

DISTRICT HANDBOOK

UNITED MIKIR AND NORTH CACHAR HILLS



B. N. BORDOLOI

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PREFACE

The "*District Handbook of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills of Assam*" has been immensely serving in supplying information of Karbi Anglong District of Assam, the erstwhile United Mikir and North Cachar Hills of Assam.

As almost all the copies of the first edition had been exhausted, the Directorate of Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes has attempted to reprint the first edition of the book.

I on behalf of the Directorate offer my heartiest thanks to the readers for encouraging me to take the task of reprinting this book for the benefit of the scholars.

(Mrs. N. A. Hazarika)
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Assam Institute of Research for
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Jawaharnagar, N.H. 37,
Guwahati-781022

PREFACE

In preparing this District Handbook of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills of Assam, I have taken great care as far as practicable to make the Handbook informative. Critical analysis of facts and figures have also been added wherever it has been thought necessary. It is intended that this book would be of great help to the Administrative Departments as well as to the visitors and others who want to know about the district.

My attempts will be fruitful if this book serves the purpose for which it is prepared.

I offer my hearty thanks to the Administrative Departments, Local Bodies and other Voluntary Organisations with whose help and co-operation it has been possible to complete the book.

B. N. Bordoloi,
District Research Officer,
United Mikir & N. C. Hills,
Diphu

DIPHU: DECEMBER 1968

Explanatory Note

Many changes have taken place in the administrative organisation of the former United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District since the writing of this Handbook. The nature of these changes have been given in the Appendix, but the Handbook describes the situation as they were prior to the period of change mentioned in the Appendix.

A FEW WORDS REGARDING THE SOURCES OF MATERIALS USED IN THE DISTRICT HANDBOOK

In compiling this Handbook, besides the data collected by me personally, I have used the relevant and available materials from the District Census Handbook (1961) of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills and the Constitution of India.

Materials provided by the Administrative and other Government Departments mainly of the District, and also by Departments at the State level, and those generously given by Local Bodies and the Voluntary Organisations have also been used in this Handbook with modifications and additions wherever this was thought essential.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

General Introduction to the District.

1. Location and Area	1
2. Topography	2
3. Climate and Rainfall	6
4. Flora and Fauna	7

CHAPTER II

1. Population	8
2. Short Notes on Different Tribes Inhabiting the District	14

CHAPTER III

District Administration	54
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CHAPTER IV

1. Agriculture and Irrigation	70
2. Communications	76
3. Public Health	84
4. Education	95
5. Co-Operation	101
6. Forests	108
7. Soil Conservation	116
8. Veterinary and Animal Husbandry	119
9. Industries	123

10. Fishery	126
11. Economic Conditions	128
12. Social Welfare	132

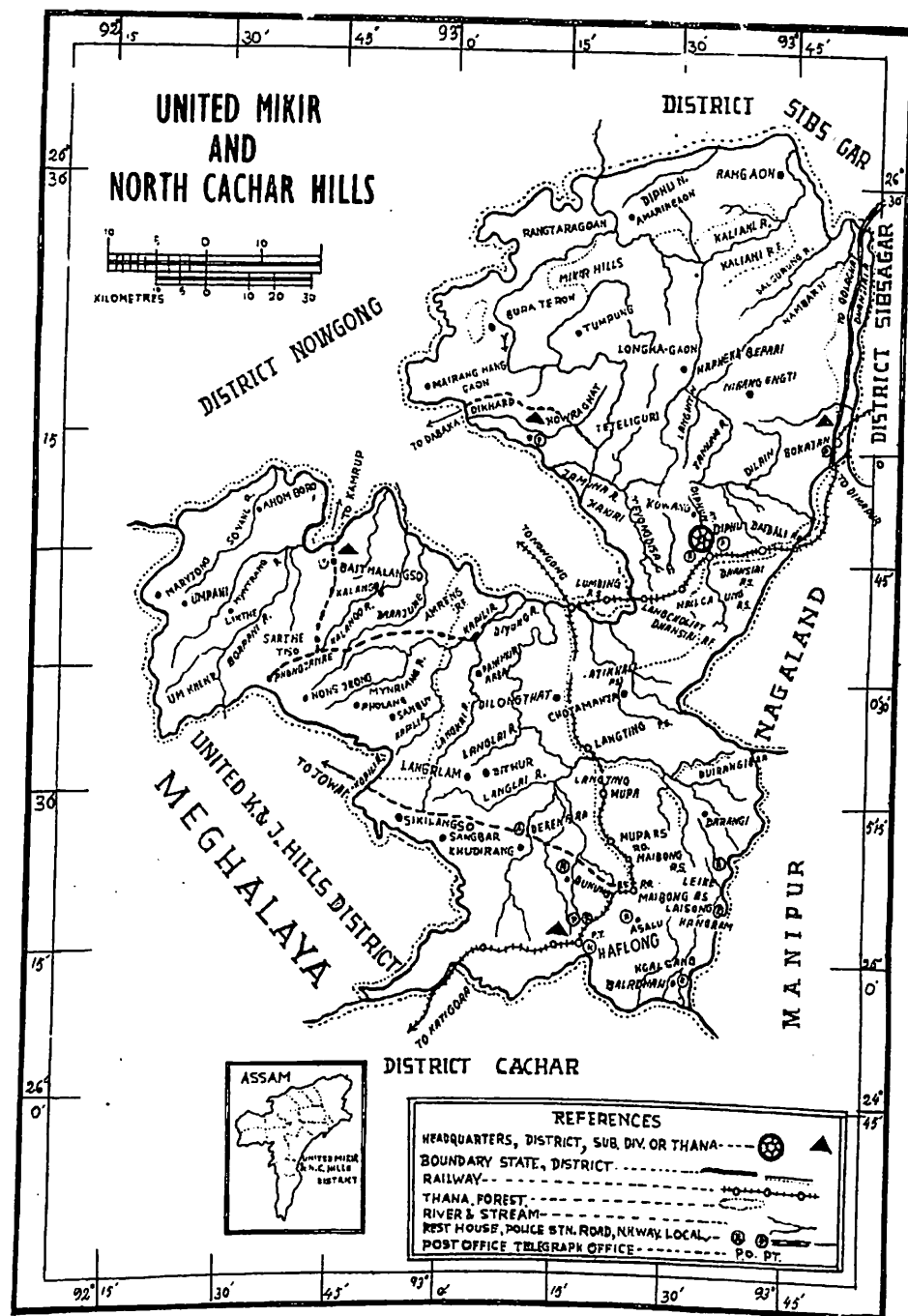
CHAPTER V

1. Post Independence Changes	141
A. Development Blocks	141
B. Socio-Economic Changes Brought about by the Development Blocks	147
C. Electricity	154

CHAPTER VI

Other Information Relating to the District

1. Civil Defence	158
2. Gazetteer	161
APPENDIX	166



CHAPTER-1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO
THE DISTRICT

The people of Assam saw the birth of a new district, that is the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District, on the 17th November 1951. The new district was formally created on the aforesaid date, vide Government Notification. T.A.D./R31/50/204, dated the 3rd. November 1951, with some parts of Nowgong, Sibsagar, Cachar and United Khasi and Jaintia Hills Districts.

1. LOCATION AND AREA

The united Mikir and North Cachar Hills District lies between the latitudes of 20.°54 and 26.°41(N) and longitudes of 92.°8(E) and 93.°53(E). The district is bounded on the north by Nowgong and Sibsagar districts, on the south by Cachar district, on the east by Sibsagar district, Nagaland and Manipur, and on the west by the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district.

From the point of view of area it is the second biggest district in Assam, the first being the Mizo Hills district.

The total area of the district is 5,883 square miles (15,237 sq kilometres). It comprises of two Sub-divisions namely Mikir Hills and North Cachar Hills. The total area of the Mikir Hills Sub-division is 3,995 sq. miles (10,343 sq. kilometers) and the total area of the

N.C. Hills Sub-division is 1.888 sq. miles (4,890 sq kilometres). Diphu in the Mikir Hills is the district headquarters, while Haflong is the Sub-divisional headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-division.

It may be mentioned here that a new Administrative Unit was created with Hamren as its Headquarters in the Mikir Hills Sub-division, vide Government Notification No. AAP.77/61/14, dated the 13th September 1966 reissued on 16th November 1966. The newly created Administrative Unit includes the entire area under the jurisdiction of the Baithalango Police Station. The Administration of the Unit is entrusted to an Extra Assistant Commissioner for the present.

2. TOPOGRAPHY

Topographically the United District of Mikir and N.C. Hills has a blend of hills and plains. As such one can find a varying climatic atmosphere in the district associated with a variety of flora and fauna.

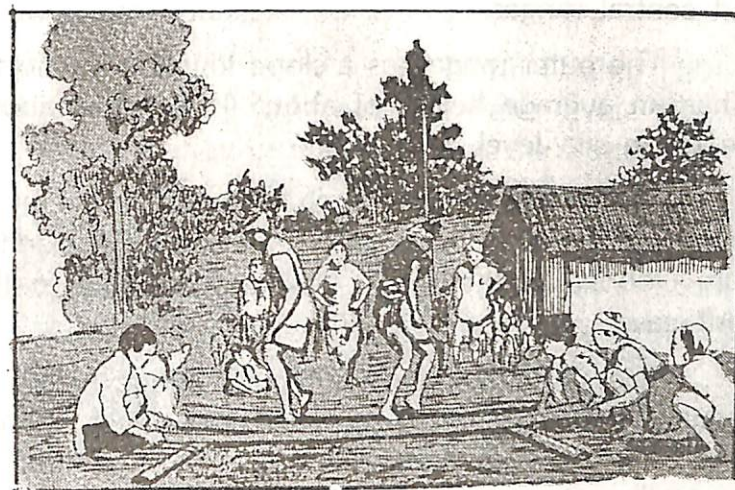
A. PHYSICAL DIVISIONS

Physically the whole district can broadly be divided into three broad regions : (1) The Mikir Hills, (2) The Kopili, Jamuna and Dhansiri Valley and (3) The North Cachar Hills.

(1) THE MIKIR HILLS REGION

The Mikir Hills region lies between the Assam range and the Dhansiri river to the east divided by the Kopili valley. The hills in this region are weather-beaten and subjected to denudation. As a consequence, they constitute an extremely rugged and hilly terrain.

The Mikir Hills proper can be divided into four



Young Mikirs Doing a Dance with Wooden Pounders



An old Mikir Couple in their Village

ranges - the outer range, and the northern, southern and central ranges.

The outer range has a slope towards the north. It has an average height of about 450 meters above the mean sea level.

The northern range with an average height of about 600 metres above the mean sea level extends from Doboka in the south -east to Bokakhat in the north-east.

The southern range with an average height of about 900 metres above the mean sea level extends from Bakaliaghat in the south - east to Barapathar in the north-east.

The Central range lying in the east of the Kopili is the highest among the four ranges with an average height of about 1000 metres above the mean sea level.

(2) THE KOPILI, JAMUNA, DHANSIRI VALLEY REGION

The Kopili, Jamuna and Dhansiri Valley region between Lumding, Hojai and Diphu can be regarded as plains with gentle rise and fall with a height ranging from 75 to 250 metres. This sheet of plains land lies between the Mikir Hills on the north, the Barali range on the south-east and the North Cachar Hills on the south.

(3) THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS REGION

This region is constituted with the eastern flanks of the Jaintia Hills and the northern flanks of the Barail range. The hills of this region are steeper, more rocky and rugged. There are of course gentle slopes towards

Lumding. Small tracts of plains lie here and there in between the ridges.

The Barail range in the North Cachar Hills lies in a crisscross way and it acts as a water-divider between the Dhansiri river in the north and the Surma river in the south. The height of the range varies from 100 to 1200 metres.

The eastern flanks of the Jaintia Hills consist of the Saipung and Kurnuming Hills along the eastern side of the Kopili valley and the Sunngut and Bura Ingti Hills on the north-west side of the Kopili river. The height of these hills varies from 600 to 900 metres.

The Hills and the plains of the district alike are full of dense forests. The tribal people inhabiting the district practise shifting cultivation commonly known as 'JHUM' by clearing the jungles of the Hills. Most of the low-lying plains land is brought under paddy cultivation. But some low-lying plains lands are full of thick weeds and still lie unreclaimed.

B. THE RIVER SYSTEM

The main rivers of the district are the Dhansiri, Kopili, Jamuna and the Kaliani. Being the tributaries of the Brahmaputra, their flow is towards the north.

The river Dhansiri serves as a natural boundary between this district and Nagaland and Sibsagar district. This river rises from the Barail range and flows north-east of Dimapur and Bokajan and enters Golaghat Sub-division of the Sibsagar district. It is to be noted there that the course of the river is very zig-zag and during the monsoon it not only causes heavy floods but erodes its banks also in many places.

The Kopili river rises from the Jaintia Hills and flows north-east between the Jaintia Hills and the North Cachar Hills. It enters into the plains at Panimur, south-west of Lonka, where it is joined by the Diyung at Daiangmukh. It then continues its course in a general north-western direction. At Jamuna-mukh it is joined by the Jamuna from the right bank and the Barpani from the left bank Further downstream.

The Diyung, which is an important river of the North Cachar Hills, rises from the northern flanks of the Barail range and flows north-wards and enters into the plains a few kilometres to the west of Lumding and thenceforth it flows west to join the Kopili.

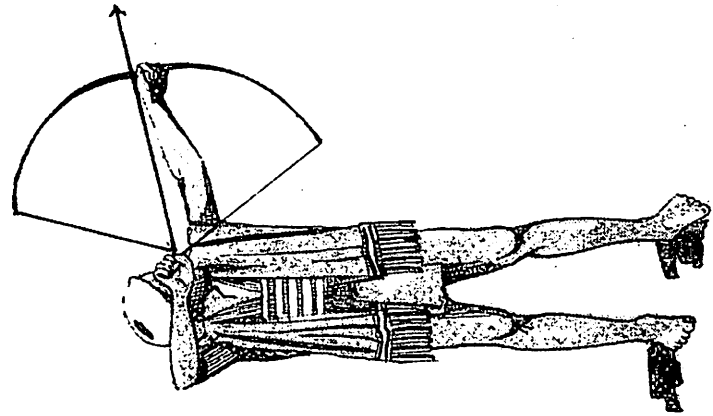
The river Jamuna forms the main drainage basin along the southern foot of the Mikir Hills. Rising from the eastern flanks of the Khumbaman range, it flows south-west and enters the plains north of Jarapgaon and thenceforth flowing in a west-northwest direction, it meets the Kopili at Jamunamukh.

The Kaliani flows in the east-northeast direction across the north-eastern parts of the Mikir Hills.

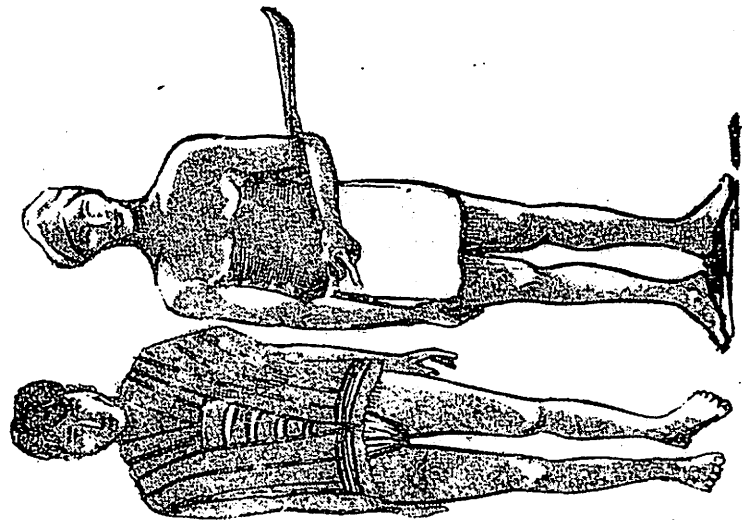
Among the other important rivers mention may be made of the Barpani, Deopani, Nambar, Diphalu, Kalang, Amreng and the Doigrong.

C. Minerals

The Geological Survey of India has revealed that the United Mikir and N.C. Hills district has a good quantity of mineral deposits like limestone, coal and porcelain clay. While limestone and porcelain clay are virtually untapped, coal has been mined for some years



A Mikir Hunter with Bow and Arrow



Mikir Men

in the Koilajan area (near Dilai) in the Mikir Hills Sub-division. Coal deposit are also found at Longlai, Kheroni, Silveta, Disobai Nala and the Khumbaman range and also near Garampani in the Kopili valley. The coal found in the district is however of poor quality and is scattered in small patches.

Limestone, suitable for cement manufacturing, is found abundantly at Garampani Kailajan, Manjali, Silveta, Mayong Disa and Donglai area of the district. According to the estimation of the Geological Survey of India, the reserve of the limestone will be near-about 154 million tons. The cement factory at Cherrapunjee in the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District is fed with the limestone of Garampani area also. The second cement factory of Assam is proposed to be established near Bokajan in the Mikir Hills Sub-division. Coal and limestone required for the factory will be supplied from the Koilajan area where both are found side by side.

3. CLIMATE AND RAINFALL

As the United Mikir and N. C. Hills is blended with hills and plains of varying elevations, the climatic conditions also differ from place to place. Although the district falls within the temperate heat zone, during summer the atmosphere becomes very sultry being so near to the Tropic of Cancer. The climatic conditions of the district, generally speaking, cannot be said to be wholesome for unacclimatized persons. The district as a whole is a malarious region and Kala-azar also had caused unprecedented havoc in the past especially among the Mikirs. However acclimatization for generations together makes the tribal people of the district immune against the unhealthy climatic influences. The

Haflong area of the North Cachar Hills has a very healthy climate.

The average mean maximum temperature is 78.4°C (80'60°F) and the mean minimum temperature is 17'2° c (62'96° F) in the district as a whole. While the summer days are sultry, the winter days are cold and somewhat dry.

During the summer days the district receives sufficient rainfall from the monsoon. The annual rainfall ranges from 1424 millimetres to 2160 millimetres.

4. FLORA AND FAUNA

Sufficient rainfall has helped tropical vegetation to grow abundantly throughout the hills and plains of the district. A greater part of the hilly region of the district abounds in various types of bamboo and tall grass. The bamboo wealth is so rich that it can very well support two huge paper mills. Steps have already been taken by a private enterprise to establish a Paper Mill near Lungting in the N. C. Hills Sub-division.

On the higher altitudes timbers of excellent quality are found to a considerable extent. Teak and Sal are the most important products of the forest which are used as railway sleepers, building materials and for making furniture, etc. Besides, various types of flowers are also found to grow abundantly.

The district was the original home of the famous one-horned rhinos of Assam. Wild animals like elephants, deer, bears, buffaloes, leopards, etc. are found abundantly in the jungles of the district. The district is therefore a paradise for hunters. The district abounds in various species of birds also.

CHAPTER II

1. POPULATION

According to the 1961 Census the total population of the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is 279,726 and the Sub-division-wise break-up is as follows :-

Mikir Hills Sub-division	225,407
N.C. Hills Sub-division	54,319
<u>Total---</u>	<u>279,726</u>

Out of the total population stated above, 211,331 belong to the Scheduled Tribes, the percentage to total population being 75.55; and 67,89 belong to the Scheduled Castes, percentage to total population being 2.43. A classification of the population is given below :-

Mikir	116,887
Dimasa Kachari	67,284
Any Naga Tribes	8,338
Any Kuki Tribes	7,150
Hmar	4,131
Garo	3,326
Khasi & Jaintia	3,921
Mizo	284
Scheduled Caste	6,789
Others.....	61,606
<u>Total</u>	<u>279,726</u>



A Group Dance of the Mikirs.

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Total	279,726



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As per 1961 Census the caste-wise break-up of the Scheduled caste population is as follows :-

1. Bansphor.....	10
2. Bhuinmali or Mali	247
3. Brittil-Bania or Bania	128
4. Dhupi or Dhubi	394
5. Hira	80
6. Jalkeot	11
7. Jhalo, Jalo or Jhalo-Malo	83
8. Kaibartta or Jaliya	918
9. Mahara	36
10. Methar or Bhangi	47
11. Muchi or Rishi	220
12. Namasudra	4393
13. Patni	125
14. Sutradhar	97
	Total- 6,789

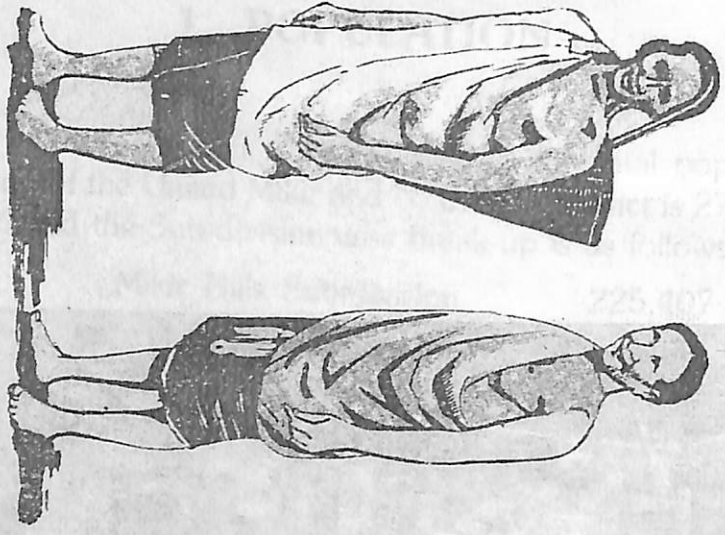
(A) PERCENTAGE INCREASE OF DISTRICT POPULATION

Year :	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951	1951-1961
	-33.12%	+5.92%	+13.60%	+306.17%	+24.02%	+69.08%

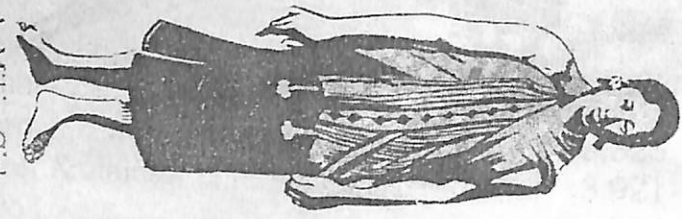
The above table clearly shows the growing pressure of population. It is most interesting to note that the percentage increase of population during the last 60 years, i.e. from 1901 to 1961 is 585'40. The percentage increase of population during a ten year period that is from 1951 to 1961 is 69.08. In other words, there is an increase of 114,285 persons over the 1951 census. This percentage increase of population between 1951 and 1961 is the highest among all the districts of Assam ; the State percentage of increase

CHAPTER II

Milk Women Going to the Jhum Fields



A Milk Girl



being 34.45 only.

This abnormal growth of population during the ten year period can be ascribed to three major factors.

1. One of the chief factors responsible for such an abnormal increase in the district population has been the heavy influx of Pakistani refugees into this district during the last part of 1960-61 numbering more than 12,000 (source : District Census Handbook, 1961-United Mikir & N. C. Hills.)

2. Another major factor is the introduction of better health facilities by the Public Health Department, which has reduced the death rate to a considerable extent.

3. Another factor that is indirectly responsible for increasing the longevity of the life of the tribal people of the district is the betterment of socio-economic condition as a result of developmental activities on the part of the Government as well as on the part of the two district councils.

During the aforesaid period, i.e. from 1951 to 1961 the Mikir Hills Subdivision records an increase of population by 79.21 per cent while the N.C. Hills Sub-division records an increase by 36.95 per cent.

(B) DENSITY OF POPULATION

The following table shows the density of population of the district and the Sub-division-wise break-up. (Source: 1961 Census).

1961	District.	Mikir Hills Subdivision	N. C. Hills Subdivision
Population	48	56	29
per sq. mile	(18 per sq. Km.)	(21 per sq Km)	(11 per sq Km)

From the point of density of population this district is the second lowest in Assam, the first being the Mizo Hills District, (33 per sq. mile). The density of population for the State of Assam is 251 per sq. mile.

(C) SEX RATIO

Year	1951	1961
No of females per 1000 males	914	863

The above table clearly shows the marked inequality in sex-distribution. During the period of ten years, i.e. from 1951 to 1961 the inequality has further deteriorated to a considerable extent.

(D) LITERACY

From the point of view of literacy this district occupies the lowest position among all the districts of Assam. According to the 1961 census the percentage of literacy of the district is 17.4 only as against 27.4 for Assam State. According to the 1951 census the percentage of literacy of this district was only 5.9 as against the State percentage of 18.2. During the ten year period, that is, from 1951 to 1961 literacy, therefore, has made considerable progress.

TRIBEWISE PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY

The following table shows the tribe-wise percentage of literacy. The percentages have been worked out by me from the Census figures of 1961.

Name of the Tribe	Total No. of Population	Total No. of Literates	Percentage
1. Mikir	116,887	14,088	12.57
2. Dimasa Kachari	67,284	5,896	8.76
3. Any Naga Tribes	8,338	437	5.24
4. Any Kuki Tribes	7,150	601	8.41
5. Hmar	4,131	82	1.89
6. Garo	3,326	765	23.00
7. Khasi & Jaintias	3,931	960	24.42
8. Mizo	284	147	51.76

From the foregoing table it can be seen that the percentage of literacy is the highest among the Mizos and the lowest among the Hmars.

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES

Total No of Scheduled Caste Population	Total No of Literates	Percentage
6,789	916	13.49

(The percentage has been worked out from the Census figures of 1961).

(E) ELECTORATES

The United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is divided into four legislative constituencies--three in the Mikir Hills Sub-division and one in the N. C. Hills sub-division. Up to the 1961-62 General Election there were, of course, only three legislative Constituencies, two in the Mikir Hills Sub-division and one in the N. C. Hills Sub-division. The constituency-wise break-up

of the electorates during the last four general elections is as follows :

Year	Name of the Constituency	No of electorates
1951-52	Mikir Hills East	37,398
	Mikir Hills West	33,020
	N. C. Hills	19,986
Total-		90,404
1956-57	Mikir Hills East	39,883
	Mikir Hills West	37,576
	N. C. Hills	21,329
Total-		98,788
1961-62	Mikir Hills East	48,639
	Mikir Hills West	42,223
	N. C. Hills	23,181
Total-		114,043
1966-67	Bokajan	38,383
	Howraghat	35,644
	Baithalangso	37,753
	N. C. Hills	27,649
Total		139,429

From the point of view of Parliamentary Constituency this district forms only a part of the 3 Autonomous Hills Districts Parliamentary Constituency.

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Racial Affinity :

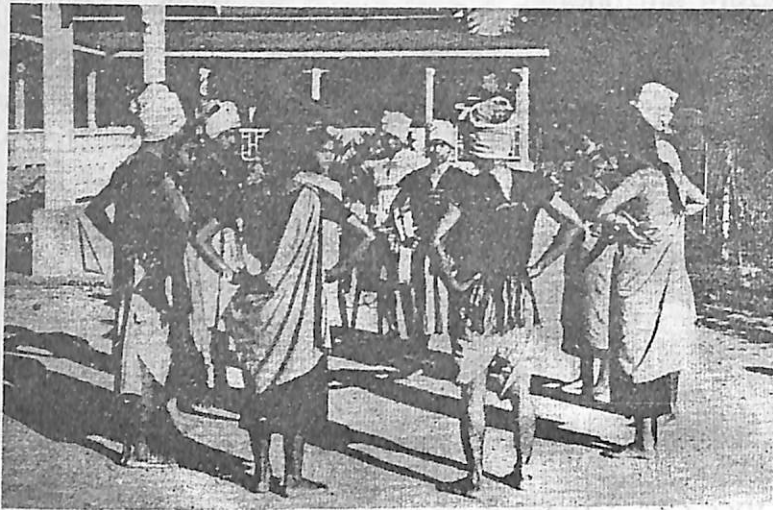
The United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District is chiefly inhabited by the people belonging to the Mikir tribe. The Mikirs are supposed to belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group to which some of their fellow-tribes in Assam also belong. They call themselves 'ARLENG' in their own dialect.

Regional Division :

The Mikirs are divided into three broad groups, namely CINTHONG, RONGHANG, and AMRI. These groups are otherwise known as CHINTHONG, NILIP-RONGHANG and AMRI-MARLONG. Fundamentally, these groups do not differ from each other and they should not be confused with clans. These names, in fact, do not indicate true tribal divisions (clans), supposed to be derived from common ancestors and united in blood. These names in all probability refer to their habitats.

Clan :

A clan is called 'KUR' in Mikir. The Mikirs have five 'KURS' namely, INGTI, TERANG, LEKTHE, TIMUNG and TERON. Each clan is further divided into a number of sub-clans. All the 'KURS' are socially on an equality. INGTI is said to have been the priestly clan in former times. TERANG also claims this dignity, but is thought to be of lower rank. LEKTHE is said to have



Mikir Young People Doing A Group Dance.

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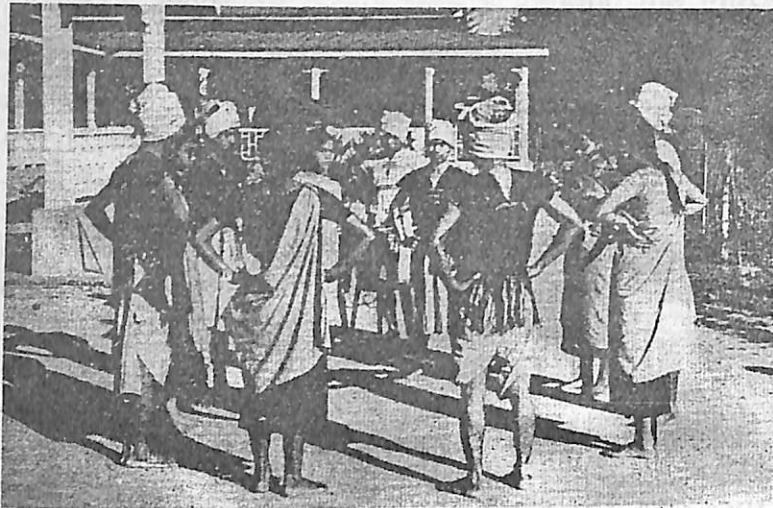
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Mikir Young People Doing A Group Dance.

been the warrior clan, while TIMUNG and TERON represented the rest of the people.

Marriage :

These clans are exogamous and marriage among the persons of the same clan is a taboo. Cross-cousin marriage is preferential marriage. Monogamy is the prevailing rule although there is no bar to polygamy. Polyandry is quite unknown to them. Like other tribal societies there is no system of bride price among the Mikirs.

Marriage is generally arranged with the consent of the parents. Although permitted under the customary rules, divorce is very rare. Widow marriage is allowed but child marriage is unknown to them.

Family Structure :

The Mikirs follow a patriarchal system of family. All the children belong to the father and assume his title. The line of descent is traced through the male members only. At death the sons inherit the fathers' property. If the deceased has no sons, his property will be inherited by his brother. If the deceased has no brother also, the property will be inherited by the nearest male relative of his clan. But the widow can also retain the property, by marrying into her husband's clan if the deceased has no sons or brothers. An other important factor that is to be noted here is the absence of adoption among the Mikirs.

Religion :

The Mikirs follow the crude form of Hinduism but it is to be remembered that they do not have idols, temples, or shrines. They cannot be said to be animists

also in the sense that they do not worshipping inanimate and natural objects. Although they believe in plurality of gods, nevertheless, they also believe in God Almighty whom they call ARNAM SONGSAR RECHO' (The Creator of the World). He is the Creator of this world and from Him Alone all things originate. Throughout the whole year they perform various religious rites to appease many gods and goddesses. Each disease is also associated with a presiding deity. The Mikirs believe in witchcraft and black magic also. Sacrifice of fowls and use of rice beer are indispensable for the performance of every religious rite. The funeral ceremony known as 'CHOMANGKAN' is the most elaborate, costly and important of all the ceremonies performed by the Mikirs.

A small section of the Mikir people has embraced Christianity.

Occupation :

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Mikirs. They practise Jhumming (shifting cultivation) by clearing the forests of the hills. In their Jhum they cultivate mixed crops. They also do low land cultivation where such lands are available. Most of the families rear cattle and they are found to be more interested in the increase of their number. It is very interesting to note that cattle are hardly reared for the purpose of milk. Besides cattle, each family possesses a good number of pigs and fowls. The Mikir women are expert weavers and they generally produce all the clothes needed for their domestic use. Many families rear Endi also. Necessary cane and bamboo articles are made by the villagers themselves. There are expert carpenters and blacksmiths among the Mikirs.

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These clans are exogamous and marriage among the persons of the same clan is a taboo. Cross-cousin marriage is preferential marriage. Monogamy is the prevailing rule although there is no bar to polygamy. Polyandry is quite unknown to them. Like other tribal societies there is no system of bride price among the Mikirs.

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Family Structure :

The Mikirs follow a patriarchal system of family. All the children belong to the father and assume his title. The line of descent is traced through the male members only. At death the sons inherit the fathers' property. If the deceased has no sons, his property will be inherited by his brother. If the deceased has no brother also, the property will be inherited by the nearest male relative of his clan. But the widow can also retain the property, by marrying into her husband's clan if the deceased has no sons or brothers. An other important factor that is to be noted here is the absence of adoption among the Mikirs.

Religion :

The Mikirs follow the crude form of Hinduism but it is to be remembered that they do not have idols, temples, or shrines. They cannot be said to be animists

also in the sense that they do not worshipping inanimate and natural objects. Although they believe in plurality of gods, nevertheless, they also believe in God Almighty whom they call 'ARNAM SONGSAR RECHO' (The Creator of the World). He is the Creator of this world and from Him Alone all things originate. Throughout the whole year they perform various religious rites to appease many gods and goddesses. Each disease is also associated with a presiding deity. The Mikirs believe in witchcraft and black magic also. Sacrifice of fowls and use of rice beer are indispensable for the performance of every religious rite. The funeral ceremony known as 'CHOMANGKAN' is the most elaborate, costly and important of all the ceremonies performed by the Mikirs.

A small section of the Mikir people has embraced Christianity.

Occupation :

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Mikirs. They practise Jhumming (shifting cultivation) by clearing the forests of the hills. In their Jhum they cultivate mixed crops. They also do low land cultivation where such lands are available. Most of the families rear cattle and they are found to be more interested in the increase of their number. It is very interesting to note that cattle are hardly reared for the purpose of milk. Besides cattle, each family possesses a good number of pigs and fowls. The Mikir women are expert weavers and they generally produce all the clothes needed for their domestic use. Many families rear Endi also. Necessary cane and bamboo articles are made by the villagers themselves. There are expert carpenters and blacksmiths among the Mikirs.

Economic Conditions :

Economically the Mikirs are very backward and most of them are poverty-stricken. During the lean months of the year many families remain half-starved and sometimes they live on fruits of the jungles and wild roots. Their economic condition is further aggravated by the fact that a considerable portion of paddy is used by them for brewing beer. As their methods of cultivation are still crude, their yield per acre is also much less. Because of their poverty they fall into the hands of the unscrupulous village money lenders.

Village :

The Mikirs have a liking to live on the hill tops. Their villages are scattered and they do not live in compact areas. Their villages are, therefore, small, and a village is generally named after the Gaonbura (village headman). They have a tendency to shift their village to the site of their Jhum. And sometimes the whole village is shifted to the newly selected site of the Jhum.

Houses :

Their houses are neither too big nor too small. Houses are strongly built on wooden posts and for the superstructure bamboo is used. Thatch is used for roofing purposes.

Dresses and Ornaments :

The Mikir still wear their traditional dresses and ornaments although the educated section has almost given up their traditional dresses and ornaments.

The village disputes are generally settled by the village Council presided over by the Gaonbura. They go to the law courts only on rare occasions. The Village Council is called 'ME' which is composed of all the male householders of the village. This 'ME' also determines whether a village is to be shifted to the new site of 'JHUM' or not.

Festivals :

The Mikirs are a peace-loving and mild-tempered people. Dance and music play a great role in their day to day life. The beginning of the cultivation is marked with a great festival known as 'RONGKER'. This is an annual compulsory festival. Similarly at the end of the harvesting they celebrate another festival known as 'HACHA'.

THE DIMASA KACHARIS

The Dimasa Kacharis inhabit the northern half of the N. C. Hills Sub-division and also in the ravines of the Jatinga river. Physically they are strong and stout and found to be a peaceful tribe unless provoked.

Terminology:

The origin of the term 'KACHARI' is doubtful and the name is unknown to the people themselves. The Bodo Kacharis in the plains of Assam and the Dimasa Kacharis in the N. C. Hills and the Cachar district perhaps refer to the same stock of people. Although they bear different tribal designations, the Bodo Kacharis and the Dimasa Kacharis speak very nearly the same language and have many customs in common. It is very probable that the Dimasas on leaving

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Maibong and settling in the district known to the Sylhet Bengalis as Cachar, were called 'KACHARIS' by their neighbours and the term was soon accepted by the outsiders as the real designation of the people.

Meaning of Dimasa :

Dimasa literally means the descendant or son of the head of a big river; 'DI' means water, 'MA' means big and 'SA' means son. The race originally inhabited the hills and slopes of the Brahmaputra and then gradually spread through Central Assam to the Mymensing district, now in Bangla Desh. They had a long standing hostility with the Ahoms which ultimately resulted in their overthrow from the Brahmaputra valley during 1500 A.D. The Dimasas, after retreat, established their capital at Dimapur but from here also they were subsequently driven out and they had to shift their capital to Maibong in the N. C. Hills.

A Ruling Tribe :

That the Kacharis were ruling in Assam throughout many years prior to their establishment of the kingdom at Dimapur is established by the fact that the names of all the principal rivers of Assam bear the syllable 'DI' before them which is invariably a Kachari word.

Clans :

The Dimasa Kacharis have 42 male clans and 40 female clans. As they follow the patriarchal system of family, the female clans, as such, do not have much significance. From the point of view of marriage they are exogamous and marriage between the members of the same clan is a taboo. Cross-cousin marriage is allowed. Although marriage by consent is the prevailing



Another View of a Mikir Dance.

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practice, marriage by capture is also found to be prevalent among them to a considerable extent. In the latter case the marriages has to be regularized by performing it in their traditional way at a later date. Monogamy is the prevailing rule among the Dimasa Kacharis.

Marriage :

In case of marriage by consent the father and the other male relatives of the boy have to approach the girl's family for the marriage of the girl with the boy. In this informal talk the traits and the qualifications of the boy and the girl are taken into account. If the girl's party accepts a bundle of salt weighing about one kilogram wrapped in plantain leaves and tied with seven ropes, it indicates that the marriage is settled and after the acceptance of the bundle of salt the actual date of the marriage is fixed. After the fixation of the date of marriage, rice beer (zoo) has to be offered to the bride's family thrice. During the third time the bride price will be fixed. The marriage takes place in the bride's house and is consummated there. The bride's family has to make a separate arrangement for the accommodation of the newly wed couple for a few days in the bride's house. After marriage the son generally does not live with his parents. He lives separately in a newly constructed house.

Family Structure :

As the Dimasa follow a patriarchal system of family, at the death of the father, his sons inherit all the properties, the eldest receiving the largest share and the others in proportion. If a man does not have any sons, at his death his property will be inherited by his nearest

male relative but not by his daughters. A daughter can inherit the jewellery and clothes of her mother only but none of the real estates. But the most interesting provision of the customary law of inheritance of the Dimasa Kacharis is that as soon as a man inherits the real estate of a deceased person, he is liable to pay off all the debts of the deceased even if the amount of debt is more than the value of the real estate he inherits. Under no circumstances can he get rid of this responsibility. This tradition very often bears heavily on a person who has to pay off a very heavy debt because of the fact that he happens to be the next male kin of the deceased.

Religion :

From the point of view of religion the Dimasa Kacharis can be said to be animists. They follow Hinduism in its crude form. They believe in the existence of one Supreme Being whom they call 'MADAIS'. Under him there are some minor 'MADAIS', some of them are regarded as family deities, and some are regarded as evil spirits. Among the minor 'MADAIS', 'Sibrai' occupies the most important place. Sibrai is worshipped as a common god by all the Dimasa Kacharis and in all their prayers his name is mentioned first. For the appeasement of their deities birds and domesticated animals are sacrificed at the time of the performance of religious festivals. Attempts on the part of the Christian Missionaries to convert them into Christianity bore no fruit.

Birth Ceremony :

At the time of delivery the woman is helped by two elderly women of the village and after the delivery

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Birth Ceremony :

At the time of delivery the woman is helped by two elderly women of the village and after the delivery

the two women go to a river or a stream and breaking an egg take their bath in order to purify themselves. The baby is taken out of the four walls of the house only when the navel chord falls off. Three elderly women of the village participate in this ceremony in which two fowls-one cock and one hen are sacrificed. At the end of the ceremony the baby is handed over to the father. The father of the baby has to offer some monetary presents to these women for their services.

Death Ceremony :

Performance of death ceremony is a must for the Dimasa Kacharis. It must be performed at any cost. A person is allowed to die inside his house. The widow does not tie the knot of her hair until the body of her husband is cremated. A cock is thrashed to death and placed at the foot of the deceased so that it might show the deceased the rightway to heaven. The body is cremated by the side of a river or a stream. At the death ceremony the people of the village have to be entertained with a great feast. Pigs, fowls, and rice beer (joo) are the pre-requisites of this feast. A share of food from this feast is kept separately for the deceased and is offered at the cremation ground.

Occupation :

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Dimasa Kacharis. They practise Jhum in the hills where they raise mixed crops. Among the subsidiary occupations, mention may be made of weaving, rearing of Endi and Muga, bamboo and cane products, etc. Their women are found to be more laborious. They have pigs, fowls and buffaloes but not cows. They neither drink milk nor do they milk the she buffaloes for commercial

purpose. Economically they are very backward and their economic condition is far from satisfactory.

Village Structure :

The Dimasa Kacharis have a tendency to live on the bank of rivers. Therefore every Dimasa Kachari village is found to be situated on the hill slope with a river or a stream running by. The houses are generally built in two rows facing each other leaving sufficient open space in between. Each village has a protective fencing all around with two gates-one at the top and the other at the bottom.

The village headman is called KHAUNANG'. He is selected by the village elders in a formal meeting. He with the help of the other village elders settles disputes, tries cases and no function in the village can take place without his consent.

Festivals :

The Dimasa Kacharis are a colourful tribe. They have their traditional dresses, ornaments, musical instruments, weapons of war etc. They are gay and cheerful. Dance and music play an important role in their day to day life. 'RAJINI GOBRA' AND 'HARNI GOBRA' are the two important festivals celebrated by the Dimasa Kacharis every year before they start cultivation.

THE RENGMA NAGAS

Origin :

The Rengma Nagas of the Mikir Hills Sub-division live between the strip of Hills in between Barpathar and Chokihola. The total Rengma Naga population would

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THE RENGMA NAGAS

Origin :

The Rengma Nagas of the Mikir Hills Sub-division live between the strip of Hills in between Barpathar and Chokihola. The total Rengma Naga population would

be about 2000 scattered in 12 villages. It is obvious that the Rengma Nagas of the Mikir Hills belong to the same group of Rengmas in Nagaland. There are cent per cent similarities between their customs, traditions, usages, etc. They even speak the same dialect.

Migration :

It is believed that this group of the Rengma Nagas under the leadership of Desong and Mongkha, migrated to the Mikir Hills during the reign of the Ahom King Kumaleswar Singh. Kehang, son of Desong, paid a tribute to the Ahom king and he was offered the title of 'PHUKAN'. And since then he was known as Kehang Phukan. As regards the migration of this group of the Rengma Nagas Shri Kheumbe Rengma has related to me a nice story. It runs as follows :

Long back there were two very influential brothers among the Rengma Nagas. They were so influential that each brother had a number of loyal followers. In other words, they had been regarded as their chieftains by the common Rengmas. These two brothers lived separately. The elder brother brought some improvement to a small stream known as Rengmapani for the purpose of fishing and he created a bund for this purpose. He also made an absolute rule that whoever would catch fish in the bund, a share of the catch must be given to its owner (the elder brother). One day the younger brother had fished there but he did not pay the due share to his elder brother on the ground that the latter was having a feast of fish every day. This infuriated the elder brother very much and he ordered his brother to leave that place immediately. The younger brother followed by those loyal to him came down from

the Naga Hills and settled in the plains in between the Naga Hills and the Mikir Hills. But as they were habituated to living in the hill tops, the plains did not suit them and so ultimately they migrated to the Mikir Hills and settled permanently in their present abode and were known as Naga Rengma.

It is well-established fact that formerly there were severe types of feuds among the different Naga tribes. There were frequent raids, head hunting, etc. The Rengma Nagas, being a smaller group, probably were subjected to all sorts of harassment. This might have induced Desong and Mongkha, the Naga chieftains to migrate from the Naga Hills to the Mikir Hills.

Clans :

The Rengma Nagas are divided into eight exogamous clans--

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. KENPUVNYU, | 2. KANRINYU, |
| 3. RESOBINYU, | 4. JISENBINYU, |
| 5. SABINYU, | 6. NYENTHANYU, |
| 7. NANGDUNYU and | 8. HENBUNYU. |

Among the clans HENBUNYU and NANGDUNY are regarded as belonging to the higher strata.

Marriage :

As the clans are exogamous, the marriage between the members of the same clan is a taboo. Violation of this taboo leads to the dire consequence such as excommunication from the clan. Marriage by capture is practically nil and almost all marriages are performed through negotiations. The system of bride price is not

in vogue, but in the case of rich people bride price in terms of animals has to be paid. But this depends in mutual understanding and as such there is no compulsion. Marriage can take place only after the completion of one year from the date of engagement. On the date of engagement the parents or guardians of the boy have to offer a costly and decorated spear to the parents of the girl and on the day of the marriage again they have to offer two such spears to the parents of the bride. Like the Mikir society divorce, although permissible, is very rare. Child marriage is quite unknown while widows are allowed to remarry provided they pursue the rule of exogamy intact. The minimum marriageable age for a boy is 20 and for a girl 16. Monogamy is the prevailing practice in the Rengma Naga society. Cross-cousin marriage is not preferred.

Family Structure :

The Rengma Nagas follow the patriarchal system of family and as such the father is the head of the family and at his death his sons inherit his property. In case of adoption the child must belong to the same clan of its foster father.

Birth :

After the birth of a child the parents are almost segregated from the whole community till the end of the ninth day of birth. During these nine days the parents cannot talk to anybody outside his family. The villagers also will not visit their house nor talk with them during these nine days. On the tenth day a feast has to be served to the villagers and on this day the child is named also.

Death :

It is customary for them to bury the dead bodies. The burial takes place as soon as all the relatives of the deceased arrive. On this day the villagers have to be offered a feast. The death ceremony comes to a close only on the tenth day. During these nine days the deceased also has to be offered his due share of principal food and every day his share has to be kept in a bundle wrapped with plantain leaf. On the tenth day all these bundles have to be offered to the deceased at his grave. The Rengma Nagas believe that it is on this day only when the soul leaves the body for good.

Religion :

All the Rengma Nagas living within the jurisdiction of the Mikir Hills Sub-division, have embraced Christianity. Before conversion they were animists. To them TERUNYU or JANKROKAN was the highest God. There were smaller gods and goddesses also.

Occupation :

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Rengma Nagas. Like other hill tribes they also practise Jhumming. Wet-lard cultivation is also done to some extent. They are good horticulturists. Orange and pineapple are their major horticultural products. Women are expert weavers and they equally share the strenuous work with their male counterparts. Besides cattle, the Rengma Nagas rear pigs and poultry. Economically they are better off than their neighbouring Mikirs.

Houses :

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Houses :

Their houses are built on raised platforms and in two rows leaving sufficient space in between the two

rows. Although the houses are katcha, they are strongly built with indigenous materials brought from the jungles. They do not have any tendency to shift their villages to the site of Jhum.

Dresses and Ornaments :

The Rengma Nagas have their own traditional dresses and ornaments. But the younger generation has almost given up the wearing of their traditional dresses and ornaments. Therefore, the wearing of these dresses and ornaments has now been confined to the older conservative section only.

Village Administration :

The oldest man of the village is called PETHINYU and maintenance of law and order of the villages is his responsibility. Village disputes are normally settled by the village Council presided over by PETHINYU.

Ceremonies :

Dance and music are indispensable in their day to day life. They also organise a number of important feast and festivals. NYADA (held in December), PI-PE (held in January) LOTSUNG NGA (held in March) and KHONG KEPANG KENNYU (held in November) are the four most important ceremonies that are celebrated by the Rengma Nagas every year in connection with their cultivation.

THE ZEME NAGAS

Origin and Migration :

The Zeme Nagas of the N. C. Hills Sub division originally migrated from the Naga Hills (present

Nagaland) via Manipur and settled down in the north eastern part of the Sub-division and in the hills south of Maibong. They also went as far as the bank of the Kopili river. They lived for many years under the Kachari suzerainty. Along with the decline of the Kachari power, the Zeme Nagas became an easy prey to the warlike Angami Nagas who raided and harassed them constantly. As a result the people of some villages in the north and east migrated to the west and settled in the hills beyond the Diyung Valley.

Linguistically the Zeme Nagas belong to the Tibeto Burman stock of the Mongoloid race. They are classified as one of the Sub tribes of the Kaccha Naga tribe. (Source District Census Handbook 1961, United Mikir and N. C. Hills). They are well built, strong and healthy and have a fair complexion. The Zeme Nagas living in Nagaland call themselves 'ZELIANG'.

Clans :

The Zeme Nagas of the N. C. Hills are divided into six clans of equal status. They are - NPAME, NKUAME, HENEUME, NRIAME, SOGAME & PANME. These clans are exogamous and no marriage can take place between the members of the same clan. As NPAME and MKUAME are regarded as allied clans, marriage between the members of these two clans is not encouraged.

Marriage :

Marriage by negotiation is the prevailing practice among the Zeme Nagas. At the time of negotiation family background and the age of the girl are always taken into account. Bride price has to be paid in terms

of numbers of necklaces, mithuns and sometimes in terms of landed property. Marriage by capture is very rare. Cross cousin marriage is preferred by them.

Family Structure :

The Zeme Nagas follow a patriarchal system of family. The line of descent is traced through the father only and all the children assume the title of their father. The father is the sole authority of the household and next to him stands the eldest son. At the death of the father, only the eldest son inherits the father's property and in return he has to look after his younger brothers and sisters.

Religion :

The native religion of the Zeme Nagas is 'animism'. They believe in the existence of one Supreme God and eight minor Gods subordinate to Him who are associated with health, water, agriculture, wealth, etc. They are very superstitious by nature and they believe in witchcraft and black magic. They also believe in the existence of a spiritual world which is opened to all persons after death who follow an honest and strictly religious life in this world. The Zeme Nagas also believe in the existence of a number of family and village deities to whose appeasement sacrifice is offered from time to time as and when occasions arise.

A small section of the Zeme Nagas has embraced Christianity.

The birth ceremony for a new born child is performed by sacrificing a cock in case of a male child and by sacrificing a hen in case of a female child. The sacrificial rites are performed by the head of the family to which relatives are also invited.

Death :

It has been mentioned earlier that the Zeme Nagas believe in the existence of a Spiritual world. That is to say, they believe in life hereafter. When a person dies, it is considered that the deceased is making a long journey to the spiritual world. As the journey is a long one provision of food has to be made for his use on the way. The relatives of the dead, therefore, prepare a small feast and offer the share of the deceased in a basket. The dead body is put in a coffin and buried in front of the house. Articles used by the deceased during his life time are also buried in the grave. A flat stone slab with some markings is placed on the grave as a symbol of identification of the grave of the deceased.

Dormitories :

The Zeme Nagas have dormitories for bachelors and spinsters. The bachelors' dormitory is called HANGSEUKI and spinsters' dormitory is called LANGSEUKI. All the young unmarried boys and girls have to spend their nights in their respective dormitories and none is allowed to spend nights at home. As soon as a person gets married he or she ceases to be the member of HANGSEUKI or LANGSEUKI as the case may be. These dormitories are in fact the centres of recreational activities of the young unmarried men and women of the village. The members of the Hangseuki are taught the arts of wrestling, dancing, singing and the making of handicrafts, etc. by the elected leaders of the bachelors. In the LANGSEUKI the girls learn the arts of singing and dancing apart from the learning of spinning, weaving etc. Bachelors are not allowed to visit LANGSEUKI and similarly spinsters are also not al-

lowed to visit HANGSEUKI. These dormitories also serve as the guest houses of the village. While male guests from other Zeme Naga villages are accommodated in HANGSEUKI, female guests are accommodated in LANGSEUKI.

Agriculture is the principal occupation of the Zeme Nagas. As wet-land is very scarce they mostly do Jhumming. They raise mixed crops in their Jhum land. They have cows, pigs, and poultry also. But they donot have buffaloes. The women are expert weavers. Necessary cane and bamboo goods are made by the people themselves. Their handicrafts have a very good artistic value.

Village Sites :

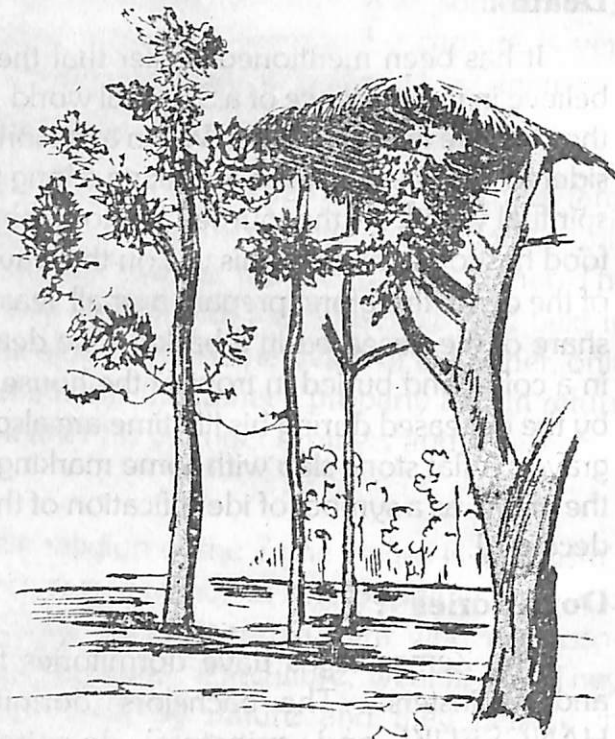
The Zeme Nagas have a liking for the hills rather than for the plains areas. Most of the villages therefore, are established on the breezy hill tops and hill slopes. In the past when village raids were regular features, villages situated on the hill tops provided a better advantage for defence.

Dress, Ornaments :

The Zeme Nagas always put on their traditional dresses and ornaments and their manners and customs are remaining almost unchanged. In fact modern civilization has very little impact on their life and culture. They celebrate six important festivals in a year.

Singing and Dancing :

Singing and dancing are a part and parcel of their daily life. Every youth must learn the art of singing and dancing. Songs are generally divided into five group :



A Watch house in the Jhum Field



A Youth

1. Song relating to romance.
2. Duet between a group of boys and a group of girls.
3. War songs.
4. Legendary songs.
5. Songs in praise of one's deeds of adventure and heroism.

THE KUKIS

Racial Affinity :

Among the tribes which inhabit the N. C. Hills, mention may be made of the Kukis. Their original settlement was Central Asia. They migrated to eastern India through Burma. In Burma the Kukis are known as 'CHIN'. From the point of view of ethnology the Kukies belong to the Mongoloid group (source--District Census Handbook, 1961-(U) Mikir & N. C. Hills). Physically they are strong and stout.

Tribal Division :

The Kukies are sub-divided into 37 groups. They are as follows :--- 1. Baite or Biete, 2. Changsan, 3. Chongloi, 4. Doungel, 5. Gamalhou, 6. Gangte, 7. Quite, 8. Hanneng, 9. Haokip or Haupt, 10. Haolai, 11. Hengna, 12. Hong-sungh, 13. Hrangkhwal or Rangkhoh, 14. Jongbe, 15. Khawchung, 16. Khawathlang or Khothalong, 17. Khelma, 18. Kholhou, 19. Kipgen, 20. Kuki, 21. Lengthang, 22. Lhangum, 23. Lhoujem,

24. Lhouvun, 25. Lupheng, 26. Manjel, 27. Misao, 28. Riang, 29. Sairhem, 30. Selnam, 31. Singson, 32. Sithlhou, 33. Sukte, 34. Thado, 35. Thangeu, 36. Uibuh, 37. Vaiphei. Each group has a number of clans and each clan has a number of sub-clans. They do not follow exogamy strictly. Marriage between the members of the same clan is permissible.

Marriage :

From the point of view of marriage the Kukis are monogamous. Divorce and widow-marriage are permissible. Formerly marriages were fixed by the parents of the boys and the girls in their early ages and the actual marriages took place when they grew up. But now-a-days marriages are fixed only when they are sufficiently grown up. Marriage by negotiation and cross-cousin marriage are preferred.

Family Structure :

The Kukis follow the patriarchal system of family structure. At the death of the father, the sons inherit the property.

Religion :

From the point of view of religion the Kukis can be said to be animists. Every disease has a presiding spirit and at the time of sickness animals are sacrificed to appease the concerned spirit. Besides, they also worship one Supreme Being in the indistinct terms of their belief. A great majority of them have already been converted into Christianity by the foreign Missionaries. Owing to the acceptance of Christianity considerable changes in the socio-economic life of the Kuki people have taken place.

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Occupation :

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Kukis. They practise Jhumming in the neighbouring hills of their abodes. They are good horticulturists. They produce fruits like oranges pineapples, etc. in large quantities. Economically they are not so well off. They have good carpenters and blacksmiths among them. The women are expert weavers and almost all the necessary cloths of the family are produced by them in their indigenous looms.

Village Structure :

The Kukis like to live in the hilly places. A Kuki village presents the view of a cluster of houses closely constructed preferably on a hill top which from the point of view of defence is always in an advantageous position. The houses are built with wooden posts and on wooden planks. Bamboo is used for the superstructure. Each family has only one house which does not have any partition inside. The village headman exercises wide powers and is held in high esteem by the villagers.

Dress, Ornaments, Dance and Music :

The Kukis like other tribes of Assam, have their traditional dresses, ornaments, dance and music. But at present only the women folk put on their traditional dresses. They also do not seem to have made any effort for the upkeep of their traditional dance and music.

THE HMARS**Racial Affinity and Migration :**

Some regions of the N. C. Hills sub-division of the United Mikir & N. C. Hills district are inhabited by the people belonging to the Hmar tribe. The Hmar belong to the Mongoloid group and they came to this part of the State through Burma and Manipur.

Clans, Exogamy and Marriage :

They are divided into 12 clans like PANGAMTE, RENGSATE, PAZAMATE, PHENATE, KHABUNG, LUNGTHRAULE, LUNGSUNG, etc. These clans are exogamous. But they do not follow exogamy strictly. Although as a rule of exogamy there can be no marriage among the members of the same clan, this rule is not strictly followed. If a boy wants to marry a girl belonging to the same clan at first he will be persuaded to give up the idea. But if he still insists he will be allowed to marry the girl by his parents and elders with great reluctance. Cross-cousin marriage is always preferred. Monogamy is very strictly followed. There is provision for divorce also in the customary law.

Formerly bride price was paid in terms of goods and animals. But now-a-days it is paid in cash which varies from a minimum of Rs. 200/- to a maximum of Rs. 500/-. The bride price for the youngest daughter is always high.

Naming Ceremony :

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maternal uncle who is specially invited to this ceremony to give a name to the child. The name given to the new born child by the maternal uncle is a preferential one.

Religion :

Before the acceptance of Christianity the religion followed by the Hmars was animism---and their god was PATHIEN. He was widely worshipped and sacrifices were made to him for his appeasement. At present almost all the Hmars of the N. C. Hills are found to be Christians. They have churches in their villages and the religious rites are performed only in the Christian way.

Economic conditions :

The Hmars are very laborious and economically they are in a better position than the other tribes of the district. They practise Jhumming and most of the families have nice horticultural gardens. Like other tribes they do not indulge in rice-brewing and drinking of liquor has almost been given up by the younger generation.

Houses :

Their houses are generally built on wooden planks. Each family has a single house the length of which is more than three times the breadth with necessary partitions inside. They usually like to live on the hill tops.

Dance, Music, Dress and Ornaments :

The Hmars have their traditional dance and music, dress and ornaments, etc. But unfortunately their traditional dance and music are almost forgotten by the

present generation. Only the women are found to put on their traditional dresses and ornaments.

THE GAROS

Introduction :

The Garo Villages in the United Mikir & N. C. Hills District are confined into the Neparpatty area within the jurisdiction of the Bokajan T. D. Block. As per 1961 Census the Garo population in this district is 3,326 only. The Garos are believed to belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of people.

Migration :

The origin of the Garo families at present living in the Neparpatty area can be traced back to the Garo Hills.

At the initial stage of opening up of the Kakodonga Tea Estate in the Golaghat Sub-division of the Sibsagar District some Garo persons from the Garo hills were recruited by the tea garden authority. Their family members also came along with them. Later on they had given up their jobs in the tea garden and taken up paddy cultivation in the Kakodonga area. From there they migrated to the Mikir Hills in search of good cultivable land at the beginning of the present century and settled permanently in the Neparpatty area.

Tribal Division and Clans :

The Garos are divided into seven sub-tribes, namely Awe, Chisak, Megam, Ruga, Atong, Matchi and Abeng.

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In Garo, a clan is called Mahari. The Garos have three broad clans among them. They are Momin, Marak and Sangma. Each clan is again sub-divided into some subclans.

Marriage :

The Garos follow exogamy very strictly and hence intermarriage within the same clan is a taboo. Marriage by negotiation is the prevailing practice. Cross-cousin marriage is preferred to other types of marriages. Although there is no bar to polygyny, the Garo people inhabiting this district are found to be monogamous. There is no bar to intermarriage between a son and a daughter of the same father provided their mothers belong to separate clans.

Family Structure :

The Garos follow the matriarchal system of family structure. Hence the mother is the head of the family and all the property of the family belongs to the mother only. At her death her daughters and not her sons, will inherit the property. As soon as a man gets married he automatically becomes a member of his wife's family and his children will acquire the title of his wife's clan only.

Religion :

All the Garos living within the jurisdiction of this district have already embraced Christianity. Formerly their traditional religion was animism. They believed in one Supreme Being whom they called 'SALGONG'. There were also a number of smaller spirits and deities. Sacrifices were offered by the 'KAMAL' (priest) for the appeasement of these deities and spirits.

Death :

The death of a person is an occasion for mourning for them. Now-a-days they bury the dead bodies in accordance with the Christian rites. But before the acceptance of Christianity they used to cremate the dead bodies. And cremation would take place only when all the relatives of the deceased arrived. The expenses of the cremation ceremony and the death ceremony (to be observed within one year from the date of death) are to be borne by the relatives of the female clan.

Occupation :

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Garos living in this district. A few persons have taken up small business also. They do only wet land cultivation as the area of their habitat is flattish and almost plains like, besides paddy they cultivate cash crops and various types of vegetables. They have nice horticultural gardens also. There are many progressive cultivators among them. Some of them have their own tractors and power pumps for irrigation purpose. The women are very expert weavers.

The Garo people rear cattle and poultry also. They are found to be very laborious. Their housing condition is also good. Some of them have pucca houses. In fine, economically they are better off.

THE KHASIS AND THE JAINTIAS

Introduction :

According to the 1961 Census the number of people belonging to the Khasi and the Jaintia tribes in the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is 3,931 only. The people belonging to these two tribes are found to inhabit in those areas of the Amreng and Socheng T.D. Blocks in the Mikir Hills and the N. C. Hills which are adjacent to the border of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. Linguistically the Khasis and the Jaintias are believed to belong to the Austro-Asiatic group of people.

It may be mentioned here that the Khasis and the Jaintias being the followers of matriarchal system of family structure bear the names of their mothers' clan.

Clans & Marriage

The Khasis and the Jaintias have a good number of clans. Each clan is composed of those persons who are descendents from the same female ancestor. These clans are exogamous and hence marriage among the members of the same clan is a taboo. Violation of this taboo is viewed as a crime of very grave nature.

From the point of view of marriage the Khasis and the Jaintias are monogamous. Marriage by negotiation is the prevailing practice. According to Khasi customary law after marriage the son-in-law has to stay with his wife in his mother-in-law's house till he becomes the father of one or two children. Then he can take his family to his own house. But in case of the Jaintias the son-in-law does not stay in the house of his mother-in-law. He goes there only at night to spend the night with his newly married wife. In their customary law there

are provisions for divorce and widow-marriage.

Family Structure and Inheritance :

I have already mentioned that the Khasis and the Jaintias follow the matriarchal system of family structure. Hence mother is the head of the family and all the property of the family belongs to her. If a man, remains with his mother, his earnings will have to be given to his mother and not to his wife even if he is married. At the death of the mother the daughters, and not the sons, inherit her property. The larger share, of course, goes to the youngest daughter. A couple, having no daughter, can adopt a girl of another family as their daughter. But the girl must belong to the clan of her foster mother.

Religion :

From the point of view of religion the Khasis and the Jaintias are animists. They not only worship the spirits of the natural objects but worship the spirits of their ancestors also. Their priest is called 'LYNGDOH', 'SHILLONG' God is considered to be the most powerful among the mountain deities. 'THLEN' is a serpent spirit. It is worshipped for the purpose of gaining material wealth. Formerly human sacrifices were made for the appeasement of this spirit.

A good number of people belonging to the Khasi and Jaintia tribes of this district have already embraced Christianity. And along with the conversion they have also given up their traditional religious rites and customs.

Birth :

The birth of a child is an occasion for rejoicing for the whole family. The traditional name giving ceremony

is very important. It is to be performed preferably on the day of the birth of the child if possible. An old man allows rice beer to fall on the ground from a gourd and the assembled people utter some names. The name which synchronizes with the falling of the last drop of rice beer from the gourd is considered appropriate.

Death :

The death of a person is an occasion for mourning. When a person dies his relatives are informed. The corpse is retained at home for several days during which religious rites including the sacrifice of animals, offering of food, etc. are performed. The dead bodies are generally cremated. After cremation the bones of the deceased are collected by the relatives and later on leave them in the ancestral sepulchre. Those who have embraced Christianity, bury the dead bodies in accordance with the Christian ways.

Occupation :

The Khasis and the Jaintia who inhabit this district are mainly agriculturists. Some of them are petty traders also. Like other hill tribes they are also Jhummers. Besides paddy they cultivate potato, orange, pineapple, betelnuts and betel leaves, etc. They also cultivate vegetables to a considerable extent. They also rear cattle and poultry. But they do not consume milk and the milk products till to-day. The women are expert weavers. They are found to be more laborious than the men.

Dress Ornaments:

The Khasis and the Jaintias have their own traditional dresses and ornaments. The old people, both men, and women, are still fond of their traditional

dresses and ornaments and put them on. But the young people, specially the young men, prefer to put on modern dresses. Of course, during festivals all participating persons, old and young alike, are found to put on their traditional dresses and ornaments.

Dance, Music, and Festivals :

The Khasis and the Jaintias are two very colourful tribes of Assam. Culturally they are quite rich. Dance and music play an important role in their day to day life. The most colourful dance of the Khasis is 'NAKRAM' dance which continues for several days. This dance is held annually. Among the Jaintias also there is a similar annual dance called 'LAHO'.

THE MIZOS

As per 1961 census the number of population belonging to the Mizo tribe in this district is 284 only and most of them are found to inhabit in the N. C. Hills Sub-division. The Mizos originally migrated to the Lusai Hills (Mizo Hills) from the Chin Hills of Burma.

Terminology :

Formerly the Mizos were known as Lusais. 'LU' means head and 'SAI' means long. The term 'LUSAI', therefore, literally means people having long heads. The literal meaning of the term 'MIZO' means habitat of men. 'MI' means man and 'zo, means place of inhabitation.

Marriage :

Like the Kukis, the Mizos also do not follow exogamy strictly. This is to say, marriage between the

members of the same clan is permissible although not so much favoured. From the point of view of marriage they are monogamous although there is no bar to polygyny. Marriage by consent is the prevailing practice among them. Bride price is paid in terms of cash and animals as well. The women are always treated with respect and they are as free as the male members of the society. But yet the incest is found to be very rare. In their customary law there are provisions for divorce and widow marriage. But a widow cannot remarry for a period of three months from the date of death of her husband.

Family Structure and Inheritance :

The Mizos follow the patriarchal system of family structure. Hence the father is the head of the family and his authority is the supreme. Their customary law of inheritance is somewhat peculiar in nature. At the death of the father all the sons cannot inherit the paternal property. Only the youngest son can inherit the paternal property.

Religion :

All the Mizos living within the jurisdiction of this district are found to be Christians. Prior to their conversion they were animists. They believed in a number of good and evil spirits and for their appeasement sacrifices were made to them by their priests from time to time as and when occasions demanded. Among the evil spirits 'RAMHOIA' was the chief while among the good spirits 'KHUAWANG' was the chief. The Mizos also believed in one Supreme Being. They also believe in the life hereafter.

Death:

When a person dies his relatives are informed immediately. The burial takes place when all the relatives of the deceased arrive. If the deceased cannot be buried on the day of death owing to some unavoidable reasons, the young people of the village have to keep vigil throughout the whole night. The grave is dug by the young people by giving voluntary labour. A tombstone is kept on the grave yard.

Occupation :

By occupation the Mizos living in this district are agriculturists. They practise jhumming wherein they raise mixed crops besides rice. They are found to be very laborious. The women are also very industrious and they are no way inferior to the men. The Mizos are also very good horticulturists. Pineapples and oranges are produced by them in large quantities.

The women are expert weavers. Most of the domestic requirements of cloths are produced by them in their loin looms. Yarns required are also spun by them from cotton grown in their fields.

The Mizos are also found to rear pigs and birds. Bamboo and cane products play an important role in their economic life.

Dress and Ornaments :

The Mizos have their own traditional dresses and ornaments. But at present the use of their traditional dresses and ornaments are confined to the fair sex only. They have also their traditional dance and music. Festivals like 'TOLKUT' and 'SA-POSARKUT' play an important role in their social life.

Village and Houses :

The Mizos, like the other tribes of Assam like to live in the hill tops. Each village has a church. Their houses are built on raised platforms. The houses are quite spacious but there are no partitions inside. The houses are very well kept and the sanitation is fairly good.

THE LALUNGS**Introduction**

The Lalungs are found to inhabit mainly the Amri area of the Mikir Hills Sub-division. Some Lalungs are found scattered in the plains districts of Assam also. They appear to be more akin to the Mikirs and in some villages the Mikirs and the Lalungs are found to live side by side. From the points of view of manners, customs and traditions there are more similarities than differences between these two tribes. But the fundamental difference between these two tribes lies in the system of family structure. While the Mikirs have the patriarchal system of family structure, the Lalungs have the matriarchal system of family structure. Further, the Lalungs have their own dialect which is in no way similar to that of the Mikirs. On the other hand the Lalungs seem to be closely connected with the Kacharis inhabiting the foot of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It is however, believed that their original habitat was in the Jaintia Hills.

Clans :

In their dialect a clan is called KUL. They have five KULS : 1. LIMA, 2. MITHI, 3. CHARIBHAI, 4. PARMESH SEARONG and 5. MATHLAI.

Marriage :

These clans are exogamous and hence no marriage can take place between the members of the same clan. They have totemic clans also. Monogamy is the prevailing practice although there is no bar to having more than one wife. But cases of polygyny are very rare. The younger brother can marry the widow of his elder brother but not vice versa. Cross cousin marriage is always preferred. Bride price as such is not prevalent. Marriage between the Lalungs and the Mikirs is allowed freely.

Family Structure :

It has already been mentioned that the Lalungs have a matriarchal system of family structure. As such at the death of the mother, the daughters inherit the property. The wife and not the husband is the head of the family.

The line of descent is also traced through the female members only.

Birth :

When a child is born, the mother is regarded unclean till the umbilical cord of the new born is dropped. The purification ceremony of the mother is held as soon as it is found that the naval of the new born is dropped. In this ceremony one egg and two hens have to be sacrificed.

While the dead bodies of the aged persons are cremated those of younger ones are buried. The death ceremony of the deceased has to be performed within one or two years of the death according to the convenience of the family concerned. The minimum number of pigs necessary for this ceremony is four. A large quantity of liquor is also essential. The members of the whole clan of the deceased have to help and participate in the performance of the death ceremony.

Occupation :

Like other tribes in Assam agriculture is their mainstay. They do both types of cultivation, wet land as well as Jhumming. In their Jhum they cultivate mixed crops. Most of the Lalung families rear Endi and it is a good source of income for them. The women know spinning and weaving. They spin yarn from the cotton acquired from their cultivation and weave cloths which is sufficient for their annual domestic requirements. They have their blacksmiths and carpenters among them. Their bamboo and cane products are of high standard. But inspite of all these they are economically backward and their economic condition is far from satisfactory.

Religion :

The Lalungs follow Hinduism in its crude form and worship a number of gods and goddesses. But a considerable section has also embraced Christianity.

Village Administration :

All the village matters and disputes are settled by the Village Council which is formed with the aged male persons of the village and which is presided over by

the Gaonbura (village headman). The decision of the Council is final. Matters and disputes of minor nature are decided by the village headman without the help of the Village Council.

Dress, Ornaments and Music :

The Lalungs have their own traditional dresses and ornaments. The Lalung women generally like to put on cloths of one colour only. Besides, they have their own dance, music and musical instruments.

N. B. -The Lalungs have a king now-a-days also. He resides in a village called Na-Khola near Jagiroad. Now he lives like an ordinary Lalung. But on the day of the Darbar he puts on the royal dress and his subjects show all the respect due to a king on this particular day. The Darbar is held once in a year in a place called Hilsang situated in between Nelli and Dharamtul by the side of the National Highway-37. All the seats meant for the officers and the king are made of flat stones.)

THE SHYAMS OR AITUNIAS**Introduction :**

The Shyams are otherwise known as Aitunias. They mainly inhabit in the plains area of Barpathar and Balipathar within the Jurisdiction of the Mikir Hills Sub-division. The Shyams have not been declared as a scheduled tribe under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. But they have more or less all the characteristics of a tribe and during the visit of the PATASKAR COMMISSION to Diphu in the month of December 1965, the leaders of this community had submitted a representation to the Commission

wherein a request was made to consider the question of declaring the Shyams as a Scheduled tribe. I therefore, consider it appropriate to include here a brief anthropological note on this community also.

Origin :

As the name itself indicates, the Shyams originally belong to Shyam or Thailand, a neighbouring country of Burma. It is believed that they migrated to Assam along with the Ahoms.

Marriage :

The Shyams do not have any clans like the other tribal communities. Therefore, the question of exogamy does not arise here. Although cross-cousin marriage is preferred, no marriage can take place among the close relations. Marriage is celebrated at night only in their own traditional way. The system of bride price does seem to be prevalent. Marriage generally takes place after negotiations between the two concerned families. To a lesser extent marriage by capture is also found to be prevalent. Child marriage is unknown and there is no bar to widow-marriages. They practise monogamy.

Family Structure :

The Shyams have a patriarchal system of family structure and therefore, property is inherited by the sons after the death of their father. The line of descent is also traced through the male members.

Religion :

By religion, the Shyams are Buddhists and they have Pagoda like monasteries where all the religious festivals are held. Their head priest is called CHAMUN and

when he visits a Shyam village he has to reside only in the village monastery.

Birth :

For a new born child they do not hold any ceremony. Of course, they perform the naming ceremony and it is performed on a major scale in accordance with the economic status of the family.

Death :

The dead bodies of the aged persons are cremated, while those of younger ones are buried. The death ceremony has to be completed within seven days of the death of the person. The death ceremony is purely a mourning ceremony and as such it is not associated with any dance and music except the offering of a moderate scale feast to the villagers.

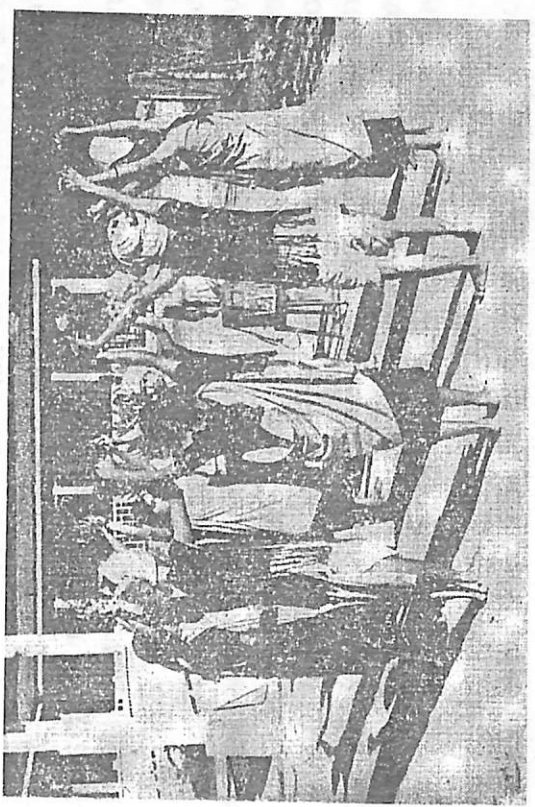
Occupation :

The main occupation of the people of the Shyam community is agriculture. They do only wet-land cultivation and they do not practise jhuming. Women are expert weavers and it is their subsidiary occupation. Their economic condition, as a whole is satisfactory and far better than that of the neighbouring Mikirs.

Customs and Tradition :

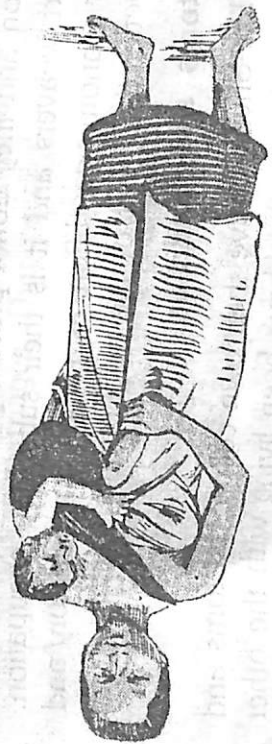
The Shyams have their own culture, customs and traditions. But as they have been living with the other Assamese people for generation together, assimilation to a considerable extent has taken place. Now-a-days they celebrate almost all the Assamese community festivals. They have their traditional dresses also. But the male members have already given up the wearing

Mikir Youth Performing a Dance



confined to the aged persons only. But now-a-days the younger members to keep their bodies and to wear their traditional dresses and ornaments. It is also

A Mikir Woman and a Child



Occupation

The main occupation of the people of the Mikir is agriculture. They do not depend on any other source of income. The women are engaged in spinning and weaving. The death of the person is not considered as a calamity. The death occurs after seven days of illness. The bodies of the aged persons are cremated. The new born child is named after the father.

A Dimas a Kachari Girl



of traditional dresses while the women are still found to wear their traditional dresses and ornaments. It is also customary for male members to keep hair locks and to put on turbans. But now-a-days this practice is mainly confined to the aged persons only.

CHAPTER III

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The United Mikir and N.C. Hills District is one of the four autonomous hill districts of Assam, the others being the Garo Hills, Mizo Hills and the United K & J Hills. As such the pattern of administration is somewhat different from that of the plains districts of Assam.

Like the plains district the Deputy Commissioner of the United Mikir & N. C. Hills District with his headquarter at Diphu is the head of the district and the maintenance of law and order in the district is his primary responsibility. All the heads of the district departments have to regard him as their immediate officer. He is also the District Magistrate and has to function as the Session Judge of the district. There are a number of subordinate officers under him who help him in his administrative work. There is a Sub-divisional Officer at Haflong the Sub-Divisional headquarter of the N. C. Hills Sub-division, who is also the Sub-divisional Magistrate.

However, with the creation of the District Council some of the responsibilities of the Deputy Commissioner were vested with the Councils in accordance with the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The Deputy Commissioner is also helped by a Police force headed by a Superintendent of Police in the maintenance of law and order in the district and in the prevention and detection of crimes. There are six Police Stations and five Outposts throughout the whole district. The Sub-division-wise break-up is as follows :

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

Police Stations.	Outposts
1. Diphu ...	1. Barpathar
2. Howraghat ...	2. Dokmoka
3. Bokajan	3. Mohendijua
4. Baithalangso ...	4. Donkamokam

N. C. HILLS SUB-DIVISION

1. Haflong	1. Garampani
2. Maibong	

The Police Station and outposts are manned by the Civil Police whose primary duty is to maintain law and order in their respective area.

There is also an armed branch police and the personnel of this branch are detailed for treasury guard duties at Diphu and Haflong, for escorting convicts and to assist the Civil Police in the maintenance of law and order, as and where necessary. Besides, the armed branch personnel are also deputed to help the officials of the Excise Department in conducting raids and to help the civil authorities in eviction operation.

There is also a DSB staff which is mainly dealing with the political affairs, collecting of intelligence etc.

DISTRICT COUNCILS

The autonomous District Councils operating in the four autonomous hills districts of Assam are created in accordance with the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The functions of these autonomous bodies are clearly laid down in the Sixth Schedule itself. Broadly the functions and powers of a District Council can be divided under four main heads—Legisletive, Executive, Financial and Judicial.



Mikir's Giving Chief Minister a Traditional Welcome.



Mikir Youth in Traditional Dress with Shields and Swords.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS

The District Council for an autonomous district in respect of all areas within the district shall have the power to make laws with respect to—

- (a) The allotment, occupation, or use or the setting apart of land other than any land which is a reserved forest, for the purpose of agriculture or grazing, or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town.
- (b) The management of any forest not being a reserved forest.
- (c) The use of any canal or water course for the purpose of agriculture.
- (d) The regulation of the practice of Jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation.
- (e) The establishment of village or town committees or councils and their powers.
- (f) Any other matter relating to village or town administration including village or town policies and public health and sanitation.
- (g) The appointment or succession of chief or headman.
- (h) The inheritance of property.
- (i) Marriage.
- (j) Social customs,
- (k) The District Council has also been empowered to frame laws to regulate and control money lending and trading by persons other than the scheduled tribes.

EXECUTIVE POWERS

The District Council may establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, road and waterways in the

district and in particular may prescribe the language and manner in which primary education should be imparted in the primary schools of the district.

FINANCIAL POWERS

The District Council has been allotted specific items of revenue for the efficient discharge of its functions and to meet necessary expenses. The following Financial powers have been vested with the District Councils :

(a) Powers to assess and collect revenue and impose taxes

The District Council in respect of all lands within the district shall have the power to assess and collect revenue in respect of such lands in accordance with the principles for the time being followed by the Government of Assam in assessing lands for the purposes of land revenue in the State of Assam generally.

The District Council shall have the power to levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, and tolls on persons residing within such areas.

It shall have the power to levy and collect all or any or the following taxes(—)

1. taxes on profession, trades, callings and employments.
2. Taxes on entry of goods into a market for sale therein and tolls on passengers and goods carried in ferries.
3. Taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads.
4. Licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for, or extracting minerals. The District Council shall have the right of sharing the royalties accrued each year from licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for, or the extraction of

minerals granted by the Government of Assam in respect of any areas within the autonomous district as may be agreed upon between the Government of Assam and the District Councils.

JUDICIAL POWERS

(District Court and Village Councils or Courts)

(a) The District Council for an autonomous district in respect of areas within the district may constitute village councils or courts for the trial of suits and cases between the parties all of whom belong to the scheduled tribes within such areas. It may appoint suitable persons to be members of such village council or presiding officers of such courts and may also appoint such officers as may be necessary for administration of the laws made under the legislative powers.

(b) The District Council shall exercise the powers of a court of appeal in respect of all suits and cases triable by the village council or court constituted and no other court except the High Court of Assam and Nagaland and the Supreme Court of India shall have jurisdiction over such suits and cases.

(c) The District Council may with the previous approval of the Governor of Assam make rules regulating—

- (i) The constitution of village councils or courts and the powers to be exercised by them.
- (ii) The procedure to be followed by village councils or courts in the trial of suits and cases.
- (iii) The procedure to be followed by the District Council or any court constituted by such council in appeals and other proceedings.

(iv) The enforcement of decisions and orders of such councils and courts.

(d) The Governor may, for the trial of suits or cases arising out of any law in force in any autonomous district or region being a law specified in that behalf by the Governor or for the trial of offences punishable with death, transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term of not less than five years under the Indian Penal Code or under any other law for the time being applicable to such district or region, confer on the District Council having authority over such district or region or on courts constituted by such District Council or on any officer appointed in that behalf by the Governor, such powers under the Code of Civil Procedure 1898, as he deems appropriate, and thereupon the said council, court or officer shall try the suits, cases or offences in exercise of the powers so conferred.

THE MIKIR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Mikir Hills District Council, with its headquarters at Diphu was formally inaugurated by Shri Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam, on 23rd June 1952.

The District Council for the Mikir Hills consists of sixteen members, twelve of whom are to be elected and the four nominated with a view to provide representation to the minorities who constitute a considerable proportion of the total population of the Sub-division. The following are the twelve constituencies from which members are elected to the District Council.

1. Mikir Hills (Block II)
2. Duaramla
3. West Rongkhong
4. Eastern Rongkhong and Lanka

5. Mikir Hills (Block I)
6. Duarbamuni-Duar Salona-Duarbaguri of formerly Nowgong District.
7. Nomati
8. Duardikharu, West Rengma, Duardisa, West Langpher
9. Duarbagori of formerly Sibsagar District.
10. Naga Rengma, East Rengma, Barpathar
11. Borjan, Sarupathar
12. Jamunapar, Langfer, Lunding

A proposal to increase the Mikir Hills District Council constituencies from 12 to 18 and to increase the number of the nominated members from 4 to 6 is under the active consideration of the Mikir Hills District Council. Thus the proposed strength of membership of the District Council would be 24 instead of the present strength of 16. The delimited constituencies under the proposal would be as follows :

1. Mikir Hills (Block II)
2. Jamunapar
3. Langsar
4. West Rongkhong
5. Duarbamuni-Duarsalana
6. Sarupathar-Barpathar
7. East Rengma-Naga Rengma-Barpathar
8. Duarbagari
9. Namati (South)
10. Namati (North)
11. East Rongkhong
12. Hawaipur-East Rongkhong
13. Duarmala (Block II)
14. Block II
15. Duar Dikharu-West Rengma
16. Duar Disha-West Rengma

17. Barjan (East)

18. Barjan (West)

The Deputy Commissioner of the Mikir and N. C. Hills acted as the chairman of the District Council for a period of six years, with powers to guide deliberations and actions of the Council, subject to the control of the Government for that period. This had been done, so that in the initial stages, the District Council may avail itself of the knowledge and guidance of experienced officers. The Deputy Commissioner still functions as the Returning Officer in respect of the District Council election.

The tenure of the District Council is for five years unless it is dissolved earlier. The District Council has a chairman and a Deputy Chairman who are elected by the members of the council in accordance with the provisions of the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951.

The Executive Committee consists of one Chief Executive member and two other Executive Members. The Chief Executive Member is elected by the members of the District Council and the two other members are appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Executive Member from amongst the members of the District Council. But the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman are not eligible to hold office either as Chief Executive Member or as a Member of the Executive Committee.

Portfolios like forest, education, communication, water supply legislation, finance, revenue, etc., are allocated among the Chief Executive Member and the two other Executive Members.

The Mikir Hills District Council has a Secretary who is a member of the Assam Civil Service and who functions as Secretary to the Executive Committee also. A secretary

to the legislative wing of the District Council who is also a member of the A. C. S. has also been posted.

The Mikir Hills District Council has so far enacted a number of Acts, Rules and Regulations which have not only opened new sources of revenue but have brought much benefits to the inhabitants as well. Besides, some acts have improved the lot of the employees of the District Council to a considerable extent. Some laws passed by the Assam Legislature have also been adopted by the District Council with suitable modification to suit the local situations and requirements. A list of Acts, Rules and Regulations so far enacted by the Mikir Hills District Council is given below :

1. The Mikir Hills (Land and Revenue) Act, 1953
2. The Mikir Hills (Land and Revenue) (Amendment) Act, 1958
3. The Mikir Hills (Land and Revenue) (2nd Amendment) Act, 1959
4. The Mikir Hills (Land and Revenue) (3rd Amendment) Act, 1965
5. The Mikir Hills (Money Lending by Non-Tribals) Regulation, 1953
6. The Mikir Hills (Money Lending by Non-Tribals) Rules, 1955
7. The Mikir Hills Carts, Cycles and Boat (Taxation) Act, 1954
8. The Mikir Hills District (Transfer of Land) Regulation, 1955
9. The Mikir Hills District (Transfer of Land) Act, 1959
10. The Mikir Hills (Local Rate) Regulation, 1953
11. The Mikir Hills Grazing Regulation, 1954
12. The Mikir Hills District (Revenue Assessment) Regulation, 1952

13. The Mikir Hills District (Jhumming) Regulation, 1954
14. The Mikir Hills (Autonomous District) Administration of Justice Rules, 1954
15. The Mikir Hills District (Christian Marriage) Act, 1962
16. The Mikir Hills District (Forest) Act, 1957
17. The Mikir Hills Market (Management and Control) Act, 1954
18. The Mikir Hills District (Constitution of Town Committee) Rule, 1958
19. The Mikir Hills (Trading by Non-Tribals) Regulation, 1953
20. The Mikir Hills (Trading by Non-Tribals Amendment) Regulation, 1963
21. The Mikir Hills (Trading by Non-Tribals) Rules, 1956
22. The Mikir Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) Act, 1958
23. The Mikir Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1959
24. The Mikir Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) (2nd Amendment) Act, 1964
25. The Mikir Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) Act, 1958
26. The Mikir Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) (2nd Amendment) Act, 1961
27. The Mikir Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) Act, 1962
28. The Mikir Hills District (Chairman & Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) Act, 1963
29. The Mikir Hills District (Salary & Allowances of Executive Members') Act, 1957

30. The Mikir Hills District (Salary & Allowances of Executive Members') (1st Amendment) Act, 1963
31. The Mikir Hills District (Salary & Allowances of Executive Members') (2nd Amendment) Act, 1964
32. The Mikir Hills District (Salary & Allowances of Executive Members') (3rd Amendment) Act, 1965.
33. The Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (Amendment) Act, 1957
34. The Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (2nd Amendment) Act, 1957
35. The Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (3rd Amendment) Act, 1958
36. The Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (4th Amendment) Act, 1958
37. The Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (5th Amendment) Act, 1961
38. Amendment to the Mikir Hills District Fund Rules, 1952
39. Amendment to the Mikir Hills (Trading by Non-Tribals) Rules. 1956.
40. Amendment (Further) to the Mikir Hills (Trading by non-Tribals) Rules, 1956
41. Adoption of Assam Town & Country Planning Act, 1953 (with modifications to suit local condition)
42. Adoption of Assam Town & Country Planning Act, 1959 (with modifications to suit local conditions)
43. The Mikir Hills District (Profession, Trades, Callings and Employment) Taxation Act, 1961

THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The North Cachar Hills District Council was formally inaugurated on the 29th April 1952 by the then Chief Minister of Assam. Till the Election held in February 1968, the District Council consisted of sixteen members, twelve of whom were elected on the basis of the universal adult suffrage and the remaining four were nominated by the Government. The nominations are made in consultation with the elected representatives, bearing in mind the paramount importance of ensuring the stability of the Council and also the need for according representation to those important interest in the area which fail to secure representation through elections.

The following were the twelve constituencies from which members were elected to the District Council :

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Haflong | 2. Kalachand |
| 3. Mahur | 4. Khunglung |
| 5. Laisong | 6. Maibong |
| 7. Hajadisa | 8. Langting |
| 9. Lobong' | 10. Gunjung |
| 11. Garampani Christian Villages | 12. Harangajow |

The present District Council of the N. C. Hills consists of 22 members- 20 of whom are elected and the remaining 2 nominated by the Government. The newly delimited constituencies of the N. C. Hills District Council are as follows :

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Haflong | 2. Barali |
| 3. Mahur | 4. Jinam valley |
| 5. Laisong | 6. Boro Ninglo |
| 7. Maibong (East) | 8. Maibong (West) |
| 9. Hajadisha | 10. Wajao |
| 11. Kalachand | 12. Langting |

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 13. Diyungmukh | 14. Lobong |
| 15. Gunjung | 16. Dihangi |
| 17. Hadingma | 18. Dihamlai |
| 19. Harangajao | 20. Kharthong |

Under the provision of the constitution the Sub-Divisional Officer of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division was the Chairman of the District Council for a period of six years from the date it was first constituted. During that period, subject to the control of the Governor, he had power to guide the Council in its deliberation and actions. This special provision was made with a view to providing the District Council with advice and guidance of experienced officers so that the affairs of the District Council could be conducted smoothly in its initial stage. The Sub-Divisional Officer of the N.C. Hills Sub-Division still functions as the Returning Officer in respect of District Council Elections.

The tenure for the District Council is five years unless it is dissolved earlier. The District Council has a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman who are elected by the members of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Council) Rules, 1951.

The Executive Committee consists of one Chief Executive Member and two other Executive Members. The Chief Executive Member is elected by the members of the District Council and the two members are appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Executive Member from amongst the members of the District Council. But the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman are not eligible to hold office either as Chief Executive Member or as a Member of the Executive Committee.

The N. C. Hills District Council has a court also which was founded on 1.3.56. The District Council court is

headed by a Judge. There is also a subordinate District Council court headed by a sub-judge. While the judge is appointed by the District Council on a permanent basis, the sub-judge is deputed by the Government of Assam from among the members of the Assam Civil Service (II)

The following Rules, Regulations and Acts have so far been passed and enacted by the N. C. Hills District Council-

RULES

1. The Assam Autonomous District (Constitution of District Council) Rules, 1951
2. Amendment to the Constitution of District Council Rules, 1951
3. The North Cachar Hills Autonomous District (Administration of Justice) Rules, 1955
4. The North Cachar Hills (Trading by Non-Tribals) Rules, 1955
5. The N. C. Hills District Fund Rules, 1955
6. The N. C. Hills District (Members' Travelling & Halting Allowances) Rules, 1962
7. Modification to the Constitution of District Council Rules, 1962
8. Amendment to the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules 1962
9. The North Cachar Hills District Constitution of Town Committee Rules, 1963.
10. The North Cachar Hills District Employees' Provident Fund Rules, 1964
11. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes on Profession, Trades, Calling and Employment) Rules, 1964.

REGULATIONS

1. The North Cachar Hills Land & Revenue (Adoption of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation) Act, 1953
2. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes) Regulation, 1953
3. The North Cachar Hills District (Revenue Assessment) Regulation, 1953
4. The North Cachar Hills District (Trading by Non-Tribals) Regulation, 1954
5. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes) (Amendment) Regulation, 1955
6. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes) (Amendment) Regulation, 1958
7. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes on entry of Goods into Market) Regulation, 1959
8. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes) (3rd Amendment) Regulation, 1963

ACTS

1. Amendment to the North Cachar Hills Forests (Adoption of Assam Forests (Regulation & Rules) Act, 1953
2. The Constitution of North Cachar Hills District Council (Amendment) Act, 1955
3. The North Cachar Hills District (Salaries & Allowances of Executive Members) Act, 1955
4. The North Cachar Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) Act, 1955
5. The North Cachar Hills District (Members Salary & Allowances) Act, 1955.
6. The Constitution of North Cachar Hills District Council (2nd Amendment) Act, 1956

7. Amendment to the Constitution of District Council (2nd Amendment) Act, 1956
8. The North Cachar Hills District (Administration of Town Committee) Act, 1956
9. The Constitution of North Cachar Hills District Council (3rd Amendment) Act, 1957
10. The Constitution of North Cachar Hills District Council (4th Amendment) Act, 1958
11. The Constitution of North Cachar Hills District Council (5th Amendment) Act, 1958
12. The North Cachar Hills District (Taxes) (Amendment) Act, 1958
13. The North Cachar Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) Act, 1959
14. The North Cachar Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1959
15. The North Cachar Hills District (Christian Marriage) Act, 1960.
16. The North Cachar Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1960
17. The North Cachar Hills District (Chairman's Salary & Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1960
18. The North Cachar Hills District (Chairman's Salary & Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1963
19. The North Cachar Hills District (Deputy Chairman's Salary & Allowances) (2nd Amendment) Act, 1963
20. The North Cachar Hills District (Salary & Allowances of Executive Members) (Amendment) Act, 1963
21. The North Cachar Hills District (Members' Salary & Allowances) (2nd Amendment) Act, 1963
22. The North Cachar Hills District (Appointment of Headmen) Act, 1963

CHAPTER - IV

I. AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

Agriculture is the principal occupation and main source of livelihood of all the tribes living in the Uited Mikir & N. C. Hills District. Their traditional method of cultivation is shifting cultivation which is otherwise known as Jhumming. Although the land is good for Jhumming, the yield is very poor. Because the methods they practise are crude and the implements they use are almost primitive. Besides, the land is infested with pests and insects and sometimes scanty rains hamper the growth of the crops to a great extent. Rice being the staple food, is cultivated in a larger area of land. But, Because of its low yeild the production does not meet the full requirements of the people throughout the whole year. The people raise mixed crops in their Jhums. Along with paddy they generally cultivate maize, sesame, cotton, chilli, pumpkin, ginger, castor etc.

It is very interesting to note that although many changes have been brought about by different agencies including the Government machineries in the post Independence period in the social and economic life of the people of this district, Jhumming remains almost static. For the purpose of Jhumming, jungles are at first felled and then burnt to ashes. Afterwards seeds are broadcast on the ashes. After raising crops for two to three years the plots are left for the growth of jungles and new plots are again prepared for Jhumming. In bygone days Jhumming was not so unproductive as it stands to-day. Because in the past the Jhum cycles were no longer

duration, from 10 to 15 years and hence the land could replenish its lost fertility during this period. But now-a-days owing to increasing pressure of a growing population on land the Jhum cycles become shorter, from 4 to 7 years, and as such it cannot replenish its lost fertility to the full. Therefore, the yield is also less. Jhumming is also associated with grave consequences, like soil erosion, denudation, loss of forest wealth, silting up of river beds etc. Because of constant Jhumming some hills have almost become barren. Unless something is done soon and at a faster rate to minimise unproductive Jhumming to the least extent possible, the situation will prove itself beyond repair and unmanageable as well in course of time.

A few steps have already been undertaken for the purpose of improvement as well as control of Jhum. These steps are enumerated below :

- I. Introduction of the cultivation of cash crops like coffee, black pepper, cashewnut, etc. as a soil conservation measure.
- II. Top-dressing of prepaid Jhum land with chemical fertilisers.
- III. Establishment of compact villages in the plains areas of the district by rehabilitating the people drawn from the hill tops.
- IV. Introduction of terraced cultivation.
- V. Reclamation of waste land suitable for wet land cultivation.

It may also be mentioned here that shifting cultivation has generated a nomadic tendency among the people especially among the Mikirs. In other words, the shifting cultivation is associated with shifting village. Very often the whole village is shifted to the place of their Jhum cultivation. After two or three years the village is shifted

again to the place of their new Jhum site. This nomadic tendency is most harmful as no developmental work of permanent nature can be undertaken for the people of such villages. Such tendency is, therefore, definitely detrimental to the interest and progress of the people.

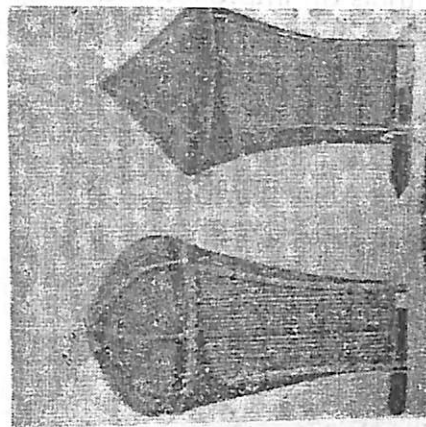
Wet land cultivation is also done where such lands are available, But it is very interesting to note that in the interior regions of the district formerly people were not in habit of ploughing or hoeing their wet lands for cultivation. Instead of ploughing or hoeing, a herd of buffaloes was allowed to trample down the plot until it would become muddy. People surrounded the plot in such a manner that not a single buffalo could leave the plot before the land would become suitable for transplanting of paddy seedlings. When the plot was thus prepared, paddy seedlings were transplanted immediately. Such type of wet land cultivation is bound to be unproductive as the weeds shoot up again within a very short time. Now-a-days of course, such a practice has already been replaced by ploughing. But nevertheless, in some interior parts of the Socheng and Amri Blocks of the district, this practice is still found to be prevalent.

The plains portions of Howraghat and Bokajan areas of the district produce very good sali paddy and in fact, these two areas can be said to be the granaries of the district. Jute and mustard are also cultivated in the plains areas of the district to a considerable extent.

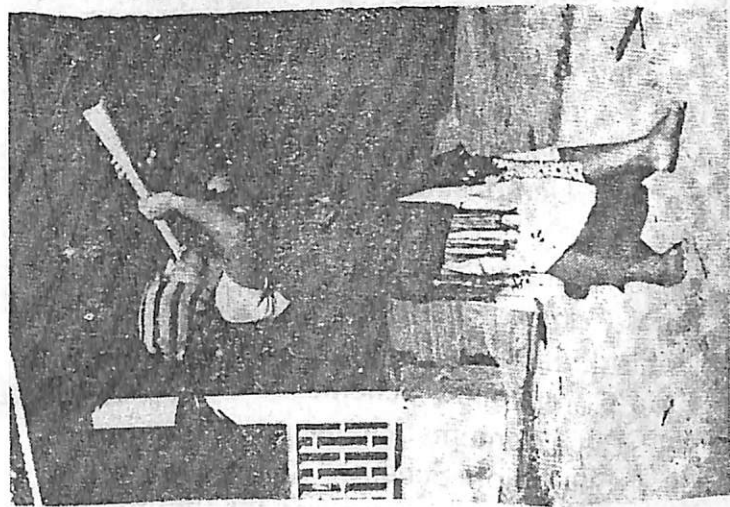
In the N. C. Hills, good varieties of pineapples and oranges are produced to a limited extent.

Lac is also an important product of this district which fetches a substantial revenue in the form of royalty.

There are seven seed farms in the district the primary object of which is to raise improved seeds technically known as 'A' Class seeds for distribution among the



Mikir Cane Baskets for Storing
Valuables.



A Mikir Blowing A Trumpet.

Registered growers. All the nucleus seeds brought from Research Farms are cultivated in these farms. Apart from this, demonstration and trials on improved practices, new varieties, new method and introductory crops are also carried on in these seed farms. A list of the seed farm is given below :

1. Diphu District Seed Farm
2. Tarabasa District Seed Farm
3. Bokajan District Seed Farm
4. Diphu Fruit Nursery
5. Tumpreng Farm
6. Maibong Seed Farm
7. Harangajow Seed Farm

Improved horticultural plants grafts are raised in the Diphu Fruit Nursery and distributed to growers according of the demand.

The following schemes for the improvement of agriculture in this district are implemented by the District Agricultural Authorities :

1. Popularisation of Chemical Fertilisers Scheme
2. Wet Paddy Cultivation Scheme
3. Minor Irrigation Project Scheme
4. Fertiliser Demonstration & Trial on cultivators' field
5. Green Manure Scheme
6. Rural Compost Scheme
7. Horticultural Development Scheme
8. Crop Competition Scheme
9. Jute Development Scheme
10. Seed Saturation Scheme

Among other important measures for the improvement of agriculture mention may be made of the application of plant protection measures, introduction of improved agricultural implements, use of bulldozers to

reclaim uneven jungle lands and tractors for ploughing, cultivation of Taichung Native-1 (Paddy) hybrid maize etc. etc.

In this connection the name of Cotton Development Scheme may also be mentioned here. This scheme was started in the last part of 1961 and a Cotton Development Officer with his headquarters at Diphu has been placed in immediate charge of the scheme. This scheme covers Mizo Hills and Garo Hills besides United Mikir and N. C. Hills.

The object of the scheme is to develop cotton by introducing better seeds and improved methods of cultivation and manuring practices. Survey has been carried out with a view to extending the cultivation of cotton wherever possible. Demonstrations are also being conducted in the cultivators' fields with a view to increasing production of cotton.

As this district is formed with different parts of K & J Hills, Nowgong Sibsagar and Cachar and is inhabited by different tribes, lack of homogeneity is quite apparent in the habits, belief mode of thinking and practices of the people. Besides heterogeneity, mass illiteracy and suspension are also rampant among the people. Because of these factors, it is very difficult to infuse new ideas and beliefs in their minds. The situation is further worsened by the migratory nature of the people which stands in the way of stabilisation or improvement in a particular village.

Because of the lack of good road communications, it is very difficult to carry agricultural materials to the interior and to organise and supervise work. The people also experience difficulties in marketing their agricultural products for want of proper road communication.

IRRIGATION

A greater portion of the district falls under the rain shadow area of the Jaintia Hills. Hence this district gets comparatively low rainfall and moreover rainfall is neither certain nor assured, Irrigation, therefore, is highly important for this district. While the minor irrigation schemes are executed by the District Agricultural Authorities generally through the Development Blocks, the major irrigation schemes are taken up and executed by the Flood Control and Irrigation Wings of the Public Works Department.

The minor irrigation schemes include the construction of bunds, digging up of dongs and canals, channelisation of hill streams to the cultivated fields, lift irrigation by the power pumps, etc.

The following major irrigation schemes were taken up by the Flood Control and Irrigation Wing (P.W.D.) during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd FIVE YEAR PLANS :

Sr	Name of Schemes	Year of starting	Year of Completion	Total acreage covered
1	2	3	4	5
1	Providing Irrigation facilities from Langaparpan river, in Duardisa Mauza in Mikir Hills	1963-64	1965-66	500 acres
2	Providing Irrigation facilities from Jamuna river in Borjan Mauza in Mikir Hills.	1963-64	Execution is still in progress	2500 acres
3	Providing Irrigation facilities from Horgoti river in Langhin and Daidok in West Rengma Mauza in Mikir Hills.	1963-64	The scheme has since been handed over to Jamuna Irrigation Div, I and execution is in progress	6719 acres

The following irrigation schemes are proposed to be taken up and executed during the FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN :

1. Kheroni Irrigation Scheme
2. Dillai Irrigation Scheme
3. Dikhari Irrigation Scheme
4. Harina Irrigation Scheme
5. Horgoti Irrigation Scheme
6. Kollonga Irrigation Scheme.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

A. ROAD COMMUNICATIONS

From the point of view of communications, the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is one of the most backward districts in the whole State of Assam. During the British period the road communication in this part of the State was completely neglected. Although in the post-Independence period sufficient progress has been made in the field of road communication, nevertheless, in the interior of the district many regions still remain in the same inaccessible condition. Such places have only foot paths and bridle paths which during the monsoon season become almost unuseable owing to incessant rain and swelling up of rivers and hilly streams. Execution of road communication programmes in this district has been entrusted to the P.W.D., District Council and Development Blocks. While the execution of major road programme which entails heavy expenditure is undertaken by the

P.W.D., the execution of minor programmes like the construction of fair weather roads, village roads, foot paths and bridle paths is undertaken by the District Councils and the Development Blocks. Sometimes important roads constructed by the District Councils and Development Blocks are handed over to the Public Works Department for improvement and maintenance.

The total approximate length of the different types of road executed during the First, Second and the Third Five Years Plan period is as follows :

Major Motorable Roads	Fair Weater Motorable Roads	Village roads	Foot Paths and Bridle Paths
580 km	499 km	578 km	756 km.

It will be worthwhile to mention here some of the vital links of the district.

(1) Diphu-Mahendijua-Parokhowa-Doboka Road

This is one of the most important roads of the district which links Diphu with Nowgong.

(2) Diphu-Mohendijua-Dimapur Road

This road is linked with National Highway No 39 (Numaligarh-Dimapur road) and with Kohima-Imphal Road at Dimapur.

(3) Diphu-Lumding-Maibong-Mahur-Haflong Road

Completion of this road is a major step in the development of road communication programme in this district as it now connects Diphu the district Head quarters with Haflong, the Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division.

(4) Haflong-Garampani-Shillong road

This road links Shillong with Haflong via Guwahati

(5) Haflong-Silchar Road

This road links Silchar with Haflong. It passes through the Barail Ranges

(6) Political Project Road

This road has been specially constructed parallel to the railway line from Diphu to Naojan with a view to check the activities of the Naga hostiles, by clearing the forests on both sides of the road and allowing the land thus cleared of forest to be occupied by people for permanent habitation.

(7) National Higway No 39

The National Highway No, 39 also passes through Lahorijan, Bokajan, Barpathar area of the Mikir Hills Sub-Division of this District.

The following major roads are under construction.

(1) Diphu-Dillai-Sariahjan Road

At present Diphu is linked with Bokajan, Sariahjan, Barpathar etc. by road through Dimapur (Nagaland) only. Completion of the construction of this road will obviate the necessity of passing through Nagaland.

(2) Kheroni-Rongpongong Road

This road passes through the Socheng T.D. Block which is perhaps the most backward area of the whole district. Completion of the road will surely serve as a major step towards rapid development of this area.

(3) Baithalangso-Rongpongong Road with Diversion to Umbassu

This road passes through the area of the Rongkhong T. D. Block and links Baithalangso with Hamren, the Headquarters of the newly created administrative Unit in the Mikir Hills Sub-division. From Hamren it is going to be linked with Jowai, in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills via Rongpongong.

(4) Jatinga-Lampoo road

This is going to link Jatinga with Dittockcharra via Harangajow in the N. C. Hills.

Besides the improvement of the existing roads the following major roads are proposed to be constructed in this district during the Fourth Five Year Plan period:

- (1) Construction of a road linking old Numaligarh Dimapur Road with diversion road via Balipathar in the Mikir Hills.
- (2) Construction of Debangi Khejuriband Road in the N. C. Hills.
- (3) Construction of Laisong Rajabajar Road upto Diphu-Charra
- (4) Construction of Mahur Laisong Thunja Road from Thunja to Laika.
- (5) Construction of Boukhai Khepri Road from Nongkhai to Laisong.

The Forest Department has also maintained some forest roads for the convenience of the Department and the contractors.

At present Assam State Transport busses ply between Haflong and Shillong and between Diphu and Nowgong. The Diphu-Dimapur-Golaghat route is also going to be nationalised very soon.

The P.W.D. has been facing a number of difficulties in implementing the road communication programmes in this district. They are enumerated below.

Many roads in the interior pass through hilly areas and hence plants and machineries cannot be carried easily to the site for execution of the work. As bridge and building materials are to be carried by manual labour, it entails heavy expenditure for transportation. Sal timber and bricks are also not available in this district. Procurement of the same from other districts takes a good deal of time and involves very high cost as well. Skilled labourers are not available locally. Local Tribal people also do not serve the Department as daily labourers for unskilled jobs. As such both skilled and unskilled labourers are to be brought from outside the district. The imported labourers are normally available only from November to April, i.e. for about 6 months during a year and hence progress of work suffers a lot due to this short period of working season. In the N.C. Hills, to get labour for execution of work in the vicinity of the Nagaland border is a real headache for the P.W.D.

However under the special Hill Development Scheme some steps have already been taken by the Government for the speedy implementation of the road communication programmes. The United Mikir and N.C. Hills district has been put under a Superintending Engineer with Diphu as his Headquarters. Further, one new division and two new sub-divisions have already been added to the already existing two divisions and six sub-divisions.

B. RAILWAY COMMUNICATION

From the point of view of railway communication this district may be regarded as a fortunate one as it is

the only Hill district in Assam having railway communication facilities. The Lumding-Mariani section of the North-East Frontier Railway runs along the eastern border of the Eastern Mikir Hills and the Hill Section of this railway bisects the North Cachar Hills into two parts. While Diphu and Bokajan are the two important railway Stations in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division on the Lumding-Mariani section, Maibong, Mahur, Haflong and Harangajow are the important railway stations of the N. C. Hills Sub-division on the Hills Section of the N. F. Railway.

C. POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS

From the point of view of postal communication the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is lagging far behind. Although the whole district has been served by a network of postal services which include 7 Sub-post offices and 55 Extra Departmental post offices nevertheless, the services cannot be said to be enough so as to meet the needs of the growing population of the district. Some interior parts of the district are completely cut off from postal communication. The case of the Socheng T. D. Block area can be cited as an example. The Block area comprises of 450 square miles with a total population of 13,451 (according to 1961 census). But throughout the whole Block area there is only one Extra Departmental Branch Post Office at Amreng which is also kept open only for two days in a week.

The following are the existing posts and telegraph offices within the jurisdiction of the United Mikir & N. C. Hills district.

COMBINED SUB-POST OFFICES

1. Diphu ESO (PCO)
2. Haflong CSO (PCO)
3. Bokajan CSO
4. Maibong CSO (PCO)

NON-COMBINED SUB-POST OFFICES

1. Howraghat S.O.
2. Bokoliaghat S.O.
3. Mahur S.O.

EXTRA DEPARTMENTAL BRANCH POST OFFICES

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Christian Kamphai | 2. Dittockcherra |
| 3. Bunjung | 4. Haflong bazar |
| 5. Haflong RS | 6. Harangajow |
| 7. Jatinga | 8. Manthai |
| 9. Hajadisa | 10. Mupa |
| 11. Baraarkap | 12. Dautahaja |
| 13. Laisong | 14. Balipathar |
| 15. Bogijan | 16. Chokihola |
| 17. Daithor | 18. Deopani |
| 19. Diphu Bazar | 20. Dhansiripar |
| 21. Manja | 22. Mohendijur |
| 23. Neparpatty | 24. Vitorkaliani |
| 25. Patakmati | 26. Rajapathar |
| 27. Rongkut | 28. Uttarbarbil |
| 29. Bargaon | 30. Dokmoka |
| 31. Duarbamuni | 32. Langhin-Manikpur |
| 33. Langlasko | 34. Parokhowa Bazar |
| 35. Phulani | 36. Donkamokan |
| 37. Kalanga | 38. Tumpreng |
| 39. Umpanai | 40. Baithalangso |
| 41. Hatikholi | 42. Langchaliat |
| 43. Langting | 44. Amreng |

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 45. Howaipur | 46. Barthal |
| 47. Anjakpani | 48. Kheroni |
| 49. Khotkhati | 50. Sariahjan |
| 51. Dillai | 52. Japrajan |
| 53. Disirigoyansatra | 54. Kachupukhuri |
| 55. Kheronigaon | |

A. Proposal for the opening of new post offices at the following places in the district have already been forwarded to the Postmaster General, Assam Circle, Shillong for his approval and will be opened after obtaining necessary sanctions :

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Dentaghat | 2. Amonigaon |
| 3. Okreng | 4. Koilajan |
| 5. Langting Tini-ali | |

B. Proposals for opening new post offices at the following places in the district under examination of the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Kalaigaon | 2. Dhonkachintu |
| 3. Rongkhelang Bazar | 4. Umkyang |
| 5. Gorgaon | 6. Rongagora |
| 7. Nongkhrila | 8. Malasi |
| 9. Dolamora | 10. Panibari |
| 11. Rongpangtong | 12. Bagetor |
| 13. Amtereng | 14. Tikahills |
| 15. Umtali (Hamren) | 16. Taijal |
| 17. Hidipi | 18. Sildubi |
| 19. Mailongdisa | 20. Sumren |
| 21. Sapani | 22. Phangcherop |

C. The construction for opening of a telegraph office at Mahur Sub-Post Office is going on and the office will be converted into a combined Sub-post office as soon as the construction is completed.

D. There are proposals for conversion into Departmental Sub-offices the following existing-Extra Departmental Branch-Offices, if justified.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Langting | 2. Dhansiripar |
| 3. Langhin-Manikpur | 4. Bogijan |
| 5. Dittockcherra | 6. Langchaliat |
| 7. Chokihola | 8. Hatikholi |
| 9. Disirigoyansatra | 10. Mahendijua. |

DIFFICULTIES

One of the difficulties experienced by the Posts and Telegraphs Department is the lack of road communications in most of the areas of the district. If post offices are opened, full advantages could be derived provided the transportation of mails is quicker. Wherever there are bus services operating, the co-operation of civil authorities is most essential to make it compulsory for busses to carry mails as they are generally reluctant to undertake this. And when they do agree, they usually demand a very exorbitant rate.

Apart from these inherent difficulties, the unco-operative attitude and apathy on the part of the concerned public also stand in the way of the development of postal communication in this district.

3. PUBLIC HEALTH

The general health condition of the people of the United Mikir and N.C. Hills is far from satisfactory. The major portion of the district is still inaccessible inspite of the attempts made by the Government and other agencies to develop the road communication at a faster rate. Medical facilities, therefore, could not be moved freely as it ought to be the interior of the district, so that a minimum health standard of the people could be preserved. Be-

sides, some of the existing Primary Health Units, Dispensaries and Medical Sub-Centres are in adequately staffed.

A list of existing Hospitals, Primary Health Units, Dispensaries, Medical Sub-Centres and other medical institutions under the Medical Department of the Government till the end of March 1968, is furnished below.

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

Sl.No.	Name of the Institution	No of Beds.
1	2	3
1.	Diphu Civil Hospital	72 (General)
2.	Howraghat P.H.U	2 (Paying)
3.	Bokajan P.H.U.	6
4.	Donkamokam P.H.U.	6
5.	Baithalangso	6
6.	Mohendijua State Dispensary	NIL
7.	Dengaon State Dispensary	NIL
8.	Dolamora State Dispensary	NIL
9.	Kolonga State Dispensary	NIL
10.	Umpanai State Dispensary	NIL
11.	Borgaon State Dispensary	NIL
12.	Deihari State Dispensary	NIL
13.	Dhansiri State Dispensary	NIL
14.	Bakulia State Dispensary	NIL
15.	Dillai Sub-Centre	NIL
16.	Rajapathar Sub-Centre	NIL
17.	Langhin Sub-Centre	NIL
18.	Barpathar Travelling Dispensary	NIL
19.	Diphu Travelling Dispensary	NIL
20.	Howraghat Travelling Dispensary	NIL
21.	Deithor Travelling Dispensary	NIL
22.	Kolong a Travelling Dispensary	NIL
23.	Maternity & Child Welfare Centre at Dengaon	NIL

N. C. HILLS SUB-DIVISION

Sl. No.	Name of the Institution	No. of Beds.
1	2	3
1.	Haflong Civil Hospital	42
2.	Langting Primary Health Unit	NIL
3.	Gunjung Primary Health Unit	4
4.	Maibong State Dispensary	10
5.	Harangajow State Dispensary	NIL
6.	Laisong State Dispensary	NIL
7.	Mahur State Dispensary	NIL
8.	Garampani State Dispensary	NIL
9.	Hajadisha Sub-Centre	NIL
10.	Haflong Travelling Dispensary	NIL
11.	Dehangi Travelling Dispensary	NIL
12.	Laisong Maternity & Child Welfare Centre	NIL
13.	Government Ayurvedic Subsidised Dispensary at Haflong	NIL

Besides the existing medical institutions mentioned in the list, there are provisions for the establishment of Primary Health Units at Jirikinding, Chokihola and Manja in the Mikir Hills Sub Division.

The construction of one Travelling Dispensary at Amreng and one Dispensary at Rongpongong in the Western Mikir Hills has already been completed.

There is also provision for conversion of the Mahur State Dispensary in the N. C. Hills to a Primary Health Unit.

Apart from the Government Medical Institutions, two voluntary welfare organisations namely the Sreemanta Sankar Mission and the Mikir Hills Seva Kendra have also been rendering medical services to the people. The

Mikir Hills Seva Kendra has its own dispensary at Sariahajan. The Dispensaries at Ouguri, Tumpreng, Ghillani and Dellijan are run by the Sreemanta Sankar Mission. It also has its maternity centres at Tumpreng, Ghillani and Diphu.

Leprosy is the most alarming and menacing disease from which the tribal people of this district suffer to a considerable extent. In fact, the United Mikir and N. C. Hills District has the highest percentage of leprosy patients among all the districts of Assam. The high incidence of this disease can be ascribed to the unhygienic habits, diet and malnutrition of the people.

Under the Leprosy eradication Programme, the whole district is divided into 110 sectors, out of which 14 sectors are in the N. C. Hills Sub-Division and the remaining 96 sectors are in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division. For each sector there is one Leprosy worker whose primary duty is to carry out a survey of leprosy patients along with domiciliary treatment of lepers. For the purpose of isolating the leprosy patients Government has also taken up the construction of leprosy colonies. Besides the two leprosy colonies at Maibong and Sonapur another leprosy colony at Malasipathar is nearing completion. The voluntary welfare organisations like the Sreemanta Sankar Mission, Assam Seva Samity, etc. also have their own leprosy colonies. Besides the Government medical institutions, leprosy patients are also treated in the out centres managed by the organisations.

As the treatment of leprosy requires special care and technique, co-operation among the medical department, voluntary organisations and the public is of great significance. The role to be played by the field workers also has great significance. They must have a thorough knowledge of the social background of the people and

they should approach the people with understanding and sympathy. They should also play the role of educators so that no leprosy case goes undetected.

Malaria is also another public health problem in this district. But the incidence of this disease has considerably been brought down with the intensified activities of the National Malaria Eradication Programme an Unit of which was started at Diphu in October 1957. This Unit covers the entire Mikir Hills Sub-Division. For the N. C. Hills Sub-Division there is a sub-unit at Maibong under the control of the Zonal Officer, Silchar. Under the N.M.E.P., D.D.T. spraying and medical treatment are carried out to eradicate the disease. The incidence of Malaria can still further be reduced by intensifying the effectiveness of the programme particularly in the sphere of spraying D.D.T. all over the district.

Among the other diseases mention may be made of kala-azar, cholera and various types of skin diseases. The incidence of Kala-azar has been brought down almost to the lowest point by the Medical Department with the help of five preventive measures. Cholera, when it breaks out in an epidemic form, takes a heavy toll of life before any medical help can be rendered.

Goitre is another common disease in this district. To ascertain the incidence of this disease, two Non-Medical Assistants have been employed to carry out survey in this district. There is a Goitre Unit at Diphu and this Unit is at present under the charge of the Sub Divisional Medical and Health Officer, Mikir Hills, Diphu. There being no separate hospitals or dispensaries for the treatment of goitre cases in this district, such cases are attended in the general hospitals and dispensaries.

The prevalance of these diseases can mainly be ascribed to the insanitary habits of the people in respect

of food, dwelling and drinking water. In case of any ailment, they always prefer to look for their own indigenous methods and medical help is sought only when the condition of a patient turns from bad to worse. Hence health education is of utmost importance so that their superstitions can be driven away and the knowledge of a modern hygienic way of living can be imparted to them.

WATER SUPPLY

The supply of good drinking water to the people of this district is far from satisfactory. Lack of good drinking water is one of the principal contributing factors to the prevalence of so many diseases in this district. In the hill areas of the district people generally use water of the springs, streams and rivers which might be one to three kilometres away from their habitation. As the upper courses of these water sources are unprotected, various agencies might pollute the water and as such the water from these sources is not at all suitable for drinking. Ring wells and tube wells cannot be installed in these areas owing to the presence of unpenetrable rocks. Now-a-days of course, in many places of the interior regions reservoirs are constructed specially by the Development Blocks for tapping as well as for storing of stream and spring water. But there is no provision for filtration of water thus reserved.

In the plains areas of the district people get water from rivers, ring wells and tube wells. The ring wells and tube wells are installed by different agencies like the Development Blocks, District Councils, Public Health Engineering Department, etc. But these could hardly meet the demand of the people. It would be really a great help if the Government undertakes a comprehensive programme of water supply in this district with a view to providing

each village at least with a reservoir, or a tank, or a tube well or a ring well according to situation and feasibility for providing such an amenity.

In regard to the urban areas water supply, descriptive notes on the Diphu and Haflong Water supply scheme are given here.

DIPHU WATER SUPPLY

Diphu, the headquarters of the United Mikir and N. C. Hills District is 700 feet above mean sea level and its area is 3.5 square miles with a population of 3,200 (According to 1961 Census).

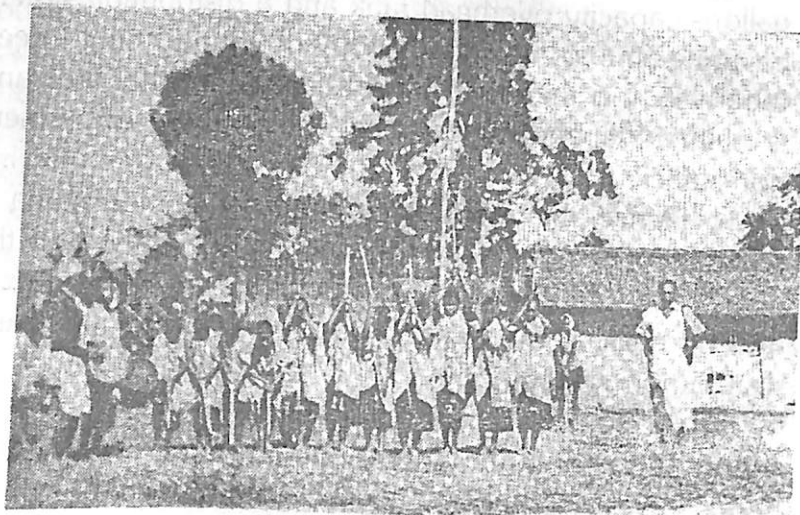
The existing water supply schemes implemented during the Second Five years Plan consists of a 20,000 gallons capacity overhead tank and a distribution system covering almost the whole town. The source being a deep tube well, it is therefore not satisfactory for that area and is neither dependable to meet the present requirement nor sufficient to meet the future needs of this growing town. Hence the authority thought of implementing a scheme for a good water supply for the people of the district town by tapping the water from the Longpi river and by utilising the existing overhead storage tanks and distribution system.

The present scheme has been prepared for the supply of water to 10,000 people including Mahendijua, Manja, Kheroni and Chotianala village at the rate of 15 gallons per capita per day keeping a liberal provision for the expected growth of the new district headquarters for a period of 30 years to come.

At present there are no industries in and around Diphu which may require water supply in large quantities.



A View of Diphu Town.



'Hoing of Laud' Dance by the Mikir Girls.

Hence the total daily requirement of water worked out on the basis of 15 gallons per capita per day will be $15 \times 10,000 = 1,50,000$ gallons. To ensure that there would be no difficulty in getting a minimum supply of 1,50,000 gallons of water per day, it has been decided to pump this water from the river Longi about 30 kms away from Diphu which is satisfactory from the point of view of quality as well as quantity.

The water, at first, would be pumped from the Longi river to the treatment plant on the Siloni Hill. After filtration, clear water would be gravitated through a 9 inch dia. cast iron pipe to the existing overhead reservoir at Diphu and water would then be distributed to the town people utilising the existing distribution network. In this new scheme there is provision for additional storage and for remodelling the existing distribution system also. The Diphu water supply scheme was being executed from the beginning of the year 1965 and is almost completed.

HAFLONG WATER SUPPLY

Haflong, the Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills is situated at an altitude of 2,600 feet above the mean sea level. This town was established by the then Assam Bengal Railway Company for housing its employees. The Haflong Town Committee came into existence on 8.5.1931 and along with the formation of the Town Committee, the water supply project hitherto maintained by the Assam Bengal Railway was handed over to the Town Committee.

The old waterworks consisted of one catchment reservoir constructed on a hillock on the north-western corner of the main town near the Fiengpui village. The collected water filtration through the pressure filter was gravitated to the town. The maximum possible supply that

could be expected from the impounding reservoir after deducting the annual losses due to evaporation and percolation came to approximately 30,000 gallons per day.

The present water supply scheme of the Haflong Town was taken up by the Public Health Engineering Department for execution in 1960. A low submersible dam was constructed across the stream De Domla situated about 12 kms away from the town. The bed level of the stream is about 300 feet above the average level of the town. Water from this stream is gravitated to the town reservoirs through 6 inch dia. C. I. main pipes and chlorinated by a pressure injecting chlorinator. The re-fined water is distributed to the town from the existing reservoirs. The scheme is designed for an estimated population of 10,000 with 30 gallons of water per head per day.

The Scheme was completed towards the end of 1963 at a cost of Rs. 7,76,639.00 and was handed over to the Haflong Town Committee soon after its completion.

The Public Health Engineering Department had also executed another water supply project known as Lower Haflong Water Supply Scheme by tapping the water of the Dolong stream. This scheme is primarily meant for supplying water to The Police Training Centre. This Scheme was also handed over to the Haflong Town Committee in September, 1965.

FAMILY PLANNING

One of the greatest problems that has been confronted by India in recent years is the alarming rate of growth of population. The results of all the developmental activities will be nullified unless this problem is solved

expeditiously. Hence it would not be out of place to mention here the family planning activities carried out so far in this district.

1. Although the Family Planning Organisation was in existence in the United Mikir and N. C. Hills District for sometime past, it did not function properly for want of proper organisation. It started functioning only after the Government's sanction of a District Family Planning Bureau for the United Mikir & N. C. Hills District with its Headquarters at Diphu in the month of March, 1966.

The District Family Planning Medical Officer has overall charge of the District as far as implementation of Family Planning Programme in the district is concerned. He has to supervise the Family planning activities in the district and to set the guide lines for the working of the Family Planning Programme. He is supposed to be assisted by two Medical officers-one male and another female (not yet posted) In addition, a contingent of other staff also works under the Bureau.

There is also a Family Planning Mobile Unit consisting of one Medical Officer (not yet posted), and one District Family Planning Publicity Officer with a mobile Cinema Unit. The duty of this Unit is to give mass education on Family Planning through meeting, group discussion, exhibition and Family Planning Cinema shows.

Under the District Family Planning, Bureau, there are nine family Planning Welfare Centres in the district attached to different Civil Hospitals, Primary Health Units and Dispensaries The Family Planning work is being carried out by the normal staff attached to these Civil Hospitals, Primary Health Units and Dispensaries in addition to their normal duties.

2. The programme of the Family Planning Bureau is to educate people in family planning, to enable them

to take family planning as a way of life, to arouse awareness in the people about the need of family planning and to render family planning services not only to reduce the number of births from the present 41 to 25 per thousand in near future, but also for the welfare of the entire family.

3. Till the end of March 1968, 36, 209 persons were imparted family planning education, 1987 persons were given family planning advice with supply of contraceptives, 39 persons sterilised and 738 IUCD (Loops) inserted.

4. In addition to the existing family welfare planning centres in the district viz. (1) Diphu Civil Hospital, (2) Bokajan Primary H. U., (3) Howraghat P. H. U., (4) Baithalangso P. H. U. and (5) Donkamokam P. H. U. in the Mikir Hills Sub-division and (6) Haflong Civil Hospital, (7) Maibong State Dispensary (8) Gunjung P. H. U. and (9) Langting P. H. U. in the N. C. Hills Sub-Division, IUCD (Loop) Centres have also been opened in the above mentioned Family Welfare Planning Centres except in the Langting and Gunjung P. H. Units. IUCD Centres have also been opened at Dengaon Maternity-cum Child Welfare Centre, Langhin Medical Sub-Centre, Sariahjan General Dispensary, Tumpreng Sreemanta Sankar Mission and Gurampani State Dispensary.

5. Lack of communication, backwardness and illiteracy of the people in the district seem to be the main handicaps in the quick and effective implementation of the Family Planning Programme. The people being illiterate, backward and unsophisticated, they are bent more upon old customs, traditions and superstitions than towards the modern amenities in life. Unless they are

enlightened through the spread of education, progress in family planning activities in this district will always be at a very low ebb. In spite of all these difficulties, attempts are being made to give a proper shape to the family planning programme in the district.

4. EDUCATION

From the point of view of education the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is the most backward among all the districts of Assam—the percentage of literacy according to 1961 Census, being 17.4 as against 44.0 for Mizo Hills, 34.3 for Sibsagar, 31.3 for (U) Khasi & Jaintia Hills, 28.7 for Lakhimpur, 28.6 for Cachar, 27.4 for Kamrup, 27.3 for Nowgong, 22.9 for Darrang, 21.1 for Goalpara and 20.0 Garo Hills.

Till the end of 31st March, 1968, the number of existing schools in sub-divisionwise breakup is as follows :

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

NO. OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Govt.	Govt. Aided	Venture	Total	Total No. of Students
2	7	7	16	1,437

NO. OF M. E. & SENIOR BASIC SCHOOLS

Govt.	Govt. Aided	Venture	Total	Total No. of Students
13	7	37	57	4,046



A Mikir Damsel in her Traditional Dress.
The black line on the face is a decoration

NO. OF L. P. AND JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOLS

Under Mikir Hills District Council	Attached Tea Garden Schools under Govt.	Total	Total No. of Students
538	2	540	25,417

NORTH CACHAR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

NO. OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Govt.	Govt. Aided	Venture	Total	Total No. of Students
1	5	NIL	6	1328

NO. OF M. E. SCHOOLS

Govt.	Govt. Aided	Venture	Total	Total No. of Students
4	12	4	20	1,357

NO. OF L. P. & JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOLS

Central Govt	Under N. C. Hills District Council	Total	Total No. of Students
1	265	266	7,426

That considerable progress in the field of education has been made in this district during the last twelve years, that is, from 1956 to 1968, can be seen from the following tables.

Table No. 1
PRIMARY & JUNIOR BASIC SCHOOLS

1956		1968	
No. of Schools	No. of pupils	No. of Schools	No. of pupils
280	11,221	806	32,843

Percentage of increase from 1956 to 1968
Schools-212.52
Pupils-292.60

Table No. 2
MIDDLE SCHOOL (M.E. & SENIOR BASIC)

1956		1968	
No. of Schools	No. of pupils	No. of Schools	No. of pupils
25	1,136	77	5,403

Percentage of increase from 1956 to 1968
Schools-308
Pupils-475.62

Table No. 3
HIGH SCHOOLS

1956		1968	
No. of Schools	No. of pupils	No. of Schools	No. of pupils
1	151	22	2,785

Percentage of increase from 1956 to 1968
Schools-2200
Pupils-1844.37

It is interesting to note that in 1956 throughout the whole district there was only one High school and that was the Haflong Government High School. The Diphu Government High School started functioning only from the year 1957.

At present there are two Colleges in the district—one at Haflong and the other at Diphu while there had been none in the year 1960. The Haflong College was

established in 1961. It is a Government Aided Degree College and at present it has only an Arts Department. The College authority is contemplating to open up science and commerce departments in the near future and to make it a first grade college. The college has its own buildings.

The Diphu college was established on 15th July, 1965. It is also an Arts college. As the college has no building of its own, classes are at present held in the Diphu Government High School building. The college was provincialized on 1st July, 1967. There is a likelihood of opening up the Science Department also in the near future.

To meet the demand of the technical personnel, an Industrial Training Institute under the Labour Department of the Government of Assam was established at Diphu on 1st May, 1964. Trades at present taught in this Institute are Fitter, Blacksmithy, Carpentry and Welding. During the Fourth Five Year Plan some new trades are proposed to be introduced in the Institute. They are Electrician, Wireman, Motor mechanic and Turner.

There is also one Government Hindi Training Centre at Diphu. The Centre was originally started at Missamari in the Darrang District in July, 1952. But due to the Chinese aggression in 1962, the Centre had to be shifted to Diphu towards the end of March, 1963 and was formally opened on 1st April, 1963. The training is meant for qualifying the intending candidates for the posts of Hindi Teachers in Secondary and Middle Schools of the state where they will have to impart instructions in Hindi progressively from class IV.

The minimum qualification of a trainee is matriculation which is relaxable for the tribal candidates belonging to

the Hill Districts of Assam. The duration of training is for ten months which is spread over into two terms. The Centre has provision for 125 seats. The Centre is residential and each trainee is awarded a stipend by the Government of Assam.

Facilities for pre-primary education in this district can be said to be practically nil. There are only two nursery schools in this district—one at Diphu and the other at Haflong. The nursery school at Diphu was till recently managed by the Mikir Hills Social Welfare Organisation and on 1st April, 1967 the management of the school was taken over by the Mikir Hills District Council. The nursery school at Haflong has been managed by the Haflong Mahila Samittee.

According to the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, management of primary education in the Autonomous Hill Districts of Assam may be taken over by the District Councils. Accordingly in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division, the Mikir Hills District Council had taken over the management of primary and junior basic schools from the State Education Department on 1st August, 1961. In the N.C. Hills Sub-Division, the management of primary and junior basic schools was handed over to the N.C. Hills District Council on 1st April, 1964.

Although there is a marked improvement in the growth of educational institutions in the last twelve years (which can be seen from the preceding tables) in this district, the standard of education specially in the field of primary education is far from satisfactory owing to some unavoidable and inherent difficulties as pointed out below :

1. During the busy agricultural season the attendance in the schools becomes very thin as the grown up

children are engaged in cultivation by their parents and guardians. Further, in many cases attendance to schools becomes a matter of sweet will of the children themselves. The parents or guardians generally do not play an imperative role in sending their children to schools regularly. In fact, they very often play the role of indifferent onlookers. This is due to their apathy towards education as only a few people in the interior could realize the importance of it. Most of the children of the schoolgoing age are not sent to schools at all in spite of the availability of educational facilities in the neighbourhood.

2. Lack of qualified local tribal teachers is another handicap specially in the interior areas. Therefore improvement in the standard of education can hardly be expected from teachers whose qualification is below the minimum requirement. It is also very interesting to note that the teachers in the interior do not themselves attend the schools regularly. Formerly one to two weeks were spent in going to get their pay from Diphu and Haflong and in returning back to their schools. The practice has however been stopped now.
3. Lack of good road communication, absence of conveyance, frequent landslides and numerous streams and rivers make it impossible for the supervising officers to go to the interior for inspection of the schools. Absence of postal service also stands in the way of contacting the teachers.
4. The tribal villages in this district are small in size and scattered miles apart. Hence it is not possible

to provide each tiny village with a primary school. Compact villages with at least fifty families in each village is most essential for the better quality of education in this district.

The following steps are taken for the spread and improvement of education in this district :

- (1) Establishment of more primary, middle and high schools to meet the growing demand.
- (2) Granting of building grants for the improvement of school buildings.
- (3) Non-recurring grants for purchasing educational implements, sports goods, library books etc.
- (4) Provision for training of teachers of different categories of schools.
- (5) Rendering of generous deficit grants to recognize high and middle schools.
- (6) Granting of stipends and scholarships to the deserving students for prosecuting higher studies.
- (7) Financial assistance to the existing colleges.

5. CO-OPERATION

The principal idea underlying the Co-operative movement is to uplift our rural agricultural communities from the age-old stagnant economy by means of loans and advances, better marketing facilities etc. Basically its purpose is to help the villagers to help themselves so that they might get rid of the unscrupulous greedy village Mahajans who have been exploiting the poor illiterate people by advancing their day to day need in the 'SADAI'

system and receiving back their dues in kind at a very low price during the harvest.

Along with the formation of the United Mikir and N.C. Hills District in November, 1951, the office of the Senior Inspector of Co-operative Societies was also established. During the First Five Year Plan the achievement of the Co-operative movement can be said to be practically nil as far as this district is concerned.

Prior to the establishment of the office of the Assistant Registrar of Co Operative Societies at Diphu by the end of November, 1955, the Mikir Hills Sub-Division was under the A.R.C.S. of Nowgong and the N. C. Hills Sub-Division was under the A.R.C.S., Silchar. The A.R.C.S. Diphu, took charge of the two Sub-Divisions along with the establishment of his office at Diphu.

In order to ameliorate the economic condition of the tribal people of this district, a loan of Rs. 82,000.00 under a special scheme was issued to the most needy families through Multipurpose and Trading Co-operative Societies. This loan was issued free of interest charge for the first two years and the interest was to be computed from the third year only and the loan was refundable in 12 equal instalments commencing from the 1st month of the 5th year, Although the entire amount is now overdue, the recovery is practically nil and as a consequence, seven co-operative societies have to be liquidated.

A Cotton Ginning Mill at Diphu was established in 1955-56 in the Co-operative sector in order to save the poor cultivators from the exploitation of greedy Mahajans. But unfortunately the Mill had to be closed down after working only for two years owing to the shortage of working capital and lack of proper marketing facilities for the finished products. Although the Government had set

up a committee to probe into the affairs of the Mill long back, the report was submitted by the Committee to the Government only recently. Now the Government has taken concrete steps to revive the Mill as early as possible.

A Central Banking Union was formed in 1956, but this union has not started functioning till now.

It is a matter of great regret that there is no branch of the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. either at Diphu or a Haflong. Co-operative Banking, therefore, has to be undertaken through the branches of the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. of Nowgong, Golaghat and Silchar.

In order to cope with the increasing activities of the Department, four offices of Deputy Co-operative Officers at Daithor, Donkamokam, Howraghat and Maibong were established in 1957. But in the year 1960, these offices were abolished and merged with the offices of the Sub-Divisional Deputy Co-operative Officer at Diphu and Haflong. For the purpose of extension and audit work. Assistant Co-operative Officers have been posted in different development Blocks of the district.

A credit scheme was introduced in the district by organising a few multipurpose co-operative societies in the Howraghat area through the Nowgong Central Bank, for the first time. Thereafter the branches of the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. at Nowgong, Golaghat and Silchar began financing these societies. Because of its benefit the credit movement has earned much popularity and a good number of credit societies have since been organised in different regions of the district and Short Term loans are being issued to the needy persons.

The Baithalangso Trading Co-operative Society Ltd. was established to supply lac to the Government shellac Factory

at Chaparmukh. The society incurred heavy loss as the lac supplied to the factory fetched a very low price. Ultimately the society had to stop the business of lac supply.

The marketing scheme was introduced in the district in 1957 and there are at present five marketing societies. Among the five, the two societies at Langhin and Howraghat are big societies not only within the district but also within the whole State of Assam. But it is regrettable that the management of these two societies has been suspended owing to mismanagement and the working of them has been vested with the Apex Marketing Society Ltd. Gauhati. These two societies have also been given Government assistance to the tune of Rs. 99,000.00 each for the establishment of two rice milling units. Installation of these two rice milling units at Langhin and Howraghat had already been completed and they are now working at full swing.

The marketing societies with the help of the service co-operative societies took up procurement of paddy and the following quantities of paddy were procured by them in different years :

1958-59	-	2,48,307 Maunds.
1959-60	-	5,43,633 Maunds.
1960-61	-	4,93,751 Maunds.
1961-62	-	2,37,460 Maunds.
1962-63	-	4,13,895 Maunds.
1963-64	-	8,70,376 Maunds.
1964-65	-	7,99,138 Maunds.
1965-66	-	2,52,345 quintals.

In 1966-67 the procurement of paddy was not taken

up by the co-operative societies of this district except by a very few as the F.C.I. was entrusted with the procurement of paddy during the year. But in 1968-69, the Apex Marketing Society took up paddy procurement in this district through the co-operative societies.

To deal with the Bakijai cases one office of the Liquidator and Bakijai Officer was established at Diphu in 1962, with two process servers and one Bakijai Assistant.

Some marketing societies and some service co-operative societies have been given loans and subsidies to construct godowns for the purpose of storing their merchandise. The Howraghat Tarabasa Co-operative Marketing Society was also given a loan of Rs. 50,000 to purchase a truck in 1964-65.

The Co-operative Farming scheme was introduced in this district in 1962-63 and so far the following farming societies have received financial assistance from the Government as per details below :

Name of the Society	Loan	Subsidy	Year.
1. Baresewaguri K.K.C.S. Ltd.	Rs. 3,750/-	Rs. 1,250/-	1962-63
2. Malipul Collective C.S. Ltd.	Rs. 3,750/-	Rs. 1,250/-	1964-65
3. Karbi Youth C.C.S. Ltd.	Rs. 3,750/-	Rs. 1,250/-	1965-66

A number of Weaving Co-operative societies have also been organised and registered in this district. The first weaving Society was registered in 1956-57 and at present there are 40 weaving co-operative societies throughout the whole district. Some of them have been assisted with loans for share capital and working capital.

A special scheme known as Hill Development Scheme

is being implemented in the Nilip, Rongkhong and the Diyung Valley T.D. Blocks of this district. In accordance with this scheme three sub area Marketing Co-operative Societies one at each Block Headquarters of the three Blocks mentioned have been organised and they have been functioning since 1967. These societies are primarily meant for the marketing of agricultural products of the tribal people. These three societies are functioning in collaboration with an Apex level Marketing Society organised in Shillong for the Hill districts of Assam. In the year 1968-69 also one such Sub-Area Marketing Society is proposed to be established in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division of the district.

The special Hill Development Scheme has provision for the establishment of a number of smaller-sized service co-operative societies under each Sub-area Marketing Society. Under the Nilip Sub-Area Marketing Society 19 (Nineteen), under the Rongkhong Sub-area Marketing Society 5 (five) and under the Maibong Sub-area Marketing Society 6 (six) smaller-sized co-operative societies have already been organised. Financial assistance in the shape of working capital godown loan, loan for truck, staff subsidy, etc., has already been given to these three sub-area Marketing Societies by the Government. There is also provision for giving working capital grant to the smaller-sized societies organised under each Sub-area Marketing Society.

A list of existing societies up to the end of March, 1968 in this district in subdivisionwise break-up is furnished below :

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

Sl. No.	Type of Societies	No. of Societies	Member ship
1	2	3	4
1.	Primary Agricultural Credit Societies	151	4,367
2.	Central Bank	1	NIL
3.	Primary Marketing Societies	4	1,478
4.	Consumers' Co-operative Societies	7	404
5.	Weaving Societies	29	511
6.	Labour Co-operative Societies	2	36
7.	Industrial Co-operative Societies	5	129
8.	Farming Co-operative Societies	8	182
9.	Dairy Societies	1	59
10.	Sub-Area Marketing Societies	2	250
11.	Other Societies	35	2,098
Total :		245	9,513

NORTH CACHAR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

Sl. No.	Type of Societies	No. of Societies	Member ship
1	2	3	4
1.	Primary Marketing Societies	3	222
2.	Weaving Societies	11	291
3.	Credit Unions	6	324
4.	Service Co-operative Societies	21	483
5.	Multipurpose Co-operative Societies	1	22
6.	Industrial Co-operative Societies	2	59
7.	Labour Co-operative Societies	2	12
8.	Consumers' Co-operative Societies	2	185
9.	Credit Societies	10	220
10.	Dairy Societies	1	35
11.	Sub-Area Marketing Societies	1	36
12.	Other Societies	4	75
Total :		64	1,964

DIFFICULTIES

Mass illiteracy poses a stumbling block to the implementation of different schemes of co-operation. The tribal people find it extremely difficult to understand and abide by the complicated laws of co-operation. They are quite indifferent towards the existing as well as new schemes of Co-operation. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to find out capable and responsible persons who can work as office bearers of the societies. Absence of local officers from the tribal communities is also keenly felt by the Department.

Lack of road communication and absence of transport facilities render it physically and practically difficult to come into frequent touch with the masses.

The shifting nature of tribal habitats and the absence of periodical land sttlement make agricultural financing completely risky.

Last of all the absence of a co-operative propaganda machinery is another handicap in the way of speedy progress of the co-operative movement in this district.

6. FORESTS

The United Mikir & N. C. Hills is one of the richest districts in Assam from the point of view of forest wealth. The district has a number of reserved forests besides an extensive area of unclassified forests. But the latter area is forest in name only due to the fact that unrestricted jhumming has virtually eaten up all forest trees. The total area under the reserved forests in the district is approximately 684.3 thousand acres. The following

reserved forests of the district are managed by the United Mikir & N. C. Hills Forest Division :

1. Langting Mupa Reserve Forests (N. C. Hills)
2. Dhansiri Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
3. Disama Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
4. Daldali Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
5. Nambar Reserve Forests (West Block). (Mikir Hills)
6. Chelabor Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)

The following reserved forests of the district are managed by the Nowgong Forest Division for convenience of management from the forestry point of view :

1. Tutumani Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
2. Jakola Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
3. Rongkhong Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
4. Amreng Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
5. Junthung Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
6. Mikir Hills Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)
7. Sildharampur Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)

The following reserved forests of the district are managed by the Sibsagar Forest Division for convenience of management from the forestry point of view :

1. Namber Reserve Forests (North Block). (Mikir Hills) (Part)
2. Kaliani Reserve Forests (Mikir Hills)

The reserved forests of the district contain valuable trees, canes and bamboos and as such they are potentially very rich and fetch a very high revenue for the district. Besides, these forests sustain minor forest products like Patidai, Agar, Dhuna, Chalmugra etc. But the great

handicap that stands in the way of tapping the forest resources is the lack of good road communication. Hence next to regeneration work priority has been given to opening of new roads and the improvement of existing ones. As a result of this step it has become possible to sell the coupes and Mahals at a competitive price and tap new areas.

Different varieties of valuable trees are found to grow in the forests of this district. Sal occurs in small patches in the Chalabor, Sildharampur and Rongkhong reserves. In the past the area under Sal was more extensive. But the shifting cultivation has reduced the area to a considerable extent. The other important species are Hollook, Gamari, Sam, Sonaru, Ajhar, Poma, Bogipoma, Bhelu, Titasopa, Bonsom, Amri, Korai, Khoira etc. Most of the timber species are used for constructional purposes and for making furniture. Some reserved forests, such as Langting, Mupa, etc. are very rich in bamboo and Bhelu trees which may be used for the manufacture of paper. Another important item of immense value is Lac grown by the Mikirs. It fetches a very substantial revenue for the district.

SCHEMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST WEALTH

- (A) Plantation Schemes
- (B) Road (Communication) Schemes
- (C) Building Schemes

(A) PLANTATION SCHEMES : Under this scheme, several sub-schemes have been drawn out with an eye on the requirement of the industries. They are :

- (a) Matchwood plantation scheme
- (b) Plywood plantation scheme
- (c) Teak plantation scheme
- (d) Khoir plantation scheme
- (e) Normal schemes for plantations.

(a) The Matchwood Plantation Scheme was drawn up to cater to the needs of the matchwood industries. The species grown under this scheme are mainly Simul, Bhelu and Bhelkor.

(b) The Plywood Plantation Scheme is meant to cater to the needs of the commercial plywood industries in Assam. The Species grown under this scheme are mainly Bogipoma, Koroi, Amari etc.

(c) The Teak Plantation Scheme was drawn up to grow Teak in the district to replenish the increasing depletion in valuable timbers in the State. Teak is a very good timber for furniture, decorative plywood, cabinet making and for locomotive body building etc.

(d) The Khoir Plantation Scheme was implemented for providing raw materials to the Khoir industries of Assam. The heartwood of this species is utilised for extraction of Katha and Katch, otherwise known as Khoir.

(e) Besides the schemes mentioned above, a normal plantation scheme is also in force in this district for planting valuable timbers to compensate the natural deficiency of regeneration in the high forests. The principal

species grown under this scheme are Hollock, Gomari, Bonsom, Titasopa, Ajahar etc.

(f) To improve the indigenous cane species, a scheme for planting them has been undertaken in Bokajan area under the State Development Scheme since 1955.

There is no Afforestation Scheme in force in the district where plantation in barren hills and wastelands could be taken up with soft wood species.

(B) ROAD COMMUNICATION SCHEME : Under this scheme roads and bridges are constructed in the forests to facilitate efficient management and easy extraction of logs.

The following are the existing forest roads constructed and maintained under this scheme.

1. Lumding Hatikhali-Langting road	46.4 kms	} N.C. Hills
2. Langting-Mupa-South Block road	4.8 kms.	
3. Langting Milo road	8.0 kms.	
4. Diphu-Nailalung-Langcholiata road	28.8 kms.	} Mikir Hills
5. Diphu-Dhansiri road	28.8 kms.	
6. Dhansiri-Manglomukh road	22.4 kms.	
7. Daldali-Dhansiri road	19.2 kms.	
8. Balipather Forests road	8.8 kms.	
9. Nambar Reserve West Block road	9.8 kms.	
10. Diphu-Disama road	6.6 kms.	
11. Chelabor Forests road	1.6 kms.	
12. Deopani Forest village road	1.6 kms.	
13. Deopani Plantation link road	1.8 kms.	

These roads are annually repaired and maintained according to the availability of fund and with due regard to the necessity for doing the wok.

Besides the forest roads imparting accessibility to the ostensible buyers and bringing up industries in course of time, they play a vital role in efficient management of the forests. These are also very important from the defence point of view as they are the only means of communication for the military personnel for any movement to be made in the forests and in the border areas.

(C) BUILDING SCHEME : Construction of buildings to house the executive staff and various other centres is as important as any other scheme for developing the forests. Several buildings have already been constructed in different parts of the district.

Difficulties Faced in the Implementation of the Schemes

1. The season for field work connected with forest begins from the months of June-July. Thus if all administrative problems such as sanctions and the co-ordination for schemes are taken care of and completed by May or June, the schemes could then be implemented smoothly during the working season which begins in June-July, and work could also be done during the winter months. Only with this kind of coordination and proper timing can the schemes be effectively implemented and successful.

2. Secondly, shortage of both ministerial and executive staff in this division also sometimes proves to be a handicap in implementing the schemes.

OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FORESTS OF THE UNITED MIKIR AND NORTH CACHAR HILLS DIVISION

(a) 50% of the total area in the hills should be under forests as per principle laid down in the Indian Forest Policy. Of late, a general tendency has grown amongst the people to clear more and more areas for cultivation and habitation. This can apparently be attributed to the temptation and incentive to grow more food crops to avert any possible food crisis. In fact, it is a grave mistake according to the basic principle of the forest policy. Forests are required for varied purposes of mankind and can be summarised as below :

- (i) To conserve soil and moisture without which the agrarian value of the soil will be reduced to a great extent,
- (ii) To cater to the needs of various forest products in the country. Forests give timber, raw materials for industries and minor materials for construction of buildings and bridges etc.
- (iii) The forest influences the climate of a locality with beneficial aspects of rain and temperature.
- (iv) It shelters the wild denizens.
- (v) It improves the aesthetic value of the countryside.

It is our duty to preserve the existing forests of this district which is far below the required area of 50% as indicated earlier.

(B) POTENTIAL RESOURCES OF FORESTS FOR INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE DISTRICT

With the springing up of industries, the forest resources of the district can be channelized for the following industries :

1. Paper Industry

Bamboos are primary raw materials for this industry and can be had from the vast bamboo areas of N. C. Hills Sub-Division. At present, Bengal Paper Mills Private Ltd. has taken out a lease in this area with the understanding that a paper mill will be installed in this area in course of time. The yield of bamboo at a 4 year cycle is estimated at 1,11,559 tons annually and is sufficient for a paper mill of 120 tons capacity requiring a sustained supply for its full capacity.

2. Plywood Industry

Approximately 7.80 Lakh cft. of timber can be extracted annually from the reserves for use in the plywood industry. The species required for this purpose are mainly, Jiapoma, Mango, Dhuna Borpat, Kadam, Haldusopa, Khokon, Badam, Bogipoma, Amari, Ghogra, Titasopa, Mundhani, Poma, Moj and a large number of other species. With the opening up of such an industry, a most beneficial use will have been found for the ever neglected trees like Jia, Mango, Dhuna, Poma, Moj, Bandardima and the large scale wastage in our forests will have been reduced.

3. Seasoning cum Treating Plant Industry

For want of a proper seasoning and treating plant, the timbers do not last longer and as such the demand in the market is not very high. Along with the installation of such an industry, a great deal would be done for the betterment of timber resources of this district. The annual feeding for such an industry can be assured by a sustained supply of approximately 5 lakh cft.

Besides the industries mentioned above, a large number of small scale industries can come up with an assured supply of raw materials from the forests. They are mainly saw mill industries, bobbin industry (raw materials for this industry is Haldu timber), packing case industries and cane industries and so on. Along with the development of communication, market, electricity and water supply and other such prime requirements, we expect that a time will come when we can utilise our valuable resources to its best and maximum uses.

7. SOIL CONSERVATION

Soil conservation plays a very important part in a district like the United Mikir and N. C. Hills where shifting cultivation, otherwise known as Jhumming, is practised by all the tribal families to a considerable extent. The economy of the tribal people of this district is primarily based on agriculture and the people practise only subsistence farming in the age old method of shifting cultivation. This, apart from keeping the people needy, poor and backward, results in grave and serious consequences. It destroys the natural cover of land and being barren of any vegetation the soil completely loses its moisture bearing capacity. As soon as the monsoon starts, heavy showers of rain waste away the top soil and also erode away the barren hill slopes. As a consequence, dam, reservoirs and river beds are silted up which results in heavy floods in the plains causing untold miseries to the riverside people.

The situation gets more and more aggravated with the reduction of the period of the Jhumming cycle due to

increase in the Jhumming population. Because of the loss of water holding capacity the yield also becomes gradually poorer. In this way the vicious circle continues and soon the entire top soil gets lost and the barren materials get exposed.

The work of the United Mikir and N. C. Hills Soil Conservation Division started actually in the year 1954-55 as a part of erstwhile Jhum Control Division of the Forest Department with headquarters at Gauhati and continued as such till March, 1959. Then the Jhum Control Division was split up into three Divisions as follows and named Soil Conservation Department with a separate Directorate.

1. Garo-Mikir Hills Division covering the Garo Hills District and Mikir Hills Sub-Division.
2. United Khasi and Jaintia Hills Division comprising of the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district and N. C. Hills Sub-Division of the district.
3. Mizo Hills Soil Conservation Division.

In 1960, the first two Divisions were amalgamated and resplit into three divisions covering each of the three Hills districts of Assam.

The United Mikir and N.C. Hills Division with its headquarters at Diphu started functioning from the 1st June, 1960.

Shifting cultivation being a necessary evil, it cannot be stopped forthwith. Hence the following methods were adopted by the Soil Conservation Division in order to reduce the annual area under Jhum :

1. Shifting the agriculture-based economy of the people to one based on 'Agri-Horticulture' -i.e. the people can take up cultivation of some suitable non-

perishable cash crops like rubber, cashewnut, coffee, cardamom, blackpepper etc. and depend on them for their cash requirement.

2. Bringing all reclaimable cultivable land under permanent cultivation of suitable agricultural crops with a view to reducing Jhumming for food requirements.
3. To bring the barren hill slopes, gone permanently out of cultivation due to repeated Jhumming, under suitable forest covering to stop further deterioration of the soil.

With the aforesaid ends in view, the Soil Conservation Department has conducted extensive trials on cultivation of non-perishable cash crops to select suitable species for a particular locality and has maintained a number of demonstration farms of such crops to teach and show the people the methods for their cultivation.

This Department has also been operating a loan-cum-subsidy scheme for helping the tribal growers in the initial cultivation of cash crops. Under this scheme, the department helps the tribal growers in the cultivation of cashewnuts, coffee and blackpepper. It bears all expenses in connection with the cultivation of such crops at rates worked out by them up to the period of the planting of crops.

50% of this expenditure is recoverable free of interest charge at easy instalments after the crops come to the bearing stage while the other 50% is treated as subsidy.

The Soil Conservation Department helps in the reclamation of land for permanent cultivation by subsidising the cost of terracing and / or reclamation. It also provides irrigation facilities where possible as departmental

contribution towards bringing land for permanent cultivation.

The Department is also conducting trials to evolve suitable crop and cropping patterns for the dry terrace in the hill slopes. It also helps the District Council by providing some financial assistance for afforestation of barren hills.

N. B. A new Soil Conservation Division for the N. C. Hills Sub-Division with Headquarters at Haflong has been functioning since April 1968. And hence at present two Soil Conservation Divisions one for each sub-division are functioning in this district.

8. VETERINARY AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The tribal people of this district rear buffaloes, cows, pigs and poultry of indigenous breed to a considerable extent. Availability of good fodder almost throughout the year makes the tending of cattle extremely easy. It is very interesting to note that most of the Mikir families have allowed their cattle to be tended by the Nepali graziers on Adhiar system. Another interesting fact is that the tribal people of this district do not milk the she-buffaloes and the cows either for domestic consumption or for commercial purpose. Tribal families who use milk are very rare. Pigs and poultry are also not raised for commercial purpose although their demand in the market is very high. They are mostly used in connection with any ritual or for the appeasement of their deities.

The following abstract from Livestock Census 1966 shows the present position of domesticated animals and birds in the district.

	Cow	Buffalo	Sheep	Goat	Horse	Pigs	Poultry
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
MIKIR HILLS	112,682	148,021	215	43,496	406	236,649	305,735
N.C. HILLS	17,754	35,484	91	9,910	40	57,689	94,375
Grand Total :	130,436	183,505	306	53,406	446	294,338	400,110

For the treatment of ailing animals and for combating the out-break of contagious and infectious disease, there are altogether 8 Veterinary Dispensaries and 13 Veterinary First Aid Centres in the district at present.

VETERINARY DISPENSARIES

- | MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION | N.C. HILLS SUB-DIVISION |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Rongkhong Veterinary Dispensary at Donkamokam | 1. Maibong Veterinary Dispensary |
| 2. Howraghat Veterinary Dispensary | 2. Mahur Veterinary Dispensary |
| 3. Bokajan Veterinary Dispensary | 3. Garampani Veterinary Dispensary |
| 4. Diphu Veterinary Dispensary | 4. Haflong Veterinary Dispensary. |

There are also provisions for the establishment of Veterinary dispensaries at Chokihola, Ulukunchi, Jirikinding and Mahendijua in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division.

VETERINARY FIRST AID CENTRES

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

1. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Phuloni
2. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Daithor
3. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Tumpreng
4. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Baithalangso
5. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Kolonga
6. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Rajapathar
7. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Hidipi
8. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Dengaon

N.C. HILLS SUB-DIVISION

1. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Langting
2. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Gunjung
3. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Harangajao
4. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Sangbor
5. Rural A.H. & Veterinary First Aid Centre- Goving

The Veterinary Department has also proposed the establishment of four new First Aid Centres in the district in the near future.

The following schemes have been taken up for the development of livestock in this district :

1. Distribution of exotic breeds of livestock (bulls, pigs, goats, sheep and birds) to infuse exotic blood in the inferior type of livestock.
2. Establishment of Sheep Breeding Farm-one such farm near Diphu on the Diphu-Lumding road has

been established for production of an exotic breed of Nelore sheep for distribution after their progenies are acclimatised to the local conditions. This farm has got an area of 4020 acres of land and almost the whole area has now been brought under maize cultivation to meet the demand for fodder of other livestock farms of the State.

3. Establishment of Poultry-cum-Pig Farms-two such farms one at Diphu and the other at Haflong are being established to meet the demand for hatching eggs and exotic birds in this district.
4. The veterinary Department has also contemplated the establishment of one Milk Colony in order to supply milk to the consumers of this district. But the site for the Milk Colony has not yet been finalised.
5. A programme for pasture development in an intensive way will also be undertaken if the regrouping of tribal villages materialises.

DIFFICULTIES

Constant personal contact with the people is very essential so that the modern technique of animal husbandry and disease control can be infused in them. But in this district because of lack of good communication facilities it has almost become an impracticable proposition. The impoverished condition of the people also stands in the way of adopting scientific methods of animal husbandry. Their superstitions and religious beliefs are also other stumbling blocks.

Sometimes pigs and birds are not allowed to be vaccinated on the ground that vaccination might make them impure for religious offerings.

Last but not the least is the lack of technical personnel from among the local tribal people who could have been better guides than other persons.

9. INDUSTRIES

From the point of view of industrial development the United Mikir & N.C. Hills district is one of the most backward districts of Assam. This industrial backwardness is not due to the non-availability of raw materials required for setting up of major industries. It can rather be ascribed to the slow industrial progress of the State of Assam as a whole. It is a chronic disease from which Assam has been suffering all along and as such this district has also to suffer from this malady. Lack of proper transport facilities is also responsible to some extent for industrial backwardness of this district.

Till now there is not a single major industry in this district. There is a proposal to set up a cement factory at Bokajan under the Public Sector. Necessary data for this purpose have already been collected. Under the Private Sector a Paper Mill is likely to be set up by the Bengal Paper Mills (Private) Ltd. in the Langting area of the N. C. Hills from where sufficient quantities of bamboos as raw materials can be obtained.

Among the small scale industries of this district mention may be made of the following :

In the private sector there are at present seven saw mills in this district— three in Diphu, one each at Nailalong, Khatkhati, Langting and Dhansiri. There is one flour mill and one combined flour and rice mill at Diphu. There is also a few rice mills in different rice producing areas of this district. Two of them, one at Howraghat and the other at Langhin are run by the local Marketing Societies.

A Cotton Ginning Mill was established in Diphu in the year 1955-56 in the Co-operative Sector. But unfortunately the mill had to be closed down after running it only for two years owing to the shortage of working capital and the lack of proper marketing facilities for the finished products.

There is also enough scope for setting up a plywood factory and a few timber seasoning-cum-treating plants in this district.

The important cottage industries of this district are spinning and weaving, rearing of Endi and Muga, carpentry, blacksmithy, mat-making, making of bamboo and cane goods, etc.

The Carpentry Production Centre and Doll and Toy Making Centre both at Diphu and Blacksmithy and Carpentry Production Centre at Maibong are run by the Industries Department. The primary object of these Centres is to train up local tribal youths in these trades.

Weaving is a very commonly practised household industry in this district. The women are very expert weavers and most of the domestic requirements of cloths are met from the family looms. They are, of course, still using their indigenous looms (Loin looms). Cloths are artistic in colour and design. It should be noted that the colours used for dying yarns are prepared by the women

themselves with raw indigo and other wild herbs. Rearing of Endi and Muga silk worms is not so widely practised. This industry is confined to a limited number of families only. Sometimes yarn is spun from Endi and Muga cocoons and cloths are woven at family looms. And sometimes cocoons as such are sold to the mahajans or at local weekly markets.

The Weaving Department of the Government of Assam have been conducting training centres in weaving at Diphu, Sariahjan and Haflong to impart training to local girls in improved and up-to-date methods of weaving. Apart from the demonstration work done by the Sericulture Inspector and his staff, Government has started demonstration silk farms at Diphu and Dergaon. There are also several weavers' co-operatives organised by the people with the help and guidance from the officials of the Development Blocks and the Co-Operative Department.

Carpentry and blacksmithy are two major cottage industries practised by a limited number of people of this district. Most of the requirements of the people in regard to furniture, agricultural, hunting and fishing implements are met by the village artisans. But as the artisans are still using the outdated tools and implements, their production cost is naturally high and hence their products can not compete with the goods produced with modern tools and implements. Of course, the Industries Department has been providing improved tools and implements to the village artisans at a subsidised rate.

Production of bamboo and cane goods is also another important cottage industry that is commonly practised by the people of this district. Different types of baskets, used for a variety of purposes, such as for mats, fishing traps,

etc are made from bamboo and cane. Besides meeting the domestic requirements of the families, surplus products are sold in the local markets.

In most cases it is a leisure time activity of the people. Another important cottage industry is mat-making and there are expert mat-making artisans among the tribals of this district. Mats are made of weeds having very smooth stems which grow abundantly in the swamps of this district. It is a very lucrative cottage industry. The mats have a high demand especially during the summer season. They also fetch good prices. Some mats are woven with very artistic designs and these are generally used on special occasions.

There are also good prospects for fruit preservation and squash making industries in this district.

10. FISHERY

Pisciculture as an industry has yet to be developed in the district of United Mikir and N. C. Hills. Being a hilly region the scope for development of pisciculture as an industry is also limited to some extent. Of course, in the plains portion of the district there is enough scope for the development of fishery as an industry. In the hilly regions of this district also there is scope for the introduction of hill fishes in the natural lakes. The deep water-logging ravines may also be used for this purpose after reclamation and by erecting necessary bunds wherever required.

The people of this district catch fish from the rivers, streams and the 'Beels' (small natural lakes) by various methods. For the purpose of fishing in the small streams, dams are erected across them keeping gaps here and there. Fish traps made of bamboo and cane are placed

in these gaps. Fishing by poison in the bigger streams and hilly rivers is a common practice among the tribal people of this district. In the plains area of this district various types of nets are used for fishing in the rivers and the 'Beels'. Fishing by spear at night with the help of a torch light is also another important method for fishing practised by the people inhabiting the plains portion of this district. At night the light attracts the fish and it is not difficult to spear them from a boat if the water is transparent as well as shallow. Fishing by angling is also a hobby with some people. Fishing by angling is permitted in the Haflong Lake and the Diphu Lake during a certain time of the year on payment of a certain amount to the Haflong Town Committee in case of the Haflong Lake and to the Mikir Hills District Council in case of the Diphu Lake.

Fish is caught by the people of this district for home consumption generally. Only a small portion is taken to the markets for sale. Dried fish is a great delicacy for all the tribes inhabiting this district. The tribal people themselves dry the fish in the sun and preserve them for domestic consumption. Sometimes they purchase dried fish from the markets also.

Fishing in those fisheries which are under the administrative control of the District Council is prohibited. These fisheries are leased out to private parties by open bid. The following fisheries are under the administrative control of the Mikir Hills District Council :

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Dighalpani Arikati Beel | 11. Latumari Beel |
| 2. Baisa Beel | 12. Bargang Beel |
| 3. Kalasera Beel | 13. Kapili Nadi Part-I |
| 4. Era Kapili Beel | 14. Kapili Nadi Part-II |

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. Memaro Beel | 15. Kapili Nadi Part-III |
| 6. Kachamari Beel | 16. Dikharu Nadi Part-I |
| 7. Khanda Beel | 17. Dikharu Nadi Part-II |
| 8. Amdubi and Langjut Dubi | 18. Jamuna Nadi Part-II |
| 9. Komari Beel | 19. Kaliani Nadi Part-I |
| 10. Cheng Chung Behar Beel | 20. Kaliani Nadi Part-II |

Dobong lakes and fisheries located in the Diyung, Jatinga and the Langting rivers are under the administrative control of the N. C. Hills District Council.

Development of fishery in this district is the responsibility of the Fishery Department of the Government of Assam. There are two Fishery Officers in this district, one for each Sub-Division. At the field level there are fishery demonstrators.

The Fishery Department has already established three fishery farms, one each at Padumpukhuri, Howraghat and Bokajan. The activities of the fishery unit consist of the survey of all fishery resources, production of fish seeds, establishment of departmental fish farms, technical guidance and monetary assistance to fishery co-operatives and private parties interested in the development of pisciculture, development of beel fisheries and hill fisheries.

11. ECONOMIC CONDITION

The economic condition of the tribal people of this district is far from satisfactory. Every year there is the regular feature of lean months when the majority of the people experience great economic hardship and remain almost half-starved. This impoverishment is caused by a variety of factors, such as, whims of nature, types of occupation followed by the people, economic habits of

the people, lack of subsidiary occupations, habitual lethargy of the people and their drinking habits.

A socio-economic survey was carried out by me in 18 tribal villages of this district in the year 1967. Two tribal villages, one advanced and one backward, were selected from each Tribal Development Block of this district for the purpose of my survey. The survey covered villages inhabited by the Mikirs, Dimasa Kacharis, Zeme Nagas, Kukis and the Lalungs. In order to have a picture of the true economic conditions of the people as found from the study of the 18 villages, a summary of the report is incorporated herein.

82.87 per cent of the surveyed families are found to have agriculture as the basic occupation for means of sustenance. 16.57 per cent of the families are found to be partly agricultural. Besides agriculture some members of these families have other occupations like teaching jobs in the elementary schools, service in the Police Organisation and Army, trade etc. Only .56 per cent of the families are found to be non-agricultural.

Among the subsidiary occupations mention may be made of spinning and weaving, rearing of Endi and Muga, blacksmithy, carpentry, manufacturing of bamboo and cane goods etc.

The percentage of earning members is found to be 46.47 while the percentage of non-earning dependents is found to be 46.13. 7.40 percent are found to be earning dependents.

The average land holding per family is 14.16 Bighas—the break-up being as follows— land under permanent cultivation 8.05 Bighas, land under cash crops .99 Bighas, land for homestead 1.17 Bighas, fallow land .59 Bighas and Jhum land 3.36 Bighas.

SOURCES OF INCOME

1. Land	86.97 per cent
2. Cattle	.96 per cent
3. Poultry	.46 per cent
4. Cottage Industries	1.27 per cent
5. Daily labour	4.30 per cent
6. Employment	3.39 per cent
7. Subsidiary Occupations	2.12 per cent

Total **100.00 per cent**

Thus it is seen that land is the principal source of income of the people of this district contributing 86.97 per cent of the total annual income.

ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE

1. Food (value of home products consumed and cash purchase made)	76.12 per cent
2. Clothing	8.18 per cent
3. Education	1.47 per cent
4. Medical	1.36 per cent
5. Transport	1.23 per cent
6. Land Revenue & Other Taxes	.63 per cent
7. Religious Festivals	5.25 per cent
8. Furniture	.40 per cent
9. Ornaments	.75 per cent
10. Utensils	1.13 per cent
11. Bicycle	1.13 per cent
12. Watch	.18 per cent
13. Pen	.06 per cent
14. Residential buildings	1.79 per cent
15. Amusements	.75 per cent
16. Miscellaneous	1.57 per cent

Total : **100.00 per cent**

attempt is being made to portray the activities of these organisations in the field of social welfare.

THE SREEMANTA SANKAR MISSION

The Sreemanta Sankar Mission, established in the year 1950, with headquarters at Nowgong, is the pioneering social welfare organisation in the State of Assam. It had started its welfare activities in the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district in the year 1953.

The Mission has been running leprosy treatment centres at Ouguri, Umpanai, Ghillani, Borthol, Kolonga, Tumpreng and Mohendijua. It has also maintained two leprosy colonies for the lepers, one at Ouguri and the other at Satgaon. It has also established one Preventoria for healthy children of the lepers at Tumpreng. These children in the preventoria are fed and clad free of all charges.

The Sreemanta Sankar Mission has also been running general dispensaries at Ouguri, Tumpreng, Ghillani and Dellowjan where outdoor patients are given free medical treatment.

The Mission has been performing commendable service by arranging and holding eye-relief camps in many places of Assam from time to time. In these camps persons suffering from various eye diseases are treated free of cost. Where necessary, eye operations are also performed. As far as this district is concerned, four such eye relief camps were held so far, two at Diphu, one at Haflong and the other at Maibong.

Side by side with the treatment of leprosy, kala-azar and other diseases, the Mission took up the work of education and maternity and child welfare in the Mikir Hills. In 1955, one Middle English and one Junior Basic

school were established at Ouguri which have been running very satisfactorily till this day. It has also started maternity and child welfare centres at Ghillani in 1958, at Diphu in 1959 and at Tumpreng in 1960.

In 1957, the Mission had started an orphanage at Diphu with 4 tribal orphan boys who were taught carpentry as the basic craft. But owing to some reasons, the orphanage was shifted to Nowgong in the year 1959.

At the beginning of the anti-leprosy work in the Mikir Hills, the Mission had undertaken extensive survey work in the tribal villages in order to assess the incidence of leprosy so that planning for necessary and adequate treatment could be done.

The Mission also wants to introduce rural industries like Endi spinning, bee-keeping, weaving, carpentry, blacksmithy and so on among the tribal people of this district for the betterment of their economic condition.

THE MIKIR HILLS SEVA KENDRA

The Mikir Hills Seva Kendra with its headquarters at Sariahjan came into being on 3rd February 1949. The primary objectives of the Kendra are as follows :

1. To serve the backward people and communities of the United Mikir and N. C. Hills through social welfare activities such as :
 - (a) Education
 - (b) Medical aid work including leprosy service
 - (c) Vocational training
 - (d) Model co-operative farming and such other activities which might help the people in attaining a better standard of life

2. To organise relief measures at the time of natural calamities and to carry out rehabilitation programmes wherever possible.
3. To undertake such other social service programmes as the organisation may decide from time to time according to the needs of the situations.

In the field of education, the Kendra has done some laudable work. It has so far organised 32 primary schools which have already been handed over to the Mikir Hills District Council. The Sariahjan Middle English School was started in 1949 and it was provincialized in 1958. The Sariahjan High English School was organised by the Kendra in the year 1960. It is now a fullfledged High School with classes upto class X. The Seva Kendra is also running four hostels for tribal students, three for boys and one for girls, where nearly 100 students from different areas of the district reside for prosecuting their studies in various educational institutions at Sariahjan.

The Medical staff of the Kendra has carried out survey among the Mikir people to find out the incidence of leprosy among them. The Kendra has so far established 6 leprosy treatment centres in the remote hilly areas wherein lepers are given free medical treatment as outdoor patients. In 1950, a leprosy colony known as the Sariahjan Kustha Nivas was also established for the treatment of the lepers as indoor patients. This colony has been rendering very useful service to the cause of leprosy. For the segregation and rehabilitation of children born to lepers, the Kendra has a Preventoria at Sariahjan. The inmates of the Preventoria are fed and clad free and provision has been made for their education as well.

The Seva Kendra has a general dispensary at Sariahjan which was established in the year 1950. In this dispensary

free medical treatment has been provided to tribal people and over 6,000 patients get treated annually in this dispensary.

The Seva Kendra started one Industrial Training Centre in 1959 to train the tribal youths in village crafts like carpentry, ghani and oil pressing, fibre and rope making, etc. A good number of tribal youths have taken advantage of this centre.

The Seva Kendra has successfully rehabilitated about 800 Mikir families who were Jhummers, in a strip of 6 sq.miles area of the Nambar Reserve after deforestation.

THE MIKIR HILLS SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION

The Mikir Hills Social Welfare Organisation came into existence in the year 1962. This organisation is formed with the principal objective of stimulating the spirit of social welfare service among the people of this district inhabiting mostly in the rural areas.

Soon after its formation, this organisation took upon itself the responsibility of running the then existing Sariahjan Welfare Extension Project with its five welfare centres at Khatkhathi, Deopani, Baghjan, Dillai and Neparpatty.

In each of the aforesaid centres there is one Dai (Midwife) and one Gram Sevika, The Dai's job is to look after maternity cases both at anti-natal and postnatal stages and to acquaint the people with ways and methods of properly looking after the health of their children and to foster hygenic living among them. The Gram Sevika is entrusted with the task of rendering Balwadi Services to the children and teaching adult women in the evening. Of late, they have been utilised also for popularising the



Photo shows two Mikir drummers.

family planning schemes in their respective areas in co-operation with the District Family Planning Bureau, Two of the Dais have recently returned after undergoing a course of training in Family Planning at Shillong. (The management of these centres were transferred to the Mikir Hills District Council on 31.3.68).

The Mikir Hills Social Welfare Organisation had also established one nursery school at Diphu which has been running satisfactorily since its inception. But the management of this school was also handed over to the Mikir Hills District Council on 31.3.67

The Organisation is contemplating the taking up of some welfare projects in the different areas of the district in the near future for the benefit of the public at large.

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION

The Christian Mission has also been doing a lot of social work in this district. The Mission is more active in the N.C Hills Sub-Division. Although it is primarily concerned with the conversion of the tribal people into Christianity, in the field of driving away illiteracy it has been rendering very commendable service. It has established a good number of primary schools mostly in the Christian villages. It also runs one girls' convent school at Haflong besides running a few Middle English Schools. Rendering medical assistance to the tribal people is also one of the principal aims of the Mission.

ASSAM SEVA SAMITY

The Assam Seva Samity with its headquarters at Gauhati confines its activities to the field of labour welfare and leprosy work in different districts of Assam. As far as the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district is concerned,

the Samity has confined its activities only to the field of leprosy work. In this district besides running a Leprosy Colony at Kuthori, it has also been maintaining 4 Leprosy Outdoor Clinics at Deopani, Fulguri, Rongagorah and Buralongso. Extensive leprosy surveys have also been carried out by the Leprosy Social Workers and Para-Medical Workers of the Samity in order to find out the incidence of leprosy among the Mikirs.

All the able-bodied patients of the Kuthori Leprosy Colony are engaged in agricultural work. They grow paddy, sesame, mustard, jute, pulses, pineapples, plantains, lemons, sugarcane and all sorts of vegetables. Besides, a cashew nut garden and a fishery have also been started. The products are generally consumed by the inmates of the Colony.

SHRI RAMKRISHNA SEVA SAMITY

The Ram Krishna Seva Samity is also an important social welfare organisation with its headquarters at Haflong.

The Samity has been maintaining three residential Students' Homes—two of them are at Haflong for school and college students and the other is at Maibong for girl students exclusively. The residents of these Homes are given all sorts of free facilities in regard to—

- (1) accommodation
- (2) medical aid
- (3) learning of type-writing
- (4) signalling
- (5) tailoring
- (6) use of library.

The students have to pay for the charges of food themselves.

The Samity has been running one Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary at Haflong for the benefit of the

poor and the distressed patients.

Some miscellaneous activities of the Samity include, among others, financial assistance to the distressed and afflicted, and the nursing of patients as and when needed.

HAFLONG MAHILA SAMITY

Another important social welfare organisation in the N. C. Hills Sub-Division is the Haflong Mahila Samity which was formally organised in the month of November, 1959. It has confined its activities only to the field of women and child welfare.

The Samity has been conducting weaving, tailoring, embroidery and knitting classes regularly. The products are sold in the market through the emporium and other agencies. It has also managed one nursery school at Haflong. One adult literacy centre for women has also been recently organised by the Samity.

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

The Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Assam, has mostly concentrated on consolidating and expanding the various welfare activities carried out by the different social welfare organisations in the district of United Mikir and N. C. Hills. For this purpose the various welfare organisations of this district have been given grants-in-aid for activities such as hostel for poor boys, maternity and *balwadi* services, medical aid for domiciliary treatment of leper patients, child welfare, women welfare and other miscellaneous social welfare activities.

The only welfare service that has been directly introduced by this Directorate in the district is probation service, that

is correctional treatment of offenders. The Probation of Offenders Act 1958, and the Assam Probation of Offenders Rules, 1962 have been enforced in the district with effect from 1st July, 1964 and the entire district has been declared as a Probation District under the provision of the rules. A District Probation Officer has been appointed for the district with his Headquarters at Diphu. The District Probation Officer through his social investigation helps the court in arriving at a correct decision about the punishment to be given to a particular offender as per provision of the act. He also helps those offenders who are released on probation and to his care by exercising supervision and imparting necessary instruction and guidance during the period of probation. This corrective method of treatment of offenders, so far as Assam is concerned, is quite new and the result so far achieved in this district is quite encouraging.

Apart from probation work, the District Probation Officer has also been entrusted with the work of inspection and guidance of the activities of the various welfare organisations of this district which receive grants from the Department of Social Welfare.

CHAPTER V

1. POST INDEPENDENCE CHANGES

Since the creation of the United Mikir and N. C. Hills district in October, 1951, the Government, District Councils and other voluntary welfare agencies have been trying their best to bring all round development in all spheres of the life of the people of this district like education, agriculture, industries, public health, communication, fishery, co-operation, etc. A brief note on each of the above topics has already been given in Chapter-III of this book. Here, only an attempt has been made to deal with other important changes that have not been touched so far in that Chapter.

A. DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

The Community Development movement has been introduced in India to meet all the problems of the rural and tribal population— problems such as ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, public health, communication, etc. Changes are wanted to be brought about through an integrated socio-economic approach which aims at current welfare as well as future production.

For the purpose of regional development, the whole district is divided into nine Development Blocks, seven in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division and two in the N. C. Hills-Division. A brief note on each block is given below :

MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION
BOKAJAN TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Bokajan T. D. Block was formally started on 2nd October, 1954. As a Community Development Block it had completed its first and second stages on 31st March, 1958 and 31st March, 1963 respectively. On 1st April, 1963, it was converted into a T. D. Block. The Headquarters of the Block is at Bokajan.

The Block area comprises of 242 sq. miles with a total population of 19,373 (according to 1961 Census) out of which 16,417 are tribals. The Block area is predominantly inhabited by the Mikirs, Kacharis, Kukis and the Garos. There are 232 villages under the jurisdiction of the Block.

**HOWRAGHAT TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT
 BLOCK**

The Howraghat T. D. Block was originally started as a Community Development Block on 2nd October, 1954. The Block had completed its first and second stages on 31st March, 1959 and on 31st March 1964 respectively. Since 1st April, 1964 it has been functioning as a T. D. Block. The Headquarters of the Block is at Howraghat.

The Block area covers 978 sq. miles with a total population of 63,858 (according to 1961 census) out of which 52,374 are tribals. The bulk of the tribal population belong to the Mikir tribe. There are altogether 355 villages under the jurisdiction of the Block. From the points of view of area, population and the number of villages, it is perhaps one of the biggest T. D. Blocks in the whole State.

**RONGKHONG TRIBAL
 DEVELOPMENT BLOCK**

The Rongkhong T. D. Block came into existence as a Special Multipurpose Community Development Project on 2nd October, 1956. It was converted into a T. D. Block on 1st April, 1963. The Block has its Headquarters at Donkamokam.

The Rongkhong T. D. Block lies in the western part of the Mikir Hills Sub-Division. The Block area comprises of 300 sq. miles. The total population of the Block is 30,998 (according to 1961 Census) distributed into 202 villages. The Block area is inhabited mainly, by the Mikirs, Khasis and the Jaintias. Some Chakma refugee families from East Pakistan and some Garo families have also recently settled in the Kheroni area of the Block. Although the Block area is blended with hills and plains, the plains area constitutes only a small portion of the total area. Most of the Block regions consist of hills with deep jungles and of high elevation.

The Headquarters of the newly created administrative unit (Hamren) falls within the jurisdiction of the Rongkhong T. D. Block.

AMRI TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Amri Community Development Block came into existence on 2nd October, 1960. It was converted into a T. D. Block on 1st April, 1963. The Block is situated in the western part of the Mikir Hills bordering Khasi and Jaintia Hills District.

The Block has a total area of 426 sq. miles. The total number of population, according to the basic survey of the Block is 23,322 distributed into 184 villages. The Block is mostly inhabited by the people belonging to the Mikir, Lalung and the Khasi tribes. The Block area consists mostly of hills with high elevation.

The Headquarters of the Block is at Ulukunchi.

NILIP TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Nilip T. D. Block is in the northern part of the Mikir Hills Sub-Division bordering the Nowgong District and the Golaghat Sub-Division of the Sibsagar district. Completing its pre-extension period on 31st March, 1963 it had entered into the first stage of Community Development on 1st April, 1963. On 1st September, 1965, it was converted into a T. D. Block.

The Block has a total area of 706 sq. miles. The total population of the Block, according to 1961 Census, is 28,835 distributed into 226 villages. The bulk of the population consists of the Mikir tribe. There are a few Rengma Naga villages within the jurisdiction of the Block area.

Chokihola is the Headquarters of the Block.

LUMBEJUNG TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Lumbejung Community Development Block was started on 2nd October, 1962 and on 1st September, 1965, it was converted into a T. D. Block.

The Block has a total area of 922 sq. miles and the Block area covers the central part of the Mikir Hills Sub-

Division. The total population of the Block, according to the basic survey of the Block carried out in 1962-63, is 25,131. The Block has 288 villages under its jurisdiction out of which 178 villages are tribal ones. The main tribes inhabiting the block area are the Mikirs, Dimasa Kacharis and the Kukis.

Manja, which is only 16 kms. away from Diphu, is the Headquarters of the Block.

SOCHENG TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

From the point of view of location, the area under the Socheng T. D. Block falls in the western part of the Mikir Hills Sub-Division. It is one of the most backward areas in the whole district with inaccessible terrain and deep jungles infested with wild animals.

The Block covers an area of 450 sq. miles. The total population of the Block, according to 1961 Census is 15,451 distributed into 85 villages. The Block area is chiefly inhabited by the Mikirs, Kukis and the Jaintias.

The Block started its life on 1st April, 1962 and had completed its pre-extension period on 31st March, 1964. The Block entered into its first stage of Community Development on 1st April, 1964 and the first stage of T. D. on 1st September, 1965.

Since its inception upto November 1965, the temporary Headquarters of the Block was in Diphu— far away from the people to whom the Block wanted to serve. Only on 17th November 1965, was the temporary Headquarters of the Block shifted from Diphu to Kheroni within the jurisdiction of the Rongkhong T. D. Block. The Headquarters of the Block is now at Jirikinding.

NORTH CACHAR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

DIYUNG VALLEY TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Diyung Valley T. D. Block was created on 2nd October, 1956 as a Special Multi-Purpose Project. It completed its first stage on 31st March, 1962. During its second stage the project was converted into a T. D. Block on the 1st April, 1963.

Maibong, which was once the Capital of the Kachari Kingdom, is the Headquarters of the Block. The Block has an area of 800 sq. miles. Its population is 21,817 (according to 1961 Census) distributed into 181 villages. The Block is mainly inhabited by the Dimasa Kacharis, Zemi Nagas, Kukis and the Hmars.

JATINGA VALLEY TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK

The Jatinga Valley Community Development Block was created on 1st April, 1961. During its first stage it was converted into a T. D. Block on 1st April, 1963.

The Block has a total area of 1088 sq. miles. The population of the Block, according to the 1961 Census, is 31,162. The Block has 170 villages under its jurisdiction and is inhabited by the Dimasa Kacharis, Kukis, Zemi Nagas, Hmars and the Jaintias.

Mahur is the Headquarters of the Block.

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

The Development Blocks of this district have been able to bring about some changes into the different spheres of the socio-economic life of the people. These changes are enumerated below :

AGRICULTURE

It has already been mentioned elsewhere in this book that the tribal people of this district are habitually Jhummers. Owing to the constant attempts on the part of the Block officials, many tribal families have taken up permanent cultivation by reclaiming low lying marshy lands wherever such lands are available and by terracing the gentle slopes of the hills. Resorting to permanent cultivation has stopped the shifting of villages to the sites of Jhum. This has enabled the Development Blocks to undertake development work of a permanent nature like the construction of villages, roads, ring wells for drinking water, libraries, schools etc.

People are now using improved seeds like hybrid maize, Taichung Native-I, R. I.-8, Monoharsali and so on in their cultivation and are getting better yields. Cultivation of cash crops like cashewnut, black pepper, jute, mustard etc. has been taken up by them. They have also shown keen interest in horticultural gardens and plants and grafts of fruit-bearing trees are planted by them after getting them through the Blocks. Most of the families now have compost manure pits. Use of chemical fertilisers, improved

agricultural tools and implements and the use of pesticides to control pests have become very common among the cultivators.

People are now more interested in minor irrigations. Hiring of water pumps from the Blocks for the purpose of irrigation has become very popular. Some progressive farmers have even purchased water pumps.

Kitchen gardening which was practically non-existent among the tribal people of this district formerly, has become a great favourite with them now-a-days.

Lastly, practical demonstrations, Kishan Melas, agricultural exhibitions, crop competitions etc. organised by the Blocks have infused new ideas among the cultivators of this district. The Field Management Committees have also played a very important role in the improvement of agriculture.

EDUCATION

In the field of education the Development Blocks have been able to bring about some changes to the attitudes of the people of this district. Formerly their attitudes towards education was one of indifference. Persistent attempts on the part of the Block officials have already lessened the people's indifference to education and has made them take a more favourable attitude towards it. Attendance in the schools has become more regular. People are sending their children of school-going age to schools. The Blocks have started primary schools where there were no schools formerly. Building grants, sports

goods, library books, educational implements have been provided to the needy schools. Adult Literacy Centres have been started both for men and women. Attendance in these centres is very encouraging.

Establishment of youth clubs, libraries, community centres with provision for radios, recreational centres with provision for musical instruments, etc. have infused new blood into the people. Organisation of village leaders' camps, excursion parties, holding of cinema and cultural shows have helped a great deal in educating the people of this district.

Organisation of Mahila Samities is an important step in the field of women's programmes. The members of these Samities are taught useful trades like weaving, knitting, tailoring etc.

Organisations of Maina Parijats or children's clubs and establishment of children's parks have, through discipline, helped the children to work and to spend their time in a better way.

COMMUNICATIONS

Community Development always refers to the peoples' programmes with Government's participation. But in a backward district like the United Mikir and N. C. Hills, it refers to the reverse, that is, Government's programmes with people's participation. Although at the initial stages the people's participation was not forthcoming, at present it is found to be spontaneous and this spontaneity has come through the initiation of local programmes specially in the field of road communications. Construction of

village roads, approach roads, bridle paths, foot paths, bridges and culverts by the Development Blocks, have without doubt improved the communication facilities specially in the interior of the district. The people have now come forward to improve their communication facilities through local programmes where they offer Shramdan (free labour). The Block officials also participate in these programmes and they offer technical guidance. Small contracts are often given to the villagers and to the local registered Shramik Bahinies. This has not only bettered the economic condition of the people, but taught them the dignity of labour also. Thus the local programmes in the field of road communication have brought about a change in the mental outlook of the people and in its turn it is making the people more and more interested in their own development.

RURAL ARTS, CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIES

In the field of rural arts, crafts and industries, the Development Blocks have been able to bring about only slight changes.

Fly shuttle looms distributed by the Blocks have gained much popularity among the female section of the population. Local girls have been given training in the use of these fly shuttle looms. In many places weaving societies and training-cum-production centres have been set up. These have attracted the local women and they are fairly interested in these organisations. Many families have taken up rearing of silk worms besides the rearing

of Endi. Mulberry plants needed for silk worms have also been planted by them. Distribution of improved tools and implements to the local carpenters and blacksmiths has helped them to improve the quality of their products. Introduction of bee-keeping has helped many families to better their economic conditions. But no concrete steps seem to have been taken for the improvement of bamboo and cane products, mat-making and their marketing.

HEALTH AND RURAL SANITATION

The construction of ring wells, reservoirs, sinking of tube wells, have provided the people with good drinking water. The establishment of primary health units, dispensaries and medical sub-centres has helped the people in getting better and quick treatment for various types of diseases. Formerly people used to depend on their indigenous treatment in case of illness. But now-a-days they prefer modern medical treatment to their indigenous treatment. This change of outlook is really an important thing without which progress cannot be achieved. The help of the midwives is now-a-days sought not only at the time of delivery but at the pre-natal stage also. The Gram Sevikas have helped the housewives to improve the sanitary conditions of the family.

It should also be said that better medical facilities have helped the tribal people of this district to get rid of superstitions connected with death and disease to a considerable extent.

VETERINARY AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The people of this district have taken advantage of the benefits that are offered by the Veterinary Dispensaries and First Aid Centres established by the Blocks in the different central places of this district. In cases of cattle and poultry diseases, the people approach these dispensaries and sub-centres for treatment. Formerly animals and birds were hardly allowed to be inoculated against epidemics. The people thought that inoculation might make the animals and birds impure and as such they could not be offered in the worship of deities. But at present it seems that people have given up this superstition. Now they do not object to inoculation.

Many families have taken up the rearing of an improved variety of birds and Yorkshire pigs as a result of the efforts on the part of the Block officials. As these are supplied by the Blocks at a subsidised rate, this has given an incentive to the people. But the Blocks have not been able to bring about much changes in regard to the tribal people's aversion towards consumption of milk and the utility of milk products.

CO-OPERATION

The Development Blocks of this district have been able to organise various types of co-operative societies such as, Service, Credit, Consumers', Weaving and Marketing Co-operatives. These co-operatives have not only enabled the people to free themselves from the clutches of the unscrupulous village mahajans but taught them to stand

on their own feet. Specially have the marketing co-operative in this district rendered great beneficial service to the poor cultivators. They are getting a good price for their surplus agricultural commodities and now they are realising how they had been deceived by the village mahajans before the establishment of these societies. However, owing to mass illiteracy, co-operation has not been able to make any headway in the interior parts of this district.

FISHERY

Opening up of new fisheries has also become favourable specially with the people inhabiting the plains portion of this district. Even in the hilly areas people are found to have taken keen interest in the development of pisciculture. In this regard subsidy offered by the Blocks has also acted as an incentive.

CONCLUSION

We all know that one of the main aims of community development is to change the outlook of the people so that people might accept the development and welfare plans which entail changes in the socio-economic life of the people as their own plans. The success of these plans depends on the involvement of more and more people in them.

From the above discussion, it can be clearly seen that the Development Blocks in this district have been able to bring about sufficient changes in the mental outlook of the people by creating suitable and appropriate conditions in the different spheres of development.

C. ELECTRICITY

Diphu, the Headquarters of the district was electrified by the Assam State Electricity Board in the year 1957. At present diesel engines are being used for generating electricity. The power from the Namrup Thermal plant will reach Diphu soon after the extension of the transmission line from Bokajan to Diphu by the Assam State Electricity Board. There is also provision for electrifying Bokajan and Howraghat in the near future.

Haflong, the Subdivisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division was electrified by the Assam State Electricity Board in the year 1966-67. Debrai and Mawlai villages situated near the Haflong Town have also been electrified.

2. SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DISTRICT

Lack of good communication, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and disease are the common major problems for all the hill districts of Assam. Of course, for the Mizo Hills District illiteracy is not a problem at all as it has the highest percentage (44) among all the districts of Assam. Here

it is not intended to give an appraisal of the major problems again as they have been elaborately discussed elsewhere. An attempt has therefore been made here to give an idea of the special problems that have been confronted by the tribal people of this district.

(1) DEPREDATION CAUSED BY WILD ELEPHANTS

The United Mikir & N. C. Hills district is inhabited by a large number of wild elephants. Just before the harvesting of Ahu and Sali paddy they come to the paddy fields in herds and completely destroy the ripened paddy crops about to be harvested. As a preventive measure the tribal cultivators erect houses on the tree tops near-about their paddy fields and as soon as they get the scent of an approaching elephant herd, they raise a hue and cry with a view to driving away the elephants. But this measure is not so effective. The wild elephants not only cause damage to the standing crops but sometimes they bring about complete havoc to the villages by breaking their houses and killing the occupants. The people living near the deep jungles, therefore, have to live in constant vigil for fear of being molested by the wild elephants.

(2) BUFFALO MENACE IN THE N. C. HILLS

Damage caused by the stray buffaloes to the standing crops is a great menace in the N. C. Hills. The Dimasa Kacharis are in the habit of rearing a large number of buffaloes of local breed. But strangely enough they are not in the habit of tending them and the buffaloes are

always let loose to roam at will. After causing considerable damage to the standing crops they return to their homes only at nightfall. Even high fencing cannot prevent them from entering into the cultivated fields or Jhum. Unless this problem is permanently solved, any attempt to boost up agricultural production will not bear any substantial result.

(3) FLOOD OF THE RIVER KOPILI

The Plains portion of the western Mikir Hills is subject to the heavy floods of the Kopili. There being no embankments, almost every year the floods of the Kopili cause great havoc by destroying standing crops, breaking roads and bridges, sweeping away livestock and inundating homesteads of the people. The problem of controlling the flood of the Kopili river also deserves consideration from another angle. The plains portion of the western Mikir Hills is one of the best rice-producing areas of this district, as such production could still be increased by controlling the flood effectively.

(4) SHIFTING OF HABITATS

Frequent change of habitats is itself a serious problem so far as the Mikirs are concerned. They change their habitats because of two reasons.

- (1) Each revenue village has a village headman called 'Gaonbura' who is appointed by the District Council. But each revenue village is found to have a number of hamlets which are situated miles apart. Each hamlet has also a **Gaonbura** who occupies the most honoured position among

the people of the hamlet. In the social and religious ceremonies also his position is undisputed. It is due to this interest that very often a part of a big village is shifted to a new place and the person who takes the leading part automatically becomes the **Gaonbura** of the newly established hamlet.

- (2) The second factor necessitating their change of habitat is the shifting cultivation. Very often the whole village is shifted to the new place of Jhumming.

Because of the need to change their hearth and home frequently development work of permanent nature cannot be undertaken. This problem can only be solved by compelling the people to live permanently in the compact villages where facilities for permanent cultivation can be provided to each and every family.

CHAPTER VI

OTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO THE DISTRICT

1. CIVIL DEFENCE

The starting of Civil Defence activities in this district may be dated back to the year 1965 when the unexpected Pakistani aggression had created a national emergency throughout the country. Raising of Home Guards, Village Defence Parties and training of public in the matters of Civil Defence techniques were intensified to cope with the situation.

1. HOME GUARDS

The Home Guards Organisation in the District of United Mikir and N. C. Hills was started on 14th September, 1965, with an initial strength of 1,100 Home Guards for the entire district in addition to 36 women Home Guards. Out of 1,100 Home Guards, 110 were meant for the urban areas and the rest were distributed in 9 Development Blocks, each Block getting an allotment of 110 only.

The Home Guards Organisation in each Sub-Division of this district is headed by an Honorary Commandant who has a full-fledged office. The Commandant is assisted by a good instructional staff which includes one Jamader, one Platoon Commander and four Instructors.

Since September 1965, Home Guards numbering 770 have been trained in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division different training camps held at Diphu, Howraghat, Langhin, Lumbajung, Bokajan, Borpathar and Donkamokam.

In the N. C. Hills Sub-Division, 220 Home Guards had already been trained in camps at four places.

The Home Guards of this district have been rendering very useful services in different fields. They have helped on various occasions such as during elections, or guarding important places during emergencies, or in helping victims of railway accidents and for other similar needs.

Five persons of this district were deputed by the Assam Government for higher training in the Central Emergency Relief Training Institute, Nagpur, A large number of Home Guards were deputed and trained in the Central Training Institute at Beltola, Gauhati.

As the basic training of Home Guards in this district had already been completed, further course of training will be imparted as per the scheme of the State in the near future.

II. VILLAGE DEFENCE PARTIES

The Village Defence Organisation is one of the most essential institutions of Civil Defence. This organisation has been functioning in this district since the year 1956.

At present 252 Village Defence Parties, 172 in the Mikir Hills Sub-Division and 80 in the N. C. Hills Sub-Division, are actively functioning in this district in the following spheres.

1. Helping the Police in dealing with troubles created by anti-social elements.
2. Exercising vigilance in the villages to prevent crimes and spotting out unknown criminals and bad elements entering into the villages.
3. Helping the police in all possible ways in the maintenance of law and order in their respective localities and in prevention and detection of crimes.
4. The members of the village defence parties are found to have organised social service work also over and above the performance of their primary duties mentioned above.

III. NATIONAL CADET CORPS

The Junior Division Boys' National Cadet Corps was introduced in the Diphu Government High School in the year 1964 and a troop was raised under 6 Assam Bn. N.C.C., Nowgong. In 1966, it was transferred to the 2 Assam Independent Company N.C.C., Diphu. The Junior Division N.C.C. has been functioning in the Haflong Government High School also for quite sometime past.

The Senior Division of N.C.C. was introduced in Diphu College in the year 1966. The Senior Division of N.C.C. under 8/7 Assam Independent Company, N.C.C. was introduced in the Haflong College in June 1968.

2. GAZETTEER MIKIR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

DIPHU

Diphu is the District Headquarters of the United Mikir & N. C. Hills District. It is also the Headquarters of the Mikir Hills District Council. Although it is a newly created small town with a population of about 5,000, it has been making rapid progress. It is electrified and the water supply project from the Lungi river has also been completed. Diphu is also an important Railway Station of the N.F. Railway. Since its declaration as the district Headquarters a number of educational institutions have been coming up. At present it has one Government College, two Government High Schools— one for boys and one for girls, one Hindi Training Centre and one Industrial Training Institute besides a number of elementary schools. As a business centre, the importance of Diphu has been gradually increasing. It has one well-equipped Civil Hospital also. At present Diphu is linked with Nowgong by State Transport services.

Diphu has a Town Committee of which the Secretary, Mikir Hills District Council is the Ex-Officio Chairman.

HOWRAGHAT

Howraghat is one of the important business centres of the Mikir Hills. It is just on the border of Nowgong District separated only by the river Jamuā. It has a big weekly market. There is one High School, one Primary Health Unit and one Police Station at Howraghat. It is also the Headquarters of the Howraghat T. D. Block. The distance from Diphu to Howraghat is about 80 kms.

BOKAJAN

Bokajan is also another important business centre of the Mikir Hills. It is a railway station of the N. F. Railway on the Lumding-Mariani Section. It is touched by the National Highway No. 39 also. It has a weekly market. There is one Primary Health Unit, one Police Station and one High School at Bokajan. It is also the Headquarters of the Bokajan. T. D. Block. The distance from Diphu to Bokajan by road is about 72 kms.

DONKAMOKAM

Donkamokam is an important place of the Western Mikir Hills. It can be reached from Hojai Railway Station by road via Tumpreng Ghat or from Kampur Railway Station by road via Baithalangso. It has one Primary Health Unit, one High School and a Police Outpost. It is also the Headquarters of the Rongkhong T. D. Block and the newly created Baithalangso P.W.D. Division. It also has a weekly market.

Among the other important places of the Mikir Hills Sub-Division, mention may be made of Baithalangso, Hamren (Umteli), Kalanga, Umpanai, Mahendijua (Manja), Bakulia, Langhin, Dokmoka, Dengaon, Daithor etc.

NORTH CACHAR HILLS SUB-DIVISION

HAFLONG

Haflong is the Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division. It is also an important railway station

on the hill Section of the N. F. Railway. Following the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, the Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division was shifted from Gunjung to Haflong in 1895.

Haflong is also a beautiful small hill station on the top of the Haflong Hill. From the point of its natural beauty, it can be regarded as the Second Shillong of Assam.

There is one Civil Hospital, one College, one Government High School, one Convent School and one Weaving Training Centre at Haflong. At present it is directly linked with Shillong by State Transport Services. Haflong is the only town in this district constituted under the Assam Municipal Act.

MAIBANG

Maibang literally means a place which is full of rice or paddy. It is a Kachari word— 'Mai' means rice or paddy and 'Bang' means plenty. Maibang is mainly a place of historical importance as it was the last capital of the Kachari Kingdom. There are still some ruins of historical importance relating to the ancient palace of the Kachari kings lying in obscurity at Maibang. Two inscribed stones and the rock-cut temple can still be seen clearly.

Maibang is a railway station on the hill section of the N. F. Railway. It is also the Headquarters of the Diyung Valley T. D. Block. There is one Primary Health Unit, one Leprosy Colony, one High School and a weekly bazar at Maibang.

MAHUR

Mahur is an important railway station on the hill section of the N.F. Railway. It is also Headquarters of the Jatinga Valley T. D. Block. There is one Primary Health Unit, one Middle English School and a weekly bazar at Mahur.

ASLU

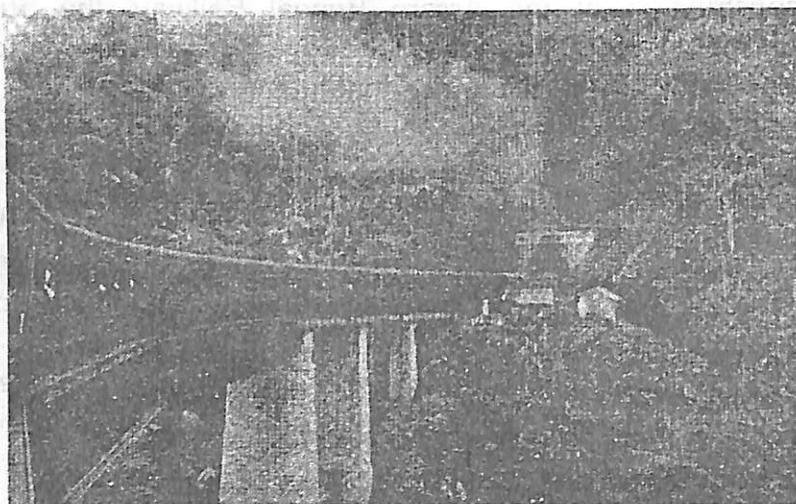
It is Zemi Naga village. The Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division was at first established here in 1853 and continued till 1880 when it was shifted to Gunjung. A broken part of a stone house can still be seen here.

GUNJUNG

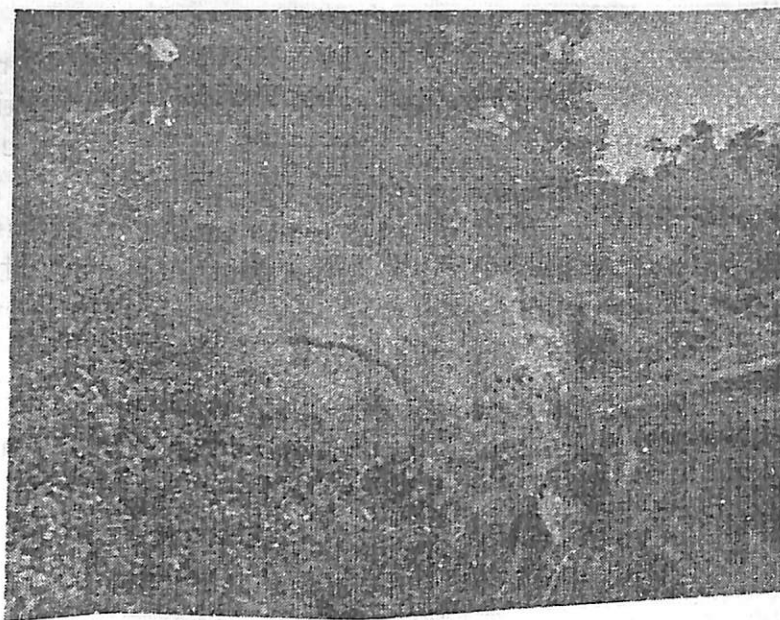
It is a Kachari village situated on the Shillong-Silchar road. It was the second Sub-Divisional Headquarters of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division established in 1880 and it continued to be so till 1895 when it was shifted to Haflong. Originally it was a Zemi Naga village believed to have been established by a Naga Chief named Gunyang and the village was named after him. The round stones found here might be of some historical importance.

JATINGA

It is a progressive Khasi village. It is also an important railway station on the hill section of the N. F. Railway. Jatinga is famous mainly for its large scale production of oranges and pineapples.



A Train Entering a Tunnel in the N. C. Hills.



Stone House at Maibong.

GARAMPANI

Garampani is a hot spring on the right bank of the river Kopili. It is situated on the Shillong-Silchar Road. The natural scenery of Garampani is very enchanting. It is also a good fishing ground. The nearby reserved forest which abounds with wild animals provides a good hunting ground. It may therefore be regarded as an ideal place for the holiday makers.

Although a site for the proposed Kopili Project was selected near Garampani long back, the execution of the project has not been included in the Fourth Five Year plan.

Harangajao, Laisong, Kalachand, Hajadisha, Langting and Hatikhali are the other important places of the N. C. Hills Sub-Division.

APPENDIX

Since the writing of this Handbook, some important changes in the administrative set-up and other spheres have taken place. I consider it worthwhile to remain here the most important changes that were brought about till the end of the calendar year 1970.

1. FORMATION OF THE NORTH CACHAR HILLS DISTRICT.

A new civil district comprising of the North Cachar Hills Sub-Division of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was inaugurated on 2nd February, 1970, with Haflong as the Headquarters of the newly formed district.

2. FORMATION OF MEGHALAYA-A SUB-STATE

Meghalaya, an Autonomous Sub-State within the State of Assam comprising of the United Khasi Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District was formally inaugurated on 2nd April, 1970. The Mikir Hills District and the newly created North Cachar Hills District opted to remain with Assam instead of joining the Sub-State of Meghalaya.

3. TRANSFER OF POWERS TO THE DISTRICT COUNCILS

A. MIKIR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

With effect from 1st June, 1970, almost all the Development Departments of the Government of Assam functioning in the Mikir Hills District have been placed under the Administrative Control of the Mikir Hills District Council. The Government Notification No AAP. 95/70/

36, dated 1st Jne, 1970, to this effect, runs as follows :

In pursuance of the decision of the Government of Assam regarding entrusting the District Council of Mikir Hills with functions relating to Agriculture, Animal Husbandry etc., the Governor of Assam is pleased to place the services of all the District level officers, as well as their subordinate officers and staff working in the Mikir Hills District of the following Departments under the Administrative control of the Mikir Hills District Council with effect from 1st June, 1970.

(1) Agriculture, (2) P.W.D. (F.C.&I.), (3) T. A. & W. B. C. Department (Soil Conservation), (4) Animal Husbandry, Veterinary and Fisheries, (5) Forests, (6) Development (P. & C. D.), (7) Industries (Cottage), (8) P.W.D. (R. & B.), (9) Education (G) and (P.T.M.), (10) Health and Family Planning (B), (11) Health and Family Planning (A), (12) Planning and Development (Social Welfare)

These officers and staff will not cease to be Government servants but will function primarily as the officers of the District Council and the District Council will be associated in the matter of recording of their Annual Confidential Reports in accordance with the provisions to be prescribed by the Government. They will continue to be responsible to the State Government for implementing Schemes which have not been transferred to the District Council and will not be entitled to any deputation allowance or other additional allowances, as they will not be performing the same functions as hitherto. The Administrative Departments concerned should issue further detailed notification/order in respect of such officers and staff.

The Secretariate Cell of the Mikir Hills District Council is headed by a Principal Secretary, who is a member of the Indain Administrative Service :

B. NORTH CACHAR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

With effect from 16th September, 1970, almost all the Development Departments of the Government of Assam functioning in the newly formed North Cachar Hills District have been placed under the Administrative Control of the North Cachar Hills District Council. The Government Notification No. AAP. 95/70/100, dated the 10th September, 1970, to this effect runs as follows :

In pursuance of the decision of the Government of Assam regarding entrusting the District Council of North Cachar Hills with functions relating to Agriculture, Animal Husbandary etc. the Government of Assam is pleased to place the services of all the District level officers as well as their subordinate officers and staff working in the North Cachar Hills District of the following Departments under the Administrative control of the North Cachar Hills District Council with effect from 16th September, 1970.

(1) Agriculture, (2) P.W.D. (Flood Control & Irrigation), (3) T.A. & W.B.C. Department (Soil Conservation), (4) Animal Husbandry, Veterinary and Fisheries, (5) Forests, (6) Development (Panchayat & Community Development), (7) Industries (Cottage), (8) P.W.D. (Roads & Buildings), (9) Education (General and P.T.M.) (10) Health and Family Planning (B), (11) Health and Family Planning (A), (12) Planning and Development (Social Welfare).

These Officers and staff will not cease to be Government servants, but will function primarily as the Officers of the District Council and the District Council will be associated in the matter of recording of their Annual Confidential Reports in accordance with the provisions to be prescribed

by the Government. They will continue to be responsible to the State Government for implementing Schemes which have not been transferred to the District Council and will not be entitled to any deputation allowance or other additional allowances, as they will be performing the same functions as hitherto. The Administrative Departments concerned should issue further detailed notification/order in respect of such officers and staff.

The Secretariat Cell of the North Cachar Hills District Council is headed by a Principal Secretary belonging to the Indian Administrative Service.

4. DIPHU TOWN COMMITTEE

On 25th January, 1970, for the first time an election of the members to the Diphu Town Committee was held under the provisions of the Mikir Hills District (Constitution of Town Committee) Rules, 1958. The newly constituted Diphu Town Committee consisting of 6 members-4 elected and 2 nominated- had taken over charge formally on 2nd April, 1970, from the Secretary of the Mikir Hills District Council who was also the ex-officio Chairman of the Diphu Town Committee.

5. STRENGTH OF MEMBERS OF THE MIKIR HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

As per the Constitution of the Mikir Hills District Council (7th Amendment) Act, 1969, the number of constituencies of the Mikir Hills District Council was

increased from 12 to 18 and the number of nominated members was increased from 4 to 6.

As per Constitution of Mikir Hills District Council (9th Amendment) Act, 1970, the number of Constituencies of the Mikir Hills District Council has been increased from 18 to 20 and the number of nominated members has been decreased from 6 to 4.