

**HISTORY OF CHARITABLE HOMES IN ASSAM**

ATIQR RAHMAN**PROF. GOPAL SHARMA**

RESEARCH SCHOLAR

ASTT. PROF, GOVT.

CHHATRAPATI SHAHUJI MAHARAJ UNIVERSITY, KANPUR

PG COLLEGE, NARNAUL

ABSTRACT:

The Assam Minorities Development Board was registered on 4th April, 1985 under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and was notified vide notification No.PLB.340/84/31 dated 13/06/1985. The object of the Board is “Charitable” Particularly to benefit 6 (Six) notified religious Minority Communities in Assam namely Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis by examining the problems of the communities. The Board is to advise ways and measures for the protection of constitutional rights of these particular communities. It is to formulate schemes for advance of education and to promote employment opportunities amongst the notified minority communities. In brief the Board is to identify the problems of economic backwardness and evaluate and study welfare schemes for minorities. The Assam Minorities Development Board was registered on 4th April, 1985 under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and was notified vide notification No.PLB.340/84/31 dated 13/06/1985. The object of the Board is “Charitable” Particularly to benefit 6 (Six) notified religious Minority Communities in Assam namely Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis by examining the problems of the communities. The Board is to advise ways and measures for the protection of constitutional rights of these particular communities. It is to formulate schemes for advance of education and to promote employment opportunities amongst the notified minority communities. In brief the Board is to identify the problems of economic backwardness and evaluate and study welfare schemes for minorities.

Keywords: charitable, homes ,protection to the orphan, widows regeneration

INTRODUCTION:**Widow’s regeneration**

The lace and embroidery industries were very helpful for the widows. In the London Missionary Society report Mrs. Duthie has given an interesting account of the influence and the fruits of lace-making introduced by Mrs. Mault, which runs as follows: “A great number of Christian women, by means of this employment, have been able to earn much. It is great advantage, especially to those who have been left widows and whose relatives may be poor, and therefore unable to give them but little assistance”.²⁰ The industry provided succour Christian widows who entirely depended upon it for the support of themselves and their families.²¹ In the Nagercoil Mission District Report, George Newport writes, “Some widows rely upon the lace for their livelihood.²² In the year 1879 many of the workers were widows or women whose husbands have deserted them”.²³ As it gave a livelihood to poor women

other caste people were attracted towards it. The London Missionary Society Report of 1885 describes that a Sudra (Nair) widow with the help of her uncle learned needle work and earned her livelihood.

History of Assam

The history of Assam is the history of a conversion of individuals from the east, west, south and the north; the intersection of the Austroasiatic, Tibeto-Burman (Sino-Tibetan), Tai and Indo-Aryan societies. Despite the fact that attacked throughout the long term, it was never a vassal or a state to an outside power until the third Burmese intrusion in 1821, and, in this way, the British entrance into Assam in 1824 during the First Anglo-Burmese War.

The Assamese history has been gotten from different sources. The Ahom realm of middle age Assam kept up with narratives, called Buranjis, written in the Ahom and the Assamese dialects. History of old Assam comes from a corpus of Kamarupa engravings on rock, copper plates, mud; illustrious awards, and so forth that the Kamarupa lords gave during their rule.

The history of Assam can be separated into four periods. The old period started in the fourth century with the notice of Kamarupa in Samudragupta's engravings on the Allahabad column and the foundation of the Kamarupa realm. The archaic period started with the assaults from the Bengal Sultanate, the first of which occurred in 1206 by Bakhtiyar Khilji as referenced in the Kanai-boroxiboa rock engraving, after the separation of the old realm and the growing of middle age realms and tribal leader ships in its place. The pilgrim time started with the foundation of British control after the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, and the post-provincial time started in 1947 after the Independence of India.

Ancient Assam (350–1206)

The verifiable record of Assam starts with the foundation of Pushyavarman's Varman tradition in the fourth century in the Kamarupa realm, which denotes the start of Ancient Assam. The realm arrived at its conventional degree, from the Karatoya in the west to Sadiya in the east. This and the two succeeding traditions drew their genealogy from the legendary Narakasura. The realm arrived at its peak under Bhaskaravarman in the seventh century. Xuanzang visited his court and left behind a critical record. Bhaskaravarman kicked the bucket without leaving behind an issue and the control of the nation passed to Salasthamba, who set up the Mlechchha line. After the fall of the Mlechchha line in the late ninth century, another ruler, Brahmapala was chosen who set up the Pala tradition. The last Pala lord was taken out by the Gaur ruler, Ramapala, in 1110. However, the two resulting lords, Timgyadeva and Vaidyadeva, however settled by the Gaur rulers, controlled for the most part as free thinkers and gave awards under the old Kamarupa seals. The fall of resulting rulers and the ascent of individual realms in the twelfth century instead of the Kamarupa realm denoted the finish of the Kamarupa realm and the time of Ancient Assam.

Protection to the Orphans:

The lace school became an asylum for Orphan and destitute girls. the object of the orphanage was not merely to provide a home and education for destitute girls. It had to improve their

general living conditions through training and teaching. When severe Cholera ravaged South Travancore, many girls who lost their parents managed on their own by making lace.

Spiritual and Moral Development

The work done among women is generally of two kinds - religious and industrial. The industry grew more than self-supporting and had the advantage of imparting Christian Education too. All Superintendents of these industries lay equal emphasis on the social and spiritual sides of the work. The monthly address, the weekly Bible Readings and the Daily Office prayers were all greatly appreciated. It can not be gains aid that they strengthened the spiritual life of the workers. The Primary object of the lace school was to give plain instruction together with a Christian religious and moral education and it did help them to grow spiritually. A teacher's observation is apt here. 'I have often noticed on Sunday afternoons after the class was over, many of the girls have gone two by two to lonely places that they might ponder over what they had heard and pray for blessing. This is further explained by Mrs. Parker when she writes; "Every meeting gives an excellent opportunity for speaking together of the things that concern the social developments and thus the first half an hour, which is given to this, is often made blessing to us all. The way in which the embroidery workers spent their time in the work spot stood to gratify the desire of the authorities as "Our great ambition" it is said, 'is to see every embroidery worker a true flower of Christ'. George Trevor Spencer, Bishop of Madras, visited the Girls school at Nagercoil in 1840. As a part of his itinerary programme he went to the lace industry and was very much pleased to see its social involvement and formed a very high opinion of it. His opinion is expressed thus 'Tamil being the language of this place, Mr. Jones at my request, examined the girls, in a chapter of the Bible and reported most favourably of their proficiency''

Christian education and social service went hand and strengthened as well as enriched one another. Bible teaching was carried on systematically.⁵⁷ About the prayer meeting which was held every Monday morning in the lace -room Mrs. Foster Writes "They have walked in to the head station every fortnight to bring and fetch their work. When a sufficient number came we have a little service, taking a series of lessons from 'The women of bigger thus the women something good to think and talk about their long walk-back''. Every Monday morning the Bible Women conducted a prayer meeting with lace workers consisting of 25 to 30. They also met for a Bible class on Thursdays, the workers in the cut-lying villages brought their finished work in to the centres and tended widen their outlook. The religious teaching was of course, a chief lesson and this was well taught by Bible- Women and others. On lace -cutting days the women always assembled for a short service, a Bible reading, a short address and a prayer before cutting any lace. Similarly a monthly meeting was held on the first Tuesday, and all the women came in for prayer. The Missionaries took this opportunity to give them a help full talk to deepen their spiritual life. In the convents they conducted moral classes, seminar and meditation. They also conducted prayer meetings on August 15, St. Joseph's Day and also in women's Day. These women were encouraged to participate in women's conferences. The workers were grouped and led by a leader. A Missionary comments on the religious impact of the lace and embroidery industries as follows; "I feel it is a real blessing to the women in many ways. We meet for prayer every Tuesday before the work in begun and in various ways I trust I may be thus able to have a good influence among the best educated women of the district." The Mission had the policy of appointing only the

Christians to work in the industry. This was mainly because of their expectation that they may be able to study scripture together. In doing so the Missionaries could help them improve both of their temporal and spiritual life as well as grow in to more intelligent and useful Christian Women. Industrial women in several villages started cottage prayer-meetings in the early morning once a week. It also helped to form a sort of Christian fellowship around each mission station. Women's participation in the lace and embroidery industry brought them to the fold of Christianity as in shown in the quotation, "Many of those who two years ago were heathens are now able to listen to Christian Lyric and meet together regularly for Christian Worship.

Guidance to lead a Good Family

Life Habits of courtesy, cleanliness and punctuality were some of the good qualities inculcated by the girls of the Boarding schools. The same was the case of the women who worked in the lace and embroidery industries. The girls were 'not outfitted for the ordinary duties of life. They were taught all methods of plain sewing, and endowed with sufficient all round knowledge to be good and useful women. It became an interesting feature that those girls who studied in the Boarding Schools were married by men who studied in the Boy's Boarding Schools. They could adjust with all without considerations of caste and creed. This has been substantiated by Mr. Lewi's words "Paul, who is a shaner by case, has lately married Euschiel, who was a pariah. Their mutual attachment, through they are of different castes, was formed by their observing in each other refinement of Christian Character, which each loved to behold .

The unmarried young women saved their earnings for their dowry and hence their marriages could be conducted without hassles. When the girls of the Mulagumood Technical School left the institution to marry, they received a box of dowry containing clothing and all necessary materials to make lace and embroidery for themselves. Thus they gained for themselves the means to live by. Since the establishment of the Mulagumoodu Orphanage, the poor women had acquired for themselves easy employment opportunities without being a burden to their parents and family members. And most of the school girls married Mission agents or those who occupied good position. It is gratifying to say that nearly all the old girls found greater satisfaction in life after leaving schools and getting married. The effects of their training could be seen reflected in the neat and tidy appearance of their houses and their own habits of cleanliness and punctuality and the good behavior of their children. Most of the parents could marry of their girls easily because of the latter's earnings from lace and embroidery making. Even at the time of hardships like famine the married women who were employed in the lace and embroidery industries could manage their home affairs well.

London Missionary Society

The London Missionary Society was the child of Evangelical Revival in England. It was a Philanthropic organization which was started to propagate Christianity at the close of eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The two great men who were responsible for religious awakening were George white field and John Wesley. The great awakening created by them in the churches of England result in the creation of missionary favour in the minds of the people. This consequently caused the formation of missionary

societies.¹ The London Missionary society was one among those societies. The London Missionary society was founded in 1795 as an interdenominational enterprise. This organization was started by Mr. May at Chinsurah was mainly meant for the overseas expansion of the protestant faith.

Uplift of Poor Women:

All the embroidery workers were poor. The establishment of this reputed industry helped its employees to develop their self-respect and social status. The employment appeared profitable and it was calculated to inculcate a spirit of self-support in the workers.¹⁶ It had also raised the economic status of women and brightened the educational facilities, mainly for women. In villages many of the poor lace and embroidery workers emerged as leaders amongst their neighbours and friends. This happened because; through the industries the women were enabled to support themselves and their families, and were given regular instructions. As a result of this many of them became leaders among the women in their villages. The workers husbands have deserted them". As it gave a livelihood to poor women other caste people were attracted towards it. The London Missionary Society Report of 1885 describes that a Sudra (Nair) widow with the help of her uncle learned needle work and earned her livelihood.

Help to the handicapped:

The authorities were very happy to see that the industry was a shelter not only to the table bodied women but also to some physically handicapped ones. For eg. there was an orphan in the school. Her case was very pathetic as she had been somewhat deaf through the thickening of the tympanum of the ear. For her it as very difficult to discover any way of making a livelihood The fact that the girl was a lace-worker, made a respectable young man marry her thus she got a happy settled life.

Change of bad habits:

In the industrial schools missionaries instilled in the virtues of order, cleanliness and industry. It helped the children to get away from the baleful influences they were exposed to in their villages and trained them in the habits of obedience and usefulness. The changes that came over their mental and moral attitudes helped many to look at life with a changed perspective. Nearly all the women of the district were in the habit of chewing betel-nut thus wasting their money. To put an end to this bad habit, the teachers proposed to make them sign an agreement so as to make them keep away from this filthy and unhealthy practice. The girls of Boarding Schools were only too glad to do this, and promised to avoid this bad habit throughout their lives.²⁹ Many of the women gave up their traditional ornaments.³⁰ Some of them stopped other bad habits and some girls could prevail upon their parents to give up their bad habits. Miss Cox mentioned an incident of a girl who stopped the drinking habit of her father.

Guwahati is the capital of the north-eastern Indian state of Assam. The city, the largest in the state, is a major commercial and trade centre and has expanded very quickly in recent decades. While historically it was located south of the Brahmaputra River, new neighborhoods known as North Guwahati have come into existence across the river. This

growth has put strain on infrastructure such as the provision of clean drinking water and waste treatment.

In spite of the growth in the service and manufacturing sector, unemployment and poverty remain a problem. The state of Assam is amongst the poorest in India, and according to some estimates poverty has actually increased in recent years. People living in rural areas of Assam often struggle to make ends meet, and many migrate to Guwahati in search of a better life. This has led to unplanned urbanization all across the city - according to some estimates over ten per cent of the population lives in slum areas.

Women and children are the first to suffer the consequences of the high unemployment and poverty levels and political unrest. Gender inequality continues to be an issue. For example, the average literacy rate in the city is 78 per cent, but there are big differences between male literacy rates - at 81 per cent - and female literacy at 74 per cent. Although among the poorest, children of both sexes are often taken out of school so that they can contribute to the family income, it is still common for girls to leave school earlier than boys.

Human trafficking is also a problem in the area, as people fall for the false promises of traffickers. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to their weak position in society. They often end up working as prostitutes or under exploitative conditions as domestic workers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study on help to the handicapped
2. To study on economic value of the industry

Economic Value of the Industry:

Lace and embroidery had great economic value. It gave work to many hundreds of poor people in the villages. It was also a great help to those who were struggling for their livelihood. The management of the lace-work took up a good deal of time and strengthens of the Missionary ladies. This in turn brought some monetary benefit to the native women and their families.¹⁰⁶ The industries helped to develop the economic background of the low caste people.

Assam has over 5 (five) lakhs Senior Citizen as per the 2001 Census Report and in order to provide them opportunities to lead a productive, pro-active, and healthy life, the Social Welfare Department with the help of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has taken various steps :

Implementation of Maintenance of Parents & Senior Citizen Act, 2012

Constitution of the Senior Citizen Welfare Council to Monitor & Advice on the Welfare of the Senior Citizens and also suggest for improvement of the policies wherever necessary

Further two Old Age Homes specifically for male & female has been set up for institutional care of parents and Senior Citizens beside various NGO run Homes. The Ministry of Social

Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, has provided Grants in Aid to Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for running Old Age Homes, Day Care Centers, Mobile Medical Services and a Physiotherapy Center in the State of Assam. Moreover, the Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Assam has also established a Geriatric Ward in the Gauhati Medical College, Guwahati for the welfare of Senior Citizen.

For senior citizens in Assam to live with dignity and in good health, the state government has set up its first old age home in Kamrup district. For senior citizens in Assam to live with dignity and in good health, the state government has set up its first old age home in Kamrup (Rural) district.

The home will provide accomodation for 25 male and as many women inmates, official sources said here today.

The state owned home, constructed at a cost of Rs 1.25 crore, was inaugurated by Social Welfare Minister Akan Bora at Bamunigaon in Boko near here yesterday.

The home was part of the government measures to ensure that the senior citizens were not neglected in their old age and could live with dignity and in good health.

CONCLUSION:

It was necessary to curtail the growing expenditure under this item and to bring it within reasonable limits. Accordingly, on receipt of Ramachandra Roa's report, the first subject on whom the government took action was that of charitable institution. Comprehensive proceedings were issued in 1084 (1908-09) M.E, dealing with every point relating to the administration of State Charities. The main features of the revision effected were the closing of a few mofussil Oottupuras which were found to be unnecessary, the separation from the Mofussil Oottupuras of those items of expenditure which did not legitimately belong to them, the fixing definitely in money of the pathivus under the each head for each of the Mofussil Oottupras retained; and 198 the revisions of the establishment of the mofussil Oottupuras. A few words of explanation are necessary in respect of each of these items of reform.

REFERENCES:

1. Acarya P.K. Indian Architecture Indian India, Indololgical Publishers, Patna, 1979
2. Aravamudam, T.G. Portrait Sculpture of South India the Indian Society, London, 1931.
3. Bernier M. Ronald. Temple Arts of Kerala, Chand and Company Ltd: New Delhi, 1982.
4. Bose, D.N. Tantras their philosophy and occult secrets, Oriental Publishing House: Calucutta, n.d.
5. Brown, Percy Indian Painting, Oxford University Press London, n.d
6. Caldwell A political and General History of the District of Tirunelvely, Government Press, Madras, 1881.

7. Chopra, P.N. History of South India, Vol. I. Chand and Company, New Delhi, 1979.
8. Coomarasamy K. Ananda History of Indian and Indonesin Art, Munshi Ram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1972
9. Dheber Drury Selections from the Records of South Travancore, Vol. III, Superintendent, H.H.S. Press. Trivandrum. 1860.
10. Dubais, Abbe J.A. Hindu Manners customs and ceremonies, Clarendon press Oxford, 1968.
11. Rengacary .K India, Vol. V. Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1987
12. Foulkes T. A class Book of the Geography of South Travancore, Govt. Press Trivandrum, 1871.
13. Ganesh Vasudev Tagore The Bhagavatapurna, Pt. IV, Motilal Banarosidass: New Delhi, 1978
14. Ganesh Vasudev Tagore The Kurma Purana, Pt. II. Motilal Banarosidass: New Delhi, 1982.