

SCHOOL EDUCATION In MEGHALAYA

Catholic Contribution

Pius Varghese

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Dr. Pius Varghese

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*TO
MY*

BELOVED PARENTS

*Who Were Genuinely Interested In My Physical And Spiritual
Well Being*

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Foreword

Among the more visible signs of the presence of the Church the service of education occupies a prominent place. The role of monasteries in the history of education, and the various dedicated men and women in the Church in the promotion of integral education of people all over the world can never be denied.

The importance of education in the work of the Church prompted the Second Vatican Council, in 1965, to state in its document on Christian education, "Education is, in a very special way, the concern of the Church, not only because the Church must be recognized as a human society capable of imparting education, but especially it has the duty of proclaiming the way of salvation to all men, of revealing the life of Christ to those who believe, and of assisting them with unremitting care so that they may be able to attain the fullness of that life" (*Gravissimum Educationis* n. 3). In line with this, the Church in India, in its *All India Catholic Education Policy, 2007* emphasized that "Education, by its very nature is a transformative process, namely changing human persons and, through them, society and its structures." (art. 2.2), and that this process should be spiritual, humanizing and liberating.

The process of education, carried out by the Governments or by other agencies has undergone various evolutionary phases in its passage through the corridors of history. At every phase there has been rethinking in the pattern of education with corresponding paradigm shifts appropriate to the context of education. Education continues to challenge people, inviting them to make it relevant in each particular situation. This challenge continues to be met by individuals, agencies, organizations – governmental, secular and religious. The responses have brought along appropriate interventions at various levels with the resultant quantitative and qualitative changes.

Though the contribution of the Church to the cause of education has been phenomenal there have been very few studies showing the extent to which Catholic Church accomplished in the field of education in our country. It is here that this book makes a notable contribution by shedding light on the educational activities of the Catholic Church in Meghalaya.

The book takes the reader at the very outset to the context of the study. The relevant data in the introductory chapters highlight the Church's involvement in education at the national level and state level in various sectors despite the fact that Christians make up only a tiny percentage of the Indian population. Convincing arguments and justifications make the study very contextualized and take it in the right direction.

The book provides an enriching review of related literature on educational activities carried out by the Catholic Church, extending from studies done abroad. Besides the reviews of studies completed at the national level there are also very useful and enlightening references to the studies completed at various stages in North East Indian universities. It is indeed a very valuable and enriching resource for the reader who wants to know more about the Church's role in the field of education right from the moment Christianity came to North East India.

The methodology followed in the investigation is unique in itself. While following the descriptive methodology in the study, adequate attention has been paid to its various aspects. The population and sample are certainly credible and representative taking the sample from teachers, Heads of institutions, from all civil administrative districts of the state both rural and urban and from the trained and untrained segments of the population as well. Besides the credibility of the sample, the tools used in the work are also scientifically constructed and validated in a scientific way. All these provide us with very authentic data that is reliable and statistically correct. Another unique feature of the research is the division of the area of study in twelve parts that cover the whole area of study. This pattern is reflected in the entire study and runs like a thread that weaves the total fabric of the study from the data presentation to the analysis and conclusions of the study.

There has been extra effort to present all data in a table format. It becomes easy to understand the data and to locate the findings. Along with tables, diagrams and graphs have been used to project the information in an attractive and appealing fashion.

The section on analysis and interpretation brilliantly exposes the data collected in the research. The interpretations are focused and very much pertaining to the data and they are very revelatory in nature. In the final section of the study, adequate conclusions have been made from data presented and analyzed. In most cases very relevant and focused reflections have been made as to the possible causes of the discussed cases. Further the study also relates the findings that emerged to the existing practices in the global Catholic education world making us see a common pattern in the existing educational scenario in the Catholic world.

Great attempts have been made to pick out the contributions of the Catholic Church to Secondary and Higher Secondary education in Meghalaya. At the same time the

critical stance taken by the study is very distinct in the way the problems of the present educational practices of the Catholic schools are elaborated. This prevents us from getting a lopsided picture in any way. A clear and objective picture of the role of the Church in education in Meghalaya emerges.

In doing a study of this nature, the author has set a unique pattern in many ways. It is highly informative and puts at our disposal a vast store of reliable data. The author takes the reader from the jarring scientific steps to the height of educational wisdom that shines out in this work. The reading of the book will be very profitable from the information point of view and will help one to appreciate the work done by Catholic Church in the field of education particularly in secondary and Higher Secondary education in Meghalaya.

There is an underlying conviction of the Catholic Church beneath the visible engagement in education. The study that Fr. Pius Varghese has undertaken leads us certainly to see how this conviction is expressed. At the same time, the critical recommendations are useful indicators for a more fruitful carrying out of the mission of education, especially as the Church seeks to implement the *All India Catholic Education Policy* which is an invaluable guide for reaching the goals of integral education.

Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, D.D.
Archbishop of Shillong

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1

The Problem

Education is essentially a life-long process of developing or bringing out the qualities of a person in accordance with needs and values. As a process it includes all knowledge, experience, skills and attitudes. In the process of education, human potentialities – physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual - are given maximum consideration. Further, the process of education provides the care and stimulation necessary for actualization of these potentialities. Education also takes upon itself the responsibility for striking a balance while developing these abilities so that a harmonious personality is developed.¹ From a developmental point of view, in the words of Israel Sheffler “Maximal self-realization is what constitutes education, understood as the fulfillment of all of one’s potentials, satisfying every one of one’s potentialities- being all that one can be.”² Education is a process and product. As a product, education is the sum total of what is received through learning, i.e., knowledge, skills, ideas and values. As a process it refers to the act of developing in someone else or oneself the above mentioned qualities.³

As per the National Policy on Education (1986)⁴ education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and promotes independence of mind. Education develops manpower for different levels of the economy. It is also the substratum on which research and development flourish, being ultimate guarantee of national reliance. Further, education is a unique investment for the present and the future.

There are a number of agencies which determine the success of educational processes. In the words of Delors Commission (1996):⁵

The main parties contributing to the success of educational reforms are first of the local community including parents, the school heads and teachers. The countries where the process of educational reform has been successful are those where parents, teachers and local communities show determined and

sustained commitments backed up by continued dialogue and technical and financial assistance. It is obvious that local community plays a paramount role in any successful reform strategy.

Further in the findings of Delors Commission, education in the Indian context is a critical investment in shaping the present and future of India. It is inseparably linked to progress in every aspect of human development and is a major contributory factor in enhancing the quality of life. Viewed in a broader global context, education is one of the principal means available to foster deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce, poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war.⁶

The work of education is being carried out by many agencies all over the world. Governments, private individuals, societies and trusts, religious groups, corporate bodies are actively promoting education. They all aim at educating citizens to fit in the emerging society. The work is fundamentally same and the basic goals are also comparable. The difference lies in the pattern and approach towards education. The ideals of education also sometimes differ radically.

Voluntary endeavours to transform the society, it is claimed, have been made from time immemorial. The deliberate, systematic and organized attempts at social transformation may be traced to the last decade of the 19th century. The motivating factors for their establishment are many: philanthropic considerations, sense of social responsibilities, religious fervour and commitment to certain philosophies. Voluntary organizations and education have been a subject of great interest to scholars of public administration, sociologists, social psychologists in particular and other social scientists.

In this context, Indian education is unique in many respects. It involves formal and informal agencies in formal and non-formal educational processes. Today, India engages nearly 55 lakh teachers spread over around 10 lakh schools to educate about 2025 lakh children. While 82% habitations have a primary school within a radius of one kilometer, there is an upper primary school within a radius of 3 kilometers for 75% habitations. At least 50% of our children who appear at the school leaving examinations pass out of the secondary school system.⁷ To accomplish such a mammoth task, scores of voluntary agencies and government institutions are at work. Catholic Church is one such agency which is actively involved in education and therefore, it arouses scholarly interest.

The seventh plan emphasized the cooperation of voluntary sectors for rural development. *The Yojana*, the academic organ of Indian planning and the *Indian Journal of Public Administration* of Premium Natural Training and Research Institute brought out special issues highlighting the role of voluntary organizations.⁸

In an essay, "Private Enterprise and Christian Education", M.M. Balaguer rightly points out that there were at least five great objectives achieved by the educational institutions started by the missionaries. First, they taught that human dignity must be

respected. Secondly, they cultivated a social sense in their students. Thirdly, they established the code that one should treat others as one expected to be treated by them. Fourthly, they enjoined upon the authorities of public institutions that they should look upon the power they enjoyed as a sacred trust. Fifthly, they taught youth the need of the rule of law to prevent anarchy.⁹ Men of learning have acknowledged the contributions of the missionaries and their findings are an added inspiration to further explore the present role of the Church in the field of education.

Shri J.P. Naik, Secretary of the Kothari Commission, pays glowing tribute to Christian contribution to secular education. He points out that it was the Christian missionaries and educationists who taught that man's supreme duty is to serve his fellowmen. Those responsible for the management of Christian institutions were men of charity, the teachers who worked there were men of integrity and character, and the education imparted by them stressed human dignity and freedom.¹⁰

As per the draft document of NCERT entitled, *National Curriculum Framework 2005*¹¹, we are in a situation where the system of education which is divided between a fast growing private sector and a larger state sector marked by shortage and uneven spread of resources. Here the issue of quality in education poses complex conceptual and practical questions. The belief that private schools have higher quality treats examination results as the sole criterion for judging quality. This kind of perception ignores the ethos-related limitations of the privileged private schools. The fact that they often neglect the child's mother tongues warrants us to wonder about the opportunities they are able to provide to the child to construct knowledge in meaningful ways. Moreover, the exclusion of the poor from their admission process implies the loss of learning opportunities which occur in a class room with children from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Catholic schools as private enterprises are not totally devoid of such controversies.

In this context, a casual observation of the education scenario in India will point to the fact that there are scores of voluntary agencies or Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in education at all levels. Kothari Commission (1964) revealed the following data with regard to the role of Voluntary Organizations in education.

Table 1
Private Institutions' Involvement in Education

<i>Stage of Schooling</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Private</i>
Pre-primary	29 %	71 %
Primary	56 %	44 %
Secondary	30 %	70 %
Vocational Schools	33 %	67 %
Special Schools	21 %	79 %

As early as in 1967, a survey conducted by National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) showed that private agencies manage 70% of the secondary schools in the country.¹² There are two obvious reasons for this phenomenon, one being that India's multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-religious polity. The second follows from the first. The Constitution of India reciprocates this national reality and guarantees the various segments of the pluralistic polity their right to establish and manage their own institutions.

Christians form only 2% of India's population, but they have a strong presence in the field of education. Taking advantage of the constitutional right, Christians have participated actively in education. As a Christian community, although Catholic Church forms only 1.1% of the Indian population; as educators Catholics have excelled both in terms of quantity and quality. Despite being a miniscule minority community, Catholic Church has established educational institutions throughout the country.

The following is a table of educational institutions of the Catholic Church in India as in 2004-2005.

Table 2
Catholic Educational Institutions in India¹³

<i>Type of Educational Institutions</i>	<i>Total Number of Institutions</i>
Nursery schools	4428
Lower Primary schools	5872
Upper Primary Schools	198
Secondary Schools	372
Higher Secondary Schools	465
Colleges	59
Technical Schools	900
Training Schools	513
Professional Institutions	263
Orphanages	1278
Hostels	2979
Hospitals and Dispensaries	2265
Publications	380
Total	26892

In the state of Meghalaya there is a large number of Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools. In Meghalaya, the Catholic Church runs 70 secondary schools and 24 higher secondary schools (including 3 colleges with higher secondary education facilities). They constitute 15% of the educational institutions of the state at the secondary level. The number of students who pass out of these institutions is also very large.

Table 3
Catholic Church's Involvement in Education in Meghalaya¹⁴

<i>Types of educational Institutes</i>	<i>Total number of institutions</i>
Pre Primary schools	648
Lower Primary schools	978
Upper Primary Schools	180
Secondary schools	68
Higher Secondary Schools	24
Colleges	06
Technical Schools	01
Hostels	151
Nursing School	02
Training Centers	10
Total	2068

These institutions involve a large number of personnel, a very huge financial investment, developing adequate number of quality infrastructure and assurance of competence and produce in general satisfactory output. How far is this gigantic effort successful? What is the quality of student output? What is their educational effect on society at large? These are some crucial questions which need to be addressed.

India as a whole has undergone socio-political and economic changes. Educational changes have also taken place as a consequence. The structure of educational, curricular and administrative changes have altered the face of education and new trends in education appear almost by the day. All these have serious repercussions on the functioning of the Catholic schools. Therefore, the question, to what extent and in what manner these changes have been absorbed into these schools? As it is observed, "The temples of learning" have degenerated into arenas for commerce, controversy and unhealthy competition.¹⁵ These developments make it expedient to scrutinize the role of the Catholic Church in secondary and higher secondary education in Meghalaya.

Many writers on Meghalaya have highlighted the role of the Catholic Church in secondary education. They have seen the Church as an active agency in the field of education. Their observations have been casual and made without research support. This calls for supporting or challenging, as the case may be, such views on the basis of reliable data.

Most Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools show visible commitment to national integration and a concern for the underprivileged sections of the society. They impart value-based education intending to form a holistic personality. Thus Catholic

schools have empowered many students by helping them to discover their potentialities. As a result of this, these schools have been consistently contributing enlightened leadership to the state and the country. A study of this nature will shed light on the extent to which Catholic Church attempts to promote the all round education of students even in the case of the marginalized of the society.

Most Catholic schools in the urban area excel. Many take this as the image of all the schools of the Church. But there are schools in rural areas which struggle to excel. These schools are overshadowed by the urban schools. Therefore, it is justified that all these schools are taken as a single unit of study to present a realistic and complete picture. It is in this background that the present study has been undertaken.

Need and Justification of the Study

Secondary and higher secondary education in India has undergone phenomenal changes in many aspects. Different Commissions constituted by the Government of India made recommendations which radically changed the nature of secondary education.

The Secondary Education Commission of 1952-53, visualized the objectives of secondary education for an emerging democratic social order in India. It implied vocational efficiency for the economic prosperity of the country. Secondary education also caters to the development of artistic and cultural interests which form the basis of human personality.¹⁶

The Education Commission of 1964-66 realized that the destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms. In a world based on Science and Technology, education determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. To realize this broad aim, the Commission suggested the inclusion of science, education, work experience, vocationalization of education, book banks, scholarship, identification of gifted students, residential facilities, guidance and counselling and moral and religious education. All these factors help students to expose themselves to the education of science, humanities and social sciences. This is an appropriate stage to instill in children a sense of history, national perspective and give them opportunities to understand their constitutional duties and rights as citizens. Conscious internalization of a healthy work ethos and the values of a humane and composite culture will be brought about through appropriate functional curricula.¹⁷

The National Policy on Education (NPE), which was formulated in 1986 and revised in 1992, clearly outlines the role of secondary and higher education with specific goals. Within this framework, higher secondary education is seen as a bridge between primary and secondary education. It is expected to prepare young persons of 14 – 18 age group for the world of work and for pursuing higher education. It envisaged action plans to

prepare young people for the 3rd Millennium. In this perspective, secondary schools have an enormous responsibility towards building the country.¹⁸

Thus we see that India has placed paramount importance on secondary and higher secondary education. It is often said “the purpose of any country can be best measured by the quality and quantity of its secondary schools.”¹⁹ Keeping in mind the above mentioned goals and priorities of secondary education, the study will probe whether these concerns are integrated into the Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools of Meghalaya. Some of the other reasons are enlisted below:

- (i) There is a need to ascertain the magnitude of the work that is being accomplished by the Catholic Church in secondary and higher secondary education. The public at large does not know the volume of work being carried out by the Church in this sector because reliable information is not available.
- (ii) A number of authors, Karotemprel (1990)²⁰, Jayaseelan (1996)²¹ Verghese (1997)²² Crescensius (2005)²³ have referred to the contributions made by the Catholic missionaries to education in North East India but no indepth study could be located with respect to Meghalaya which highlights the role of the Catholic Church in running secondary and higher secondary schools in the state.
- (iii) It is observed that there is usually a rush for admission in the schools run by the Catholic Church. The reasons have not been identified so far. A detailed study will bring out the significant features of Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools which set them apart and will shed light on the overall functioning of these schools.
- (iv) It is seen that in Meghalaya, the Catholic Church invests personnel, money and material in education. Very often government’s support is limited to salary grant when its support is there, while support to infrastructure is minimal or absent. Therefore, through investment, the Church contributes towards the development of the state. But the role of the Church is unclear in various aspects of education. It is also not certain how much monetary investment is made for schools.
- (v) Institutions in general face problems of understanding their own weaknesses because there is no or little provision for self-evaluation. Therefore, they are left in the dark as to their relevance in the present context of the society. Any institution needs timely assessment for its improvement. Time and again one needs to evaluate the effectiveness of an institution. Such an evaluation of schools includes all aspects. A comprehensive study will bring out the objectives, planning, administration and policies of these institutions. The result of these studies will serve as an agent for the betterment of the schools. Besides the knowledge generated through this study will cause greater interest in all those who are interested in secondary and

higher secondary education in Meghalaya. It will be an asset to Catholic educationists for better planning and administration. The study will also investigate the problems plaguing the Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools.

On the basis of the above facts and discussion, it seems justified to undertake the present study. Moreover, no comprehensive study exists on the present topic under study and the findings will be of help to the Church as an Organization. It also will shed light on many unexplored areas in the education provided by the Church. A proper study can provide a typology of education in general with regard to administration, efficiency and curricular and co-curricular management.

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms Used

- (i) **Role:** In this study the word 'role' is understood as functioning of the education system and thereby making contribution to education.
- (ii) **Catholic Church:** It is understood as the Christian Church which accepts the Pope, as its spiritual leader and whose center is situated in Vatican City, Rome.
- (iii) **Secondary Education:** In the present study secondary education means high school education consisting of classes VIII to X. The term high school means a school or department of the school giving instruction in school education and preparing students for matriculation or High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) examination.
- (iv) **Higher Secondary Education:** The current study uses higher secondary education to mean the two year course of study after matriculation or Plus Two level education provided both in higher secondary schools and colleges consisting of classes XI and XII.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- (i) To study the contribution made by the Catholic Church to secondary and higher secondary education in Meghalaya with regard to:
 - a) Status and Objectives of the School
 - b) School Building, Equipment and Facilities
 - c) Administration, Planning and Finance
 - d) Teachers' Recruitment, Training and Development
 - e) Library and Laboratory Facilities
 - f) Co-curricular Activities, Sports and Games

- g) Examination and Evaluation
 - h) Admission and Scholarship
 - i) Social Activities and Value Education
 - j) Discipline, Guidance and Counselling
 - k) Computer Education
 - l) Hostel Facilities
- (ii) To locate the shortcomings in the functioning of the Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools in Meghalaya and
- (iii) To suggest measures for the improvement of education at the secondary and higher secondary levels in Meghalaya.

Questions Posed

The study will answer the following questions:

- (i) With regard to Status and Objectives:
- a. What is the status of Catholic Secondary and Higher Secondary schools with regard to recognition and reputation?
 - b. What objectives are being achieved in Catholic Secondary and Higher Secondary schools?
- (ii) With regard to School Building, Equipment and Facilities:
- a. What type of infrastructure facilities are provided by these schools?
 - b. How adequate are the equipments provided for the daily functioning of the school administration?
 - c. What basic amenities are provided in these schools?
- (iii) With regard to Administration, Planning and Finance:
- a. In what manner administration is being carried out in schools?
 - b. What type of planning is being practiced in these schools?
 - c. How do they manage the schools financially?
- (iv) With regard to Teachers' Recruitment, Training and Development:
- a. How are the teachers recruited?
 - b. What are the service conditions of teachers?
 - c. What are the facilities provided for the training and development of teachers?

- (v) With regard to Library and Laboratory Facilities:
 - a. How adequate are the libraries?
 - b. How well maintained are the laboratories?
- (vi) With regard to Co-curricular Activities, Sports and Games:
 - a. To what extent do Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools promote co-curricular activities?
 - b. What sports and games facilities are provided in these schools?
- (vii) With regard to Examination and Evaluation:
 - a. What type of evaluation system is followed in these schools?
 - b. How competitive are they in the Board examinations?
- (viii) With regard to admission and Scholarship:
 - a. What is the admission policy that is being followed in these schools?
 - b. What type of scholarship facilities are offered to students?
- (ix) With regard to Social Activities and Value Education:
 - a. What are the social activities being organized in these schools?
 - b. How is value education being imparted in these schools?
- (x) With regard to Discipline, Guidance and Counselling:
 - a. How is discipline ensured in these schools?
 - b. How is guidance and counselling provided?
- (xi) With regard to computer education:
 - a. To what extent computer education is being provided in these schools?
- (xii) With regard to Hostel Facilities:
 - a. What kind of hostel facilities are being provided in the Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools?

Delimitations of the Study

- (i) The present study is limited to Secondary and Higher Secondary schools owned by the Catholic Church. It also includes the secondary and higher secondary schools owned by the Catholic Church but not run by the Church personnel.
- (ii) The study is delimited to the principal, teachers and selected parents, education officials, Church officials and selected community leaders.

(iii) It does not include secondary schools which do not have classes till the Xth standard.

Scope of the Study

The present study is comprehensive in as much as it covers all major aspects related to secondary and higher secondary education. It is designed in such a manner that all essential elements of school functioning have been dealt with in its various sections.

The analysis of the data will reveal the objectives and status of Catholic secondary and higher secondary schools. It will also bring to light the infrastructural facilities and administrative efficiency of these institutions. Special attention is paid also to staff status and co-curricular activities of the school. Other areas covered by the study are admission, scholarships, discipline, value education, guidance and counselling, computer education and hostel facilities.

Thus, the findings of the study will reveal with some measure of accuracy the nature of the education being given in these schools. The study will manifest the intricate elements that are special to Catholic schools.

In this way, the investigation will give fresh ideas to educators and planners. It will also indicate problems faced in these schools at different levels. To the Church in question, it will provide vital insights for future educational strategy.

The study conducts interview of education officials, parents, Church officials and community leaders. Therefore, the study is aimed at providing a complete picture.

No study on this topic has been conducted in the state. At the same time a study in this area will yield enormous data which will help administrators and planners of the state. It will be also useful to other private agencies which run similar schools. So there is an urgent need to explore this area.

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2

Theoretical Background

This chapter introduces the state of Meghalaya with its people and culture and presents the status and development of education in the state. Effort is also made to contextualise the work of education carried out by the Catholic Church in Meghalaya.

A Profile of Meghalaya

Until recently, North East India was known as the “seven sister states”, comprising the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. To this list, the state of Sikkim is also included today, although it is not linked to North East geographically. Sikkim’s inclusion is a central initiative for easy administration of tribal and hilly terrain. Essentially, the seven sister states of the North East are still unique as a social – economic and geographic entity.

The state of Meghalaya was born with abundant love and goodwill through the historic North Eastern Areas Reorganization Act, 1971. Statehood was given to Meghalaya on 30th December, 1971. The state of Meghalaya was inaugurated on 21st January 1972.¹

(i) Geography

The word Meghalaya, comes from two Sanskrit words: ‘*Megh*’ meaning cloud and ‘*alaya*’ meaning house or abode. Thus, Meghalaya literally means abode of clouds. True to its name, from April to September, rain clouds envelope the land.²

Meghalaya is a narrow strip of land measuring 22,48, 939 kms located between 25°02 North to 26°06 north latitudes and 89° .48 east to 92°50 east longitudes. The State has as its neighbours Bangladesh on the South and South West and the state of Assam on the north and east.³

Geographers have described the state as a plateau exhibiting hilly land forms and terrain. Therefore, many parts of the state are characterized by gentle to steep hills, sudden steep slopes and deep gorges and some plain areas.⁴

The State of Meghalaya is divided into seven districts and thirty two community development blocks. The name of these districts are: East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi, East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills.⁵

(ii) People and Culture

Meghalaya is the home of the Khasis, Pnars and Garos. They are the original inhabitants of the state. The Khasis inhabit the eastern part of Meghalaya. The Pnars occupy the Jaintia Hills and they are also known as Jaintias. The Khasis who occupy the northern low lands and foot hills are generally called Bhois. Those living in the southern tracts are known as Wars.⁶ The other ethnic group that forms a major part of the population of Meghalaya is known as "Garos".

The Garos call themselves Achik Mande. In the Garo language 'Achik' means Hills and 'Mande', means man; so *Achik Mande* means the 'Hill People'.⁷ There are also some minor tribes like the Kochs, the Hajongs, the Rabhas, Tiwas and the Karbis.

The Garos are believed to descend from the Tibeto-Burman family of tribes. The Khasis and Jaintias form an isolated group of Austro-Asiatic race who speak the language which belong to the family of Monkhmer.

The Khasis are matrilineal which implies that they trace their descendance along the line of the mother. The property of the family is inherited by the youngest daughter. A Khasi male can own property acquired by him in profession or business. Among the War-Khasis, property also is passed on to male and female children in equal share. Among the War-Jaintias, only the female children get the inheritance.⁸

The Khasis are ruled over by *Syiems* or Chiefs. The '*Syiems*' are titular heads. Actual decision-making is done by '*Myntris*' (ministers). In important matters, the state '*Dorbar*' or executive council plays a decisive role. In this way, they have a democratic set up in the society.

As for Religion, the Khasis and Garos are mostly Christians. In the Khasi traditional religion, there is the concept of a Supreme Being. Besides worshipping gods, the traditional Khasis revere their ancestors.

Garos and Khasis have many similar customs. A Garo belongs to his particular *Machong* as soon as he is born. The *Machongs* are the basic units in the Garo social structure and are named usually after rivers, animals, caves etc. The dominant *Machong* in a village selects its headman. The Garo society is basically matrilineal like the Khasis.⁹

One special feature of Garo society is the existence of *Nokpante* or bachelors' dormitories. In such dormitories young people live and stay together till they are married. They receive various training in the dormitories and act according to the direction of elders for various duties.¹⁰

In Meghalaya's countryside, festivals are a common feature. Among the Garos, the most important festival is the *Wangala* or the hundred drum festival. This is a harvest festival held in honour of *Salljong*, the Sun-god of fertility. Another dance is the *Doregata* dance. One dance that needs special skills is the *chombil Mesara* or *Pomelo* Dance. A traditional dance called *Drue Sua*, which means the pecking of doves, is also popular.¹¹

The Khasis have two important festivals – Nongkrem Dance and *Shadsuk Mynsiem*. Nongkrem Dance is a religious festival dance held annually for five days together. Through this dance they express their gratitude to God almighty for good harvest and to pray for peace and prosperity to the community. It is held in the month of November. It is also associated with *Khyriem Syiemship* and so it is held in Smit near Shillong, the capital of the *Khyriem Syiemship*. *Beh Diengkhlam* is the most famous dance of the Jaintias. It is celebrated after the sowing period. The dance is also associated with driving away of the evil spirits. This dance form is similar to *holi* celebrations of the rest of India. Through this dance invocations are made to God to seek blessings for a good harvest. Another entertainment dance of the Jaintias is the *Laho* Dance.¹²

(iii) Population and Literacy

The statistics of the 2001 census shows that Meghalaya has a population of 23,060,69 out of which 11,678,40 are males and 11,382,29 are females. The density of population in the state is 84 persons per Sq. Km. in the rural areas, 1970 persons in the urban areas and 103 persons per Sq. Km. in the whole state. The highest density of population was recorded in East Khasi Hills District with 141 persons per Sq. Km. in rural areas and 7976 persons per Sq. Km. in the urban areas. The total density in the district as a whole is 241 persons per Sq. Km. The lowest concentration of population with 48 persons per sq.Km. is recorded in South Garo Hills District in its rural areas while lowest density of population per sq.Km. with 286 persons in urban areas is recorded by Ri-Bhoi District. In comparison with other districts of the state, South Garo Hills is the most thinly populated district with 53 persons per sq. Km. in the district as a whole.¹³

It is observed that total population of urban areas in the State has considerably increased from 3,30,047 to 4,52,612 during the 1991 - 2001 period, registering a decadal growth rate of 37.14%. This is perhaps due to the classification of new District/Civil Sub-Divisional headquarters and some other suburbs as urban areas. The East Garo Hills District has shown the highest decadal increase of 199.09% followed by the West Khasi Hills with 133.77% and South Garo Hills with 46.64% during 1991- 2001. Other Districts have registered a decadal growth of 26.76% for West Garo Hills, 20.26% for East Khasi Hills and 21.46% for Jaintia Hills.

Table 4
Population of Meghalaya according to Districts¹⁴

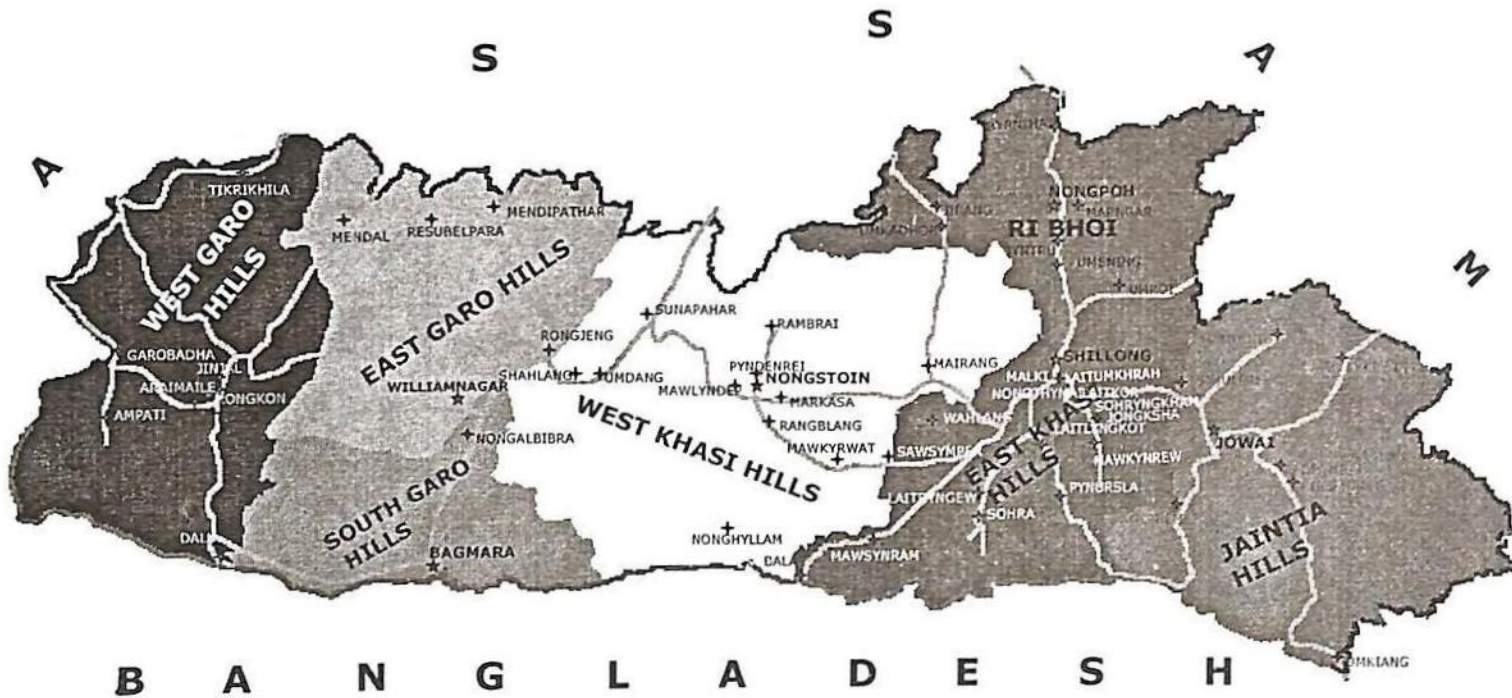
<i>Districts/ State</i>	<i>Number of Persons</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Jaintia Hills	295692 (100.00)	270669 (91.54)	25023 (8.46)
East Khasi Hills	660994 (100.00)	383027 (57.95)	277969 (42.05)
West Khasi Hills	294115 (100.00)	260595 (88.60)	33520 (11.40)
Ri Bhoi	192795 (100.00)	179630 (93.17)	13165 (6.83)
East Garo Hills	247555 (100.00)	211652 (85.50)	35903 (14.50)
West Garo Hills	515813 (100.00)	457422 (88.68)	58391 (11.32)
South Garo Hills	99105 (100.00)	90462 (91.28)	8643 (8.72)
Meghalaya	2306069 (100.00)	1853457 (80.37)	452612 (19.63)

The Ri-Bhoi District accounted for the highest percentage of rural population with 93.17% in 2001, while East Khasi Hills recorded the lowest percentage of 57.95% according to 2001 census. The rural population in the State in 2001 has, however, decreased from 81.40% to 80.37% out of the total population inspite of the decadal growth of 28.29%.¹⁵

Table 5
Density of Population Per Sq.Km. according to Residence in 2001¹⁶

<i>District</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>
Jaintia Hills	96	2308	77
East Khasi Hills	141	7976	241
West Khasi Hills	51	347	561
Ri-Bhoi	75	286	79
East Garo Hills	82	2071	95
West Garo Hills	125	3191	157
South Garo Hills	48	982	53
Total	84	1970	103

ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF MEGHALAYA



REFERENCES

District Headquarter..... ★
 Village..... +

International boundary ————

Inter State boundary ————

The literacy rate of Meghalaya is 62.06% as per 2001 census. It is still below the national average (65.38%). The following table shows the growth of literacy in Meghalaya during the past 30 years.

Table 6
Number of Literates and Literacy Rate in Meghalaya¹⁷

Sl. No.		Persons	Male	Female
I	Number of Literates	1157875	614272	543603
II	Literacy Rate	62.06	65.4	59.6

Table 7
Growth of Literacy in Meghalaya during 1971-2001¹⁸

Particulars	Years			
	1971	1981	1991	2001
Rural	23.40	27.45	41.05	57.00
Urban	65.22	64.12	81.74	87.19
Total	29.49	34.08	49.10	63.31
Male	34.12	37.89	53.12	66.14
Female	24.56	30.08	44.85	60.41

Meghalaya is at 27th position in literacy among the states of India. The female literacy rate is 60% in 2001. The census 2001 also observed that the rate of literacy in the rural area of the state has increased from 23.40% to 57%. East Khasi Hills is the most literate district in the state with 74.74% literacy while the West Garo Hills District with 50.78% has been reckoned the least literate. What is impressive in this matrilineal society is that the female literacy, 60.41% is lower than the male literacy rate of 66.14% as per Census, 2001. However, Jaintia Hills is the only district in the country with a higher female literacy rate than male literacy rate.

The percentage of literate persons in the rural areas of the districts of the state is highest in East Khasi Hills District with 63.72% and lowest in West Garo Hills District with 46.09%. The Table 8 shows literacy rate in Meghalaya by districts.

Among the seven states of the North Eastern Region, Meghalaya has the 6th position in terms of literacy. One reason for the low literacy rate in the state may be due to the lack of awareness of parents regarding education and low economic status. It is found that the average family size in the state is more than seven and children usually help parents at work, and also look after the younger siblings. Children are also engaged in occupations like coal mining, limestone quarrying, cutting and crushing stones etc. The

Table 8
Literacy Rate by Districts – 2001¹⁹

Literacy Rate	DISTRICTS							State
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	Ri- Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	Jaintia Hills	
1. Total								
a. Persons	74.74	65.50	63.67	61.57	50.78	55.21	52.79	63.31
b. Male	74.89	66.74	65.77	67.17	57.12	61.42	50.13	66.14
c. Female	74.58	64.21	61.40	55.72	44.41	48.61	55.52	60.41
2. Rural								
a. Persons	63.72	63.13	62.66	57.97	46.09	52.28	48.97	57.00
b. Male	61.88	64.48	64.74	63.99	52.67	58.79	46.03	59.90
c. Female	65.60	61.73	60.41	51.68	39.52	45.42	52.00	54.02
3. Urban								
a. Persons	88.65	83.83	77.10	82.15	85.17	83.96	91.14	87.12
b. Male	91.50	84.59	79.74	85.32	89.14	86.15	93.07	89.90
c. Female	85.79	83.08	74.34	78.84	81.05	81.43	89.33	84.30

state also has high dropout rate, low school enrollment and its adult literacy programmes have not been very successful.

A Profile of the Catholic Church

Many people are ignorant of the nature of the Catholic Church and the fact that there are many churches adds to this ambiguity. Catholic Church is a Christian religious institution with a history, theology, philosophy and a definite orientation towards humanity.

The Founding

The New Testament in the *Bible* has narratives which indicate the founding of the Church. The twelve disciples of Jesus Christ formed the beginning of the Christian Church. It is hard to differentiate the beginning of the Catholic Church from that of the early Christian Church. In the beginning, the Church was organized and presided over by Peter, the apostle. In 313, the Catholic Church was legally recognized by the Roman Emperor Constantine; in 380, it became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Important Books

The Bible, both the old and new testaments is the Sacred Book of Catholics. In the teachings of the Church, apart from the Bible, many theological doctrines and religious practices are included. The Church understands itself both from revelation and its rich

store of tradition. The basic law of the Catholic Church is the collection of rules and regulations encoded in a book known as The Code of Canon Law, last revised in 1983.

Size of the Group

Today, Roman Catholics make up the largest denomination of Christianity. There are over one billion followers of Roman Catholicism worldwide. A large number of these followers live in Central and Southern Europe, Latin America and some countries of Africa and Asia.

History

Until 1054, the Church remained as a single unit. In 1054, the Eastern Orthodox Church separated from the Catholic Church. The next schism occurred in Roman Catholic Church in 16th Century with the Protestant Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church has held three councils since the Reformation – the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Vatican I (1869–1870) and the Vatican II (1962–1965). These councils defined the Church's beliefs and role.

Organization and Structure

Catholic Church is organized hierarchically. At the head of the Catholic Church is the Pope who is believed to be the successor of Peter. The Pope resides in Rome at Vatican. Under the Pope, there is a College of Cardinals which functions as an advisory body. The Church is again divided into dioceses, which are the fundamental units of organization in the Catholic Church. These dioceses are headed by Bishops named by the Pope. Each diocese is divided into parishes which are headed by a priest.²⁰

The Catholic Church's Educational Efforts

Philosophy of Education

Belief in a personal God is essential to all Catholic activity including education. The general basis of curriculum remains humanistic and liberal. Unlike totalitarian system of education, however, Catholic philosophy maintains that the family, the State and the Church all share in the responsibility for the education of youth. Thus, Catholic educational goals require a constant striving for intellectual excellence, social responsibility and spiritual perfection.

While sharing many insights and methods with other educational systems, Catholic philosophy rejects any position that sacrifices the eternal and supernatural to the temporal and natural. Man is a spiritual as well as a physical being and only the stable hierarchy of values provided by religion can serve as the integrating principle that unifies these diverse but inseparable elements. The Church believes that education is a life long process of self activity, self direction and self-realization. Education respects the child's personal integrity and freedom while providing for necessary adult guidance.

The child is the principal agent in the educational process while the teacher is the essential mover who brings potentialities to realization by giving extrinsic aid to the natural reason. Education is complete when it provides the individual with a vision of the eternal, of the temporal and the natural. It enables him to understand the purpose of his life on earth and realize his destiny in the life to come. Only such education is perfect.²¹

Following this philosophy of education, the Catholic schools try to impart values that ennoble man and give meaning to human life. The schools symbolize a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life. Students are motivated to pursue the discovery of truth more than the acquisition of knowledge.

The Catholic education assists a student to overcome his/her individualism and discover the specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others. Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others.

The Catholic school wants to share the anxieties of students and their hopes. Thus it shares their present and future life in this world. Since it is motivated by the Christian ideal, the Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society and tries to make its own contribution towards it.

The Church upholds the principle of plurality of school systems. It is ready to collaborate with others to form in students the correct value judgments based on specific views of the world and be trained to take an active part in the construction of a community through which the building of the society is promoted. The Church participates in cultural dialogue through schools, making her own positive contribution to the cause of the total formation of the human person.²²

In the new Catholic Education Policy of 2007, the Church once again endorses the idea of quality education especially for the marginalized sections of the society. Quality education is seen as the gateway to the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of persons and of the country.²³ It is an education that frees persons from social conditioning. Such an education humanizes and contextualises by assisting the students to ask some fundamental questions regarding life and their role in the society. It enables the student to keep pace with the globalized world and pluralistic societies with right values and attitudes. Thus the new policy envisages an education which forms the young into persons of character, competence, conscience, compassion and commitment with the determination to engage themselves into the activities of nation building.²⁴

Catholic Church and Education in Meghalaya

The primary area in which Catholic Church involves itself socially in Meghalaya is

education. The Church has made a mark in the field of education through its outstanding institutions. The Church's activism in education has been very conspicuous.

a. *The Beginning*

The first recorded contact of the Catholic Church with North East India was in 1627 when the Tibet bound Jesuit Missionaries, Stephen Cacella and John Cabral visited Goalpara in Assam. Around the year 1667, there was a Catholic Christian group at Rajamati in Assam. Two Augustinian priests ministered to this community.

At that time, the Mughal army commander, Raja Ram Singh had made Rajamati, his center of operation. Later on this group declined and disappeared. Another small Catholic community that retained its faith was at Bondashil near Badapur and Mariam Nagar near Agartala, Tripura. On 27th June, 1850, two more French Missionaries arrived at Guwahati and Nowgong and ministered to the Catholics present in the whole of Assam valley.

The French Missionaries, Fr. Bourry and Fr. Krick were killed on the Tibetan border in 1854. After this incident there were no Missionaries in North East India for sometime. Only in 1873 that Guwahati got a resident priest in the person of Fr. Jacopo Broy. At Shillong, in 1876, he built the "Villa of Good Hope". He was able to minister to Catholics numbering 195 and 70% of these were Europeans. In 1890, on 21st February, a new Catholic religious group came to Guwahati under the leadership of Fr. Otto Hopfenmuller. He belonged to the newly founded German society of Catholic Education by John Baptist Jordan. They were generally known as Salvatorians. They made Shillong their headquarters of operation.²⁵

The Salvatorian missionaries soon were able to meet the demands of the Khasis and Pnars for Mission centers at Raliang opened in 1892, Shylla in 1893 and at Guwahati in 1894. Cherrapunjee was opened in 1897. These were the resident centers. Another 30 substations were opened gradually.

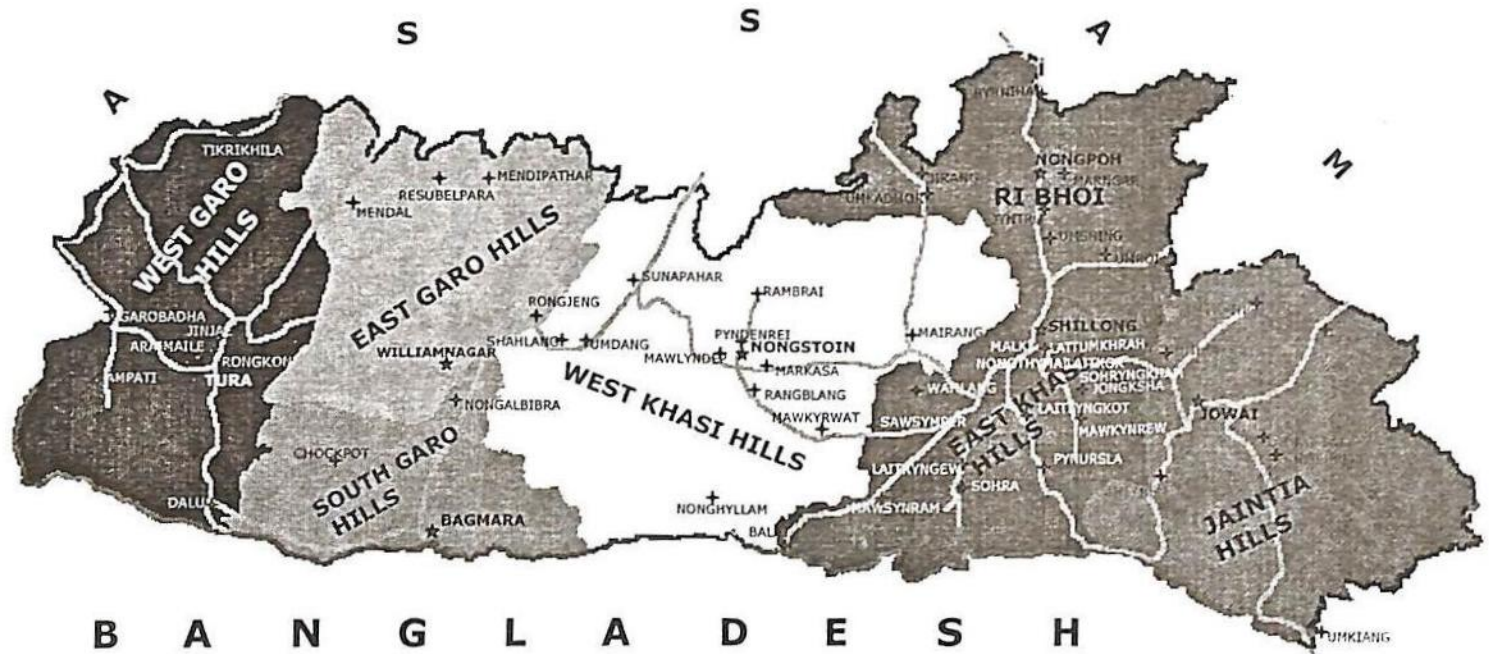
The Salvatorian Missionaries under Fr. Christopher Edmund Becker made a survey of the needs of the region. The Church personnel were given special training in English education, Mathematics and Science to meet the demands of the region.

Along with Missionary activities, the Catholic Church personnel also entered into other activities. They founded a number of schools. They took up the sericulture farms at Shillong. The Missionaries also engaged in publishing books. At Laitryngew, a press was established in 1900. Later it was shifted to Shillong and the Don Bosco Technical School began from this first press department. It also published a monthly magazine called "Ka Iing Kristan" or the Christian Family.

During the World War I, the Salvatorians had to spend their time in concentration camps owing to their German nationality. Consequently they had to leave this region.

MAP OF MEGHALAYA

(With Locations of Catholic Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools)



B A N G L A D E S H

REFERENCES

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| District Headquarter..... | ★ | Inter State Boundary | ————— | International Boundary | ————— |
| Village..... | + | | | | |

In their place, the Jesuit Missionaries came. They worked in Shillong from 1915 to 1921.

After the Jesuit Missionaries, the Salesian Missionaries came to Shillong in 1922. They are also popularly known as Don Bosco Fathers and Brothers. The Salesian Missionaries came under the leadership of Fr. Louis Mathias. All Salesians had to undergo college studies under Calcutta University so as to be ready for their educational work.²⁶

b. *Educational Activities*

Among the various Church groups present in Meghalaya Catholic Church is one of the oldest. It is active in the field of education, social development activities and other people promotion programmes. The pages of history tell us that missionaries were instrumental in the starting of school education in Meghalaya during the British period.

In Meghalaya today, Catholic Church is synonymous with quality education. In the last 15 years, the Catholic Church's role in education has intensified enormously. It has invested men and materials into education. The rural areas of the state have seen quality education through the instrumentality of the Catholic Church. The Church has also tried to diversify its educational activities by entering into fields like higher education, technical education, special education and non-formal education.²⁷

c. *Profile of Catholic Religious Societies Involved in Education in Meghalaya*

In Meghalaya, there are a number of Catholic religious societies which are running schools in different parts of the state. Besides these societies, the basic ecclesiastical administrative unit of diocese runs various Catholic schools under its administrative charge. There are four dioceses in Meghalaya which run number of schools. A short profile of the Catholic Societies running schools in Meghalaya is given below:

(i) *Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM)*

The society was founded by Mary Ward in 17th century in Ireland. The society has a secondary school in Meghalaya, known as Loreto Convent School, Shillong founded in 1909.

(ii) *Congregation of Christian Brothers (CFC)*

This religious order was founded in 1802 by Edmund Ignatius Rice in Ireland. The order runs a secondary school in Shillong, known as St. Edmund's School founded in 1918.

(iii) *Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel (SG)*

This society originated in France in the year 1705. The founder is St. Louis Marie Grignon. They have two secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(iv) *Congregation of the Missionary Brothers of St. Francis of Assisi (CMSF)* was founded by Br. Paulus Monitz. The society came to India in the year 1901 and run two secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(v) *The Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB)*

Among the religious societies working in Meghalaya, the SDBs have the largest number of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools. It was founded in 1859 by St. John Bosco in Italy. The society came to India in 1906 and runs 17 secondary schools, 8 higher secondary schools and 3 colleges in Meghalaya.

(vi) *Congregation of the Fathers of the Holy Cross (CSC)*

The founder of this congregation is Fr. Basil Antonine Moreau. It was founded in 1837 in France and the society run three secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(vii) *Claretian Missionaries (CMF)*

The founder of this congregation is St. Anthony Mary Claret. It was founded in Spain in 1849 and they run 5 secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(viii) *Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS)*

This society was founded in France in the year 1838 by Fr. Peter Mermier. They run 4 secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(ix) *Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA)*

This society was founded by St. John Bosco in Italy in the year 1872. They run 3 higher secondary schools and 2 secondary schools in Meghalaya.

(x) *Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC)*

This congregation originated in India in the year 1942 and was founded by Bishop Stephen Ferrando of Shillong. They have 2 higher secondary schools and 4 secondary schools in Meghalaya.

The Development of Secondary Education in Meghalaya

The available records show that before the advent of the British, there was no formal education in any corner of Meghalaya, then Assam. The education system in Meghalaya was developed by the Christian Missionaries. Before the independence the progress of education in the region was very slow.²⁸

British Period

The state of Meghalaya was greatly influenced by the colonial rule of the British. The culture and the pattern of education were greatly modeled on the British culture and educational system. This trend got a boost after the annexation of Assam by the

British. In the eighteenth century, non-governmental agencies have been actively participating in its educational development. The first school was established between the years 1826–1829 by David Scott, an English man, in Garo Hills.

The British government also supported American Baptist Mission in the Garo area with some financial aids. This mission also started classes in higher education.

Around the year, 1864, the schools in the Khasi and Jaintia areas were totally under the management and control of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. The other missionary groups involved in education at that time were, the Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholics and Baptist Mission.²⁹

The historical records show that neither government nor any Church organization had a role in the starting of the first high school in Meghalaya. The conditions were not smooth enough to set up an independent high school. The upgradation of an existing Middle School was never thought of by any Church Mission up to the 1870s. It was in this context that Babu Jeebon Roy played his remarkable role to set up the first high school in Shillong which had become Provincial Headquarters of Assam in 1874. The first high school was known as Shillong Zillah High School and was formally inaugurated on 2 September, 1878 with 50 pupils.³⁰

The first High school, the Shillong Zillah High School of Babu Jeebon Roy was affiliated to Calcutta University at that time. The school ran for about a decade. Later, in 1880, it was amalgamated with the newly established Mission Minor school.

Babu Jeebon Roy's example was followed by the government and the Christian Missions. The first Mission Girls' school with attached boarding was established in 1892 in which Miss Bessie William was the first Principal. Babu Roy also started another school known as Mawkhar Bengali School for Khasi pupils. This school also did a great service and produced a great number of eminent personalities. The school ran for a few decades.

The Zillah school served as the right model and provided all the necessary infrastructure for the birth of the government school. Thus in 1891, the first Government High School was started and the Zillah High School was amalgamated with this. It was at this time that the Government paid greater attention to education in Khasi, and Jaintia Hills.³¹

The demand for education of girls prompted the Government to open Pine Mount school exclusively for girls in 1900. It adopted the senior Cambridge Course. At the outset, Pine Mount obtained good support from its patrons and members of All Saints' Church. Mrs. Ellen Hughes, a Welsh Missionary lady, was its Principal. At present the school is following the ICSE syllabus.³²

High school education received greater fillip with the starting of Loreto Convent in 1909. It followed the Cambridge pattern of education. Later the Irish Christian Brothers came and opened St. Edmund's school which also followed the Cambridge syllabus. However, both Loreto and St. Edmund's followed the ICSE syllabus after some years. St. Mary's school founded in 1927, also contributed much to the education of girls. St. Anthony's School was opened in 1901 as a Primary school but in 1931 it was raised to the status of a high school following the syllabus of the Calcutta University.³³

Ramakrishna Mission also set up schools. The school at Cherrapunji, became a high school around the year 1931. The period commencing from 1920 saw the upgradation of schools to secondary level.

The Khasi Jaintia Pnar Academy established in the 1940s, by D.N.S. Wahlang was later elevated to the Matriculation level. In the 1940s, two more Catholic High Schools were established. One was at Jowai under the name St. Mary Mazarello High school; the other was at Jaiaw named St. Joseph's High School.

High school education in Garo Hills was comparatively slow. The first Government High school was started at Tura in the late 1930s. Another High school was started by the Baptist Association in 1934-35 but it is said that the government took it over in 1938-1939.

The following table shows the number of Catholic institutions in the year 1933.

Table 9
Catholic Educational Institutions in 1933³⁴

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Number</i>
1. Primary Schools	280
2. Professional & Agricultural Schools	03
3. Orphanages	07
4. Dispensaries	08
5. High Schools	02

After Independence

Immediately after independence of India, the Assam government upheld the status quo regarding educational policies. There were no note worthy developments in the field of education immediately after independence in the territory today known as Meghalaya.

The Seng Khasi school located at Mawkhar and established in 1921, was upgraded to high school in 1961. In 1965, it attained the status of Higher secondary school. In the middle of the 1970s all the three Higher secondary institutions in the state were reverted to High School.³⁵

For girls, St. Xavier's school was started in Tura in 1952. It was upgraded to a high school in the 1960s. Don Bosco school was started in Tura in 1963 for boys. Other

Catholic High schools were started during the period 1960–70 in places like Baghmara, Dalu, Chokpot, Resubelpara, Sellsella and Willamnagar, in Garo Hills.³⁶

After achieving statehood, the government of Meghalaya enforced its first Act with regard to education called Meghalaya Board of School Education Act, 1973. This Act was passed to streamline the system of examination and to improve the quality of school education in Meghalaya. The Act prescribes, the courses of instruction for primary, secondary and higher secondary stages of education and the conduct and supervision of examinations.

In 1981, the government of Meghalaya passed the Meghalaya School Education Act. In its comprehensive approach, it covers all aspects of school administration. It covers subjects like school establishment, recognition, management, school property, terms and conditions of service for employees of recognized private schools, provisions for unaided minority schools, students admission, fees, school fund, taking over of the management of schools etc.³⁷

The numerical position of education in Meghalaya is available in the 2001 Census.³⁸

Table No. 10
Number of Educational Institutions & Class-wise Enrollment

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>1996-97</i>	<i>1997-98</i>	<i>1998-99</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>1996-97</i>	<i>1997-98</i>	<i>1998-99</i>
Primary Schools	4295	4336	4679	I	104154	105121	108493
				II	64875	65573	66670
Middle Schools	922	935	946	III	51564	51935	52577
				IV	41510	41893	46373
				V	37633	38060	39455
				VI	31587	32565	33701
High & Higher Secondary	448	460	493	VII	28575	29279	31675
				VIII	20361	20563	21131
				IX	17315	17742	18394
				X	13310	13638	13911
				XI	460	670	1108
				XII	527	626	852
Pre University							
		Arts			10661	10865	12268
		Science			2158	2204	1499
		Commerce			868	895	1025

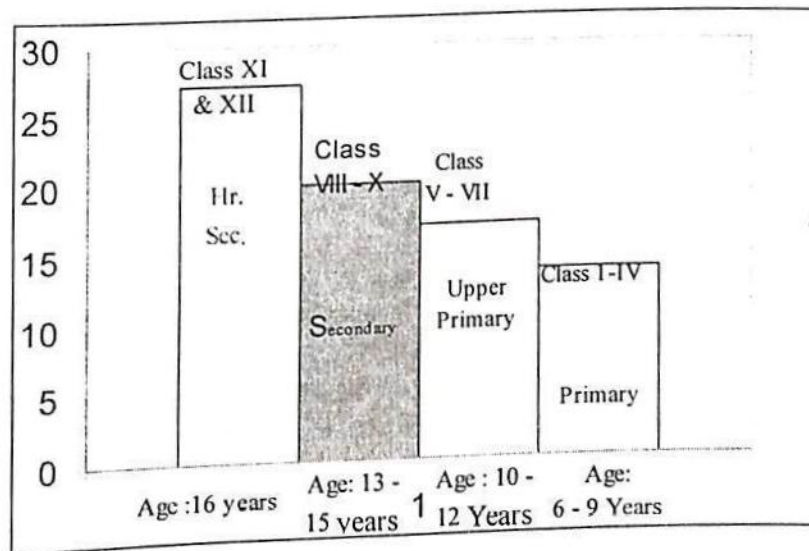
Present Education Structure in Meghalaya

The present educational structure at the school level consists of ten years of secondary education, two years of senior secondary education and three years of undergraduate level of education leading to the first degree. At the national level it is termed as 10+2+3 system. The break up of ten years of secondary education 4+3+3; that is four years

of primary education from classes 1 to IV for age group 6 to 9 years; three years of upper primary or middle school education for classes V to VII for age group 10 to 12 years and three years of secondary education for classes VIII to X is for students belonging to the age group of 13–15 years. Higher secondary education, classes XI–XII is for students belonging to the age group of 16–18 years.

Until recently, higher secondary (+ 2) classes were conducted in degree colleges, affiliated to the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in the form of Pre–University (PU) course. A change followed the decision of the state to introduce the New Education Policy which was passed in 1986. In the new policy classes XI and XII is accommodated in the school system. In order to implement this system adequate infrastructure is being created in secondary schools. It implies that secondary schools are being upgraded to higher secondary schools.³⁹ The present school education structure is shown in the following diagram.

Bar Graph 1
Structure of Education in Meghalaya



Objectives of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Meghalaya

The goals and objectives of education as incorporated in the various national policy statements of the government of India, have been generally accepted by Meghalaya. The national objectives derived from the different constitutional provisions of the Indian Union, have been a guiding principle in the state's policy formulation. They are broad in their scope and they envision the progress of a vibrant democratic state.⁴⁰

a. To Develop Qualities of Good Citizenship

Secondary and Higher Secondary education should develop attitudes, habits and

qualities of character which will sustain the democratic form of life in a secular state. It should help in utilizing the resources of the state and the country with efficiency. It will ensure the economic growth of the country as a whole. This level of education should also assist the cultural renaissance of the state.

b. Improvement of Vocational Efficiency

At the Secondary and Higher Secondary level education aims at achieving mastery of the subject and skills so that they will contribute to vocational efficiency at a later stage. Such an emphasis will discourage haphazard approach by students.

c. Development of Personality

Education also aims at the development of a well formed personality. It requires an all round formation through education. There shall be adequate opportunities to appreciate the cultural heritage and cultural interaction. A well formed personality will be able to contribute something to the society.

d. Education for Leadership

Another aim set by the state for secondary education is to prepare the students to be future leaders of the state. There is a need for leaders in all walks of life. After their schooling they should be prepared to enter every stream of life in the society. An effective education system will prepare persons who will assume leadership responsibility in the social, political, economic and cultural fields.⁴¹

e. Equipping Students for Further Education

Last but not the least, secondary and higher secondary education aims at equipping students for further education and to face life. It is at this stage that students choose a career. Education at this stage acts as a launching pad for their future activities. Understanding the value of this aspect of education, Meghalaya's secondary and higher secondary education gives ample importance to preparing students for the future.

The state of Meghalaya has a multi-cultural population. Similarly, the educational scenario of Meghalaya shows that there are many agencies involved in education and that the missionaries have played a vital role in building up the educational infrastructure in this state. In spite of the Herculean missionary educational efforts, the literacy rate is below the national literacy rate. The educational objectives at the various levels have not been fully realized in the state. It indicates that from the lowest level of educational ladder, there are tasks to be completed and many more milestones to be achieved.

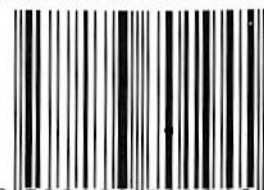
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