning to speak the language of love.
\item \textsuperscript{38}Ibid., vi.
\item \textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 64.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
two months.\textsuperscript{40} Ryngnga, commenting on this pioneering work, opines that, "...they were like the men who forged the iron from the ore and gave it to the people."\textsuperscript{41} In the process, they chose the simple Roman script,\textsuperscript{42} which would sound and match accordingly with the pronunciation of the language. Initially, the arrangement of the alphabet read, A A B D E F G H I J K L M N O P R S T T U V Z CH.\textsuperscript{43}

This alphabet was slightly amended and adopted with satisfactory results later and with mutual agreement between the Welsh missionary-educators in the north and the BMS missionaries in the south. The modified form follows, 'A A AW AW B CH D E E F G H I K L M N O P R S T T U U V Z.'\textsuperscript{44} Later on they further amended it and placed the alphabets in order, so as to match them correctly in pronouncing the language, and finally the present alphabet is as follows- A AW B CH D E F G NG H I J K L M N O P R S T T U V Z.\textsuperscript{45} These alphabets adequately express every sound in the Mizo dialect. Thus, with their hard work and determination, the missionaries transcribed the Mizo language into written form. It was an incredible achievement for the missionaries to have accomplished the creation of this alphabet and to have opened a school within such a short time.

Thus, laying the foundation of the Mizo language, the missionaries fulfilled their first ministerial goal by identifying with the people through their vernacular language. Lorrain preached his first sermon in the Mizo dialect on September 1895,

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., v.
\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., v. In his personal letter to Lewin, Lorrain mentioned that in the process of coined the Mizo language, they chose to adopt Sir William Hunter's system of transliteration. Lorrain declared in his Dictionary viii, that they followed the phonetic Hunterian system of orthography as closely as possible.
\textsuperscript{45}Rokhuma, \textit{Mizoram Zirna}, 50.
within two years after their arrival in Aizawl, Mizoram.\textsuperscript{46} The Mizo had been without a
script but as a result of Lorrain and Savidge’s determination and untiring effort, within
a short span of time and for the first time in the history of the Mizo, they were able to
have a written script of their own in a Roman alphabet. By these efforts, the Mizo were
brought personally closer to the Word of God.

Thus, the first principle of identifying with the Mizo was learning and
codifying the indigenous dialect. Having mastered the language, the missionaries made
it available for the Mizo, which began their journey into the field of education that had
a far-reaching effect for the Mizo people. The knowledge of the native language was
one of the most deciding factors that made the Mizo accept missionaries readily, even
in the South Mizoram, at the beginning of their work.

Employing the new Mizo script to translate portions of the Bible, the
missionaries turned their attention to the opening of schools for the Mizo, which was
an entirely new thing for them. Although the Government had opened an elementary
school prior to them, the policy did not include the Mizo. The policy of the missionary
was to enroll children and young men in school irrespective of their age group.

\textbf{D. Opening of the First Mission School at Aizawl}

When the missionaries arrived in 1894, there was no formal system of
vernacular education for the Mizo. Education became the main focus of the
missionaries’ endeavor. After the introduction of the Mizo alphabet, the next phase
was starting a school for Mizo children on 1st April 1894, according to Lorrain’s
report.\textsuperscript{47} Against the British administration’s policy of using Bengali, the missionaries

\begin{footnotes}
\item[46]The missionaries arrived at Aizawl on 11 January 1894 and preached the sermon in Mizo on
16\textsuperscript{th} September 1895.
\item[47]Zawnga, \textit{Mizoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin[A Collection of Important events]}, part 1
(Serkawn: Literature Committee, 1990), 35. Some authors wrote that the first school began on the 2\textsuperscript{nd}
April, but this was contradictory to what Lorrain himself wrote, as quoted by Zawnga.
\end{footnotes}
put the fruit of their linguistic efforts into use by insisting on Mizo as the medium of instruction in their school.48 This pioneering effort would, in time, source all the subsequent education enterprises in the Lushai [sic] Hills.49 Thus, from the beginning, the missionaries' interest in learning the Mizo language resulted in education that was opened for all. This also marked the introduction of vernacular as a medium of instruction in school in Mizoram.

The missionaries prepared a curriculum and imparted instruction in Mizo so that the Mizo could read and write for themselves; that envisioned the eventual readability of the Bible. Therefore, Biblical teaching and singing occupied a prominent place in the school. However other branches of elementary education were also included along with English instruction. Jones stated that English was introduced with a view to retaining the more advanced pupils who may have been tempted to go to Government school.

Suaka and Thangphunga, Government employees, were the first students to master the new alphabet within a week. Both of them later became chiefs of the Mizo Villages at Durtlang and Chaltlang respectively.50 Eventually, some of the earlier students became leaders of the village community and some of them became chiefs. From the religious point of view, the missionaries contributed to bringing a change in people's understanding of the Christian religion and practice.

The missionaries performed their educational mission according to their choice and ability and established their educational goals with unity of mind, thought and expression. Right from the inception of their work, they demonstrated the principle of delegation of responsibilities, distribution of work and co-operation between them.

48 Hluna, Education and Missionaries in Mizoram 52.
49 Zawnga, Zoram Baptist Kohhran Chanchin, 36.
50 Lalbiakliana, Mizoram Zirna Chanchin (Aizawl: Education Department, Mizoram, 1979), 23.
Lorrain devoted himself to Bible translation and production of Christian literature. As the mission work advanced, the need for publications to enhance literacy became ardent. So they published *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai language*, containing seven thousand words. In his appraisal, Grierson rightly remarks, "...of several grammars written, the most important being that of the pioneer missionaries', which is accompanied by a very full dictionary." Lorrain and Savidge had contributed much to the cause of the Mizo by preparing scripts and several valuable books, e.g., *Zirtanbu* (the Lushai Primer), *Hlabu* (Hymn book), *Zawhna leh Chhanna bu* (catechism), in 1896 for the students as well as for the converts. These publications constitute the pivotal resources for the development of education in Mizoram.

As the missionary educational work gained momentum, much against their choice, the pioneer missionaries were compelled to withdraw from Mizoram. The supporter of their mission by then had authorized his agent Mr. Dalmas, to hand over the mission field at Aizawl to the Welsh Mission. Deeply concerned about the state of the adopted field, Lorraine and Savidge offered to continue the work in Mizoram under the direct control of the Calvinistic Methodist Mission, which meanwhile, had officially taken Mizoram as their field of work. They stated their reasons as,

---

51 Grace R. Lewis, *The Lushai Hills: The Story of the Lushai Pioneer Mission* (London: Baptist Missionary Society, 1907), 34. The missionaries prepared 7000 words. Since then others have been published. G.A. Grierson was the head of the Linguistic Survey of India.


53 Robert Arthington, the founder of the Mission urged them to turn to other unreached regions by the gospel. He had a strong prejudice against institutionalization of mission work. His primary objective was the proclamation of the gospel where it was not preached. He opined that as soon as a small Christian fellowship should come up, missionaries should press on to regions as yet unexplored.

54 By then, Mr. Dalmas, Arthington's agent in India, had officially handed over the field, which the two missionaries occupied to the Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission. Therefore, they formerly adopted Mizoram as part of their mission field even before they themselves entered.
We love the people and the country very dearly, and have all along been cherishing the hope that our whole lives would be spent in leading these tribes to Jesus. As you know, we are Baptists, and of course, your Mission would not feel justified in taking us on as regular missionaries. But we have such a longing to remain and work for Christ in Lushai that we would only be too glad if your mission would accept us as Evangelists whose work it would be to preach the Gospel, leaving all Church matters to the regular missionaries.\(^5\)

This was a genuine concern of the pioneer missionaries for the gospel witness among the Mizo. However, the Welsh Mission declined their offer of service. On being refused, the duo solicited the Welsh Mission to send their missionaries immediately so that they could give orientation for the work in Mizoram. The Welsh missionary, Rev. David Evan Jones arrived at Aizawl on the 30\(^{th}\) of August 1897. Jones had the benefit of studying the language under the guidance of these pioneer missionaries. Savidge challenged him to learn ninety new Mizo words a day.\(^5\)

Lorraine and Savidge entrusted the mission work to Jones and left, forming, "The Frontier Pioneer Mission" and they went to work in the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA), the present Arunachal Pradesh among the Abhor people in 1899.\(^5\)

Jones took over the work of the educational mission in Aizawl under the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. As D.E. Jones rightly affirms,

> Although Lorrain and Savidge could not remain in Mizoram to see much of the fruit of their four years' labor, they, however, laid the foundation of a pioneer work that lasted for generations to come.\(^5\)

The mission school remained temporarily closed owing to translation work of the missionaries and the impending departure of the missionaries. The Government School at Aizawl by then was meant chiefly for the chiefs or their representatives.

---
\(^5\)Letter from Lorrain to Stephen, dated Fort Aijal [sic], 14\(^{th}\) May, 1895, cited by Hminga, in *The Life and Witness of the Church in Mizoram*, 48.


Therefore, Jones soon began to gather children and young men together in order to teach them how to read and write at his home. Several boys and girls came to learn. At first, the attendance was very irregular. By the 15th February 1898, on his 28th birthday, Jones reopened the school on his veranda. Rai Bhadur, a Khasi evangelist, and his wife who accompanied Jones to work in Mizoram assisted him in the work. They quickly won the interest and cooperation of the people. Eventually, there were enough children to justify continuing the children’s work. Soon they were able to build a small hut with timber poles, walls of bamboo and roofs of leaves to accommodate about 50 pupils.

The school was a multipurpose structure used for worship, for Sunday school and for day-school classes. Rai Bahadur, a trained teacher, taught most of the day classes. Only fifteen came regularly at the beginning, but Jones and the Khasi teacher were very impressed by the Mizo’s eagerness to learn whatever was taught. Gradually, the attendance increased to about thirty, and even came up to sixty at different times of the year. Thus, the introduction of schooling in the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the giving of formal instruction in the rudiments of reading and writing, the printing of necessary books and the translating of Scripture were the initial achievements of the missionaries. Moreover, they engaged promising students to teach in the experimental schools in different villages and they made a provision for the training of teachers by the succeeding missionaries in the North towards furthering the educational level of the Mizo.

E. Government Attitudes toward the Mission School

From the onset of the missionaries educational work there existed a cordial relationship between the Government officers and the missionaries. The main officers who were involved in helping the missionaries were Major Shakespeare, the Superintendent of Lushai Hills and Colonel Loch. Shakespeare, in 1898, built small
houses near the Fort at Aizawl, and every chief who came to study from distant
villages was provided with free board and lodging for three months. The Government
also supported the Mizo students by issuing rations to them. The Government grants
given to students in mission schools were a proof of the good relationship.

Some of the boys were self-supporting and earned their livelihood by cleaning
the sepoy’s utensils in their free time. Colonel Loch presented the Mission with a
printing press, which greatly helped in furthering the mission work in a variety of
ways. There was cooperation between the mission and the Government schools in
publishing as well as in distribution of the local papers and monthly magazines. By and
large, the missionaries considered that the policy and practices of their schools were
successful. This challenged them to establish more and more schools in different
villages in the north of Mizoram as Christianity was thriving under the Welsh
Mission.

Since the departure of the pioneer missionaries Savidge and Lorrain, northern
Mizoram came under the care of the Presbyterian Church of Wales under the
leadership of Rev. David Evan Jones, and was subsequently followed by other men
and women Welsh missionaries. The South Mizoram educational enterprise however
began with the arrival of the pioneer missionaries of the BMS, who played a major role
in opening up the area to education and the Gospel.

---
59 Lloyd, History of the Church in Mizoram, 39-40. See also in, Reports of the Foreign
60 There were three major denominations in Mizoram of which the largest was the Presbyterian
Church under the Welsh Mission and the second largest was the Baptist Church of Mizoram under the
BMS and the Evangelical Church of Maraland. The governing structure and pastoral ministry of these
two denominations were quite similar. They have been working with full cooperation and
understanding in evangelizing the people since the introduction of the organized Church among them.
The two missions also had an agreement concerning their ecclesiastical geographical boundary, which
they observed with mutual respect. According to this, the Southern district of Mizoram has come under
the supervision of the BMS missionaries.
61 Ibid., 2.
III. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE BMS IN SOUTH MIZORAM

A. The BMS at a Glance

Having the BMS as the main agent of mission education among the Mizo, we will now look briefly at the objectives and methodology of the pioneer missionaries of the BMS. Their functional work eventually became the legacy of the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM). The BMS founded in Kettering, Northampshire, England on October 2nd, 1792,\(^{62}\) was a consequence of the Evangelical Revival and it was the first missionary Society to be founded. This mission organization played a key role in introducing education to the people of Mizoram.

On the ministry of the BMS in Mizoram, Brian Stanley observes, “The BMS – Mizoram Mission is the most notable people-movement in the history of the BMS in the period 1914-1947.”\(^{63}\) Evidently, this is a valid comment when we see that by the time the last missionaries of the BMS left Mizoram, the BCM had attained the three self status; self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating, sending missionaries to various places.

1. The Formation of The BMS, Organization and Constitution

Due to the influence of hyper Calvinistic theology in the late 18th century, many Baptists in Britain had little interest in evangelism. They were convinced that God would save the elect and there was nothing to be done in evangelism.\(^{64}\) Within this Christian denomination, there were a few concerned members and ministers who

---


\(^{64}\) Jenny Lunn, “A Brief History of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS),” in Compendium: Baptist Church of Mizoram 1903-2003 (Serkawn: BCM, 2003), 6. For detail history of the BMS, see also Brian Stanley, The History of the BMS.
struggled with the theology of reaching the heathen with the gospel. One among them was William Carey who was born on August 17th, 1761 in Northamptonshire. He became convinced that the gospel should be preached to other nations. The burning issue of Carey’s life was missions to the end of the world, bringing the light of the knowledge of the true God. He maintained that the obligation “to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature still rested on the Christian Church, not just Jesus’ disciples. His discovery of the missionary mandate in the Bible impelled him to reach out to the heathen with the gospel.

Therefore, against the practice and theological stand of his own time, Carey wrote the famous treatise, “An Enquiry into the obligation of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens” in 1792. The result of this publication was a challenge, which gained for him an opportunity to preach in one of the Associations at Nottingham on May 31, 1792. He preached a missionary challenge, based on Isaiah 54:2-3, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations… Fear not.”

The sermon was delivered with such dynamic force and conviction that it produced his famous slogan, “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.” This statement clarified his faith in God and the power of the gospel. One outcome of this in 1792 was the formation of what has today become known as the Baptist Missionary Society. This took place at the historic minister’s meeting at Kettering, on October 2, 1792, where fourteen men threw themselves heartily into the

---

great enterprise, laying the foundation for the BMS. The meeting resolved that the Society be called "The Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen." Over a period of years, other Baptist ministers and laymen slowly realized the need of taking the gospel to the nations.

The Society thus formed had to make definite plans for action and commend itself to other Baptist Churches in other parts of the country, as well as to organize the mission abroad. Small as it was, it set itself bravely to the dual task. This society soon proved that "the greatest things of God have quiet and small beginnings." The formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 marked a turning point in the history of Christian missionary endeavor. The BMS set the pattern for the voluntary society model of missionary agencies, which became widespread in the 19th century. Stanley asserts that this foundation was one of the first indications in Britain of the new self-confidence and breadth of vision, which the evangelical revivals of the 18th century had nurtured, in both British and American Protestantism; qualities which in the 19th and 20th centuries, became an integral part of national culture.

2. The BMS Ministry in India

According to the first meeting of the Committee of the Society held in Northampton, 'India's need of the gospel.' was discussed. The members were convinced, "There is a gold mine in India, but the question remained as to who would venture to explore it?" Carey instantly volunteered provided that the Committee stood

---

69Ibid., 30. See also F. Deaville Walker, William Carey: Missionary Pioneer and Statesman (Chicago: Moody Press, 1925); 82. The fourteen founders formed a Committee consisting of five members, Andrew Fuller, John Ryland, John Sutcliff, Reynold Hogg, and William Carey. Andrew Fuller was the first Secretary and its first missionary was William Carey.

70The thirteen ministers present subscribed thirteen pounds and twenty-six pence. Carey was so poor that he was not able to promise anything. Instead of subscribing for an annual gift he would rather give them the proceeds of his Enquiry.

with him, to which the members solemnly agreed. Thus, the BMS focused on India as its first principal mission field and Carey as the first missionary of the Society, along with John Thomas. They sailed for West Bengal, India to do evangelistic work in 1793.

The missionary zeal of Carey as expressed in “The Enquiry” emphasized two basic principles. First, a missionary must identify with the people and consider himself as one among equals. Second, a missionary must attempt to become indigenous, self-supporting and self-propagating, as early as possible for the benefit of the people, by the labor of the missionaries and of the new believers. Carey emphasized that missionaries must support themselves by agricultural, industrial or some other kind of work. Such principles greatly influenced their philosophy and attitudes to mission. From the beginning of their work in India (Bengal) they organized local vernacular schools. These Christian institutions were started with the vision, and principle goal of reaching every tribe and nation with the gospel. This was the burning passion of Carey who came to India against many odds and facing many dangers.

Both Carey’s Enquiry and Form of Agreement referred to the task, which Jesus gave his disciples in the Scriptures.

---

75 Ibid., 21. William Carey (1761-1834), John Marshman (1768-1837) and William Ward (1764-1823), carried out the Serampore Mission. They found the Historic “Serampore Trio”. They formulated their work plan and constituted the “Form of Agreement” in 1805—where in they vowed to work in faith, harmony and mutual understanding for the Lord as well as for the people. In order to make their mission self-supporting and self-propagating they resumed responsibilities according to their income. Thus the unity of mind, thought and expression became principle of the missionary enterprise initiated by the Serampore Trio in the nineteenth Century in India.
76 Ibid. 19.
Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations ---Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you--- end of the world.
(Math: 28:19,20).

Education played an important part in disseminating western learning and Christian principles and was to have a revolutionary effect on Indian life. In one of the nine articles of the Form of Agreement of 1805, the stated BMS objective was, ‘the establishment of native free schools,’ a goal that was very important in the future spread of the Gospel. Carey, Marshman and Ward, also referred to as ‘the Serampore Trio’ realized that schools were essential for the success of missionary work. Therefore, they planned to open schools from the very beginning of their ministry.

Early in 1800, at Serampore and beyond, the mission expanded its range of operations. It opened residential schools especially for the children of Armenians, Portuguese, and Eurasian settlers in India, as well as for the natives of India. The opening of a girls’ school, through which the Christian light spread, soon followed the boys’ school. They opened a Sunday school, the first of its kind, in July 1803 under the Serampore Trio. Apparently, Carey with his missionary zeal had formulated all missionary principles and outreach methods before reaching India, focusing on education, medical work and translation work as missionary tools. For Carey and his colleagues, elementary education meant literacy, the fundamentals of western knowledge and Christian morality.

The Trio provided a rudimentary, attractive and practical education for the Hindus. The East India Company’s rule and the Charter Act opened up opportunities for several mission societies to come to India. Eventually, several societies did establish themselves in India and opened schools and hospitals for the local people.

---

77Ibid. 23.
78Oussoren, William Carey, 41.
The BMS continued to expand its ministry into different parts of India. This was an era when the schools were instrumental in providing spiritual nurture in Britain, likewise in India; they were useful for the conversion of the heathen. This schooling method, no doubt influenced the BMS missionaries in their ministerial career. Though, little in number, they aimed at ‘preaching the gospel to every creature’ while directing schools and searching for yet other means of bringing the gospel to the people.

As a consequence of the untiring efforts of the pioneer missionaries, the history of Christian missions in India reached a turning point. The BMS set the pattern for other missionary agencies of the 19th century. This is the reason why Carey is known as the father of the modern Protestant Missionary Movement. Carey recognized that schools were not only helpful agencies for evangelism but were also an indispensable part of missionary work. He saw education as coordinating and facilitating the central focus and concern of the missionary: the preaching of the Gospel. The BMS contribution to the cause of Indian education in the early 19th century was truly outstanding. It showed the way for increasing numbers of missionary contemporaries and successors by creating an almost complete educational system.

The society formed simple schools where Indian children of both sexes could learn the three R’s (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). The Trio rarely advocated schools as an end; rather they tried all the harder to increase their effectiveness and

---

79 BMS Mss., George Pearce to John Dyer, Chitpur, 17 Aug. 1831 cited in Daniel Potts, 135. Later boarding schools were discouraged by the BMS when its secretary, E B. Underhill, after visiting India in 1857, decided that although ‘the most successful of all schools as instruments of conversion’ they were ‘aside from the object of a Missionary Society, and ... by no means generally promotive of Christianity.


82 Oussoren, William Carey, 209.
number. In the course of the late nineteenth century, the BMS work spread far and wide on different continents. The work in India continued to spread far beyond West Bengal and stretched toward different places across North India, South India and to the Lushai Hills in Northeast India. The people of North East India were at first in contact with some non-evangelizing Christians.

The BMS showed interest in the Northeast in the early 19th century. The beginning of missionary work among the Khasi took place in early 1813 at Pandua. Krishna Pal was sent to begin mission work among the Khasi. The Trio was the first to initiate pioneering work in Bible translation into the local language and in making greater efforts to start schools in some places in the Northeastern regions. These education and translation initiatives operated independently of the parent society (BMS). However, the Trio’s projects were amalgamated with the BMS in 1837. Downs observed that it was during the period of independent operation that the Serampore mission undertook work in Assam at Guwahati, and Meghalaya. Education gradually occupied a central place of importance in the process of acculturation in the Northeast to which Christianity contributed significantly. By the

---

84 Henry Otis Dwight, H. Allen Tupper and Edwin Munsell Bless, *The Encyclopedia of Mission: Descriptive, Historical, Bibliographical, Statistical I* (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 68-80. See also A. Scott Moreau et al., (eds.), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 110-111. Catholics made the earliest known Christian contacts with Northeast India in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, no vigorous steps were taken to spread the Catholic faith at that time. There were three groups of Christians who came to North East India before a permanent church was set up in the middle of the 19th century. The first group was composed of two Jesuit missionaries, Stephen Cacelle and J. Gabral, who had toured the Brahmaputra Valley in 1626.
86 When the Serampore Stations were amalgamated with those of the BMS, the property situated above the banks of the Brahmaputra on what is still one of the most scenic sites in Guwahati, were eventually turned over to the American Baptist Mission, presently the CBCNEI headquarters.
88 The first missionary work at Cherrapunjee in Meghalaya began with a school. Within a short time, the pioneer American Baptist missionaries had a network of schools in the Northeast. Adoniram
end of the 19th century, Christianity had gained a foothold in most areas of Northeast India, strengthened by the presence of missions' schools.\textsuperscript{89} The only region where the BMS operated permanently in the Northeast was Mizoram.

3. The Beginning of the Educational Ministry of the BMS in South Mizoram

The 19\textsuperscript{th} century was the era when the countries of Europe were expanding their dominion to the farthest parts of the world. A spirit of adventure and enterprise inspired some who went abroad from England; some were moved with a desire to serve among the people of other faiths. Various Christian missions entered the field of education with full force and soon several missions had a network of schools and colleges all over India. For some, the sole aim was to bring about religious change in India, through the transformation that the gospel brings to people's lives. Hrangkhuma asserts that the major task of Christian mission is to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ holistically, by life, word and deed, and that especially applies to the tribal context.\textsuperscript{90}

This was particularly true in the Mizo context and the BMS missionaries operated with credibility in Mizoram. There was mutual cooperation between the Mission and the British authorities in the area of education of the Mizo. The BMS sent men and women with a strong sense of vocation and who lived devoted lives, accomplishing great things. Most of them were simple, humble people who labored not only in preaching, but also engaged in education, printing, distribution of literature and in ministries of healing and relieving the suffering of many people. Hminga, one of the


\textsuperscript{90}Judson, a missionary in Burma, advised the missionaries at Sadiya, emphasizing the importance of the schoolwork, which in the Northeast schools works ought to engross almost the whole attention of the missionaries for schools would flourish in every direction.
most prominent leaders of the Baptist Church of Mizoram acclaimed that, the work of the BMS was so blessed by God that when the last missionaries had to leave the country definitively, they left the ‘Church’ (The BCM) a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating, missionary-sending Church. This was the missionary principle, which the pioneer missionaries have declared on reaching the soil of Lunglei in Mizoram. The statement goes, “From the commencement of our work it will be our aim to make the Lushai Church self-supporting, and self-propagating.” This remark shows how much the BMS accomplished as a consequence of its educational ministry.

4. Lunglei: The Center of Educational Ministry of the BMS

Geographically, Lunglei district was bounded on the north by the North Lushai, on the south by the Arakan Hills, on the east by the Chin Hills of Myanmar and on the west by the Chittagong Hill Tracts of East Bengal. The southern region is composed almost entirely of rugged ranges of densely forest-covered mountains, separated by deep narrow valleys. The people were still leading their nomadic life-style when the BMS missionaries arrived.

The individuals and families constantly migrated from the village of one chief where the crops were poor, to a village of another chief where there was a superfluity of grain and where they would be welcomed. The general condition of the people can be understood from the following rules made by the missionaries for the early Mizo Christians:

A small bathroom in every house, which is to be utilized at least once a week; one window at least to let in the light and air; regular sweeping

---

93 Ibid., 59.
of the village streets and a thorough ‘spring cleaning’ of every house once a month. 95

Obviously the people were in their primitive stage with nomadic characteristics. Such was the land and the people of the south for whom the BMS looked for suitable workers. Lunglei was organized as an administrative town in 1890 with a civil servant at the helm of the administration assisted by the Police or Armed Forces. Mr. C.S. Murray was the first Political Officer on behalf of the Commissioner of Chittagong Division under Bengal at that time and later came to be called the Superintendent of South Lushai Hills.

During this time, Lunglei remained hidden and was beyond the reach of missionaries working in the north for various reasons. Since the Welsh missionaries succeeded the pioneer missionaries, the southern part of Mizoram came within the purview of the Welsh Missionaries in the north. The frequent visits made by the Welsh missionaries to Lunglei with a purpose to preach the gospel helped the Mizo to come under the direct contact with the missionaries. Through the faithful witness of Sohan Roy, a Khasi Government employee in Lunglei, a few Mizo had heard about Christianity. Rowlands, a missionary of the Welsh mission reported in 1902 that he had visited about 80 villages in south Mizoram. 96

5. The Arrival of the BMS Missionaries

Meanwhile, the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), which worked in the Chittagong hill tracts, became interested in working in the South Lushai Hills. Their representative, George Hughes went to Lunglei in 1901, to investigate the possibility of establishing a mission station. He found that the southern Lushai Hills looked

promising for missionary outreach. Rev. Hughes enthusiastically reported the prospect of mission work to the headquarters of BMS as,

...the selected site is not only well situated for South Lushai work, but is also the only gateway from the north to Chin and other large tribes lying still further southward... the great task of evangelizing these accessible and lovable people is not beyond the power of our society to undertake. It is an opportunity we should embrace without delay...97

Hughes also requested more missionaries to the South. Consequently, the BMS had obtained permission for the transfer of the South Lushai Hills from the care of the Presbyterian Church of Wales Mission, to the care of the BMS. In the process of searching for suitable workers in South Mizoram, the BMS came to learn about Lorrain and Savidge and their missionary experience in Mizoram.98 They invited Lorrain and Savidge to be their missionaries to work among the Mizo in South Mizoram. Lorrain and Savidge accepted their invitation on condition that the BMS should send their replacements to Arunachal Pradesh.99

Having accepted this invitation, Savidge and Lorrain requested the BMS to recognize their previous pioneering work for four years in North Mizoram to be counted as their service under the BMS.100 This request was granted accordingly, which means that their four-year service from 1894 -1897 was legitimately counted as the work of the BMS.101 On this basis, it would not be wrong to say that the educational ministry started in the north was the work of the BMS. This shift, which was taking place, was interesting because earlier, the Welsh Mission had taken over the care of northern Mizoram from Lorrain and Savidge and the same missionaries

98 Savidge and Lorrain were, at this time, working amongst the Abhors in Arunachal Pradesh. 99 Hminga, The Life and Witnesses of the Church, 54. See also Lorrain et. al., “Tribes on Our Frontier,” in The BMS Printed Report for 1911. 73-80.
100 “The Work of BMS in Mizoram” in Compendium, 10.
101 Ibid., 10.
now were taking over the care of southern Mizoram from the Welsh Mission. Commenting on the beginning of the work by the duo in the south, Mr. Hughes, Secretary of the BMS explicitly wrote,

> Our cup of joy then was very full, when we send our brethren Savidge and Lorrain to go forward to possess the land, in the early days of March. To have helped on the Lushai work, even in this small degree, has been a real pleasure to us, and we offer daily prayer for the success of this work.\(^\text{102}\)

Thus, in conformity with the BMS principle and practice, Lorraine and Savidge came to South Mizoram arriving at Lunglei, the newly acquired mission station on March 13, 1903.\(^\text{103}\)

### 6. The Proposals and Introduction of the First Mission School at Serkawn

Educational mission was secondary to evangelism and this was what almost all the missionaries did in other parts of India and elsewhere in the nineteenth century. The Tranquebar missionaries; the famous Serampore Trio; Alexander Duff, John Wilson and many other missionaries resorted to education for achieving their evangelistic goals. Winning the native population through the educational method seemed to have been the strategy of these early missionaries. Similarly, the BMS, in Lunglei, South Mizoram adopted a school approach as the key strategy.

Upon their arrival in the southern part of Mizoram the missionaries experienced the crude realities of the Mizo. Realizing the educational milieu of Mizo in the South in particular, and the social condition of the Mizo, the BMS missionaries had a great challenging task ahead of them. They felt the dire need for an educational ministry for

---


\(^{103}\) Lorrain et al., "Reports for 1903" in *The BMS Printed Report for 1901-1938*, 6. Hminga, *The Life and Witness in the Church*, 55. The Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM) affirms the landing of Lorrain and Savidge as an important event in the history of Mizoram. The BMS served in South Mizoram for sixty-five years and during this period; there were twenty-three missionaries, both men and women.
the Mizo and they had to make a concerted effort toward achieving their purpose. Public awareness regarding educational opportunities was minimal as only a few of them availed themselves of Government school education. However, the establishment of Government school in Lunglei served as a forerunner and motivated the BMS for educational mission work.

The report of Lorrain also indicated that several of the Mizo had learned to read and write at the government school at Lunglei. The little knowledge they had acquired was passed on to their friends when they returned to their villages. There were instances when the Mizo young men, anxious to improve their knowledge, continually asked the missionaries to teach them. This implied that the missionary did not take up education just to fulfill their own interest and zeal in opening a school. They studied the situation and acted upon the principle of cooperation and the reality of the people’s need.

Moreover, Lorrain and Savidge were encouraged to see that several Mizo had changed their attitudes towards Christianity after they arrived at Lunglei. There were already 125 scattered Christians including children and 13 of them had already taken baptism from the Welsh Missionaries. Lorrain reported their experience and determination, “We were filled with joy to find that there were about 30 families who had given up sacrificing to demons and were trying to serve God to the best of their ability.” They decided upon organizing a strategy against the illiteracy and ignorance of the Mizo people.

The missionaries’ principle was to consolidate the beginning of their mission operation in the South Mizoram. It was reported that from the very outset, they were

104 Ibid., 10.
105 Ibid., 7.
106 Lorrain et. al., The BMS Printed Report for 1903, 7.
glad to find a ‘spirit of liberality’ present among several of the Christian converts.\textsuperscript{107} Furthermore, due to the persecution of the Christians by their Chief at Pukpui, 16 Christian families were compelled to leave their village and founded a separate village at Sethlun. These Christians had built a bamboo-meeting house for worship. They regularly met for service, but needed definite instruction and longed for such opportunity. The presence of such enthusiastic converts was a real challenge and encouragement for the missionaries. They took steps to encourage the upcoming new Christians as much as possible.\textsuperscript{108} The missionaries’ mandate for the principle of three self’s\textsuperscript{109} marked a distinct indigenous principle that required implementation with dedication and hard work to apply for educational ministry.

The principle, which William Carey and his team adopted in assuming the task of evangelism in Serampore at the early part of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, was that they vowed to work in faith, having a mutual understanding for the Lord, as well as for the people. Thus, the unity of mind, thought and expression became the main principle of the missionary enterprise.\textsuperscript{110} As for language acquisition, they emphasized that the missionaries must master the native language in one or two years. Moreover, missionaries were encouraged to become self-supporting, men of piety, prudence, courage and forbearance. Missionary work is not leisure time amusement but duty and they must conduct themselves prayerfully.\textsuperscript{111}

It appeared that Lorrain and Savidge were determined to follow the footsteps of the Serampore Trio in several ways from the beginning of the commencement of their work in the Mizo hills. Much of their efforts was geared towards fulfilling the principle

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid. 8. 
\textsuperscript{108}Ibid. 7. 
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid. 8. 
\textsuperscript{110}Gine, \textit{The System of Elementary Education}, 21. 
\textsuperscript{111}Oussoren, \textit{William Carey}, 138.
brought out by the early BMS missionaries as stated. They employed several strategies to this end that were noticeable both in their pastoral and educational activities. They demonstrated this principle first by trying to acquaint themselves with the native language right from the inception of their ministry in Mizoram.

Having gained significant knowledge of the Mizo language, the missionaries cultivated friendships easily with the Mizo furthering their educational ministry goals. Teaching was considered a serious responsibility and this was perhaps the reason that within a very short time, a mission school was envisaged. Accordingly, the immediate priority for the missionaries was to select a site for a permanent base for their educational ministry. The missionaries lost no time in undertaking the search for a site.112

The initial step they took to fulfill their ministerial goal was to seek the cooperation of the Government in their educational task. With the permission of G.P. Whaley, the local officer of the British Government at Lunglei, the missionaries surveyed all the possible areas in and around Lunglei for their mission station. Finally they climbed to an elevated spot ‘Ramzotlang,’ where Lorrain climbed to the top of a tree to have a wide view of the land and selected Serkawn as the best site for their headquarters.113 The missionaries were very careful in the selection of a site for the mission station that was climatically conducive along with a good supply of water and was spacious enough for the construction work.

The missionaries proposed the clearing of the site and a great deal of time was spent in getting the trees and jungle growth cleared and preparing for construction. The missionaries employed several Mizo for the purpose of clearance and construction.

They quickly won the favor of the Mizo and this was reflected in some of their comments. "We like to work for you, because you fulfill every promise you make, and never deceive us." Taking the opportunity of such favorable contacts, the missionaries utilized the time to present the gospel to the workers. The Mizo, after a day's work at the mission station, would return to the missionaries' house to listen eagerly to the Gospel at night. According to Lorrain and Savidge, the Mizo were always eager to accept anything that might tend to relieve the monotony of their existence. Consequently, they were quite ready to listen to the Gospel story whenever there was an opportunity to hear. The Mizo were fond of giving names to people and as such, Lorrain was called "Pu Buanga (Mr. Brown)," while Savidge was named, "Sap Upa" (The elder white man). The Mizo popularly knew the missionaries by these names.

In initiating their educational ministry at Serkawn, Lorrain and Savidge established a small school for the Mizo just to provide them with the basic three R's. The primary purpose was to reach the Mizo youth through the school and to make it a center for evangelism. The missionaries applied the principle of selection not only for the educational center but extended it to selecting the students to begin with in order to have a good beginning in their school program. They were far sighted to select

---

115 Ibid. 10.
116 Pu Buanga literally means Mr. Brown. He was given a name after the colour of his hair. The Mizo had the habit of giving nicknames, so Pu Buanga for Mr. Brown and Savidge became Sap upa because he was older.
117 The Mizo cooperated with the work of the Missionaries and in fact, started regarding them as members of their own community. Out of love and respect, they called the missionaries ZoSap or Mizo Sahip, Zo being the contracted form of the word Mizo. Sap actually connotes any white European, but the difference lies in the fact that other Europeans working in Mizoram were not called Zo-Sap. When they used it, they only meant for the missionaries.
118 Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.
students who had already acquired the basic knowledge of reading and writing to ensure some measure of success.

With this in view, having won the favor of the British Government, Savidge then sought the permission of the then Sub-Divitional Officer Mr. G.P. Whalley, for the transfer of some of the students studying in the government school at Lunglei to help him run the school for the Mizo at Serkawn. In granting the request, the Officer permitted the removal of seven students from the Government school. These students including some 24 other students from the surrounding areas of Serkawn became the first students of the first Sikulpui (big school) headed by Savidge on July 3, 1903. Most of the students were from the nearby outskirts of Lunglei, like Sethlun and Pukpui. Out of these students nine of them were already Christians and the missionaries were very optimistic that they would become the future leaders of the church. Thus, Savidge and Lorrain together formed the historic mission school that was to play a lasting significant role in the History of Christianity in Mizoram.

The duo formulated their future plan of action, dividing their responsibilities, yet with the understanding that they would continue to work harmoniously as a team. Lorrain’s chief tasks included translating the Bible into Lushai, evangelistic responsibilities, Sunday school and pastoral work among the Mizo Christians living in different villages. Lorrain, a born linguist, in his later years translated the New Testament into Mizo along with the books of Psalms, Genesis and Isaiah. He improved

---

121 Lalmuaka and Chawma, *Zoram Sikul Zirna Chanchin*, 57-58. The school later on came to be called as Sikulpui (Large school). It continued to be a lower primary school till 1934 and from 1935 it became a primary school. See also R. Thangzuala, eds. *Serkawn Sikulpui 100 years* (Serkawn: Serkawn Sikulpui Centenary Souvenir, 2003), 20.
the Mizo-English dictionary by bringing in a total of 30,000 words and composed several songs in Mizo.\textsuperscript{121}

The responsibility of establishing schools and looking after the educational programs, the medical work and other philanthropic works fell specifically upon Savidge, who was an educationalist. He was also a gifted musician and composed a number of songs in Mizo, which are still popular.\textsuperscript{122} Savidge was prominent for his educational initiatives; he launched a training program destined to capture the minds of the Mizo boys. He was an expert in picking potential leaders and in giving training for leadership. He and his wife, a missionary teacher, became instrumental in the development of the mission schools as well as the government schools.

The first school was temporarily built with bamboo and a thatched roof. It took very little time to be popular among the Mizo. The missionaries soon discovered that there was an insatiable appetite for learning the new religion and the new script. The first duty was to see the students’ progress and meet the learning objectives. Savidge took care to see that this first batch of students was prepared in the best possible way to realize their potentials. The kind of education that the earlier learners had acquired was not up to a satisfactory standard. The missionaries observed that the students at the Government school had, at best, only a very rudimentary education, and were unable to communicate their knowledge to others. The results were often far from satisfactory. Hence, the principle of educating those students who were able to ‘teach others’ was deemed a necessity.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{121}Lalrinmawia and Rochungnunga, eds. \textit{Serkawn Centenary 1903-2003} (Serkawn: STK Centenary Souvenir Committee, 2003), 13.
\textsuperscript{122}Hminga, “A Brief Account of the BMS Missionaries in Mizoram,” in \textit{Centenary 1903 to 2003} (Serkawn: STK Centenary Souvenir Committee, 2003), 14.
\textsuperscript{123}Lorrain, et al., \textit{The BMS Printed Report for 190}, 8.
The missionaries were convinced from the beginning, that they needed to open the school to train a few of the most able students to be 'teachers.' This fact was supported by the words of the missionaries; "School was opened by us with a view to train a few of the most forward scholars to be teachers." The object being that the missionaries would place them in different villages to be schoolmasters. Therefore, Savidge's educational method can be seen, as to train those who had learned to read and write from the government school and were prepared to become teachers, were given the responsibility of teaching those who were still new to the mission school. Thus, Savidge organized the students around a monitorial system that proved to be a very successful approach.

From the outset, the missionaries emphasized the principle of self-support in matters of education. They wanted the students to be useful and effective. The students began to show satisfactory improvement with regard to their attendance and their progress in learning. The end of 1904 solved one of the major problems about the shortage of teachers, as several boys were ready to begin elementary work on other villages. Four of them were appointed for the educational ministry in different villages. In this way the bright students of the class were given direct appointment to be the village master, who proved himself or herself quite capable. Therefore, the missionaries wanted to train and recruit locally efficient and effective teachers for the smooth running of their schools and this need was always found among the students.

Savidge also applied the principle of selection with regard to giving training to promising students. He devoted himself to a small group of individuals he called

---

125 Rokhuma, *School Education under the Church and Mission*, 76-77.
126 Ibid., II.
‘Seven Disciples’ to whom he gave particular attention and special training. These seven disciples were given extra training and were mentored in terms of discipline, dress and practice teaching. Lalhmuaka, one of the early students of the missionaries, affirmed that Savidge would often say to the seven disciples that he would make them like college students. They were expected to wear formal dress, a suit and a tie, and always shoes. In case of any student approaching him without a necktie, Savidge would reprimand them. If any one replied that he did not have a tie, he would always give him one. Savidge was particular even in matters of dress because he was training future leaders and this leadership training was one of the significant contributions of Savidge in his school ministry.

Lalhmuaka later also stated that these ‘disciples’ became the pillars of Mizo society in the succeeding years especially in the ministry of the Church. These students were Rev. Challiana Murray, Rev. Chuautera, Rev. Zathanga, Rev. Rohmingliana, Rev. Haudala, Rev. Khawng inga and Rev. Laia. Of these, the first three became instrumental in assisting missionaries in the translation work of the Bible and other relevant Christian literature such as “Pilgrim’s Progress,” “The Story of the Bible,” both of which are widely used even today.

Some of them have taken the gospel far and near and even beyond Mizoram as missionaries. Following this first batch of Savidge’s seven disciples, there was a second batch of five disciples under his leadership. They were Lalmama, Nghakliana, Thangchhunga, Chhuana and Thala. Of these, Lalmama was chosen to receive linguistic coaching in English. Savidge selected him to live with him in his house for a

\(^{127}\)Rokhuma, *School Education under the Church and Mission*, 77


\(^{129}\)Ibid. 5.

year so that he could be provided with a thorough knowledge of English. Lalmama became one of the earliest educationists to have contributed richly to the literature of the Mizo. Lalmama became the headmaster of the Middle English\textsuperscript{131} school for a long time. Nghakliana became the pastor and leader of the Church in Tripura. Chhuana, Thangchhunga and Thala became government servants contributing significantly to the Mizo society.

The missionaries not only selected competent students, but they had to make an effort to equip other students for future ministry in several significant ways. To increase the students’ knowledge of Biblical literature, Lorrain prepared a Grammar book and Dictionary for the Mizo. Thus the Mizo students had the resources available to prepare themselves to contribute towards the self-propagating principle of the missionaries.

Though education was provided to all those who were willing to learn, yet there was the practice of selecting some specific children with potential and giving them extra teaching and training. Initially though, the pupils were taught only to read and write in addition to simple arithmetic, Savidge received a good report of the achievement of these boys.\textsuperscript{132} The principle of self-propagation motivated the students to engage in propagating the Gospel of Christ, in winning their own friends to the Lord. This was a new trend that emerged in the society. The students who were trained and emboldened by the missionaries evangelized local people. Student evangelistic groups were formed and every weekend, they attempted to visit the nearby villages with evangelistic intent.

\textsuperscript{131} The Sikulpui was upgraded to the Middle English (ME) course from 1915. Again in 1938, the Middle Vernacular (MV) course was introduced. Since the school was particularly for boys, it was commonly then called as “Serkawn Boy’s School” “Boy’s Middle English school,” and “Serkawn Boarding school.” See Rokhuma, Mizoram Zirna, 94 and Centenary Souvenir, 21.

\textsuperscript{132} Lorrain et al., The BMS Printed Report for 1904, 11.
The establishment of schools and particularly the establishment of the Boys' school gave an impetus to the growth of an indigenous Church for the Mizo. Basically apart from teaching the three R's and imparting basic elements of Christianity, the missionaries aimed at producing leaders for the future church. In the ensuing years, the missionaries attempted to solve the increasing demand for teachers by appointing provisional teachers for whom a teacher-training course was introduced. At the end, these provisional teachers reached permanent teacher status. In this way the missionaries ensured that their educational ministry be self-propagating, that is, by engaging the qualified and well-equipped local people as far as practicable.

By the year 1905, thirty-nine boys took the Lower Primary Examinations. Thirty of them achieved the required standard. Reflecting upon what had been achieved within a short time, Savidge reported that not only could some of them read and write in their own language, but also some knew sufficient English to translate hymns and other books into their own tongue. There was a great desire for more knowledge and Savidge reported that an intelligent educated boy presented the Gospel and drew the attention of his listeners, more than those who were unschooled and those favored by their fellowmen.

In the early years, a number of schools were opened in the interior villages as an experiment, but the results were not satisfactory. The main reasons were that the new Mizo instructors faced a difficulty in maintaining discipline among the students and the practice of villagers migrating frequently to new sites was detrimental. Consequently, they decided to concentrate their efforts at Serkawn and this method proved more successful. Although the number of students was smaller, the level of

---

133Ibid., 12.

142
education they attained was superior. These achievements were realized due to the application of the indigenous principle, the hard labor of the pioneer missionaries as well as engaging the full cooperation of the Mizo people. The missionaries understood the importance of the principle of cooperation between themselves and the support and cooperation of the local people for their work to make the church strong and dependable.

Sir, Bamfylde Fuller, Chief Commissioner of Assam came to Mizoram in February 1903. He visited the government schools and the mission schools and being impressed with the performance of the Mission schools and the success of the missionary work in the south, he decided to hand over the government schools to the missionaries. Ultimately, the whole educational system was entrusted to the Missions in the north and south, from the first of April 1904. Jones of the Welsh Mission and Savidge of the BMS became the first Honorary Inspectors of Schools in North and South Mizoram respectively. The Government and the Mission maintained a fairly cordial and cooperative relationship for the benefit of the people. They stood for the promotion of cooperation among themselves as well as with the people and, effectively, the presence of a congenial atmosphere has enhanced the educational activities immensely.

The Government bestowed a great trust and recognition to the missionaries’ work. In this way education and evangelism went hand in hand and strengthened each other for the fulfillment of the high calling of education and of Christianity. The Bible was taught along with the three R’s and the school attracted many Mizo boys who were molded in accordance with Biblical principles. The Mission school at Serkawn

---

became a strategic center especially when new teachers were being trained for leadership in the various remote villages.

The establishment of schools in different parts of Mizoram, providing formal education, the gift of literature, printing books, translating scriptures, engaging prospective teachers, making provisions for the training of teachers and several other philanthropic works were some of the steps taken by the BMS missionaries. This was also undertaken in response to the need and demand of the native people.

Thus, Savidge and Lorrain shared the responsibilities of the educational mission and worked according to the gifts they received. They left no stone unturned to reach their evangelistic goal and they selected competent persons, nurtured and trained them, and appointed them for mission work in an educational capacity. The educational ministry at Serkawn gathered momentum and became a model to be continued in subsequent years. Thus the small beginning of a Mission school at Serkawn became the nucleus in the introduction of other aspects of educational ministry.


Lorrain and Savidge displayed diplomacy of a high order in dealing with the Mizo and they soon won the hearts of the people. They lost no time in putting their plan into practice by opening a boarding school for the village boys within the mission station. This was attached to the mission school immediately after it opened and hence the school was also called “Serkawn Boarding School.”

Although, the boarding school was their main center of educational operation, schools were also established over the hills for an educational network. The missionaries chose the appointments of teachers for better results from the educated local people only and the

\[136\] Rokhuma, *Mizoram Zirna*, 94.
supervision of work done by the missionaries. However, establishing schools in the
villages became difficult on account of the small number of boys willing to attend
regularly.\textsuperscript{137}

The missionaries followed a plan for their educational ministry not to depend
on outside sources for funding as they determined to make their mission self-
supporting and self-propagating. Therefore, they hardly depended upon any outside
source for the educational operation. Their educational principle was to educate and
train the Mizo in such a way that they might become responsible enough to run the
schools themselves and thereby produce leaders for the church and the society. The
boarding school catered to the needs of the emerging schools and churches in the
south of Mizoram. The policy of preparing and appointing the educated Mizo to
teaching positions proved fruitful in the later periods. Ten years after the introduction
of schools, the missionaries in 1913 reported the educational work as having been
largely concentrated upon the Mission station, where they had 60 boarders and 24
boys coming from the surrounding locality, making a total of 84 pupils. There were
three other schools within a radius of about 24 kms from Serkawn having 17, 20 and
34 pupils respectively.\textsuperscript{138}

Thus, reflecting upon the strategies of the educational ministry of the BMS
missionaries, we see that they established a residential mission school for preparing
future religious leaders as well as, educational leaders. They introduced a monitorial
system of learning\textsuperscript{139} which proved very successful. They initiated and established a

\textsuperscript{137}Lorrain et al., "After Ten Years" in The BMS Report for 1913, 103.
\textsuperscript{138}Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{139}The idea of Monitorial system originated in India. It was the Indian system of teaching with
the help of monitors-a system that prevailed extensively in the indigenous schools. Dr. Bell, the
Presidency Chaplain at Madras, was the first Englishman to realize the value of this system. The main
advantage of the system was to enable the teacher to manage a large number of pupils at a time so that
the spread of education could be affected at a very low cost. Bell advocated the adoption of this system
pattern of elementary education independently and on an experimental basis without any financial support from the Government. The establishment of the residential school for boys and the appointment of outstanding Mizo students to be involved in the educational ministry encouraged the missionaries to expand their educational venture to provide women’s educational facilities as well.

The interesting feature to note in almost all the missionary enterprises of the various societies working in India was that they gave an emphasis to education, including the education of girls. Lorrain and Savidge were also guided by these principles and they sought to provide education of women, not in the spirit of competition but to improve their status. The lack of education for girls in the Mizo society posed a problem. Lorrain commented that, “A Mizo girl, from the time she is about four years of age, is engaged in helping her mother, while boys of twice or thrice her age are spending their days playing in the village streets or bird catching in the jungle.” They had an idea that no young man would marry an educated girl and so they must be left alone. It was quite clear that the men had no interest to see any change in the status-pattern of society. In the midst of practices like the smothering and burying of the baby along with the mother who died at childbirth and the ignorance of bringing a child up by others without the mother’s milk, the missionaries felt the need to impart practical and relevant lessons to the women folk.

In the field of girls’ education, the BMS missionaries at Lunglei played a pioneering role. Education of girls began when the first school opened for them in England. This Monitorial system was the chief method by which England achieved expansion of primary education at a very low cost between 1801-1845, See J.P. Naik & Syed Nurullah, A Students’ History of Education in India 1800-1947 (Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India, 1973), 31.


Lorrain et al., The BMS Printed Report for 1913, 105.

Sykes, Mizo Miracle, 5.
1907. This was more or less an experiment for girl's education and had continued to function and made some progress. Two of the boarders were the daughters of the Christian chiefs. Girls learned sewing twice a week from Mrs. Lorrain and they joined the boys in learning songs. However, the opening up of education for girls was not done without opposition. Due to certain social customs and existing superstitions many Mizo were not in favor of educating girls. Mizo parents were not willing to send their girls to a school in the beginning. A common retort was, "Who would work if the girls were sent to school?" Nevertheless, the idea of girl's education received attention gradually. The missionaries had to persuade the parents to send their children to school and gradually they won over the hearts of few people. The wives of missionaries had to work against the prevailing difficulties between 1915 and 1919.

Miss Chapman and Miss Clark came to Lunglei in 1919 to promote schools for girls in particular. They showed the Mizo society the dire need of education to liberate the society from the grip of superstition and backwardness. These two lady missionaries who had a great impact upon girls' education in Mizoram also exemplified the principle of cooperation that was present in the pioneer missionaries. They were successful in drawing the attention of both parents and their daughters by their vigorous program of educating the girls successfully.

The curriculum for girls included weaving, spinning, sewing, knitting, embroidery, staff-notation, childcare, household duties, gardening and the keeping of

---

143 Lorrain et al., The BMS Printed Report for 1907, 42. By 1910 a separate boarding for girls was completed.
144 Lorrain et al., The BMS Printed Report for 1913, 53.
145 The general opinion about girl's education was very low. Instead of appreciating some girls' enrolling in school, they were mocked at by composing songs to irritate them and discouraged the girls from continuation. Generally, boys used to make fun of the school going girls so much so that, out of shame and discouragement many girls were compelled to leave the school.
146 Marjorie Sykes, Mizo Miracles, 1.
147 Lorrain et al., "Arthington Mission in the South Lushai Hills, Assam India, in the BMS Printed Report for 1908, 53. See also Lorrain et al., "Tribes on Our Frontier" in The BMS Printed Report for 1911, 78.
goats, health and hygiene. This curriculum is evidence that an attempt was made to position education within the customary frames of social positioning while at the same time, infusing expertise in the role that women played in society.

Over the years, the Mizo began to understand the benefits of girls’ education as well. The Girl’s School provided the girls better opportunities to equip themselves than their counterparts from their social background. Non-Christian girls were also encouraged and brought under the purview of this educational ministry. Thus, the introduction of education for girls was a significant milestone of educational achievement of the missionaries.

The schools contributed to the prestige and identity of the people as there was progress in discipline, cleanliness, neatness of dress and appearance, and an improved morale associated with school life. The school continued to satisfactorily train students in their different ways. They demonstrated their educational skill in their common duties such as in the sphere of manual work, games, and in their annual concert. This was evident when the young men who resented the idea of girls’ education at the beginning then began to show distinct preference for educated girls over the uneducated ones for matrimonial purposes also. The value of girl’s school was recognized and to quote the first lady missionary teacher, “Our school is showing to the women of the Mizo country the meaning of abundant life, physical, mental and spiritual, which Jesus came to reveal.”

---


149 The notable women who have completed the Lower Primary Examination in the initial period of girl’s education were Thangteii, Lalsiami, Lianchhawni, Saiithangi, Lianchami, Challiani and Damghaki. See Rokhuma, Mizoram Zirna, 120.


151 Sykes, Mizo Miracle, 23.
Soon the idea of boys and girls having an equal privilege of education became the accepted norm in the Mizo society. Apparently, the parents were happy that the students were able to come to this level of knowledge, and reading and writing. The capable students who were able to pass the Middle School were absorbed into teaching jobs or in other governmental salaried jobs. Therefore, education was generally regarded as a passport to a salaried job. In the later times, when education was gaining momentum, parents would coax their children. “Go to school and get an education, otherwise you will be forced to work in the agricultural field.”

In the early stage of the missionary educational work in Mizoram, education was regarded as being of little or no value, particularly for girls, as compared to the work which they could have done at home in helping their parents. Generally, village life was characterized by arduous agricultural life for subsistence. For a person to escape such harsh realities of life, one needed an education as a great blessing. Education, in a way, enabled the Mizo to access resources from avenues other than their agricultural fields.

In all of the mission education, the inclusion of Christian teaching formed an important element in the school curriculum. Through the schools, the missionaries influenced the children, without which it would not have been possible to give teaching of the Bible. The goal of having schools for the Mizo was to give opportunities to learn both the Word of God and Christian teaching. Thus, the missionaries were engaged in education, translation, literature dissemination, journalism and printing. All these revolved around spreading the gospel. For them, the underlying principle behind the focus on education was to convey to people the

---

teaching of the Christian religion. Their education-oriented activity made a great contribution to the socio-cultural and religious life of the people.

The policy of the BMS in relation to cooperation and financial arrangement for the schools was that the host village for a new school would construct the school structure and provide food for the teacher. This resolution was passed in the meeting of the BMS on Sept. 7, 1926 at Serkawn to minimize the cost of the teacher’s salary.

The development towards the cooperation of the parents in sending their daughters was soon recognized. Hard work and sacrifice were the essential elements required for the villagers to aspire to have a school. The value of education was so realized by the people that they were willing to construct the school and the teacher’s house.

The BMS thus fostered schools, starting with the Serkawn boy’s school for the propagation of Christian knowledge. Historically, missionaries played an important role in spreading modern education and Christian education in Mizoram. By engaging in a formal and a non-formal educational ministry, the BMS missionaries became an instrument in evangelizing the Mizo people and in building the Baptist Church of Mizoram eventually.

After the departure of the missionaries, their principles and methods continued to inspire the BCM in evangelism and Church planting. The BMS planted the

---

153 Ibid., 42.
154 Ibid., 43.
156 Lorrain et al., The BMS Printed Report for 1913, 105.
157 Evangelism means the proclamation of the saving act of God in Jesus Christ to people by word and deeds, so that the people by their own choice will decide to become Christians, to have fellowship in the church to serve Him. It is the art of persuading people to consider the claim of Christ. John Stott defined evangelism in the following way: The nature of evangelization is the communication of the Good News. The purpose of evangelization is to give individuals a valid opportunity to accept Jesus Christ. The goal of Evangelization is the persuading of men and women to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and serve Him in the fellowship of His church. C. Peter Wagner, Strategies for Church Growth (California: Regal Books, 1987), 128.
educational root from which the BCM draws its principles and practice in its educational ministry. In studying the educational ministry of the BCM, it is essential to see how the BCM has formed its educational ministry and this implies the necessity of looking at the BCM today.