

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN MEGHALAYA
A CASE STUDY OF THE GREATER SHILLONG AREAS
DURING THE 1983 (ASSEMBLY) ELECTIONS

By

Miss Sulochana Bawri



SUBMITTED
IN
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

To



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

SHILLONG-793 014

1987

thesis.

DS
324.54164
BAW;1

NEHU Library
Acc. No 10.2066
Acc. by [Signature]
Date 12/26/96
Classified by [Signature]
Submitted by [Signature]
Cataloged by [Signature]
Transcribed by [Signature]
17-11-96



PHONE :
GRAMS : NEHU

North-Eastern Hill University

Mayurbhanj Complex, Nongthymmai, Shillong-793014

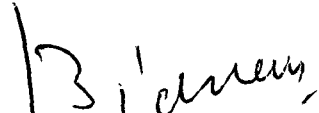
Department of _____

Dr. B. Pakem
Professor and Head
Department of Political Science

AUGUST 22, 1987

This is to certify that Miss Sulochana Bawri has prepared this dissertation on "Electoral Politics in Meghalaya : A Case Study of the Greater Shillong Areas During the 1983 (Assembly) Elections" under my supervision. I am glad to say that the dissertation makes an important contribution to our knowledge of electoral politics in the Greater Shillong Areas which form the nerve-centre of political activities and movements in Meghalaya. Miss Bawri has used all the sources that are available and supplemented her work with field studies.

I am sure she will have success.


(B. Pakem)
Supervisor

PREFACE

Elections are the backbone of Democracy because they represent people's participation in the State affairs. Elections, therefore, give us an idea of the Politics of that area including the political development. In India, election is based on broad adult franchise, direct election and individual freedom. Elections are also organised on party basis. 'THE ELECTORAL POLITICS IN MEGHALAYA: A CASE STUDY OF THE GREATER SHILLONG AREAS DURING THE 1983 (ASSEMBLY) ELECTIONS' is a first study of the general elections in Meghalaya. Meghalaya, has gone through three elections, held at regular intervals of five years, since 1972.

The present study analyses the political behaviour of the electorates in Meghalaya in the light of social, economic and cultural determinants of the area. The political study of the Greater Shillong Areas, the aims and objectives of the Political Parties, the salient features of the election manifestoes of the political parties, their election campaign, voting behaviour and the role of women in elections have been presented in this study. The electoral behaviour projected in this study reflects the motivations, attitudes, values and expectations of the public who elect their representatives once in five years.

I am indebted to Professor B. Pakem, the Head of the Department of Political Science, for supervising and going through the manuscripts. I express my thanks also to V. Venkata Rao, Professor-Emeritus, Guwahati University and Honorary Visiting Professor, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, for guiding and reading the draft scripts. My gratitude and thanks are also extended to the MLAs and contesting candidates of Greater Shillong Areas as well as the Executive Members of the Political Parties in Meghalaya, and the electorates at large in the same area. Similar thanks are also due to the staff in the library and the Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, for helping me to procure the required materials for this study. I am also grateful to Mr. Joseph F. Khongbuh for typing out the final manuscripts.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the authors of the various books and articles listed in the Bibliography whose works have helped me in completing the study. I am, however, fully conscious that there may be various types of errors in the study for which I will be wholly responsible.

My special thanks and gratitude is also attributed to my parents and well wishers who encouraged me during the period of this study.

SHILLONG
THE 21st August 1987.


(S. BAWRI)

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In India, the second quarter of the twentieth century appeared as a period during which certain processes were set in motion that transformed the age-old structure and character of the society. One such process is the politicization of Indian masses. The chief characteristics of this process is that it draws people with diverse historical and cultural backgrounds into a common universe of interaction and discourse based on principles of political equality and competition. This opens up a new area of political choice and influence for ordinary men and women, who until recently, were apolitical beings - that is, subjects not expected to intervene in the ongoing processes of allocation of power and privileges in the society.

The right of entry into the political arena is, however, not acquired automatically by all at the same time. It is through mobilization and involvement in competitive politics, and the resulting and perception of conflicting interests, that the various groups manage to enter organised politics and learn to play their part in it. This process is by no means smooth, nor is it equally open to all. Representative institutions, despite their formal openness, are in reality more open for some than for others. Those who are close to the power structure have a natural

advantage, for they possess the necessary means - high socio-economic status and better education - to turn the balance of political competition in their own favour.

But periodic elections, in a way, do satisfy the desire of the masses for their share in the political power. Once in a while, the masses get an opportunity of participation in the political process. For a time, they are the uncrowned sovereign. In the theoretical sense, power is dispersed and the masses are integrated into the main stream of political life.

The study of Election by political scientists and political sociologists started only after the Second World War to understand and explain social reality. It was for the first time that in such studies latest scientific techniques were applied to the political problems. The Behavioural approach opened up vast areas of fruitful empirical research. Eugene Burdick and Samuel S. Eldersveld, American political sociologists, made two good review studies of voting behaviour till 1951.¹ But their studies

1.(i) Samuel S. Eldersveld, Theory and Method in Voting Behavioural Research in Heinz Eulau, et al., Political Behaviour, New Delhi, 1972.

(ii) Eugene Burdick, Political Theory and the Voting Studies in E. Burdick and Arthur S. Brodbeck (Ed.) American Voting Behaviour, Illinois, 1959.

did not throw any light as to how power is acquired and through what motivations power changes hand. Moreover, they do not explain how effective are elections, parties, groups and media of communication as instruments for democratic actions and discussions.

In India, the first Election study was done by S.V. Kogekar and Richard L. Park in 1952.² Since then, Election studies were made in Poona, Gujarat, Bombay, Goa etc. But the first major step to study voting behaviour was done at the time of the Fourth General Elections in 1967 by the Indian Council for Social Science Research under the chairmanship of Shri M.S. Gore.³ Some studies were also undertaken for the 1972 elections like Zaheer Masood Quraishi's, Elections and State Politics of India, A Case Study of Kashmir. Leaving Sachindananda's, The Tribal Voter in Bihar and R.P. Singh's, Electoral Politics in Manipur, none of these studies however dealt with the voting behaviour with special references to the tribal people.

-
2. S.V. Kogekar and Richard L. Park (eds.), Report on the Indian General Elections 1951-55, Popular Press, Bombay, 1956.
 3. ICSSR, New Delhi, Studies of the Fourth General Elections, Allied Publishers, 1956.

The present study is an attempt in that direction. In Meghalaya B. Datta Ray's book, Electoral Politics in Meghalaya is only an analytical study of Parliamentary Elections held in 1977.⁴ The Contribution made by scholars for the seminar organised by the North East India Council for Social Science Research on December 14-15, 1983 on Electoral Politics in North East India dealt with only one aspect or the other of the whole Election process. Moreover, my study on Electoral Politics in Meghalaya: A Case Study of the Mawkhar Constituency during the 1983 Assembly Elections is only a micro study of one constituency which does not explain in general the Electoral behaviour of the people in the Greater Shillong Areas. Greater Shillong Areas have been taken up for study as it includes the more important constituencies of Meghalaya. It includes both rural and urban constituencies as well as a conglomeration of tribes, communities, linguistics and religious groups. It is hoped that the area selected for study presents important characteristics of Electoral Politics in the State.

The purpose of study is to examine the voting behaviour of the electorate with the following objectives:

4. B. Datta Ray, Electoral Politics in Meghalaya, NEISSR, Shillong, 1978.

- (a) To study the voters' political attitude and preferences, party preferences and identification, the pattern of orientation towards candidates and parties, the importance attached to local issues and their influence in electoral decision making.
- (b) To enquire into the process of electioneering of the different political parties and their candidates.
- (c) A comparative study of the Election manifestoes of the political parties.
- (d) The study of the various campaign techniques, the efficiency of campaign, the importance of campaign, voters' exposure to mass media, their resultant participation, involvement, etc.
- (e) The analysis of the results and the voting behaviour in general, and
- (f) The role of women in the whole election process.

The study for the Greater Shillong Areas is being conducted with the help of questionnaire, schedules, indepth interviews, primary documents, secondary sources and observation. The observation report is my own involvement in the General Assembly Elections held in 1983.

Before discussing the Electoral behaviour in the Greater Shillong Areas, it will be useful to have a

background of Meghalaya Politics in general and of the areas where field work is done in particular.

Following the Twenty-Second Amendment of the Indian Constitution on 24th December, 1969, Parliament enacted history by passing the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Bill simultaneously in the two Houses in order to create "an autonomous state to be known as Meghalaya" within the State of Assam, comprising of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District as defined in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. The most important feature of the Meghalaya Act (55 of 1969) was that it created a new tier in India's State structure similar to the Autonomous Republic of the USSR. The Executive power of the new unit was vested in the Governor of Assam, aided and advised by the council of ministers of Meghalaya, in relation to the Autonomous State. A legislative Assembly was also created with membership open to all Indians. Except Shillong, all seats in the Autonomous District for election to the Assam Legislature has been restricted to the Scheduled Tribes of the Autonomous Districts. Further the Governor was empowered to nominate upto three members from the minority communities if, in his opinion, they were inadequately represented.⁵

5. The Assam Reorganisation Act (Meghalaya) 1969.

But some of the Hill Leaders were not satisfied with it and demanded a full Statehood for Meghalaya which was finally granted to them on 21st January 1972, when it became a full fledged State of the Indian Union, Meghalaya is bounded by Assam on the North and the East and by Bangladesh in the South and the West. It has an area of 22,549 Sq. Kms according to the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971. Meghalaya lies between 25.47° and 26.10° North Latitude and 89.45° and 92.47° East Longitude. It has a population of 13,27,874 (1981 Census).⁶ The total number of Electorates in Meghalaya is 6,81,400.⁷

In 1920, only a few selected (950) male citizens enjoyed the right to franchise.⁸ Under the Government of India Act 1935, females who were literates, wives of persons who paid municipal, cantonment or small town taxes were given the right to vote. Again, wives of retired pensioners, non-commissioned officers or soldiers of His Majesty's Regular Forces or of Assam Rifles or pensioned widows or mothers were regarded as electors. So in 1935,

6. Tayeng, J., Census of India 1981, Series 14, Meghalaya, Director of Census Operations, Meghalaya, 1981, p. 3.

7. Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya, Election Handbook - Assembly Election, 1983, Shillong.

8. Rao, V.V. et al., A Century of Government and Politics in North-East India, Vol. II (Meghalaya) 1874-1983, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1983, p. 94.

the number of voters registered were 21,436. There were 1,306 in Garo Hills; 6,154 in Khasi Hills; 10,767 in Jaintia Hills and 2,197 in the Shillong Women Constituency. In 1946, the number of electors in all these constituencies increased to 31,020. (Garo Hills 3,192; Shillong Women Constituency - 5,087, Jaintia Hills - 11,101, and Khasi Hills - 11,640).

India attained independence in 1947. The Constitution of India envisaged Universal Adult Franchise as one of its principle features. This means all adult citizens above twenty-one years of age were given the right to vote irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or sex. So in 1952, the number of electors increased enormously. It was as follows:

TABLE - I⁹

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>INCREASED BY</u>	<u>TOTAL ELECTORATES</u>
1920	-	950
1937	20,486	21,436
1946	9,684	31,020
INDEPENDENT INDIA		
1952	2,49,228	2,80,248
1957	32,380	3,12,628

9. For total electorates, Ibid.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>INCREASED BY</u>	<u>TOTAL ELECTORATES</u>
1962	37,759	3,50,387
1967	26,300	3,76,687
IN MEGHALAYA		
1972	41,806	4,18,493
1977	11,833	5,30,326
1978	54,687	5,85,023
1980	52,475	6,37,498
1983	43,902	6,81,400

Under Independent India and in the 1952 Assam Assembly Elections there were 2,80,248 electors in Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. In the subsequent elections held in 1957, 1962 and 1967 the total electorate increased varied between 26,300 to 37,759 in these areas.

In the State of Meghalaya, the total electorates registered in 1972 was 4,18,493. That is, under the composite State of Assam and the separate State of Meghalaya 41,806 electors were added. But in between the two Assembly Elections (1972-1978) in Meghalaya there was an abnormal rise of voter by 1,66,530. Such an increase was never noticed before though elections were held at regular intervals. Moreover between the second (1978) and third (1983) general Assembly Elections the electors were further increased by 96,377.

If we look at the Table I we find that in 15 years (1952-67) under Assam, the total electorates increased in Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills by 96,439. Whereas within the span of five years (1978-83) almost the same number 96,377 were added. Moreover the table also shows that within a span of twenty years (1952-72) the number of electorates were increased by 1,38,245 (in Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills) and between (1972-83) that is; eleven years the voters increased by 2,62,907. If we analyse this we find that the addition in the last eleven years is more than double than the increase between 1952 to 1972.

The increase in the number of voters was due to various reasons. First, there was an improvement in the registration of voters. Second, the political parties interested in the outcome of elections must have evinced interest in the registration of voters. Third, the improvement in the sanitary conditions and the provisions of essential commodities at controlled rates resulted in the reduction of death rate and increase in the span of life. Above all, the unsettled economic and political condition in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) accelerated the migration. Apart from immigration from Bangladesh there was also immigration from other parts of India. A substantial number of them must have settled down in Meghalaya and acquired the

On the eve of its formation as a full fledged State, Meghalaya was allotted 60 seats in the Legislative Assembly. After the First General Elections held on 9th March 1972, the APHLC which won 32 seats in the Assembly was called upon to form the Government. Capt. W.A. Sangma, an ardent APHLC leader formed the Government with Stanley D.D. Nichols Roy, B.B. Lyngdoh, Edwinson Bareh and Sandford K. Marak as Cabinet Ministers and with D.D. Pugh and Grahon Singh Marak as Ministers of State.

From time to time attempts were made to unseat the Sangma Ministry. During the winter session of the Assembly (December 1974), there was a lobbying by some of the members of the opposition like H. Hynniewta and M.N. Majaw to throw out the Sangma Ministry. There was also a demand in the party itself for the expansion of the ministry. The situation was, therefore, delicate for Capt. Sangma. To strengthen his position and that of his ministry, Sangma requested R. S. Lyngdoh, the Speaker to join his cabinet so that one of his aspirants for office P. R. Kyndiah, may be dropped in the Speaker's chair. The Speaker did not like to involve himself in partisan politics. Since the Speaker did not accept the offer, Sangma had no alternative but to take P. R. Kyndiah into his cabinet. Otherwise, Kyndiah's followers would leave the party. Further, some

of the members aspired promotion. Therefore, D.D. Pugh and Grohon Singh Marak were promoted as Cabinet Ministers. In their place, three others were taken as Minister of State - P.G. Marbaniang, B.B. Shallam and Salseng C. Marak. Thus, the ministry was expanded on 6th February 1975.¹⁰

On 16th November 1976, a meeting of the APHLC was convened at Mendipathar to merge the APHLC with the Congress. Leaving B.B. Lyngdoh, S.D.D. Nichols Roy, P.R. Kyn-diah, D.D. Pugh and Jackman Marak, all the APHLC legislators supported Capt. Sangma's move which was formally announced at the Jawahar Nagar session of the Indian National Congress on 19th November 1976. On 22nd November 1976, Capt. Sangma formed the Congress Ministry with eight members which was further expanded on 24th January 1977. It included Capt. Sangma as Chief Minister, five Cabinet Ministers - E. Bareh, S.K. Marak, G. Marak, Maham Singh. P.G. Marbaniang and five Ministers of State - S.C. Marak, B.B. Shallam, U. Kharbuli, D. D. Lapang and F.K. Mawlot.

In the Second Assembly Elections held on 25th February 1978, no party obtained an absolute majority in the Assembly. The I.N.C. won 20 seats, APHLC 16, HSPDP 14 and Independents 10. Of the 10 independents, two belonged to

10. Ibid., p. 121.

the PDIC. Since no party obtained an absolute majority, coalition became inevitable. On 3rd March 1978, the central Executive Committee of the HSPDP called upon all the regional parties to come together and form a coalition government. The General Secretary of the APHLC, D.D. Pugh welcomed the proposal. On 4th March, the Parliamentary Party of the APHLC decided to negotiate with the HSPDP. Three independents - Mrs. Miriam D. Shira, Shri Mackenson K. Sangma and Shri Tylli Kyndiah promised to support the APHLC. The two members of the PDIC also promised to support the coalition. Another independent, Shri H. Britainwar Dan joined the coalition.¹¹ The representatives of the three regional parties, the APHLC, HSPDP and PDIC convened a meeting to form a three-flag government but they could not arrive at a solution as to who should be the Chief Leader. They were about to disperse when the Meghalaya Tribal Youth Organisation came into the political scene and forced the leaders of the regional parties to come to an understanding. To solve the problem of the Chief Leader, a church leader, Father Sngi Lyngdoh had to be called to settle the issue by drawing of lots. Accordingly, D.D. Pugh, an APHLC was elected as the leader of the coalition. Then

11. Ibid.

the parties entered into an agreement which stated that the strength of the ministry should be 13 - one to the PDIC and six each for the APHLC and the HSPDP. Thus, the coalition government was formed on 10th March 1978.

In the meantime, B.B. Lyngdoh who aspired the post of the Chief Minister engineered defections to increase the strength of the APHLC. He was eminently successful in this matter by having as many as 31 legislators. On the other hand, D.D. Pugh played the game dexteriously by enacting an impression that he would be resigning and facilitate the election of B.B. Lyngdoh as the Chief Minister. At the same time, he saw to it that the APHLC Parliamentary Party elected him as its leader.

B.B. Lyngdoh wrote to the President of the APHLC party that the choice of the chief minister should rest in the party. Accordingly, the Parliamentary Party decided to form a single party government with D.D. Pugh to continue as Chief Minister. But D. D. Lapang's counter question brought the truth out that the government would be a coalition one again (APHLC and PDIC). This frustrated B. B. Lyngdoh who, now decided to come to an agreement with the Congress and the HSPDP. Capt. Sangma of the Congress and S.D. Khongwir of the HSPDP responded to his call to unite together to form the government.

On 17th April 1979, the Congress, HSPDP, one PDIC and seven dissidents of the APHLC formed themselves into a group styled as United Meghalaya Parliamentary Democratic Forum (UMPDF) under the leadership of B.B. Lyngdoh and entered into a 'solemn serious agreement' which read as follows:

In this emergency situation, we the representative in the Assembly have agreed to form a sort of national government by selecting the best team of leaders, irrespective of party, affiliation, with an accepted common object, plan and programme. We will all work for the evolution of the broad based organisation in the state, federal in form that will always ensure a stable majority in the Assembly.

All important matters in the government shall be decided in the cabinet or sub-cabinet. The chief minister or any other minister shall not decide any important matter alone.

We recommend to all the political parties in the state to make a definite provision to safeguard that the interest of the minorities are not jeopardised in the interest of the individuals. All important matters shall be decided by the party.

No reasonable person in the State would think or take lightly the above agreement and belief in the mischievous propaganda being thrown around by the interested elements. We are determined to implement the pledges contained in the above agreement and stand firm and work unitedly for the maintenance of the stability of the present government to ensure confidence in the minds of the public and greater progress in the State and the country as a whole.¹²

12. See, Rao, V.V. et al., A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Vol. II (Meghalaya) 1874-1983, S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1984, p. 125.

The UMPDF further agreed that B. B. Lyngdoh would hold office of Chief Minister for two years and the remaining two years by Capt. Sangma.

On 28th April 1978, the leaders of the UMPDF called upon the Governor to say that they had 32 legislature in the house of 60. But D.D. Pugh informed the Governor that his ministry had the following of 34. To find out the actual party position, the Governor summoned the Assembly to meet on 4th May 1979, where the speaker W. Syiemiong put the motion to voice vote. In this motion the UMPDF polled 30 and the Pugh's ministry 29. Thus D.D. Pugh was defeated who then submitted the resignation of his ministry and B.B. Lyngdoh was sworn in as Chief Minister on 7th May, 1979. His ministry consisted of Deputy Chief Minister S.D. Khongwir, nine Cabinet Ministers - Salseng C. Marak, H. Hadem, D.D. Lapang, M. Reidson Momin, B. Pakem, Y. Fuller Lyngdoh, P.G. Momin, P.G. Marbaniang, Maham Singh and two Ministers of State - H. Britainwar Dan and Pritington Sangma. Capt. Sangma was appointed the Chairman of the State Planning Board.

According to the 'Solemn Serious Agreement', B. B. Lyngdoh completed his two-year term and handed over the chief ministership to Capt. Sangma and became the Chairman of the State Planning Board.

Towards the expiry of the second Assembly tenure, that is, just before the third Assembly Elections B. B. Lyngdoh left the Forum. In his letter to the Chief Minister, Lyngdoh said:

We the members of the UMPDF are going to contest against one another in the Assembly Elections to be held next month. It will not be in keeping with the healthy Parliamentary practice for the parties in the ruling party to confront each other in the election arena. You may recall the discussion, you, Mr. Khongwir and myself had on 24th September 1982 in your office, where we examined two alternative actions; viz. winding up of the UMPDF or individual withdrawal before the start of the election campaign. Since there has been no move for the first step, withdrawal is the other course to be taken. Some of my colleagues have already declared their withdrawal.¹³

Thus all the members of the UMPDF withdraw from the forum before the commencement of the election. The third General Elections to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly was held on 17th February 1983.

Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is an agglomeration of four towns - Shillong municipality, Shillong Cantonment, Mawlai and Nongthymmai. Different wards of the municipality and different towns present great internal differences. Shillong has the following five physiographic

13. Ibid., p. 127.

divisions: the Northern slopes of the Shillong ranges, the Umshyrpi valley, the Laitumkhrach-Mawkhar upland, the Umkhrach valley and the Umkhrach-Umshing divide. Malki, Lumparing, Madan Laban, Laban and Kench's Trace, Rilbong are situated mainly on the Northern slopes of the Shillong ranges and partly in the Umshyrpi valley. These wards are more than 1,465 m above sea level, Laitumkhrach, European Ward, Police Bazar, parts of Jail Road, Mawkhar, Mission Compound, Jaiaw, South East Mawkhar and Mawprem are situated on the Laitumkhrach-Mawkhar upland and for most parts are between 1,430 and 1,545 m above sea level, parts of Jail Road and Mawlai occupy the Umkhrach valley and the Umkhrach-Umshing divide. Shillong Cantonment spreads over either side of the Umshyrpi. Nongthymmai, situated between the Wah Demthring, Wah Nongthymmai and Umkhrach spreads over the hills with heights between 1,500 and 1,615 m above sea level.¹⁴

For Electoral purposes, Greater Shillong Area was divided into the constituencies of Jaiaw, Laitumkhrach, Laban, Mawkhar, Mawlai, Mawprem, Malki-Nongthymmai, Pynthor-umkhrach and parts of the Myllem Constituency. These constituencies are inhabited by the Khasis, Jaintias, Bengalis,

14. J.B. Singh, Shillong: A Geographical Analysis of Internal Variations in B.B. Goswami, ed., Cultural Profile of Shillong, Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India, Calcutta, 1979, p. 69.

Assamese, Nepalis, Marwaris, Biharis, Punjabis and Mizos. Most of the Khasis and Jaintias and Mizos follow their own indigenous religion or are either Christians or converted into Christianity. The Bengalis and the Assamese are either Hindus or Muslims, the Punjabis belong to the Sikh religion and the others are Hindus.

In the following chapters a more detailed study will be made to cover the purpose of this work. The first chapter will deal with the political study of Greater Shillong Areas.

CHAPTER - I

THE POLITICAL STUDY OF GREATER SHILLONG AREAS

Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is situated in the midst of the Khasi Hills District at a distance of 103 Km South of Guwahati and at a height of 4,960 metres. It is surrounded by the beautiful forest of pine trees. Shillong is located at 25.34° North Latitude and 91.53° East Longitude.

Meghalaya, which was a part of the composite State of Assam attained statehood on 21st January 1972. On the eve of its formation, the territorial area of Meghalaya was divided into sixty single member Assembly constituencies for electoral purposes. Shillong which has an area of 21.27 Sq.Km. was divided into nine constituencies. The constituencies included in the Greater Shillong areas are: Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrak, Pynthorankhrak, Jaiaw, Mawkhar, Mawprem, Laban, Mawlai and parts of the Mylliem constituency which fall on the left side of the Umshyrpā stream.

1. The areas included in the Malki-Nongthymmai constituency are: Wah Demthring and Dum Dum area, Rynjah, Madanriting, Nongkhyriem, Meyurbhanj, Lawjynriew, Lawpyngngad, Jylli's Shop and Nongthymmai field area, A.G. Staff Quarter, Motinagar, Fruit Garden, Fire Brigade, Dhankheti and Cleave Colony.

2. Laitumkhrach constituency includes Bhagyakul, New Colony, Nongkynrih, Nongrim Hill, Nongrimmaw, Nongshiliang, Pohkseh, Lumiablot, Upper Nongthymmai, Nongrimbah, Lum Mawrie, Don Bosco, Lachumiere and Upland Road.

3. Pynthorumkhrach constituency consists of Forest Colony (which includes Pasteur Institute, Forest Colony and Race Course area), Nongmynsong, Polo Hill area, Oakland and Jail Road.

4. The next constituency is Jalaw. It consists of Jalaw proper, Hospital Compound, Dinam Hall area, Garikhana, Qualapatty and Sunny Hill areas.

5. The territorial constituency of Mawkhar includes Mawkhar proper, Wahingdoh, Riatsamthiah, Mission Compound, Wahthapbru, Bara Bazar, Umsohsun, Sweeper's Colony, Police Bazar and parts of Thana Road.

6. The Mawprem constituency includes Barapathar, Upper Mawprem, Lower Mawprem, Naspoti Ghari, Lady Keane area, Kench's Trace, Bishnupur and Rilbong localities.

7. Laban assembly constituency consists of Laban proper, Lumparing, Raid Laban, Madan Laban, and Keatinge Road.

8. The other constituency is Mawlai. The main localities in this constituency are Mawlai Town Proper, Mawtawar, Mawsiatkhnam and Umsynjah.

In Myllem, the 4th Mile, the 5th Mile and Lawmawbah are the areas which fall under the Greater Shillong Areas. These areas consist about one-third of the Myllem Assembly constituency.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF THE MLAs IN THE GREATER SHILLONG AREAS

A modest effort has been made to study the socio-economic background of the MLAs who were elected during the 1983 Assembly Elections in the Greater Shillong Areas.

The Legislative Assembly seats won by the political parties in Greater Shillong Areas are as follows:

<u>Political Parties</u>	<u>Positions</u>		
	<u>1972</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1983</u>
A.P.H.L.C.	5	2	5
I.N.C.	3	5	3
IND and unrecognised H.S.P.D.P.	2	2	1
Total Seats	10	9	9

This shows that in 1972, the APHLC which spearheaded the movement for a separate Hill State of Meghalaya won

five seats against the Indian National Congress three. Two seats went to Independent candidates. However, the wave of public enthusiasm towards the APHLC in the 1972 election yielded to the sober realisation that Statehood was not the end in itself. So in the 1978 Assembly Elections the APHLC won two seats against the INC's five seats. Two seats were won by Independent candidates. In 1983 Assembly Elections the popular slogan 'Protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people' made the APHLC win five seats. The INC retained three seats and the HSPDP one seat.

<u>Age Group of the MLA's (1983)</u>	<u>No. of MLAs</u>
31 - 40	1
41 - 50	3
51 - 60	3
60 years and above	2

The MLA's in the Greater Shillong Areas represent all age groups that is; from thirty to sixty years and above. This shows that electorates of all age have their representation in the Assembly. Leaving Oris Lyngdoh of the Myllem constituency and B.K. Roy of the Pynthorum-khrah constituency all other MLAs belonging to fifty years and above have been elected as an MLA ever since Meghalaya

was inaugurated. So, they have a good knowledge of politics of this area. The rest of the MLAs who belong to the other age group have also been active members or supporters of their respective parties.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MLAs

<u>Educational Qualifications</u>	<u>No. of MLAs</u>
Doctors (Medical)	2
M.A.	4
LL.B.	3
B.T.	1
B.A.	2
Matric	1

The members representing Greater Shillong Areas were highly educated and urban based. Of the nine MLAs two are Medical Practitioners, four hold Post-Graduate degree. One of the Post-Graduate MLAs holds B.T. degree. Two of the members are graduates and one is in the final LL.B. Only one candidate is a Matriculate. Therefore, it may be said that all the MLAs are educated. Some of them are highly qualified. All the members from the Greater Shillong Areas are not included in the council of ministers. Only one from the Myllem constituency is included in the council of ministers of the cabinet rank. The other tribal members from the Greater Shillong Areas belong to the opposition

parties. Therefore they were not appointed as ministers. The non-tribal members belonging to the ruling party were not included in the council of ministers. So to a certain extent geographical representation is maintained in the ministry.

<u>Professional background</u>	<u>No. of MLAs</u>
Social Workers	5
Teachers	2
Government Employees	1
Others	1

Majority of the MLAs say that they are social workers. They championed the cause of social and educational development of their constituency and of the State at large. They also participated actively in every political movement of the State either as social workers or as political leaders. Analysing the professional background of the MLAs it seems that participating in the social activities of the State is the easiest way of contacting the people. Besides, being social workers, they earn their livelihood as MLAs, Medical practitioners, Advocates, Lecturers, or Journalists.

Religious Background

Greater Shillong Areas is cosmopolitan in character with the electorates belonging to diverse races, cultures,

and religions. Out of the nine elected members in Greater Shillong Areas, we find that five of them belong to Christianity, three to Hinduism and one to the Indigenous Khasi religion. Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and others are not represented at all in the Assembly from the Greater Shillong Areas.

Again, according to the language-wise distribution of the members, we find that only the Khasis, Jaintias, Bengalis and Nepalees were represented in the Assembly. The Assamese, Sikhs, Marwaris and others never had any representation by the elections in the Assembly ever since Meghalaya was inaugurated. By nomination Assamese representation was secured. Dr. H.C. Bhuyan was nominated. Unlike the rest of India, where religion plays an important role in election, the linguistics and religious minorities in Shillong never entertained a sense of insecurity. Shillong areas is free from prejudices of caste, community, race or religion. It is a cosmopolitan area as we have already noted.

Previous Political Experience

In 1983, three MLA's were elected for three terms, two for two terms and the remaining four for a single term. Moreover, in the Greater Shillong Areas it is found that

the successful candidates are full-time political activists who had taken part in the hill state movement for Meghalaya.

THE SAMPLE ELECTORATE

A modest effort has been made in this study to unravel the mystique of voting behaviour in the specific context of electorate party interaction. One of the basic assumptions of this study is that it is this interaction which is basic to the voter's sense of efficacy about the political system in general and the election process in particular. Of course, the scope of the study is much wider than what is indicated by the basic assumption identified here.

As part of the common design we are expected to cover eight complete constituencies and parts of Myllem constituency of Greater Shillong areas by studying 500 sample voters, taking at least 50 - 60 voters from each constituency. This study was conducted in the post-poll verdict stage as the decision to study the 1983 Assembly Elections was taken up after the elections. The rationale behind selecting these constituencies as unit was that during the last general election they had retained their individuality in a broad comparative sense from the point of view of competitiveness, while constituencies could not be said to have done so because of their being exposed to continuous delimitation.

After purposive selection of constituencies has thus been made it was decided to select every 200th over from the Electoral Roll on a 'simple random basis' and 'the sampling of variables proportional to size'. The voters were picked up in such a way so that a sample of 500 may be maintained. A word about replacement procedure will not be out of place here. If a respondent was contacted and yet he refused to give an interview, he was treated as a case of non-response and was not replaced. Others, however, who were not found at home or had left the area were replaced by another in the serial order of selection next to him or her in the voters' list. The electors who did not vote were treated as non-voters.

The voters and the non-voters were classified in terms of their age, sex, literacy, occupational status, income group and religion. They were further sub-divided into the three age groups of below 30, between 30-50, and above 50. Literacy-wise, they were divided into three categories: illiteracy, below matric, and matric and above. From the point of view of occupation they were classified into five categories: Business, Government Employee, Profession, Urban Labour and Non-Earner. The electorates were also categorised into indigenous religion, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. Classification according to income centered

round four broad categories namely, dependents, below Rs. 500.00, between Rs. 500.00 and Rs. 1,000.00 and above Rs. 1,000.00. Community-wise the voters were divided into Scheduled Tribes and others.

Of the total 500 sample electorates, only 461 responded, 39 of them were totally hostile, 264 exercised their franchise, 112 of them were non-voters and 85 of them were non-respondents. The highest turn-out of voters were noticed from the tribal dominant localities of the nine constituencies of Greater Shillong Areas and the lowest from the non-tribal inhabited areas. On the other hand, the highest number of non-voters came from the Bara Bazar and Police Bazar areas. The highest number of respondents came from the Mawkhar, Jaiaw and Mawprem constituencies.

TABLE - I

(i) Total Sample Electorates - 500		
Responded - 461	=	92.2%
Hostile - 39	=	7.8%
	<u>500</u>	<u>100.00%</u>
(ii) Exercised their franchise - 264	=	52.8%
Non-Voters - 112	=	22.4%
Non-respondents - 85	=	17.0%
Hostile - 39	=	7.8%
	<u>500</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

THE VOTERS AND THE NON-VOTERSDistribution by Sex

The total voters out of 461 from the point of view of sex were 234 males and 227 females. Thus the males constitute 46.6% and the females constitute 45.4% of the total sample Electorate. This shows that the males had a slight edge over the female voters. It may be pointed out, however, that the ratio among the males and the females voter is much higher than the actual proportion in the total sample electorate. In Greater Shillong Areas, slightly less electoral participation of women is not to be attributed to the reasons as found in the rest of the country. In some non-tribals areas from my own observation it was seen especially in Bara Bazar areas that the female voters were comparatively less than the male voters. This is due to their social dependence, absence from direct political involvement, the traditional hearth and home concept, lack of women's political mobilisation and others. It may also be pointed out here, that there has been a difficulty to evoke response among the women-folk to the enquiry as they are mostly reluctant to face an interview.

In the tribal areas of Greater Shillong the percentage of women voters participating was doubled than that of males. The tribal women-folk played a very active part in the whole

election process, but, their high voting behaviour percentage was pulled down by the low percentage of women voters participating in other areas. So in Greater Shillong Areas voting behaviour as determined by sex has to be looked from different angles in different constituencies.

The distribution of voters by sex in the various constituencies provides an interesting comparison. Firstly, the tribal voters had a high degree of political consciousness than the non-tribals and secondly, more tribal women voted than the non-tribal women. But in Mawprem and Laban constituencies the women-folk did not lag behind the men voters. The reason behind it being that a candidate belonging to their own sect contested the election whereas, in other constituencies like Mawkhar, Jaiaw, Laitumkhrah, and Mawlai the influential tribal candidates contested the election without evoking sufficient response from the other groups.

Among the non-voters, the female constitute 2.25 per cent and the males 3.35 per cent of the total sample electorate. While the non-response is equally divided among them. In terms of various constituencies the picture is somewhat different. The highest number of non-response came from the Pynthorumkhrah constituency. This is because in the Mawkhar

constituency especially the non-tribal women voters had no political knowledge of the constituency nor do they participate in the socio-economic activities of the constituency. The Pynthorumkhras constituency is inhabited mainly by the Bengalees. At the political level, the foreign national issue that is, the illegal infiltration of Bengalees from Bangladesh into the North Eastern States is the subject of discussion. So the voters in Pynthorumkhras constituency had a fear psychosis in giving an interview or filling up the questionnaires. In some constituencies the women-folk are far behind the males in the political consciousness and political mobilisation. But no definite generalisation can be made from the limited data available.

DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

In voting behaviour, the age factor of the voter has been given special importance in the election processes as well as in the choice of the voter. Though it is difficult to measure the exact extent the influence of age, yet, the significance of age factor cannot be underestimated. It cannot be denied however, that it is not always possible to be value free in evaluating the role of age in voting behaviour. From the study conducted in Greater Shillong Areas, it is found that the voters below 30 years (122 or 24.4%) were more interested in voting. The voters above 50 years

(49 or 9.8%) were rather apathetic in voting and the age group between 30-50 years (93 or 18.6%) were almost uniformly active in all the constituencies. The keener interest of the voters below 30 years does not necessarily indicate their sign of maturity. Similarly, no generalisation can be made about the apathy of the voters in the older age group. Actually, a man may be interested in politics but he may not vote if he has no desire to participate in the election process.

No generalisation can be made of the voters in the higher age group unless other studies also conform to this trend. It may, however, be hypothesised that perhaps the voter in the higher age tends to be more alienated from the political system and so, has been more indifferent to political participation than the youngsters. According to some voters, the main reason why they have lost interest in voting is that they find no improvement in the prevailing situation of the State ever since its formation. To others, voting meant nothing to them, except the achievement of the candidate's own end. The older age group also expressed that the eye-catching policies and programmes as expressed in the manifestoes proved to be nowhere near reality and so they have lost confidence in voting.

Among the non-voters and non-response who constitute 39.4% of the sample electorate there is no uniform pattern because most of the voters did not give any reason as to why they did not exercise their franchise.

DISTRIBUTION BY LITERACY

Education plays an important role in voting behaviour. But this does not mean, the higher the literacy, the better are the chances of political participation. Actually, there is a difference between literacy and political literacy. A voter may be illiterate, yet, he may be politically a literate by involving himself in the election campaign and propaganda to which he has been exposed. A literate voter on the other hand, may have enough knowledge of politics, yet, he may not be interested in actual participation in politics. Still literacy as one of the criteria of voting behaviour cannot be ignored in a developing country like India. In Shillong, the areas under study are mostly urban constituencies, but from the sample study available it is found that the below matric level were more interested in voting. Some voters upto the degree level were keen in voting than the voters of higher literacy group. Here if we take the ratio of the tribals and the non-tribals we find that out of the nine constituencies under study only two sections of the

non-tribal group, that is, the Nepalees and the Bengalis were represented and so they showed more interest in the election than the other non-tribal sects.

On the whole it is found that the voters in the tribal areas took the election more seriously than the voters in the non-tribal areas. From this, an inference can be drawn that only those section of the people showed their enthusiasm in voting where they found their own candidate representing them, except for a lone case of a non-tribal candidate from Mawkhar constituency who polled 11 votes.

Among the non-voters, the percentage of the illiterates and the aged is the highest in all the constituencies. As far as the non-response is concerned the illiterates had a high percentage in Pynthorumkhrah, Mawprem, Mawlai and Myllem constituencies. Actually, literacy itself is not the sole determinant of voting behaviour, it at best works in conjunction with other determinants.

DISTRIBUTION BY COMMUNITY AND RELIGION

In India, caste and religion are also the determining factors in voting behaviour but their influence varies from place to place. Meghalaya is predominantly a tribal state where caste does not play a decisive role. Most people are mainly Christians and animists. There are two tribal commu-

nities in the Greater Shillong Areas - the Khasis and the Jaintias. Besides, the Khasis and the Jaintias, there are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and others. They are not guided by any consideration but by self interest. They may vote either for a non-tribal or a tribal candidate. But in constituency consisting Bengali are in greater number as voters. They may vote for a Bengali candidate. In constituency where they are in absolute minority they vote for a tribal candidate of their choice. So far, as tribal voters are concerned, a Khasi votes for a Khasi and the Jaintia for a Jaintia.

If a candidate belonged to the indigenous religion his social and political activities and the party to which he belonged determined the behaviour of the voters.

The sample study by the electorates based on religion brought to light innumerable complexities. In the sample study, the voters were selected from different religious groups. This is done in order to see the interaction between politics and religion. Usually, a voter belonging to a particular religion voted for a candidate belonging to the same religion. But taking the sample case of Greater Shillong Areas, it is found that religion did not bar the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others from voting for a Christian or indigenous religion candidate, One important factor that

led the non-tribals tilt towards the National Parties is that by 1978 General Elections the Regional Parties did not admit the non-tribals into their party and so the only option left to them was to vote for a national party without scrutinising the identity of the candidate concerned in the constituency.

DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATION

As far as the distribution of voters by occupation is concerned the voters were divided into five categories - business, government employee, professional, urban labour and non-earner. But these occupational groupings, more often than not, tend to become blanket categories because a person may be earning his living from more than one occupation and yet he may classify himself only to one category. Thus it is difficult to identify the peculiarities of the voting behaviour from occupational groupings because they tend to hide more than what they reveal. The sample study conducted in Greater Shillong Areas does not show which occupational group took the maximum interest in voting. But it was found that the Government Employees marked the highest (16%) percentage in voting. Professional category and the Business category marked the lowest (4%) percentage.

Among the non-voter by occupation, it is found that the non-earner has the highest percentage.

The non-response came from the non-earner group. Hence the women-folk who form the bulk of the non-response group registered the maximum non-response percentage.

DISTRIBUTION BY INCOME

Lastly, the sample electorates were examined from the point of view of personal income. Income is usually taken as an index of social status and influence of a person, particularly in a developing country like India. From the study conducted it was found that the highest turnout of voters came from the income group of Rs. 500.00 - Rs. 1,000 and the lowest from the high income group. The below Rs. 500.00 were rather critical of the whole election process emphasizing that it makes no difference to them whoever is elected because they are not going to benefit from it. Judging the electorates from their income and occupation poses a very complex problem because in every category the sample electorate gave diverse replies which cannot be categorised into any fruitful groupings. Thus, the innumerable difficulties faced while studying the voters by income reveals that the sample data mentioned may not be reliably generalised for the electorates at large, in the Greater Shillong Areas.

THE INTENTION TO VOTE

'Intention' is defined as a mental resolve to action. The higher proportion of electorates showing the intention to vote is assumed to be an index of readiness on the part of the voter to participate in the governance of the country through the process of election. But the intention to vote is not a static phenomenon. It is dynamic, which keeps on changing according to the changing circumstances. If a voter continues to be firm in his voting intention, he is taken as a committed voter. If he is undecided or wants to keep his option open, he is treated as an uncommitted voter. But if he knows his mind and is constantly sure of his intention not to vote, he is then alienated from the political system as a non-voter. There are also persons who take the legal cover and refuse to answer on grounds of secrecy of ballot. They have been placed in the refused to answer category.¹

Out of the total sample electorates of 500, about 39 (7.8%) were totally hostile. 245 (49.0%) intended to vote, while 112 (22.4%) had no intention to vote and 56 (11.2%) were undecided about their voting intention. Twenty-nine voters (5.8%) were too conscious to reveal their voting

1. Varma, Narain and Associates, Voting Behaviour in a Changing Society: A Case Study of the Fourth General Election in Rajasthan, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 39-40.

intention. Nineteen voters or 3.8% did not reply, nor did they indicate their awareness of the issue itself.

TABLE - II
THE INTENTION TO VOTE

	<u>Voters</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Intention to vote	245	49.0%
Not intended to vote	112	22.4%
Undecided voters	56	11.2%
To conscious to reveal	29	5.8%
Unaware of the issue	19	3.8%
Hostile	39	7.8%
Total	500	100.0%

THE POLITICAL INFORMATION

Political information means factual information about some aspect of political process and institutions. This helps in finding out the extent to which the level of political information is a factor in voting or non-voting. This information is to be distinguished from attitudes and opinions of the respondent in regard to political issues.²

The political information sought from the respondents are:

2. Ibid., p. 105.

(a) Knowledge of the Date of election:- The correct response came mainly from the educated voters. Ever since the 1983 Assembly Elections in Meghalaya held on 17th February, two other elections were held in the State. The first one on 15th December 1983 for the Khasi Hills District Council and the other on 27th December 1984 for the Lok Sabha. So the voters got mixed up with the dates of these elections.

(b) Actual knowledge of being a voter was found more among the males and the educated. Some others also knew that they are voters but they could not suffice the reason why they were voters and what their voting act meant.

(c) Knowledge of the last General Assembly election:- This was a very critical question for the sample electorate. 197 of them know the exact date of the election while 215 voters could only say that elections were held three to five years prior to the present elections. The other voters had no knowledge about the usual five-year term of the Assembly.

(d) Knowledge of the sitting MLAs and MPs:- Out of the nine constituencies of Meghalaya under study most of the correct replies for the sitting MLAs came from Mawlai, Jaiaw, Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorumkhrah because the

candidates from these constituencies have been elected time and again in the Assembly Elections. In the Mawkhar and Myllem constituencies, the electorates were at a loss as to who the sitting MLA could be, since three different candidates have been elected in the Assembly Elections held so far in Meghalaya from these two constituencies. Laitumkhrak and Malki-Nongthymmai constituencies had elected an MLA twice respectively from their areas but, this time two other personalities were elected from these constituencies and so the correct reply came mainly from the educated and the employed.

Most of the correct replies came for the sitting MLAs than for the sitting MPs in the Greater Shillong Areas. This is because ever since Meghalaya was inaugurated, the Assembly Elections were held at regular intervals of five years whereas Parliamentary Elections were held in 1971 and 1977. In these elections, Prof. G.G. Swell and Mr. Hopingstone Lyngdoh were elected respectively from the Shillong Parliamentary Constituency. Prof. G.G. Swell completed his tenure of five years but Hopingstone Lyngdoh remained an MP for just over two years as the Parliament was dissolved in 1979 during the Janata regime and mid-term elections were announced in 1980. During this period, Meghalaya and the North Eastern States were agitating against the illegal immigrants

infiltrating into their States. So elections were boycotted in some areas of North East including the Shillong Parliamentary seat until solutions were evolved. However, elections for the Shillong Parliamentary seat was held on 27th December 1984.

Facing the above situation most of the candidates were at a loss as to who could be the sitting M.P. Most of the electorates express their inability to answer the actual sitting M.P. Only some of the politically conscious electors knew that elections were not held for the Shillong Parliamentary seat in 1980.

Normally, the MP has no direct contact with the electorates because firstly, his constituency is very big compared to the Assembly constituency to approach the voters personally and secondly, usually the MP performs his election campaign through the MLAs of the constituencies.

(e) Identification of party symbols and candidates:- Identification of party symbols and candidates on the part of the respondents is one index of political consciousness and articulation. The process of change also indicates the success or failure of electioneering on the part of parties and candidates.³ On the whole in the different constituencies

3. Ibid., p. 137.

of Greater Shillong Areas about 62% of the sample electorates could not identify the party symbols and candidates, since candidates defected from one party to another in Assembly Election and because of the change in the symbols. The Congress had a 'cow and the calf' and the 'hand' in the 1978 election but in 1983 only the 'hand' symbol was there. The voters knew that the 'rose' stood for the APHLC and the 'lion' for the HSPDP party but only a fraction of the voters could say that the 'spade' is the symbol of the PDIC.

(f) Knowledge of local and national problems:-Questions were also asked to the sample electorates regarding the problems - local and national facing the country. This assumption helps us to know the level of political information of the respondents, because if a person is aware of these problems he tends to think both in terms of the causes and remedies of the problem which ultimately reflects on the efficiency of the political system. The problems facing the Nation, State and locality were asked to the voters.

According to the sample electorate's view the civic problems are: water shortage, housing problem, unemployment, sanitary conditions of roads and lanes, drainage system, education, a government dispensary within reach, and inadequate food-stuffs in Fair Price Shops and Co-operatives.

The national problems of the country are defence, US arming weapons in Pakistan, security within the country, inter-state boundary dispute and foreign national issue. Economic problems like high price rise and food shortage. Administrative problems like corruption, unemployment, inefficiency of public employees and social problems like law and order, fall of public morality, bribing etc.

While analysing the problems highlighted by the sample electorate it is observed that educated voters assigned higher priorities to price rise, law and order, security within the country, defence, corruption, bribing, problems in Punjab and Assam etc. The female electorates laid more stress on high price rise and the fall of law and order system in the country.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT ELECTION

Media of communication has a great impact on electorates. It plays an important role in making the people politically conscious and articulating which, in turn, influence their voting behaviour. The media of communication studied here can be divided into two categories - mass media and interpersonal media. The mass media refers to such items as newspaper, radio, films, public meetings, printed materials, posters and the like. Inter-personal

media includes relations, friends, neighbours, party activists and campaigners, trade union workers, local leaders and the candidates.

In the Greater Shillong Areas it is observed that the educated voters relied more on the information available from the mass media communication. Most of the voters listened to the regional and national news from the All India Radio. The special election campaigning broadcast over the radio was listened only by some electorates who were interested in election. Newspapers and printed handbills were read more by the educated and the employed. Here the male voters surpassed the female voters.

Inter-personal media had an impact on the illiterates who received their political information through friends, neighbours, relations and other political activists of their constituency. The door-to-door campaign by party candidates and local leaders helped them to know to a certain extent the political situation of the State. Public meetings were attended both by the educated and the illiterates. Some of the voters revealed that they were asked by their employees, trade unions and other local leaders to vote for a particular candidate though most of them did not reveal for whom they voted.

Newspaper reading implied that the electorates must be literate enough to understand the content of the political information given in it. Here we found that majority of the males rather than females read the newspapers. Highly educated voters read newspapers both of national and regional publication. In Greater Shillong Areas it is found that only some people spend time in public reading-rooms. Female voters stressed that printed hand-bills and newspapers were read by them only if they could find time and had a spontaneous interest in it. No specific place was mentioned by them for reading a newspaper. Voters did not identify any one specific media of communication as the source of election information.

The purpose for which most sample electorates voted was to strengthen their party, others wanted to elect their candidate while some others voted to assert their right to vote.

Inter-personal media and mass media had a mixed influence over the voters in the Greater Shillong Areas. In Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorukhrah constituencies most of the electorate, their friends, neighbours and relations belonged to the I.N.C. whereas in Mawkhar, Jaiaw, Malki-Nongthymmai and Laitumkhrach the inclination was more towards the

APHLC. In the Mawlai constituency most of the electorates were the ardent supporters of the HSPDP. The only controversial area was the Myllem constituency where the voters were influenced both by the APHLC and the HSPDP.

After scrutinising the electorates why they voted and from where they received their political information, reasons were also asked for electing a particular candidate or a party. Here in different constituencies like Mawlai, Jaiaw, Mawprem, Pynthorumkhrah and Laban most of the sample electorates voted because of the personal merit of the candidate, for being easily approachable to them, his past performance as their representative was satisfying and because he is a local resident of the area and known to the public for his conduct. Others, however, voted for a particular candidate because he belonged to the same clan, or were asked by their elders to vote for him. There were some who liked only a particular party and voted for it. It made no difference to them who the candidate was.

Regarding the reasons for voting a particular party, a very complex answer was given in a cosmopolitan society. There are tribals who still harped round the idea that the APHLC is the only party for the Meghalayans. It was this party that struggled and achieved for them Statehood. So

whatever may be the position of the APHLC in the Assembly today (1985) they would still vote for it. The INC was preferred for a different reason. Some of the voters felt that it is the only party in India whose programmes and policies are secular and as such can serve the public justly. Others, felt that a national movement turned political party has served the public satisfactorily since independence and it may continue serving the people better in future. A few of them were critical of the political parties in Meghalaya. Membership to the regional parties is open only to the tribals of Meghalaya since 1978 so, whether the others appreciate its programmes and policies or not, the only alternative open to them is to join the Congress, the Communist party or the Janata party.

There were also a section of people who wanted to vote for a particular regional party but not for its candidate. Expressing their xenophobia of being uprooted from their land, they had to vote for the party and strengthen its position in the Assembly.

Lastly, the sample electorates were also asked why they voted for a candidate belonging to a different community. In the Greater Shillong areas Mawkhar, Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorumkhrah are the only general constituencies.

Others being reserved for the scheduled tribes. Out of these general constituencies only in Mawkhar a tribal candidate was elected because no other candidate (non-tribal) is up to the mark to be elected and so they had to opt for a tribal candidate.

In Myllem, Malki-Nongthymmai and the Laitumkhrach constituencies, the electorates were not the constant voters for a particular candidate or a party because they were not satisfied with the sitting M.L.A. In Myllem constituency, though they choose different candidates in every election yet, they opted for one of the regional party candidates. Malki-Nongthymmai and Laitumkhrach constituencies rallied round the candidates of the APHLC or the Congress.

CHAPTER - II

POLITICAL PARTIES

The concept of party has been extremely elusive. The same word has been used for different meanings by different scholars. Fred W. Riggs, defines party as any organisation which nominates candidates for election to the legislature.¹ To Frank J. Sorauf, "The political party may be defined as the agency for the organisation of political power characterised by exclusively political function, by the stable structure and by the inclusive membership and by the ability to dominate the contesting elections."² The "best" definition of 'party' has been given by J. La-Palombara and Myron Weiner.³ According to them:

A political party requires (1) continuity in organisation that is, an organisation whose expected life span is not dependant on the life span of the current leaders; (2) manifest and

-
1. Fred W. Riggs, "Comparative Politics and the Study of Political Parties" in William J. Crotty (ed.), Approaches to the Study of Party Organisation, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1968) p. 51 cited in Sarangi Prakash, "Party and Party System: A Conceptual Analysis" in Political Science Review, Vol. 23, No.3-4, July-December 1984, Jaipur, 1985 pp. 189-207.
 2. Frank J. Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), p.13 in Sarangi Prakash, "Party and Party System: A Conceptual Analysis", Op.cit.
 3. Joseph La-Palombara and Myron Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties" in LaPalombara and Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development, (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1966), p.6 in Sarangi Prakash, "Party and Party System: A Conceptual Analysis", Op.cit.

presumably permanent organization at the local level, with regularised communications and other relationship between local and national units; (3) self-conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to capture and hold-decision-making power alone and in coalition with others, not simply to influence the exercise of power, and (4) a concern on the part of the organization for seeking followers at the polls or in some manner striving for popular support.

In Meghalaya, the existing political parties may be classified into two categories - National Political Parties and Regional Political Parties. The dominant National Political Parties are: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Indian National Congress (INC). The Regional or State political parties being the "All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), the Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP), and the Public Demands Implementation Convention (PDIC).

Let us deal first with the National Political Parties.

The Bharitya Janata Party

On 25th June 1975, an internal Emergency was imposed in India, During this period most of the leaders of the Opposition Parties were kept behind the bars. In March 1976 however, a meeting of the non-communist Opposition parties were held in Bombay, which prepared an approach paper for the merger of the parties. The main object of the new

proposed parties was to end Emergency and to preserve Democracy, Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan launched a new party on 23rd January 1977 known as the Bharitya Janata Party with Shri Morarji Desai as the Chairman and Shri Charan Singh as its Deputy Chairman. Later on, Shri S. Chandra Sekhar was elected the Party President. The party was voted to power during the 1977 Parliamentary elections.

The main programme of the party (as long as it remains in existence) was to end Emergency and restore people's fundamental rights. The party was committed to uphold the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, repeal of Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and the Forty-Second Amendment Act, 1976 of the Constitution. It also resolved to delete the Right to Property from the list of fundamental right.

In the economic field, the party pledged to end unemployment within a period of ten years; to introduce appropriate technology for self-reliance, for higher priority in rural development, etc.

In the social sphere the party promised reforms in education and eradication of illiteracy and provide drinking water for all. Special machinery would be devised to safeguard the rights and interests of the weaker sections of the society.

Other programmes of the party included were protection of women rights, introduction of schemes of youth welfare, legal aid to the poor, non-alignment and peaceful settlement of all international disputes.

But the party being a heterogeneous group of non-communist opposition parties disintegrated within two years. So most of the policies and programmes which were promised to the people could not be implemented.

In Meghalaya, the Bharitya Janata Party had no base in the 1978 Assembly Elections. However, during the 1983 Assembly Elections, Shri Rabindra Das Choudhury contested the election as a B.J.P. candidate from the Laban constituency. He secured 42 votes out of the 6,486 valid voted polled (9705 electorates) and forfeited the security deposit.

The Communist Party of India (CPI)

The Communist Party came into existence with the overthrow of the Czarist regime and capturing of political power in Russia in 1917. In India, some of the freedom fighters were inspired by the communist ideology and so they formally organised themselves and founded the Communist Party of India (CPI) on 26th December 1925. The main aim of the party was to uproot British imperialism from India.

In the North-East, the decision to create an organising committee of the CPI was taken up in May 1943. It was known as the Assam Provincial Organising Committee of the CPI. It included the areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and parts of Sylhet (of present day Bangladesh). After the reorganization of North Eastern States, a separate local committee of the CPI was set up in Meghalaya in 1972.

As regards the structure and organization of the party, the party constitution provides that anyone who is above eighteen years of age and is a citizen of India can become a member of a party provided he wholeheartedly believes in the communist philosophy, is willing to do field work and agrees to carry out the programme chalked out from time to time. The application of membership has to be endorsed by at least two members of the party, and when the candidate is accepted he must take an oath of loyalty to the party and agree to pay a monthly contribution to the party fund.⁴

The heirarchy consists of a series of villages, towns, districts and provincial groups with their respective executive committees. The CPI committee consists of five

4. Shiv Lal (ed.), "The Communist Prty of India", Election Archives, Vol. II(2) February 1980, No. 42, CA-33 Tagore Gardens, New Delhi.

members and an elected secretary and Jokendra Lanong, Babyson Pakyntein, Robin Rema, Bharat Sangma, and Dalington Dympep are its members.

The basic aim of the party as defined in the preamble to its Constitution, 1943 is the organization of the toiling masses in the struggle for the victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, for complete national independence, for the establishment of the people's democratic state led by the working class, for the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building up of socialism according to the teaching of Marxism-Leninism. A little change here and there has been affected to suit the times since the constitution was first framed.

According to the same party's constitution the other programmes are: an immediate implementation of land reforms measures. Abolition of all form of land-lordism without compensation and distribution of land to the tiller of the soil. Nationalisation of big industries, big banks and insurance companies, guarantee of workers' control, minimum living wage and fixed eight hour-working day, economic plan to develop India's resources and removal of big business from strategic economic points.

For Meghalaya, the party organization added other programmes to suit the politics of the hill areas. These include freedom of the tribal people and such other backward people from economic, cultural and political oppression.

It further says it would extend full democratic rights to them. There would be prompt and adequate state aid for their development, so that they may rapidly catch up with the advanced nationalities.⁵

In spite of the eye-catching programmes and policies of the CPI for the general improvement of the oppressed lot yet, the ethnic group of Meghalaya have not so far reconciled to the CPI's unethnic ideas. Even after eleven years of functioning the CPI has yet to gain a seat in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly.

The Indian National Congress (I.N.C.)

The Indian National Congress has been one of the most successful of the nationalist movements of Asia and Africa. Founded by O.R. Hume in 1885, it struggled for the liberation of India from Britain and continued to dominate the National political scene in the post-independent era. The Congress party has two prominent characteristics. "There is plurality within the dominant party which makes it more representative, provide flexibility, and sustain(s) internal competition. At the same time, it is prepared to absorb groups and movements from outside the party and thus prevents other parties from gaining strength."⁶

5. CPI Appeal to Voters, Shillong, 1983.

6. Rajni Kothari, "The Congress System in India", in Party Systems and Election Studies, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1967, p. 6.

In course of time internal difference began to creep in the party for example, the first split in the Indian National Congress occurred in 1969. This split divided the party into 'radicals' led by Indira Gandhi and the 'liberal' led by Nijalingappa. The radicals and the liberals were known as Congress (R) and Congress (O) respectively. After the Emergency (1975-77) the second split took place. Here many ardent Congressmen like Jagjivan Ram, Bahuguna and others left the party and formed the Janata Party to contest the 1977 Parliamentary polls. The third split occurred on 1st January 1978. Here the Congress party was divided into Congress (Indira) and Congress (Swaran Singh). In spite of all these splits and ardent Congressmen leaving the party, Indira Gandhi with her charismatic appeal continued to dominate the congress party with her own policies and programmes. The other factional groups of the congress faded away with the lapse of time, many congressmen of other factions joined the Congress (I) faction after the 1980 Parliamentary elections.

After the creation of Meghalaya in 1972 and the formation of the Congress ministry in November 1976, Capt. Williamson A. Sangma became the President of the party. The present party organization in Meghalaya is as follows:

The President of the Congress(I) party Capt. Williamson A. Sangma, Vice-President Upstar Kharbuli, and Dr. B.B. Dutta, Pipinson Momin and O.L. Nongtdu are its General Secretaries.

The Indian National Congress is the oldest organization in the country. From its very inception it has committed itself to end poverty and improve the economic standard of the people. The main aim and objective of the party is to establish socialist society in which both the public and private sectors will be allowed to work together for economic development. Equality of opportunity will be open to all Indians. Agriculture will be given maximum attention. Small and large scale industries will be given due encouragement. Efforts will be made to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

In the field of foreign affairs, the party stands for non-alignment and non-interferences in the domestic affairs of other countries.

On Gandhian principles, the party believes in non-violence and encouragement of small scale and cottage industries on the one hand and co-operative farming on the other.

Though basically the party remains committed to these programmes, yet, some changes came up with the passage of time. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi followed the policy of nationalisation and laid more stress on public sector and land reform measures. During the emergency in 1975 Indira Gandhi formulated a twenty-point programme for implementation. They are: bringing down the prices of essential commodities and streamlining of production and distribution of these commodities; speedy distribution of surplus land; house sites for the poor and declaration of bonded labour and beggary as illegal; liquidation of rural indebtedness; review of laws on minimum agricultural wages; national programme for the use of underground waters; erections of superthermal stations; development of handloom sector; supply of improved quality of cloth; trial for economic offenders, confiscation of smuggler's property; action against misuse of import licenses; workers associations in industries; national scheme for road transport; income tax relief to middle class people; supply of essential commodities at controlled rates; supply of books and stationery at controlled rates and apprenticeship schemes to enlarge employment.

In addition to these twenty point programmes, Late Sanjay Gandhi also gave five-point programmes. These are:

family planning; abolition of dowry system; massive tree plantation programme; adult education and eradication of untouchability.

These programmes were vigorously followed during the period 1975-1977. The Janata Party, which came to power in 1977 had its own policies and programmes. Since 1980 the Congress (I) has again come back to power implementing the same policies and programmes. Congress (I) still follows the policy of non-alignment and non-violence. It has also adopted the policy of mixed economy in a planned way.

The Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee has implemented these policies and programmes. Meghalaya P.C.C. (I) further promised to protect and preserve the distinct identity of the tribal people, their language, customs, culture and traditions. Reservation of seats in the services for the scheduled tribes has been further extended for ten years till 1990.

Now we shall deal with the Regional Political Parties. There are three such parties duly recognised by the Election Commission.⁷

7. A number of works have been done on the APHLC. See:

- (1) V.V. Rao, et al. Government & Politics in North East India, Vol. II (Meghalaya) 1874-1984, S.Chand & Co. Delhi, 1983.
- (2) Nongrum, B. The APHLC: Its Working and Functions, M.Phil. Dissertation (unpublished thesis) J.N.U. 1982, Delhi.
- (3) APHLC 1960-1974 (14 Years) Souvenir, Shillong Printing Works, Shillong, July 1974.

All Party Hill Leaders Conference (A.P.H.L.C.)

The APHLC played a notable role in State Politics. It came into existence under crucial circumstances. On 22nd April 1960, the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (A.P.C.C.) declared that Assamese would be the State language of Assam. The immediate reaction to this decision was the meeting of the leaders of the hill areas of Assam at Tura on 23rd April 1960 under the chairmanship of B.M. Pugh. The Conference vehemently opposed the decision of the A.P.C.C. But Chaliha accepted the decision of the Provincial Congress Committee and declared that Assamese would be the State language and that necessary legislation would be introduced in the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly. Capt. Sangma, a member of the Chaliha ministry called a meeting of all the hill leaders of Assam on 6th July 1960. The meeting unanimously resolved to oppose the official language bill. On 7th July 1960, the leaders decided to constitute themselves into a political party which came to be known as the 'All Party Hill Leaders' Conference'.

The Central Committee of the APHLC consisted of a President, five Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, Joint Secretaries and a Treasurer.

During the 1983 Assembly Elections, Modi Marak was the President, S.D.D. Nichols Roy Vice-President and D.D. Pugh its General Secretary. Some of the Executive Members of the party were: Korbar Singh, B.B. Lyngdoh, P.R. Kyndiah, S.P. Swer, A. Warjri etc.

Internal dispute and factionalism undermined the strength of the APHLC. The party was created mainly to demand a separate State for the hill tribes of Assam. Once this goal was achieved, the ardent members of the party started deserting it.

The first split in the APHLC occurred in 1968. On 14th May 1968, the Government of India announced its decision to form the Autonomous State of Meghalaya within the State of Assam. The leaders of the APHLC accepted the plan unconditionally without consulting its party members. Some of the members rebelled against it which led to their expulsion. The formation of the Hill State People's Democratic Party was the outcome of the differences on the issue of an autonomous State of Meghalaya. Some of these expelled members ultimately joined the H.S.P.D.P. The next split in the party came in 1974. G.G. Swell, a member of the Lok Sabha attacked the party leadership for its alleged lapses. So he was expelled from the party. Some of his

followers also left the party and under his leadership formed the Public Demands Implementation Committee. Later on, the word Committee was replaced by the word Convention.

The major split in the APHLC occurred at Mendhipathar on 26th November 1976. When majority of the APHLC members wanted to merge the APHLC with the INC. Since Capt. Sangma the President of the party took the initiative of merging the party, all the elected members except four (B. B. Lyngdoh S.D.D. Nichols Roy, P.R. Kyndiah and D.D. Pugh) accepted Capt. Sangma's stand of becoming Congress members. Capt. Sangma and his followers resigned from the APHLC ministry and formed the Congress Ministry on November 1976 during the Jawaharagar Session at Dispur, Guwahati, Assam.

The final split in the party was made between D.D. Pugh and B.B. Lyngdoh and their supporters. Both of them were aspirants for the Chief Ministers' post in 1978-79. So when Pugh headed the coalition ministry with other regional parties, Lyngdoh entered into an alliance with the opposition party (INC(I)) in the Assembly. Lyngdoh and Capt. Sangma of the Congress agreed to divide the tenure of holding political power among themselves according to the 'Solemn serious agreement'. Thus the APHLC was split into APHLC (Pugh) and APHLC (Lyngdoh).

In addition to these splits in the APHLC, the members were also engaged in the politics of defection. In 1972 Assembly elections the party secured 32 seats (In 1978 it won 16 seats only) whereas in 1983 Assembly elections it won fifteen seats only.

Basically, the APHLC came into existence for the creation of a separate State for the hill tribes of Assam. So, its main aim was to establish a North-Eastern Hill State where English would be the official language until it is replaced by Hindi. It also assured the people that the existing District Councils would not be abolished and that the rights and privileges of the minorities in the hill areas would be protected.

On the attainment of statehood in 1972 the APHLC's formulated a programme of action. It promised to provide a clean, strong and stable government. It pledged to make all efforts towards self-sufficiency in food through increased agricultural output by adopting the modern methods of cultivation; to enrich the State and its people through a judicious and scientific exploitation of the mineral and other natural resources; to eradicate illiteracy and provide the best available facilities for the intellectual growth and development of the youths; to create employment

opportunities for the people of the State by tapping all available resources and promoting industrial undertakings. Special schemes were also adopted for the citizens living in the border areas such as: 'Border area rehabilitation programme', 'Regrouping of villages in the border areas of Garo Hills', 'Border road schemes' and the like.

With the passage of time, the party also resolved to protect and preserve the distinct identity of the tribal people including their customs, languages, culture and traditional institutions. The 'Foreign Nationals Issue' also came up with the infiltration of the illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The party decided to evolve a legal solution to it within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

Hill State People's Democratic Party (H.S.P.D.P.)

According to the members of the H.S.P.D.P. the constitution of the autonomous State of Meghalaya with the acquiescence of the APHLC leaders is a betrayal of the hill people's persistent demand for the creation of the full-fledged separate Hill State. To justify the unacceptability of Meghalaya autonomous state, the Hill State People's Democratic Party which is a direct product of the erstwhile Hill State Volunteers' Adhoc Committee, was formed with a clear and definite objective that the party will ceaselessly

struggle for the ultimate attainment of a clear-cut Hill State within the framework of the Indian Union and the achievement of Political, Social and Economic freedom of the hill people.⁸ So the main goal of the HSPDP was to achieve a full fledged State for the people of Meghalaya which was finally granted to them on 21st January 1972.

In 1968-69, Mr. Hopingstone Lyngdoh was the President of the Party and Mr. A. Basaiawmoit its General Secretary. Since then Mr. Lyngdoh continues to be its President.

The HSPDP believes in Democratic Socialism and aims to eradicate poverty, illiteracy and sickness. It also aims at achieving social, political and economic justice to all the Hill people and so it will work assiduously towards this end. The party also pledged to strive and see that the proposed Hill State should be speedily developed through good programmes conceived to suit the genius and the present condition of the people and the geography of the area, and implement them with firmness and sincerity so that they may reach the level of other developed areas of the country within the shortest possible time.

8. The Manifesto of the HSPDP issued by the Party in 1971, Shillong.

As the party aims to serve the people socially, economically and politically, the programme spelled out are as follows: The existing District Councils will be maintained and re-oriented according to needs. Development schemes should be labour-intensive and job-oriented to solve the problem of unemployment. In the sphere of Agriculture, self-sufficiency in food will be the main target while the production of cash crops will be intensified. Medium and small industries in the public sector, whose feasibility and economy will be thoroughly tested before investment, will be introduced to give diversified employment to the hill people. Entrepreneurs in small industries in the private sector will be encouraged by giving them grants or loans. The existing land tenure system will be recognised and maintained. Where land reforms are required, such reforms will be affected only for the common good and when the public interest so demands.

The party will seriously press upon the Government of India regarding the border problems so that the government may take necessary steps to relax the rigidity of trade and commerce between India and Bangladesh to the extent possible without affecting the security of the country. Moreover, good roads and communications should be

maintained to render immediate help in safeguarding the boundary areas and further integrating the tribal people.

The Constitution further states that education will be intensified to eradicate illiteracy. It resolved to get more authority for the state government in the administration of the North-Eastern Hill University so that it could render more help to the University's tribal students. At the same time it would find other means in the furtherance of higher, technical and science education in the State.

Other programmes of the party includes medical facilities will be made available to the people to the best of ability of the State. To the extent possible, free health services will be given to the people through charitable dispensaries, health centres and clinics. Every effort will be made to ensure the availability of good drinking water, electricity, employment and other necessities so that from the benefits derive from them the people and the State would prosper and progress.

The party also pledged to stop destruction of forests in the State as this would deprive the people and the owners alike of all the valuable benefits usually derived from them from time to time without affecting the land-rights of the owners.

Fearing that the identity of the tribal people would be eroded, the party pledged to protect and preserve their distinct identity.

In an interview with the HSPDP President Shri H. S. Lyngdoh on 6th November 1986,⁹ there has been no split within the HSPDP party. There were only internal differences and breach of party discipline which led some members like Hoover Hynniewta, M.N. Majaw etc. to leave the party. The HSPDP has its stronghold in the West Khasi Hills especially in the constituencies of Mawkyrwat, Langrin, Pariong, Nongstoin and Mawthengkut. In the East Khasi Hills the areas where this party dominates are: Nongspung, Mawlai, Nongshken and Sohra. In Jaintia Hills Sutnga-Shangpung, Raliang and Nongbah-Wahiajer and, in the Ri Bhoi Sub-division, Mawhati, Umroi and Jirang are the constituencies where the HSPDP has a better influence. In some other areas as Mawsynram, Lyngkyrdem, Mairang etc. the party has a fairly good stronghold to influence the constituents effectively.

Public Demand Implementation Convention (P.D.I.C.)

The youngest of all the Regional or State political parties in Meghalaya is the Public Demand Implementation

9. Interview with Hopingstone Lyngdoh, President HSPDP on 6th November, 1986.

Convention. Prof. G.G. Swell, then, a member of the Lok Sabha started the party in the 1970's for the implementation of the 16 point programme and the demands of the people.¹⁰ In the 16 point programme, Prof. Swell focussed the problems of the rural masses. In Khasi and Jaintia Hills more than eighty out of hundred of the citizens are farmers who live in and around the towns. The farmers have been neglected by the government from time to time. So a group of farmers under the leadership of Prof. G.G. Swell started the P.D.I.C. movement. The party emphasized that the farmers are the actual backbone of the nation and only when the farmers are given attention the State may step towards development.¹¹

According to Swell, the rural masses do not get the remunerative prices for their crops for example, potatoes. About 70,000 tons of potato is exported annually from the Khasi Hills. But these perishable goods are bought by middle-men at a very low price (about Rs. 60 a quintal) which does not at times suffice even the cost price and the labour involved in it. This means a loss to the farmers. The same goods is then sold at a very high price. So the aim of the PDIC is to have a government machinery (a sort of a

10. V.V. Rao, et al., Government and Politics in North East India (Meghalaya), Vol. II (1874-1983), S.Chand and Co., Delhi, 1983, p. 204.

11. Election Broadcast Over AIR, Shillong, 1983.

godown) to buy these goods on payment of reasonable price to the farmers or they should buy it among themselves which means they would become rich while re-selling it. Moreover, all government employees will get it at a reasonable than the prevalent high rate.

The other aims and objectives of the PDIC are: Since the rural masses are either illiterate or literate only in their regional languages, the Constitution of India must be translated in these regional languages so that the farmers and cultivators may understand it. Though the Constitution of India promote the rural welfare and preserve their culture and customs these people must be encouraged to work hard for their own development and advancement.

In the social field the party pledge to restore back the Garrison Ground (in Shillong Cantonment area) which has so long been in the hands of the air forces. It also pledge to settle the boundary dispute between Assam and Meghalaya especially the lands in Mikir Hills and Kamrup districts. Moreover, it would ask the Government of India to restore back all the areas which originally belong to Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills. These lands are today either in Bangladesh or Assam. For the convenience of the citizens living in the Burnihat areas the party wants to do away with the

supply gate there. It also wants to restore back the Tataw Hills (which has been taken by the ICAR) and provide sufficient drinking water supply to Mawngap, Mawphlang, Marbisu and the Shillong areas.

In the judicial sphere, the party pledge to make the Guwahati High Court agree to send the Division Board with two or three judges for the settlement of judicial cases every week. In addition to this, the high court judge should be send twice a month instead of once a month as prevalent today.

In the political angle, the party wanted to give freedom to the people to elect members of the Block Development Committee for every gram sevak circle of the Block. Till date, the government appoints anyone directly without the consent of the public. The Gram Sevak members should be made to stay around the circle so that they may be an assistance and help to the public.

The other programmes of the party includes to stop the Benami transaction, to look after the welfare of Lower Primary Schools impartially, to create a Public Accounts Committee for the transaction of Revenue of the State and to create new roads and reapiir those which are not up to the mark so that the farmers and cultivators may come in

contact with modern development. It further pledges to provide drinking water to those areas which do not have, to preserve the forest and make the elected members visit their constituencies often so that they may assist their constituents towards the road of development.

Prof. G.G. Swell is the founder President of the party. But due to his membership in Parliament and diplomatic¹² assignment thereafter, he could not devote much time to the party. The present executive members of the party as stated by Sanbor Swell on 20.9.86 are: L.R. Lyngkhai is the President; Ambrose B.M. Roy is the Vice-President; A. Imti Imchen the Assistant General Secretary and Bell Nala Lyngdoh its Treasurer.

Since the PDIC's aim and objectives is to solve the problems of the rural oriented masses, it has a strong base in the rural areas especially in Myllem, Sohryngkhan, Nongkrem, Khyrim, Shella and Dienglieng. Sanbor Swell declared that the PDIC is not a political party and would not become one. However, its leader Prof.G.G. Swell contested the 1977 Lok Sabha Elections as an independent PDIC¹³

12. Prof. G.G. Swell has been the ambassador to Norway and Burma between 1977-83.

13. PDIC was recognised as a Political Party by the Election Commission on 21st September 1978. So candidates sponsored before 1983 were as independents.

candidate but was defeated. The party went into oblivion after Prof. Swell was appointed Ambassador to Norway. In 1978, under the Presidentship of M.N. Majaw the party contested 28 seats in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. Only two candidates were elected and nineteen had to forfeit their security deposits.

In 1983, the PDIC faced a factional dispute. The President M.N. Majaw removed B. Bareh, the General Secretary. But the executive committee instead expelled M.N. Majaw from the party. In 1983, the party contested 22 seats. The President was defeated and only two candidates were elected. The President was held responsible for this debacle. The elected members defected to the Congress (I). Other prominent members of the party left it and formed the Khasi-Jaintia Convention.¹⁴

Greater Shillong Areas is mostly an urban area and the programme of the PDIC party highlights more about rural development. Sanbor Swell clarified this by saying:

Though most of their programmes are meant for the upliftment of the rural areas yet, some urban problems will also be included in the forthcoming elections like sanitation, unemployment etc. To test the response of the urban electorates, a candidate was sponsored from Malki-Nongthymmai.

14. Rao V.V. et al. Government and Politics in North East Vol. II (Meghalaya) 1874-1983, S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1983, pp. 204-205.

In Myllem, Dentis Mohon Roy Kharkongor was sponsored and he tallied the second. To S. Swell, "There is always a chance for those who come second in elections. But he has defected the party and joined the Hill Peoples' Union and this has sliced our party. Today, among the M.L.A.'s and M.D.C.'s only one elected member is left in the Party" that is, Sanbor Swell, a member of the Khasi Hills District Council. If he leaves the party then the PDIC losses its recognintion. S.Swell concludes the interview by saying that:

In the coming elections unless circumstances takes a sudden change we are going to have an alliance with one of the Regional Parties (probably HSPDP). After all, the Regional Parties fought for the statehood and so there should be some forum to make themselves an alternative to Congress.

Today what is the stand of Regional or State Political Parties. The Congess (I) wins only some seats and the rest are bought from across the floor. They are not concerned with the development or further improvement of the State.¹⁵

15. Interview with Sanbor Swell on 20.9.86.

CHAPTER - III

THE ELECTION MANIFESTOES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

This chapter explores the implications of ideological battle amongst the political parties of Meghalaya — All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC); Communist Party of India (CPI); Hill State Peoples' Democratic Party (HSPDP); Indian National Congress (Indira) INC(I); Janata National Party (JNP) and the Public Demands Implementation Convention (PDIC) as reflected in their manifestoes in the election of 1983. The CPI, INC(I) and the JNP are the National Parties whose policies emphasized the broad national issues in general as well as the regional issues of a particular area while the others (APHLC-HSPDP-PDIC) are Regional or State political parties whose emphasis is only on regional issues.

Ideology as a concept

Ideology, to many people, means the doctrine that political parties are committed to or which they use in their endeavour to get power and influence. In this sense, it is deliberately formulated and exploited. Parties appeal to some class or section more than others, and, their doctrine, if they are to be attractive, must be in keeping with the belief, attitudes and aspirations of those classes or sections.¹

1. Plamenatz, J. Ideology, Macmillan, London, 1970, p. 123.

Comparative study of manifestoes

The study of the manifestoes is the key to understanding the various problems, mainly of developmental nature and the ways and means of finding a rational solution to them as viewed by different parties. Manifestoes issued on the eve of elections, however, may not disclose the full intentions and bonafides of the parties. Declarations put in the manifestoes are mainly expressed or rather dressed up in a sublimated form which cover up many lacunae of omissions and commissions. It is an exercise in draftmanship prepared for voters' consumption. It is an artefact and less of facts. Still manifesto making, designing and its wide publicity as a technique of vote catching devise has at once 'an educative and humbling process'. Significant issues, pointers and also divergent approaches to manifold issues in the manifesto help one in understanding the mind of the parties. The way the voters' behave and react in response to the issues raised in it, is a very important and engaging subject of discussion among political sociologists.²

The manifestoes of the regional parties are projected round the idea of protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people. The regional parties

2. Singh, R.P. Electoral Politics in Manipur: A Spatio-Temporal Study, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 66-67.

expressed their fear-psychosis that the Congress (I) party is a Dkhar (outsiders) party who will serve their own interest in Meghalaya if they are voted to power. They argued that since Meghalaya is the land of the Garos, Jaintias and the Khasis; they alone should be the best judge in the governance of the State. But Indira Gandhi after her party's debacle in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh left no stone unturned to capture power in Meghalaya.³

Protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people

The question of identity comes into being whenever a sufficient number sharing the same race, language, religion, sex, caste and culture or sharing more than one of these features, feel a common threat. There are occasions when the question of identity revolves round a group's name. In Meghalaya, elections were fought entirely on the regional issues of the preservation of the tribal identity and the development of their democratic institutions, languages, customs and culture.

The question of identity first arose among the tribal people in the hill areas of the North-East even during the British period.⁴ In the Assam Hills it was further reinforced

3. "Mrs. Gandhi campaigns in Meghalaya", Ropecta, (Shillong) Vol. 7, No. 8, 7th February 1983, p. 1.

4. See Rao, V.V. A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India 1874-1974, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1976.

during the 1960's when the Assam Legislative Assembly introduced a Bill making Assamese the official language of the State. The non-Assamese speaking hill tribes united themselves under the banner of All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) to oppose the eroding of their distinct identity. The APHLC thereafter began to grow rapidly and demanded a separate State for the tribal people. An Autonomous Hill State of Meghalaya came into being after the passing of the Assam Reorganization (Meghalaya) Act 1969, while the majority of the APHLC accepted the autonomous state within Assam, a section came out of it and formed the HSPDP. The HSPDP's aim was to continue the struggle for a full-fledged State of Meghalaya which ultimately emerged through the North East Areas (Reorganization) Act 1971. Meghalaya was inaugurated on 21st January 1971. The Assembly Elections in 1972 was won by the APHLC on the wave of public enthusiasm with the creation of separate statehood. The excitement of that year yielded to the sober realization that statehood was not an end in itself. The APHLC repeatedly stressed the point that it is a regional party having a national outlook. They did not however spell out what they actually meant. The reasons advanced by the protagonists for the merger of the APHLC with the Congress was also apologetic namely, stating that the merger was done in response to the desire of the Late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. However,

an impression was created in the minds of the tribes-folk, by those leaders who continued in the APHLC that the Congress was being imposed in the tribal areas from the top. This means violating the democratic traditions of the hill people of having the decision-making body emerged from the bottom.

Similarly, in 1978, the HSPDP manifesto emphasized that as Meghalaya was specially created for the tribal people, the tribal party is needed in the State to save the tribals from the danger of extinction. The party was opposed to the 31st Amendment of the Constitution which made it possible for the non-tribals to seek election in the State Assembly. The manifesto recalled that the party led delegation in September 1976, and submitted a memorandum to the Union Government calling for the reservation of all Assembly Constituencies in the State for the tribal people.

The HSPDP was opposed to the idea of the influx of outsiders into the State. They pledged that they would "continue to check the influx of foreign nationals into the State and also expel such people from it. At the same time, maintain peace and communal harmony among all the rightful citizens of the State."⁵

5. The Election Manifesto of the HSPDP, Shillong, 1983,
p. 4.

Protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people appealed to the public at large during the 60's and the 70's. But in the 1980's none of the regional parties had any programme of movement on mass issues before the people. Neither did they project any socio-economic programmes during the elections. They always harped on the slogan, 'Preservation of tribals identity and protection of tribal's customs, religion, languages and traditions'. But what are the tribals customs and traditions which they want to preserve and which were threatened by whom is not explained. The task of codifying the customary laws was also not done. So they sought to rouse a general sentiment of the tribal people about some vague and unspecified danger of tribal identity. Even the Congress (I) which placed "Progress and Prosperity" in the first category at the national level changed its tune in its electoral campaign in Meghalaya and played up with the sentiments of the people. The political parties however overlooked that already some changes were introduced by way of land reforms, for example, The Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Amendment Act 1977,⁶ and the ban on the sale of lands to the non-tribals.

6. Section 3 of this Act says "Provided that the Government of Meghalaya is satisfied from time to time by notification prohibit such transfer of land within such areas as may be specified in the notification and therefore the competent authority shall not sanction such transfer of land under the provision of this Act within such area or areas."

Myron Weiner and John Osgood Field in Electoral Politics in the Indian States says that voters are boosted for their Indian identity during elections. Appeal are made for a strong, united and stable India. This is in contrast to Meghalaya where voters are swayed not for their Indian identity but to realise the xenophobia of their tribal identity.

Usually an identity preserver says to his antagonist that he prefers his world, culture, literature and language to others. He does not want his world to be polluted with other civilization or commerce that is, he does not want to throw off his distinctiveness. To the identity preserver, homogeneity, integration and assimilation are words that sound dangerous. In extreme cases, revenge is a powerful temptation for those who have seen their identity eroded.

A close look at the election manifesto of the 1983 Assembly elections of all the political parties, both National and Regional and the close examination of their Election broadcast through All India Radio, Shillong, reveals the fact that all parties this time in Meghalaya have expressed their own respective stand. But let us try to analyse these manifestations and find out if we can trace any common platform for the political parties.

To play on the emotions of the people, especially the electorate, all parties pledged themselves to work for the preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people and the development of their democratic institutions, language, customs, culture, preservation and protection of the tribal lands, jobs and trade, checking the infiltration of foreign nationals, peaceful solution of boundary disputes with Assam, maintenance of the tribal population structure in the State, protection of the political, economic, social and religious rights of the people belonging to different communities, entrust greater powers to the District Councils, promote youth welfare, restore the damaged economy of the border people, provide every village with drinking water, a link road, and a school, general upliftment of common man and to ensure clean administration in the state,' are some of the important programmes which form the common platform of all the political parties.⁷

Thus the party ideologies and principles were attuned and diluted to meet the local requirements. International issues and other issues of national importance were not highlighted. The electorates also equally ignored or bypassed them. A question was asked to the sample electorate regarding the problems of their constituency, State, nation

7. "Common Platform", Ropeca, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. VII, No. 9, p. 1.

and the world. About 63 percent mentioned the immediate problems of their constituency and the State, are unemployment, drinking water supply, housing etc. Others stressed about the widely publicised issues like the Punjab problems, the foreign national issues etc. Only two percent of the educated sample constituents talked about the Star War programmes, nuclear arms in Diego Garcia, the Apartheid regime etc. But these issues affect them in no way. Nor could these issues sway the voters of Greater Shillong Areas in any way.

The CPI manifesto was critical of the Janata and the Indira ~~Congress~~ regime, stating that the government has step by step launched retrograde economic policies of giving more and more concessions to the monopolists and the black-marketeers. This has allowed the private sector to penetrate and capture strategic fields reserved till now for public sector. They condemned the ruling government for borrowing money from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which undermines our national self reliance and link India more closely with crisis ridden world capitalist economy.⁸ The manifestoes of the regional parties in Meghalaya made little reference to issues of national and international importance.

8. CPI Appeal to Voters, Meghalaya State Council - CPI, Shillong, 1983, p. 2.

Regarding education, the Congress (I) emphasized not merely a qualitative expansion in education but would take up the task of equalising educational opportunities to all sections of the people so that the existing socio-economic disparities are not perpetuated in the educational attainment and intellectual calibre of the younger generations. Moreover, all schools in the remote rural areas would have adequate accommodation, teaching staff and equipments. The Congress (I) would also improve the scope of secondary and higher education and provide hostel facilities to these institutions. The party also pledge to provide more scholarships, establish medical, engineering and other technical institutions in the State. By a constitutional amendment, it pledged to transfer education from the State list to the concurrent list to bring out uniformity in the pattern and standards of education throughout the country. It will also set up National Commission on Teachers to resolve their grievances.

The manifestoes of the other national and regional parties accused the Congress (I) for the present crisis in education. The HSPDP highlighted the problems faced by the teachers and students of the primary schools. To ease this problem the party resolved to spread and improve education in the State by taking care of the welfare of the teachers

and students alike. It also stressed that it would get more authority for the State Government in the administration of the North-Eastern Hill University so that it could render more help to the University's tribal students of the State in their problems and in removing the irregularities prevailing in it. The party also pledged that at the same time it would find other means in the furtherance of higher, technical and science education in the State and see that first preference to all the privileges in the matter should be shown to the tribal students of the State.⁹

The CPI urged the government to take over the primary education and provide free education to all upto class X (ten). The CPI condemned the Congress (I) and other political parties for their capitalistic ideology and for the apathy and delay it had shown so long in improving the educational system. The party appealed for an alternative government because of the alleged colossal failures of the ruling party to deliver the immediate goods and redress the popular grievances.

Another issue agitating the mind of the electorates is the "Foreign National Issue" and no manifesto dared to ignore or bypass it. Hence all the parties focussed them in

9. The Election Manifesto of the HSPDP, Shillong, 1983,
p. 2.

their manifestoes. The difference between them is one of degree and emphasis. In the 1972 election manifesto the INC glorified its achievements in the Bangladesh War. But this victory created for the Meghalayans a serious problem. Over the years, the Bangladeshis crossed over the borders and settled in Meghalaya and the adjoining States - thus threatening the very existence of the local people. In the 1980 Lok Sabha mid-term poll, the electorates of the Shillong Parliamentary Constituency especially the Khasi Student Union expressed their determination not to contest the elections unless the foreigners were detected and deported from Meghalaya.¹⁰ So this time, the Congress (I) enthusiastically expressed its view to detect all foreign nationals who have entered into the State since 1971 and find a constitutional solution to it. Adequate measures will also be taken to prevent the tribals from being uprooted from their original abodes in the North-East.

The HSPDP expressed in its manifesto that "ways and means should be found to expel the foreign nationals from the State and check their further infiltration" into the State so that peace and communal harmony could be maintained among all rightful citizens of the State. The APHLC claimed that it would "detect and deport"¹¹ the foreign nationals

10. Ropeca, (Shillong), Vol. IV, No. 15, p. 1.

11. Ka Election Manifesto jong ka APHLC, 1983, pp. 1-3.

who have unlawfully entered into the State. The CPI however, made no clear cut measures in this direction. In a very subtle way it mentioned that there is no contradiction between the legitimate rights of the tribal majority and the non-tribal minorities who are the permanent inhabitants of the State. By emphasizing the "legitimate rights of the non-tribal minorities", they argued that their talents and resources could be harnessed for the development of Meghalaya. However, no party laid any emphasis on the large scale infiltration of rural bound citizens into Shillong. Already Shillong is over-populated facing acute problems of accommodation, education and unemployment. None of the parties pledged to divert this large scale infiltration to some other areas. No efforts have been made to increase the number of towns from the existing three - Jowai, Shillong and Tura.

Meghalaya attained statehood in 1972. But till today the actual boundary between Meghalaya and Assam has not been settled. All the parties stressed that special efforts will be made for peaceful solution of the boundary disputes with Assam. On this issue the Congress (I) relied on the central leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Union Government. The HSPDP on the other hand, pledged that they would tackle this problem both with the Central and State

governments and "restore back all the areas which rightfully belong to Meghalaya."¹² The PDIC said that it would settle the boundary disputes between Assam and Meghalaya especially the lands in the Mikir Hills and Kamrup District. Moreover, it would ask the Indian Government to restore back all the lands which originally belong to Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills but today are, either in Assam or Bangladesh.¹³

In addition to these, the South of Meghalaya has a common boundary with Bangladesh. The safety and security of the people living in the Border Areas is a common concern of all the political parties. They pledged that special amenities will be given to the people living in the border areas particularly in the field of trade and commerce, education, employment etc.

From boundary issue we come to the question of delimitation of constituencies. On the eve of its formation, Meghalaya was allotted sixty seats under sub-section (4) of Section 20 of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act 1971. Of these, 50 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes. Subsequently, the Delimitation Commission reserved the sixty seats for the Scheduled Tribes on 7th November 1974. However, this ordinance was again revoked and the seats

12. HSPDP, The Election Manifesto of the HSPDP, Shillong, 1983, p. 3.

13. Ka Manifesto jong ka Public Demands Implementation Convention (PDIC), Kamala Art Press, Shillong, 1983, p. 1.

were re-allocated as stated in the North Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act 1971. So some of the parties demanded the restoration of reserved seats for the Assembly constituency as they were before for the Scheduled Tribes.

The problem of economic backwardness and the growing unemployment question in Meghalaya were also important issues in the elections. All the parties suggested some remedial measures to cope with them. Industrialization as an important solution is recognised by all the parties. In this direction, the INC(I) assured a programme of development of small scale and village industries in much larger scale; the APHLC tends to take such programme so as to bring about the expeditious all round advancement of the people.

The HSPDP however categorised that some of the industries can be started with the rich resources available in the State such as forest products and cottage industries. These development schemes should be labour intensive and job oriented to solve the problem of unemployment.¹⁴ Moreover, the industries thus started would benefit the tribals in such a manner that their security and identity is not eroded or affected. The CPI laid emphasis for industrialization in the public sector on the basis of the raw material

14. The Manifesto of the HSPDP, Shillong, 1971.

available in the State instead of wooing the private capital. As the per capita income in the State (Rs. 597.90) is much below the national average (Rs. 1,152),¹⁵ the State remains immensely backward. The CPI pledged that it would come out with a dynamic approach for rapid industrialization particularly by developing the agro-based and other industries for which raw materials are available in the State. The transport facilities would be made by constructing roads, ropeways, railways etc.¹⁶

In Meghalaya, a continuous belt of limestone exists along the southern slope from the West Garo Hills to the East Jaintia Hills. The most important deposits are Siju, Cherrapunjee, Shella, Bholaganj, Lakadong, Lum Shnong and Nongkhlieh. Most of these limestone deposits are of cement grade. The reserves of all categories of limestone is estimated 3000 million tons approximately. The coal deposit is confined in south and south-eastern parts of Meghalaya. The total estimated quantity of coal is about 1500 million tonnes. The availability of coal, limestone and clay deposits along the southern parts of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills should prompt development of cement factories in the Garo, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The dolomite deposits

15. Meghalaya at a Glance 1978, Directorate of Economics, Statistics and Evaluation, Government of Meghalaya, Shillong, 1978.

16. CPI Appeal to Voters, Shillong, 1983.

of Cherrapunjee is of flux and refractory grade material. It can provide the refractory material industry. Similarly, fire clay brick and ceramics industry can be developed on the basis of raw materials available in the State. All these industries can be developed under small and cottage industries sector. All that the Government needs is the technical knowhow and capital. In addition to these, five lakh tonnes of Kaolin is available in Mawphlang area in East Khasi Hills. Kaolin is suitable for the manufacture of china-ware, porcelain ware etc. In Meghalaya, one paper pulp industry can easily be commissioned by utilising the available raw materials e.g., hardwood, bamboo, coal, limestone etc.¹⁷

By utilising the available coal in Garo Hills, one Thermal power project can be commissioned easily. Poly-chemical industries, fruit canning industry and for utilising the fallow land, medicinal plants can be grown. Actually proper development of transport system is a sine-qua-non for development of Meghalaya which is predominantly an agricultural state with rural basis.

17. It is worth mentioning this connection that for turning out 1 tonne of paper pulp, $3\frac{1}{2}$ tonnes of coal and $1\frac{1}{2}$ tonnes of limestone is necessary. These two important ingredients are available in Meghalaya in abundance. C.P.I. On the Burning Problems of Meghalaya, Shillong, 1983, p. 3.

Unemployment, both real and disguised, is no less serious, a problem in the State. But the party manifestoes by and large have failed to measure the extent of this problem. The APHLC stated its concern on unemployment among the educated youth. The INC(I) promised to secure adequate employment for the local people of the State, particularly the local tribals in Central Government offices, financial and other institutions. The CPI on the other hand, stressed upon modernisation of agriculture and rapid industrialization to overcome the economic backwardness and the alarming unemployment problem both in urban and rural areas. The HSPDP however, had nothing to offer in this direction. According to H. S. Lyngdoh, the HSPDP President,

Actually there is no unemployment problem in Meghalaya. Most of our projects like thermal power, construction of roads etc. are manned by technicians and labourers brought from outside the State. What we have to do is to divert our youths' mind in this direction than to think of white-collar job.¹⁸

In the summer session of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, 1983, almost all the members of the State Assembly expressed deep anxiety over the appalling portents of shrinking job opportunities in the State. Initiating a discussion on the matter Prof. Korbar Singh (APHLC) said that

18. Interview with H. S. Lyngdoh on 6th November, 1986.

the number of educated unemployed youth was on the rise. There is no alternative but to set up small scale industries. "We have to think of the future generations and not of the present". Similarly, Dr. B. K. Roy (INC(I) endorsed his view that "there is no way out but to go for industries in a big way so that the future generations could get jobs locally."¹⁹ However, such industries are yet to be established. The present number of unemployed both in rural and urban area is 15,000 and 8175 respectively.²⁰

In Meghalaya, about 80% of the people depend upon agriculture as their main occupation. So agricultural reforms and its developments was emphasized by all the parties. The APHLC, HSPDP and INC(I) pledged to make the State self-sufficient in foodstuffs by improved method of agriculture. Further, the INC(I) stressed that it would take strict measures against hoarders and blackmarketeers in order to check the price rise. The CPI however, charged the ruling government for the stagnant economy of the State. They accused the government that the peasants do not get remunerative prices for their produce like jute, cotton, mustard seeds and perishable cash crops like cashew nut,

19. Industrialization only answer to unemployment, The Shillong Times, Shillong, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 40, 2nd July 1983, pp. 1-4.

20. Data available from Employment Exchange, Meghalaya, 1983.

pine apple, potato, ginger etc. Moreover, they do not get necessary inputs timely at reasonable rates. There is a growth of private proprietorship on communal land resulting in the concentration of land in fewer hands and growing pauperisation of actual cultivators, many of whom are becoming share-croppers and agricultural labourers. Relatively rich peasants often with political backing, get the bank credit which they in turn lend out, at a higher rate of interest, to the share-croppers. They further said that though minimum wages are fixed for the agricultural labourers, till today, there is no machinery to enforce it. This shows that the ruling government have been paying only "lip service for the protection of tribal interest". Prices of essential commodities are soaring up everyday yet, the government seems to bypass this issue, the CPI added.²¹

The PDIC stated that its aim was to solve the problems of agricultural labourers and farmers. According to the PDIC manifesto, the farmers do not get remunerative prices for their produce viz. potatoes. These perishable goods are bought by a middle man at a very low price. In most cases, this does not suffice even the cost price of the product. The same goods are re-sold by the initiators

21. CPI on the burning problems of Meghalaya, Shillong, 1983.

at a very high price. So the party pledged that it would set up a store-house for these goods or buy it among the local people themselves so that the government employees and the citizens of Meghalaya on the whole can purchase it at a cheaper rate. Such auxilliary bodies are yet to function in Meghalaya.

From agricultural problems, we find that the vital needs for land reforms has also been pin-pointed. The United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District passed the Land Transfer Act 1953 which stated no land would be sold to Indians who are not the resident of the district. The Supreme Court however, refused its assent in 1971. With the creation of the Autonomous State of Meghalaya 1971, the APHLC Government passed 'The Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act 1971'. Under this Act, land could be sold to any citizen of India if the Government of Meghalaya was so satisfied. This Act was later on amended and was termed as 'The Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Amendment Act 1977'. Section 3 of this Act provided that if the Government of Meghalaya is notified to prohibit such transfer of land within that area.²² This Act was made more stringent on 7th June 1978 by a notification which totally stopped the sale

22. Shanpru, T. Ka Jingshisha halor ka Jingshakri ia ka Jaitbynriew jong ngi, Ri Khasi Press, Shillong, (no date).

of tribal lands to others in the tribal dominated areas. So the HSPDP mentioned in their 1983 manifesto that they would again amend the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Amendment Act 1977 to totally stop the sale of land in the State to the non-tribals and see that the tribals do not become mere "Benamis" at the hands of other people. Similarly, the APHLC declared that it would preserve and protect the tribal lands and stop the Immovable Property Tax. The INC(I) being a national political party refrained from local issues and preferred the age-old land management to continue, although the agrarian relations that exists today demand urgent land reforms to revitalise the agrarian sector. Only in the manifesto of the CPI some distinguishing facts have been noted and a definite programme has been spelt out. That the finding of the CPI bear facts and explain the situation correctly is corroborated by one of the terms of reference for the Land Reform Commission for Khasi Hills appointed by the Government of Meghalaya in 1973. The Commission was asked to explain inter alia the difficulties being experienced by the people, the management and the administration at all levels caused by lack of cadastral maps and records of right for each class of land.

The other remedial measures proposed by the parties are: health and sanitation, drinking water supply, electrification, sports, financial assistance, clean administration

residential accommodation in the urban areas with reasonable rents, roads and communications and the all round development of the State.

In addition to these, the HSPDP demanded more powers for the State and the District Councils. It also condemned the intrusion into the powers of the State autonomy by the North Eastern Council and claimed itself to be the only tribal regional party which can serve its people better according to their own genius. On progress and prosperity, the Congress (I) started with an optimistic note, 'with faith in our people and pride in our country — forward to progress and prosperity — and a better tomorrow'. They also focussed the desirability of a stable government in Meghalaya and appeal to the people for the 'political stabilization of a new State by voting the Congress to power'. The Congress (I) brought stability at the centre and it alone can bring stability in a State like Meghalaya. Moreover, they stressed the importance of the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi and the revised 20-point economic programme. This programme is intended to serve the underprivileged through special programmes like creation of jobs, allotment of house-sites to village families, supply of drinking water and greater medical and educational facilities. The APHLC laid emphasis on the federal character of the constitution. It declared that the strength and cohesion of a

multi-racial populace of the country would depend on the strict implementation of the scheme of the federal set up as enshrined in the Constitution and towards that end, the State autonomy has to be maintained and nurtured not only in letter but also in practice.

The State political parties, the APHLC, the HSPDP and the PDIC have touched upon the question of centre-state relations but the CPI and INC (I) have not.²³ The State political parties, as is expected, have demanded more autonomy for the State. There is not much of difference between the HSPDP and the APHLC in their stand. The only programmes which the HSPDP has over-emphasized than the other parties are: to see that the State Government should have fuller participation in the affairs of the North-Eastern Hill University and the unnecessary intrusion of the North Eastern Council into the affairs of Meghalaya.

Before concluding this chapter, some observations may be made. There is, however, one point which the Congress (I) has over-emphasized and that is, the fact that it claims that it has made an attempt to bring back the principle of the reservation of seats in the Meghalaya Assembly. In fact,

23. Centre-State relationship is currently been engaged in a nation wide debate and the Sarkaria Commission has been appointed to look into the matter.

it is the State political parties who have fought for this principle. Had the Congress (I) respected this principle, the bill which has been tabled in Parliament should have been passed in the first sitting. In fact, there was no quorum. Similarly, how can the HSPDP have a claim to better participation in the Central University. It will be worthwhile if regional parties fight to have a separate university for Meghalaya. It would be good for everybody if Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland should have separate universities. Lastly, if the APHLC stand for the development of tribal language, then it should have stood for the recognition of Khasi language which has been raised and inducted in the school of languages by the University. However, it is yet to be recognised by the Sahitya Akademi. But it is refreshing to hear the words of the M.P. candidate (Bajubon Kharlukhi) of the APHLC in the 1983 Lok Sabha by-elections who says, "If I am elected, I will try to see that Khasi language is not only recognised by the Sahitya Akademi but our language must find a place in the Eight Schedule of the Constitutions".²⁴ Thus, Kharlukhi makes an emotional appeal to the electorate. He does not bother himself about the utility and practicability of the programme.

24. Protection and Preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people, Ropeca (Shillong), 1983, Vol.VII, No. 6, p. 1.



CHAPTER - IV

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Exhortive appeals are made during Elections but we seldom ask what contributions political campaign makes to a democratic government. Indeed, given the frequency of elections at the local, state and national levels of our political system, most of us grow weary of political harangues like the faces of politicians beaming through the posters. Wearisome and time-consuming as it may be for both candidates and the electorates, the political campaign is essential to Indian Democracy as a method of mobilising support behind persons competing for the authority to govern.

A democracy recruits and selects its leaders through a regularised, periodic and open elections. The aim of opposing candidates' campaign is to win the elections. So, the principal purpose for each candidate's campaign is to achieve victory. Since we take this to be the chief role that campaign plays in the political process, this discussion will emphasize the techniques candidates employ in attracting communities, group-leaders, sympathetic followers and wavering independents.¹

1. Gore William et al., "The Functions of the Political Campaign: A Case Study", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. XI, 1958, pp. 55-70.

Democratic elections not only provides us with a mean of choosing our rulers. But by voting we acquire the feeling that we as citizens are participating in governing the political system. Seen from this perspectives, campaign communication enlists faith in one candidate, arouses fear of another, creates both reassurances and doubt, and provides an illusion of an open debates of issues, personalities and parties.

A leader is not a person who directs the actions of others because traditionally it was believed that nature has endowed him with superior skills, intelligence, knowledge, strength or character traits. In an interview with the electorates of Greater Shillong Areas it was found that the masses supported a leader in exchange for certain benefits. One such need of the voters is the yearning for someone to act as a legitimate voice of the political system and to fight against any deprivations by governmental authorities.

The Allocations of Symbols in Elections

The political parties, local associations and independent groups choose their prospective candidates for elections. These contestants file their nomination papers with the required security deposits to the election authority at the correct time and place.

In India, there are literate, semi-literate and illiterate electorates who rely on the use of symbols to identify the candidates for whom they wish to vote. These symbols must be allocated at the time of nominations to enable the candidates to educate the electorates in the recognition of the symbols as part of their election campaign.

The use of symbols pre-supposes that: symbols must be familiar to and recognisable by illiterates and ignorant voters. Moreover, symbols must be easily distinguishable one from another and should have no religious, political or racial associations.

In India, for the 1952 National Elections, the Election Commission's estimates, had sufficient standing or following in the country to merit such recognition. Only parties given recognition had symbols reserved for them in the general elections. After the 1952 general elections, the position was reversed and the Commission fixed the minimum standard for recognition at the figures of three percent of the valid votes polled in the elections. This had the effect of reducing the number of parties recognised as national parties from fourteen to four.²

2. Smith, T.E., Elections in Developing Countries, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., New York, 1960, p. 141.

In order that the names of the official candidates sponsored by the electoral authority each recognised party was required to inform the authorities the names of persons whom they would sponsor and forward a specimen signature of such persons. For the purpose of assigning symbols to independent candidates and to candidates sponsored by parties which had not achieved recognition, each candidate was permitted to indicate his first and if necessary, subsequent choices from the list of officially approved symbols (other than the symbols reserved for recognised parties). The first choice of a candidate is accepted if it did not clash with the first choice of any other candidate. If there was any such clash, the Returning Officer was required to decide the matter by drawing of lots and allot the second choice to the other candidate.³

In India, the reserved symbols for all the States are: Ear of corn and sickle - CPI; Lamp - Jan Sangh; Star - Swatantra; Hammer, Sickle and Ear of Corn - CPI(M); Elephant - Republican Party of India; Hut - Praja Socialist Party; Banyan Tree - Samyakta Socialist Party.

The Indian National Congress due to its internal differences was split in 1969. This split divided the party

3. Ibid.

into Congress (R) led by Indira Gandhi and Congress (O) led by Nijalingappa respectively. The Congress (O) retained the symbol "Two bullocks with a yoke" whereas, the Congress (R) was given the symbol "Cow and the Calf". On 1st January 1978, the Congress (R) was again divided into Congress (Indira) and Congress (Swaran Singh). The Congress (I) was allotted the symbol 'Hand' whereas the Congress (Swaran Singh) retained the 'Cow and the Calf' symbol.

The partially reserved symbols in States are those where State political parties have been recognised. In 1983, the symbols reserved in Meghalaya and in Greater Shillong Areas were: Flower (Rose) - APHLC; Lion - HSPDP; Spade - PDIC.

Some of the free symbols are: ladder, horse, cart, scales, rising-sun, cycle, boat, two leaves, camel, sparrow, railway engine, pitcher etc.

In 1972, the political parties that contested the election were the INC, CPI and the APHLC. Each of these had their symbols reserved that is, INC - Cow and the Calf; CPI - Ear of corn and sickle, and the APHLC - Flower (Rose). The HSPDP which started as an ad-hoc committee in 1968 could not get recognition as a political party for the 1972 Assembly Elections. However, S.D. Khongwir (Mawlai);

L. Gilbert Shullai (Mawkhar); Ganold Massar (Jaiaw); Goilas Marbaniang (Nongthymmai) and Lambourne Kharlukhi (Mylliem) of the HSPDP contested the elections as independent candidates. They were allotted the symbol 'Lion'.

On 16th November 1976 in Mendhipathar, most of the APHLC members decided to merge with the Congress. Leaving five members (D.D. Pugh, P.R. Kyndiah, B.B. Lyngdoh, S.D.D. Nichols Roy and Jackman Marak) the rest were inducted into the Congress on 19th November 1976 at the Jawahar Nagar Session of the A.I.C.C. On 28th November 1976, O.L. Nongtdu, Joint Secretary of the APHLC filed a petition to the Election Commission for the withdrawal of the symbol 'Flower' from the APHLC stating that the APHLC had merged with the Indian National Congress.

In the meantime the Central Executive Committee of the APHLC held its meeting in Tura on 12th January 1977. In this meeting, it resolved to send a delegation which included B.B. Lyngdoh and D.D. Pugh to represent to the Election Commission of India on the reservation of the Rose symbol for the APHLC which it had adopted in earlier elections. The APHLC further stated that a section of the leadership of the APHLC had left the party and joined the Congress. Under para 15 of the Election Symbol (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968, disputes about the symbol under the law

can only arise when two sections or two groups claim the identity of the same party and claim the same symbol as in the case between Congress (R) and Congress (O) after the 1969 split. On 1st February 1977, however, it was decided by the Election Commission that the symbol 'Rose' should be kept frozen on the ground that the APHLC had officially written that it had merged with the Congress on November 1976.⁴ So, the Flower could no longer be listed as an election symbol in the State of Meghalaya. As such the APHLC lost the Flower symbol for the Lok Sabha Elections held on March 1977.

The candidates that contested the 1977 Shillong Parliamentary seat were P.G. Marbaniang (INC); P.R. Kyndiah, H.S. Lyngdoh and G.G. Swell. P.R. Kyndiah, sponsored by the APHLC was treated as an independent candidate by the Election Commission allotting the symbol 'scales' to him. H.S. Lyngdoh, the President of the unrecognised political party (HSPDP) was given the symbol 'Lion'. G.G. Swell, started a new party known as Public Demand Implementation Committee. However, this committee had not yet gained recognition as a political party so, G.G. Swell contested the election as an independent candidate. He was allotted the symbol 'Scales'.

4. Chaube, S.K., Electoral Politics in North East India, University Press, Madras, 1985, p. 139.

In the 1977 elections, the APHLC candidates (Tura and Shillong) polled 29.2 percent of the valid votes polled. It won the symbol case too, in 1979 at the Supreme Court. The HSPDP secured 15.12 percent of the valid votes polled. It was also given recognition as a State political party by the Election Commission of India on 25th January 1978.

The second general assembly elections was held on 25th February 1978. The symbols of the political parties that contested the elections in the Greater Shillong Areas were: INC (Bhramananda Reddy group) - Cow and the Calf; INC (Indira group) - Hand; APHLC - Flower; HSPDP - Lion; and CPI - Ear of corn and sickle. Though the PDIC was not recognised as a political party yet, Drosily Mukhim (Malki-Nongthymmai), Ambrose B.M. Roy (Mawkhar) and S.A. Nongrum (Myllem) were sponsored as independent candidates. All of them were given the symbol 'spade'.

The PDIC was recognised as the State political party by the Election Commission of India on 21st September 1978.

In Meghalaya, the third general assembly elections was held on 17th February 1983. The national political parties that contested the elections were INC (I) - Hand; CPI - Ear of corn and sickle and the JNP - Haldar. The State political parties were: APHLC - Flower; HSPDP - Lion and

the PDIC - spade. The independent candidates that contested the elections were allowed to choose any one of the free symbols listed in the nomination papers. If any two or more candidates belonging to the same constituency preferred the same symbol, the Returning Officer would settle the matter by the drawing of lots and the second choice from the other free symbols available.

According to Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. Maclean, "a campaign denotes the activities of an individual or group (the campaigners) in a particular context (the campaign setting) designed to manipulate the behaviour of a wider number of people (the audience) to his advantage".⁵ This act also involves a feed-back through the election results.

In a democracy, every citizen is eligible to run for office if he can meet the specific legal qualifications. But preferable candidates are those in whom the voters see the qualities they desire in public offices. These qualities range from honesty, intelligence and education. Voters are also interested in the candidates' achievement. Whether his experience has prepared him for public office or whether his past record justifies his return to office. From the questions

5. Westley, Bruce H. & Maclean Jr., Malcolm S., "A Conceptual Model for Communications Research", *Journalism Quarterly*, XXXIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1957), 31-38, cited in Nimmo Dan, The Political Persuaders, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1970, p. 10.

asked to the sample electorates of the Greater Shillong Areas, it may be analysed that the sitting MLAs of Jaiaw, Mawlai, Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorumkhrah enjoy the confidence of their voters. Their active involvement in State politics created a positive impression in the minds of the electorates. The voters were of the opinion that these MLA's are easily approachable and are willing to redress the grievances of the public. The electorates in Malki-Nongthymmai and Laitumkhrah were of a view that for two five-year terms of office they had elected a candidate but were not satisfied with his achievements. Their immediate wants like a public water-tap, street lights, proper roads, security and others were not cared for. So, this time they opted for another personality. In Myllem, the electorates are yet to find a much preferred candidate for public office. In the three Assembly elections held so far three different candidates were sent as representatives by this constituency. Two of them have already failed in voicing the matters concerning public affairs and the third representative is still facing the test.

The main purpose of campaign is to win elections. Winning of an election can take several forms. Normally, the accumulation of a minimum number of votes is what we regard as winning the election. But the minimum number is not always sufficient. Some candidates desire to win by

large margins, creating an impression of great popularity that will discourage challenges to their re-election at a latter date. S.D. Khongwir (Mawlai), D.N. Joshi (Mawprem) and Bhaskar Choudhury (Laban) won the elections by such large margins that it is impossible to think of a suitable alternative choice in their constituencies.⁶

Some campaigns have goals which are more important than victory in a given election. In an interview with a CPI candidate Dalington Dympep it was learnt that though they have no strongholds in the constituencies of Greater Shillong Areas yet, their main objective was to bring forth to the public the ills of a capitalistic society and the growing disparities between the rich and the poor. A campaign is built on publicity, the tactics being to expose the candidate to larger audiences. For some the exposure itself is a sufficient goal. Many lawyers for example, campaign for office to win recognition hoping to advertise their existence and win clients.⁷ The study of candidates for the State Legislative Assembly in 1983 in the Greater Shillong Areas revealed that lawyer-candidates tend to use

6. S.D. Khongwir polled 4,274 margin over his nearest rival, D.N. Joshi 3,375 votes and B. Choudhury 2,588 votes, Ramakrishnan, V. Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook 1983, Shillong, pp.69-71.

7. In an interview during election time (1983) with some lawyers that the usual comment on lawyer-candidate is "This is the best means to advertise ourselves. We only spend a few hundreds for nominations, posters and wall-writings. People come to know about us which means we will have more clients."

the communication media with the greatest advertising potential. They employed mass techniques that attempts to reach an audience larger than could be reached by personal physical presence of the candidate or his helpers in the field. Some of the lawyer-candidates confided that, just a matter of few hundreds their names are printed in the ballot paper. These ballot papers are definitely seen by more citizens than other mass-communicating media.

In India, a voter is a citizen, twenty-one years of age or older, who have resided in a State for a period sufficient to meet the State requirements. Once they fulfill these obligations a candidate is interested in them. Indian States require by law that citizens should register their eligibility to vote in Local, State and National elections several months in advance of the election. So, the first strategic campaign of candidates who feel they can profit from a large turnout at the polls is to organise a successful voter registration drive. But the potential candidate would register most of his own supporters.

A voter's attitude is relevant to a candidates' campaigning. In the elections between candidates of our major political parties [INC(I); APHLC and HSPDP] the party identification of voters weigh heavily in their decisions. Voting studies conducted for 1983 Assembly elections show

that eight out of every ten electorate in Shillong are committed to one of our three major political parties. Three out of ten are probably so committed that it is unlikely that they shift to other parties during the campaign. Depending on what the distribution of partisan identification within his constituency, the general strategy of the candidate becomes clear. If his party is in the majority, he must conduct a campaign to reinforce the commitments of the party and assure their turnouts. If in the minority, the candidate must campaign to hold his own loyalists while winning votes from independents and wavering voters.

In any campaign the vast majority ignore all but the most general issues. They may for example, feel 'the protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people' more desirable but, know little about what they should protect and preserve. This issue though debatable is only an anti-Congress (I) drive.

In a competitive environment of an election each candidate assumes that if more people listen to his messages, the greater are his chances of victory. So a candidate regards exposure as tantamount to influence. But modern campaign exposure is not easily won. Good speakers no longer mobilize public attention and enthrall rally crowd with oratory. Changes in the content and character of mass

communication and in public leisure-time habits makes it more difficult for candidates to reach constituents. This task has become so technical that today we find five categories of communication channels employed in Greater Shillong Areas. They are: personal appearance, the campaign organisation, display, the printed media and the radio.

Door to Door Campaign

The candidates and their workers conducted several door to door and street-corner campaigns. They met the voters face to face sometime individually but mostly in small corner meetings. Sometimes, the local workers would conduct the candidate around the locality in a procession. In such cases, the candidate usually stopped in front of houses or shops, talked to the people around and greeted them with folded hands or a handshake, while his supporters shouted slogans. They would distribute manifestoes and leaflets directly to the voters with an appeal to vote. Appeals were made in the name of the party, group, and the personality and performances of the candidate.

Several times workers alone would go on such a campaign either from door-to-door or from shop-to-shop. They would also hold small street-corner meetings, take out slogan shouting processions and distribute leaflets and voters' slips. Such campaigns were designed to create a

climate in favour of the given candidate. These campaigns were usually held in the mornings and evenings in order to be able to contact as many voters as possible. In an interview with the electorates it was learned that during such campaigns people raised questions about local problems and wanted some amenities here and there. At other times the supporters, particularly the Congress workers would inject their ideology into such campaigns by explaining to the people about their policies and future programmes. Sometime ten to fifteen influential people with the headman of the locality would go round the houses of the electorates requesting the voters for their support and sought their blessings and help.

The voting behaviour is influenced by these personal contacts. Even educated voters have been found to disclose in confidence that only so and so candidates or party leader approached them personally and so, he or she voted for him in the absence of an alternative appeal. This is only a matter of accident. Though educated voters may be influenced by personal approach yet, if the CPI or an independent would have approached them they would to a certain extent scrutinise the candidates' achievements. In Greater Shillong Areas majority of the voters are religious-minded. To them, CPI being a non-religious party is not acceptable. In one constituency some of the voters confided that a CPI

candidate saying that whatever is written in their manifesto would be implemented by the other candidate if, voted to power. So instead of voting for him they rather vote for the Congress (I) candidate. This had actually happened in Laban Constituency where the two candidates of the Congress (I) and the CPI went round together to campaign for themselves.

Election Meetings

Public meetings for an election in the Greater Shillong Areas were held in school buildings, strategic points of the localities, the local clubs and in the constituent party offices. But what was refreshing in the 1983 Assembly elections is that, "the people of Meghalaya have shown political maturity". This comment was made by Shri Prakash Mehrotra the then Governor of Meghalaya in an interview with an AIR correspondent. He went on to say: "Every candidate would refrain himself or herself from personal attacks and mud-slinging". Further, he said that in past the election campaign was full of personal attacks and unimaginable scandals which was almost totally absent in the 1983 election. Moreover, all the candidates would begin their speeches by praising the qualities of head and heart of their opponents. Except in rare cases, nobody would touch the dark side of the life and activities of his or her opponents. Even the supporters of a particular candidate listen to the speeches

of their political opponents with rapt attention. In the past, their practice was to disturb the meeting by shouting slogans or putting down the opponents by asking him ridiculous question. This is indeed a good sign. The people of Meghalaya have become matured in their thinking in such a way that there can be no chance of success for any candidate who indulges in personal attack.⁸

Election meetings were organised by national parties. In the Greater Shillong Areas election meetings gain momentum with the visit of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Congress (I) candidates made a grand and pompous affair by taking out a procession from their respective constituencies and assembling in the Congress Bhawan. From there a combined procession of all the Congress (I) candidates was then taken out to the Garrison ground where Indira Gandhi was to address a meeting.

Besides Indira Gandhi, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting P.K. Salve, AICC (I) General Secretaries Gulam Nabi Azad and Moshina Kidwai, Deputy Minister of Railways late C.M. Stephen, former Nagaland Chief Minister Hokishe Sema, President of the Mizoram Congress (I) Lalthanhawla, Minister of Railways A.B.A. Ghani Khan

8. "Political Maturity", Ropeca, Shillong, Vol. 7, No.10, February 23rd 1983, p. 2.

Choudhury and Deputy Minister of Commerce P.A. Sangma addressed street-corner meetings in and around Shillong. Leaders from other National and Regional parties concentrated more in their own constituencies.⁹

In an election meeting the spectators size is not always an indication of the spectators' response. Actually the voters' mood, receptivity and sentiments must be taken into consideration. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi arrived at the Shillong helipad by an Indian Air Force plane and addressed the election meeting. A large number of people from remote areas came and thronged the meeting place. But in spite of such performances, only the expected candidates won from the Shillong Areas. In fact the Congress (I) lost the Malki-Nongthymmai seat. So, all these had a sleeper effect upon the voters and in their voting behaviour.

One peculiar characteristics in the 1983 election campaign is that nearly all the candidates spoke from the same platform about their policies and programmes as written in their manifestoes. Unlike the rest of India, in Meghalaya one usually does not come across any untoward incident or fight in an election meeting. The people seems to have accepted the choice of elections with a rational sporting spirit.

9. "Campaign in full swing", Implanter, Shillong, Vol. XV, No. 13, 12th February 1983, p. 1.

Election Manifestoes and Leaflets

The political parties released election manifestoes containing statements of their policies and programmes which they would implement if voted to power. All the political parties distributed their manifestoes throughout their constituencies. Several comparative studies were made by the local newspapers and the general feeling among them all was that they were extra-radical in their appeal to the electorate.

Leafleteering is another important medium of an election campaign which ranged from a single piece of paper to a well-documented long leaflets. These leaflets sought to inform the voters about the qualities of the candidates and supplied them with facts and figures of their achievements. A leaflet, which was circulated widely at election meeting, door-to-door campaign and by hand in the constituencies listed the academic records of the candidate. It gave a detailed account of his qualification and educational background, his profession as well as his activities as a social worker. Some of the candidates also listed the problems facing their constituency. To these ills, they claim there would be an immediate solution if they are voted to power. The sitting candidates' leaflets mentioned about the improvement in the socio-economic field and that they would carry on such activities if they are elected once again. In these

leaflets they also upheld the ego of the electorates and thanked them for their support in the previous election.

The Poster War

Most of the posters appeared side by side on the city walls, sometime overlapping each other. Majority of the posters were written in regional language like in Mawkhar, Jalaw, Mawlai, Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrach and Myllem. In all these constituencies posters were written in Khasi. In Mawprem the posters were written in Nepali and in Pynthorumkhrach and Laban it was written in Bengali. The Nepali posters read as (Devanagari Script) Shri D.N. Joshi laie vote dinu hos (Vote for Shri D.N. Joshi). Shri Dhruba Nath Joshi laie apno bhaheput vote deia jataunu hos. Congress laie vote dinu hos. Hath ko chinna ma thappa lagaunu hos. (Exercise your precious vote for the victory of Shri Dhruba Nath Joshi. Vote for Congress. Stamp your vote on the Hand). In Bengali language it read as, Deiya koro Shri Bhaskar Choudhury ke vote dien. Hath chinne vote dien. (Please vote for Shri Bhaskar Choudhury. Stamp your vote on the Hand). In addition to these, posters written in Hindi were also found in the above constituencies, which conveyed this message (Devanagari Script) Kripya Pynthorumkhrach chetra ke M.L.A. pad ke liya umidwar B.P. Singh ko chunna ching Lantern par apne mad de kar vijay bnaiya

(Please vote for B.P. Singh as your M.L.A. from Pynthorum-khrah Constituency. Stamp your vote on the Lantern). Some posters written in English read as 'Please vote for (Name of the candidate) as your M.L.A. from the (Name of the constituency). Stamp your vote on the (Symbol). Some of the Congress (I) posters written in English read as 'For Progress and Prosperity, vote Congress (I)'. With the photograph of Indira Gandhi. One observable fact was that there were no posters criticising any party or candidate directly.

An election campaign, like all other campaigns, seeks to stimulate the electorate in a certain direction. A series of stimuli contained in the campaign material invoked varying responses. Parties wrote of removal of poverty, unemployment and other social evils in their posters. They also pledge to preserve the tribals' distinct identity, their languages, customs and culture.

The Congress (I) party election posters, like their themes in the Election meetings mainly sought to appeal to the voters' psychological needs like 'Hope for the future'. Persistent themes in the posters were socialism, secularism and stability. The slogan 'Garibi Hatao' (Removal of poverty), the removal of unemployment and the twenty-point economic programme sought to draw the electorate towards it.

Thus the appeal in the posters were positive. The political parties and their candidates succeeded in their efforts to reach the electorate through posters, though the voters in the Greater Shillong Areas are a mixed population belonging to different socio-economic background and culture.

Wall Writings

Wall writings occupy an important place in the election campaigns. The contesting candidates devoted considerable attention to writing on walls. This helps to develop their own image and demolish the other party's image. Some typical wall writings were - Vote for (Name of the candidate). Stamp your vote on the (Symbol). Or in Khasi language, Sngewbha jied ia U Bah (Name of the candidate) kum U M.L.A. jong phi na constituency (Name of the constituency).

In Mawprem, Jaiaw and Laban constituencies it was observed that wall writings like 'Vote for D.N. Joshi. Stamp your vote on the hand' was mutilated into an independent candidate Narayan Joshi's name. Miscreants made the symbol 'Sun' on the alphabet 'D'. The symbol 'hand' was changed into the symbol 'Sun'. Similar writings were seen in the Jaiaw constituency where P.R. Kyndiah's name was changed into Maya Kyndiah and vice versa. This created

confusion in the minds of the public regarding the candidates' party identification. In Laban constituency Bhaskar Choudhury's name (Congress (I) was changed into Manas Choudhury's name (independent candidate). In some cases, wall writings of a particular candidate was washed off and fresh writing of another candidate was written.

The candidates selected vantage points for placing the writings to attract the maximum attention of the electorates. They usually selected walls on the main roads, bus-stops, tea-shops, cinema houses and the walls of schools and colleges. The Congress (I) wall writing sought to familiarise the electorates with the new Congress (I) symbol. In 1978 Assembly elections the symbols were "cow and the calf" and "hand". But in 1983 election there was only the 'hand' symbol.

Feasts

All the supporters of the contesting candidates were offered tea and snacks or a heavy meal before and after the election campaigns of the day. Some of the supporters of the contesting candidates were offered intoxicating drinks to rouse their spirit in the campaign process. In an interview with a candidate of Mawkhar constituency it was learnt that from the number of cups and plates used, the candidate would make a rough calculation of how many votes

he was likely to poll. But this is a bad logic and a misleading statistics. There is no co-relation between the two. But nevertheless it helps the candidates to touch the heart of the voters in a very congenial setting.

The Impact of Money

Charges of corruption in election is common throughout India. Bribing the voters is no secret. Candidates either independent or party affiliated offered money to the voters. In an interview with some of the electorates it was found that they received money or intoxicating drinks from the candidates in return of their promises to vote for them. Some voters revealed that they received Rs. 5/- each for their vote and Rs. 20 to Rs. 35 for his family's vote. But this aspect of corruption is not peculiar to Greater Shillong Areas alone. It is an all India affair.

The Radio and the Press

All recognised political parties were allowed to broadcast their election campaigns over the All India Radio, Shillong. Each party was allotted two broadcast programmes. These parties are - APHLC, CPI, HSPDP, INC(I) and the PDIC.

With the advent of radio broadcast politicians gained a means of achieving instantaneous transmission of appeals to individual members of a mass media. Radio has certain advantages over other campaign media. It reaches

the electorates largely missed by newspapers. An average voter spends nearly the whole day in his work. Radio is their link to the world. Majority of the housewives listen to radio during their daily chores. Elders, who has grown up with radio, depends on news broadcast for information about politics. Radio is far less inexpensive for political advertising than other techniques of mass communication.

Professional campaigners use newspapers for image building, publicity, advertising and editorial comments. They publicize candidates in such a way that it conveys to the reader all impression of the candidates' achievement and character. The image is not therefore, that of the whole man but of dimensions of personality appropriate to the role and its setting. Even though press do not create a great impact yet there is a small percentage of voters who come under its influence.

Party Flags and Processions

Some campaigners feel that they can effectively capture the voters' mind by distributing stickers, buttons and badges bearing the candidate's name. In Greater Shillong Areas, one gets into an election spirit immediately after the flags start flying on different flags belonging to different parties were placed. When asked the reason they replied that some members favoured one party while others

favoured another party. The flags in different house-tops is usually identified as a supporter of that party. Even the vehicles plying around Shillong areas flew party flags. Some of the taxis and jeeps had an APHLC flag on one side and the HSPDP flag on the other side or the Congress (I) flag on one side and HSPDP flag on the other side. In the past, if accidentally a car with a flag met an opposition party's procession on the road, they would surround the car and make it turn back and go the same route from which it had come - thus humiliating the other. Blocking of processions or cars of another candidate was very common in the 1972 and 1978 elections. However, such incidents were not observed in the 1983 assembly elections.

As a part of the campaigns, some of the Congress (I) supporters gave Television sets to the different localities of Greater Shillong Areas. These sets were given to watch the Asian Games and the programmes followed thereafter. The main idea behind it was to improve their image and gain more votes.

One observable fact was that, in the day time there was no sign of any election campaign but as the evening approached the volunteers would gather round the houses of the contesting candidates and move in procession either on buses or on foot shouting slogans in favour of their

candidate. Towards midnight the volunteers of all the candidates would meet at the strategic points of the constituencies like Mot-phran, Sunny-hill, the road intersecting Upper and Lower Mawprem, Laitumkhrach Bazar and others to shout their own respective slogans. Here each party tried to outvoice the other party's slogans - thus disturbing the usually chilly winter night. To a person hearing from a distance it seemed as if there was hand to hand fight. But, no cases of even stone-throwing was reported from any volunteer. Some of the volunteers were professional canvassers. On different days the same volunteers would be seen canvassing for the various candidates.

The Congress (I) party campaign was displayed so lavishly that it would make everyone salivate but they consoled themselves by saying, "After all they get a lot of money from the centre". Some of the candidates even calculated how many votes he is likely to poll. A candidate in an interview said that if all his loyal voters would have cast their vote, he could have easily won.

The political campaigns have a legally prescribed day on which it must end. That is the day before the election day. Thus every candidate has a limited period following his nomination to build his image for the elections.

He also has to plan strategies, raise or borrow money, expose himself to the maximum and adjust to unexpected emergencies. The demand for such time limitations challenges the information gathering and decision making capacities of any campaigners.

CHAPTER - V

ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION RESULTS AND THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR
IN GENERAL

The districts constituting Meghalaya at present namely, the Garo Hills, Khasi Hills and the Jaintia Hills were divided into nine territorial Assembly constituencies under the composite State of Assam. These constituted segments of two Parliamentary constituencies namely, the Autonomous Districts (ST) Parliamentary constituency and the Dhubri Parliamentary constituency.

Four general elections to the State Legislative Assembly of Assam and five general elections to Parliament were held beginning with the First General Elections in 1952. The people of the State, therefore, had sufficient experience in elections. But with the attainment of full Statehood in 1971, the general elections were fought more keenly and with great enthusiasm.

The process of reorganisation of Assam started with the setting up of the Autonomous State of Meghalaya inaugurated on the 2nd April, 1970 comprising the Garo Hills and the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills Districts but excluding some parts of Shillong. The Autonomous State had its Legislative Assembly but as the election thereto could

not be held in time, members were indirectly elected by members of the District Councils while some others were nominated. Meghalaya was granted the status of a full-fledged State on par with the other sister States of the Union with effect from 22nd January, 1972. The State of Meghalaya included all parts of Shillong including the three normal wards of Shillong municipality (Phudmari, Mawlai and Nongthymmai) and cantonment of Shillong town.

Under sub-section (4) of Section 20 of the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971, sixty seats were assigned to the State of Meghalaya. Of these fifty were reserved for members of the Scheduled Tribes.¹ The first general Elections in Meghalaya was held on 9th March 1972. On expiry of the first term, another election was conducted on 25th February, 1978.

On 17th February 1983, Meghalaya again went to polls to elect its sixty member house. This is the third General Elections held in the State ever since its inauguration. On 14th January 1983, the Governor of Meghalaya issued a notification calling upon all the Assembly constituencies in the State to elect members to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. The Election Commission fixed the last date for making nominations to be the 21st January, 1983. The last

1. Ramakrishnan V., Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook 1972, Shillong, 1972.

date for scrutiny of nominations was 22nd January 1983, and the last date for withdrawal of candidatures was 24th January, 1983. The date on which the poll shall, if necessary, be taken was 17th February, 1983 and the date before which the election be completed was 28th February, 1983.²

In response to the above notification 350 candidates filed their nominations for the sixty Assembly seats. Out of the 350 candidates, 62 of them belonged to the Greater Shillong Areas of Myllem, Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrach, Pynthorumkhrach, Jaiaw, Mawkhar, Mawprem, Laban and Mawlai. On scrutiny one nomination (Srimati Bina Acharya) was found invalid from the Mawprem constituency. The reason of rejection being firstly the candidate is not the resident of the Mawprem constituency and secondly the candidate was sponsored by a resident of the Laban constituency. Of the total nominees six (dummy) candidates one each from Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrach, Jaiaw, Mawkhar, Mawprem and Mawlai withdrew by 24th January 1983; the last date of withdrawal of candidature leaving 55 candidates in the field to contest the election in the nine constituencies.

The following table will give the picture.

Table I shows the number of candidates nominated, number of rejection and number withdrawn.

2. Ramakrishnan V, Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook 1983, Shillong, 1983.

General Elections - Meghalaya Legislative Assembly - February 1983. 3

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency Assembly	Total Number of Nominated Candidates	Nomination Rejected	No. of Candidates withdrawn	No. of Contesting Candidates
15.	Myllem	7	-	-	7
16.	Malki-Nongthymed	8	-	1	7
17.	Laitumkherah	5	-	1	4
18.	Pynthorumkherah	9	-	-	9
19.	Jalaw	4	-	1	3
20.	Mawkhar	9	-	1	8
21.	Mawprem	6	1	1	4
22.	Leban	10	-	-	10
23.	Mawlai	4	-	1	3
TOTAL		62	1	6	53

3. Ramakrishnan, V., Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook 1983, Shillong.

Polling on 17th February 1983, took place as scheduled in the polling stations of the Greater Shillong Areas. The counting of votes was taken up on the 21 February and the results were declared by the 22nd February 1983. By the notification dated 25th February 1983, the Governor of Meghalaya dissolved the Legislative Assembly of the State.⁴

Prior to the 1983 Assembly Elections, two other Assembly Elections were held in 1972 and 1978 respectively. In 1972, 50 candidates filed their nominations. Of these, one was rejected and 14 contestants withdrew leaving 35 candidates to contest. Similarly, in 1978, 63 candidates filed their nominations. On scrutiny, none of the papers were found invalid. However, 11 candidates withdrew their nominations leaving 52 of them to contest the electoral battle. There were 86 polling stations in the 1972 elections which was subsequently increased to 134 polling stations by 1983 elections. After the 1972 General Assembly Elections the territorial constituencies in Meghalaya were re-defined and they stand as it is, till today.

4. It was constituted under Election Commission's Notification No. 308/MEG/83, dated 28th February 1983 under Section 73 of the Representation of the People's Act 1951, notifying the names of members elected from the 60 Assembly Constituencies in the State in preface, Op.cit.

TABLE - II

The Number of Polling Stations - Assembly Constituency-
Wise as in 1972, 1977, 1978, 1980 and 1983.⁵

(i) General Elections - Meghalaya Legislative Assembly 1972

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Total number of Poling Stations
7.	Mawlai (ST)	9
8.	Mawkhar	9
9.	Jaiaw (ST)	10
10.	Mawprem	9
11.	Shillong Cantonment	4
12.	Laban	10
13.	Malki	7
14.	Laitumkhras	8
15.	Nongthymmai (ST)	11
16.	Mylliem	9
10. Constituencies		86

Note: Shillong Cantonment has been merged with Mawprem and Laban constituencies. The three constituencies of Malki, Nongthymmai and Laitumkhras has been redefined as Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhras and Pynthorumkhras constituencies.

5. Ramakrishna, V., Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook, 1983, Shillong, pp. 108-110.

(ii) General Elections - Meghalaya Legislative Assembly - 1977-83.⁶

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Total number of Polling Stations			
		1977	1978	1980	1983
	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Mylliem	11	13	14	19
16.	Malki-Nongthymmai	10	11	12	14
17.	Laitumkhrach	8	10	13	16
18.	Pynthorumkhrach	8	11	11	15
19.	Jaiaw	12	16	16	16
20.	Mawkhar	10	11	11	11
21.	Mawprem	6	10	10	12
22.	Laban	8	8	11	13
23.	Mawlai	10	12	13	18
	TOTAL	83	102	111	134

The total population of Meghalaya is 13,27,874 according to the 1981 Census and the total electorate numbered 6,37,498 for the General Assembly Elections of 1983. In the nine constituencies of the Greater Shillong Areas, the total electorates ranged in between 8,629 in Mawkhar to 13,390 in Jaiaw. Among these, the highest number of males and females were found in Jaiaw; 6.699 males and 6.691 females. The

6. Polling Stations are for 1977 and 1980 refer to Parliamentary Elections held in the State.

lowest ratio of males 4,259 being in Mawkhar and of females 4,186 in Mawprem. The total votes polled was the highest in Myllem 8,991 votes and the lowest was in Malki-Nongthymmai 7,423 votes which is 78.93 percent and 66.19 percent of the electorates. The total valid votes polled in comparison with the electorates of the Greater Shillong Areas was the highest in Myllem (8,712 votes) and the lowest in Mawkhar (5,460 votes), that is, the total valid votes polled in these areas was in between 63.27 percent (Mawkhar's) and 76.48 percent (Myllem's). The highest number of rejected votes were found in the Pynthorumkhrach constituency (454 votes) and the lowest in Laitumkhrach constituency (193 votes). This constituted 5.32 percent and 2.69 percent respectively in comparison with the total votes polled in these constituencies.

Rejection of votes is inevitable in a country where the majority of the voters are illiterate. This can be minimised through effective political education by political parties. Sometimes, rejection of a large number of votes may effect the election of certain candidate. In the 1983 election the difference between the nearest rivals and the number of votes rejected was nowhere near that, by adding all the rejected votes to the nearest rival, he would have won instead of the elected candidate.

Security Deposit Forfeited

In most large scale elections, candidates are required to deposit as a condition of nomination. The deposit is usually returnable if the candidate obtains more than a fixed minimum percentage of the votes cast in the constituency in which he is standing for election. The deposit serves to discourage frivolous candidature and candidates who support a cause which has very little appeal to the election at large.

In India, the rule lays down that if a candidate is not elected and the number of votes polled by him does not exceed one-sixth of the total number of votes validly polled, he loses his security deposit.

In 1983 election, the candidates who had to forfeit their security deposit in the Greater Shillong Areas are: In Myllem, H. Aiontis Roy Kharphuli (INC), Lambourne Kharlukhi (HSPDP), Independents - W.S. Roy Thangkhiew, Stonely A. Nongrum and U. Toju Singh Giri Nongkhlaw. In Malki-Nongthymmai, Bnein Bareh (PDIC), B.C. Swer (HSPDP), Independents - A. Blingstodor Diengdoh, J.N. Giri and S. Shynrang Khonglah. In Laitumkhrah constituency, an independent candidate Kister Kharkongor. In Pynthorumkhrah eight independents - B.N.R. Choudhury, Dal Bahadur Gurung, Evandalyne Massar, Lohit Ranjan Das, Robinson K. Tongwah,

B.P. Singh and Sujit Kumar Dhar. In Mawkhar Dalington Dympep (CPI), Hardinge L. Massar (HSPDP), and independents- H.N. Chowkhani, N.R. Laitphlang and Pollington Pyrtuh. In Mawprem CPI candidate Jekendro Lanong and independent Narayan Joshi. In Laban, Binoy Lahiri (CPI), Richard M. Toi (HSPDP), Robindra Das Choudhury (Janata), Independents Arthur P. Massar, Hasibuddin Ahmed, Kanti May Deb, Karadoklie E. Tariang and Manas Choudhury. In Mawlai, there was only an INC candidate Daminot J. Wankhar. One notable fact is that, in the Jaiaw constituency, no candidates forfeited his security deposit.

Multiple Contest

Meghalaya is noted for multiple contest. For the ten seats available in the Greater Shillong Areas in 1972 Assembly Election there were three straight contest, two triangular contests, two four-cornered contests and three five-cornered contests. In 1978, there was no straight contest. There was one triangular contest, one four-cornered contest, two five-cornered contests, two six-cornered contests, two seven-cornered contests and one nine-cornered contest. In the 1983 Assembly Elections there were triangular contests in Jaiaw and Mawlai, four-cornered contests in Laitumkhrah and Mawprem. Two seven-cornered contests were found in Myllem and Malki-Nongthymmai constituencies.

There were eight-cornered, nine-cornered and ten-cornered contests in Mawkhar, Pynthorumkhrach and Laban constituencies respectively.

This shows that the electorates in the Greater Shillong Areas were very keen in the politics of Election. There has been no unopposed candidate and the number of straight contest were only three and this was in the 1972 Assembly Election.

Key Contest:

In the Greater Shillong Areas, although Mawkhar and Jaiaw are the strongholds of the APHLC, yet, there was a key contest between Korbar Singh (APHLC) and W.H.D. Syngkon (INC) in Mawkhar and between P.R. Kyndiah (APHLC) and S.M. Jyrwa (HSPDP). Successful attempts were made to unseat the sitting M.L.A.'s in the Myllem, Laitumkhrach and Malki-Nongthymmai constituencies. In Myllem, key contest was found between Oris Lyngdoh (APHLC) and Lambourne Kharlukhi (HSPDP). In Laitumkhrach between J. Khonglah (APHLC) and P.G. Marbaniang (HSPDP) and in Malki-Nongthymmai between Bindo M. Lanong (APHLC) and Upstar Kharbuli (INC).

Highest/Least number of votes polled:

The largest number of votes polled in favour of any candidates in the nine-constituencies of the Greater Shillong Areas was found in Mawlai. S.D. Khongwir of the HSPDP polled 4,274 votes but the greatest marginal difference was

between B.K. Roy's 2,993 votes and Sujit Kumar Dhar's 9 votes in the Pynthorumkhras constituency.

The lowest number of votes polled was by Sujit Kumar Dhar - 9 votes. This is a record breaking one since no one has polled a single digit vote. The smallest margin of votes by which a candidate was elected was found in the Mawkhar constituency. The difference between Korbar Singh and W.H.D. Syngkon was of 276 votes. Korbar Singh polled 1,772 votes and W.H.D. Syngkon 1,496 votes.

The APHLC played a notable role in State politics. It came into existence under compelling circumstances. On 22nd April 1960, the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) directed the Chief Minister of Assam to take immediate steps for making Assamese the State language. The immediate reaction to this direction was the meeting of all the Hill Leaders of Assam at Tura on 23rd April 1960. This conference vehemently opposed the decision of the A.P.C.C. But Shri Chaliha declared on 3rd June 1960, that necessary legislation would be introduced to make Assamese the State language. Capt. Sangma then called the meeting of the leaders of all the political parties in the Hill Districts of Assam on 6th July 1960. On 7th July 1960 the Conference decided to constitute itself into a political party to be known as All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (A.P.H.L.C.).

At first the central APHLC consisted of all the members of the political parties of Assam but, towards the formation of Meghalaya, the APHLC became confined to Meghalaya only. So long the APHLC championed the demand for full Statehood, it was the most popular party in Assam. But on 14th May 1968, the Union Home Minister announced the decision of the Government of India to create an Autonomous State of Meghalaya within Assam. This was opposed by some radicals in the APHLC who then formed an Ad-hoc committee to form a parallel organisation which later on came to be known as the "Hill State Peoples' Democratic Party" (HSPDP). The HSPDP was recognised as a State Political Party by the Election Commission of India on 25th January 1978. Candidates sponsored by the H.S.P.D.P. were treated as Independents for the General Elections in 1972.

The Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) came into existence in the north-east from the early forties. Before the formation of Meghalaya, the Communist Party of India was a local committee of the Assam State Council of the CPI. It instituted its own State Council only after Meghalaya was created.

When Meghalaya came into existence as an autonomous State within the State of Assam in 1970, a government was formed through a process of indirect election. Here the APHLC was voted to power. But this government lasted for a little less than two years because on 21st January 1972

Meghalaya was declared as a full-fledged State of the Indian Union. The Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee (M.P.C.C.) was inaugurated on 20th January 1972 with the blessing of Indira Gandhi. Although the Congress played no part in demanding the full Statehood for Meghalaya yet, some APHLC leaders felt personally obliged to her and the Congress-APHLC understanding took place especially in the Khasi Hills in the first ever Assembly Elections held in Meghalaya on 9th March 1972.

In the ten constituencies of the Greater Shillong Areas the candidates sponsored by the Congress were: Maham Singh, Dhruva Nath Joshi and Parsvanath Choudhury from Mawpres, Shillong Cantonment and Laban constituencies respectively. The APHLC sponsored E. Bremly Lyngdoh (Mawlai); Alexander Warjri (Mawkhar); P. Ripple Kyndiah (Jalaw); Peter G. Marbanlang (Laitumkhrah); B.B. Lyngdoh (Nongthymnai); and Jormanik Syiem (Myllem). Binoy Lahiri, a CPI candidate was the only political party contestant in the Malki constituency, others being Independents. In 1972 election altogether 25 candidates out of 35 contested as Independents; some of them being sponsored by unrecognised political parties.

All the three Congress candidates were declared elected from their respective constituencies, Maham Singh in a straight contest with Jokendro Lanong for polling 3262 votes against 1394 votes, D.N. Joshi and P. Choudhury in a four-cornered

contest with Independents in their respective constituencies. D.N. Joshi polled 1263 votes against Dringson E. Shallam's 353 votes. P. Choudhury polled 1708 votes against Muriel Selma Dunn's 1183 votes. Among the APHLC candidates Alexander Warjri, P.R. Kyndiah, P.G. Marbaniang, B.B. Lyngdoh and Jormanik Syiem were elected from Mawkhar, Jaiaw, Laitumkhrach, Nongthymmai and the Myllem constituencies respective.

Alexander Warjri faced a five-cornered contest. He defeated his nearest rival Ajra Singh Khongphai for polling 1279 votes against his own 1474 votes. P.R. Kyndiah polled 2,489 votes defeating Ganold Massar's 2,031 votes. P.G. Marbaniang who polled 3059 votes faced a straight contest but won against his rival P.C. Biswas for polling 1446 votes. B.B. Lyngdoh polled 1,269 votes against Goilas Marbaniang's 1,070 votes in a five cornered contest. There was a triangular contest for Jormanik Syiem who polled 1921 votes against Francis Syiem's 1421 votes. In the Mawlai constituency S.D. Khongwir sponsored by the unrecognised H.S.P.D.P. party was elected for polling 2,830 votes in a straight contest with the APHLC candidate E. Bremly Lyngdoh who polled 2,215 votes. In the Malki constituency in spite of Binoy Lahiri, a CPI candidate being the only political party contestant was defeated for polling 715 votes against an Independent Upstar Kharbuli's 2,306 votes. (For details see Table below).

MEGHALAYA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 1972. 6

DETAIL ANALYSIS OF VOTES POLLED IN FAVOUR OF CANDIDATES

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Total No. of Electorates	No. & percentage of Electors who voted	Name of the Contesting Candidates	Party Affiliation	No. of valid votes polled by each candidate	Total No. of Valid Votes Polled	No. of rejected Votes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7.	MAWLAI (ST)	8,013	5,181 (64.65)	1. E. Bremly Lyngdoh 2. Stanlington David Khongwir	APHLC IND	2,215 2,830	5,045 (63.82)	136 (2.63)
8.	MAWKHAR	7,654	4,587 (59.93)	1. Ajra Khongphai 2. Alexander Warjri 3. L. Gilber Shullai 4. Smti. Silverine Swer 5. Stalin Rajee	IND APHLC IND IND IND	1,279 1,474 1,212 1,197 290	4,452 (58.18)	135 (2.94)
9.	JALAW (ST)	8,608	5,044 (58.59)	1. Ambrose B.M. Roy 2. Ganold Massar 3. P. Ripple Kyndiah	IND IND APHLC	389 2,031 2,489	4,909 (57.03)	135 (2.68)
10.	MAWPREM	7,378	4,763 (64.56)	1. Jokendro Lanong 2. Maham Singh	IND INC	1,394 3,202	4,596 (62.29)	167 (3.50)
11.	SHILLONG CANTONMENT	2,593	1,891 (72.93)	1. Dhruva Nath Joshi 2. Dringson E. Shallam 3. Hasting Kharkongor 4. Markam Lyndem	INC IND IND IND	1,263 353 116 78	1,810 (69.76)	81 (4.28)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12.	LABAN	7,579	4,264 (56.26)	1. Hasting Khar Kongor 2. Muriel Selma Dunn 3. Parsvanath Choudhury 4. Dr. Subrata Das	IND IND INC IND	490 1,183 1,708 746	4,127 (54.45)	137 (3.21)
13.	MALKI	6,211	4,147 (66.77)	1. Binoy Lahiri 2. Deva Kamal Bhuyan 3. George Hamilton 4. Kiron Pal Choudhury 5. Upstar Kharbuli	CPI IND IND IND IND	715 230 238 513 346	4,042 (65.08)	105 (2.53)
14.	LAITUMKHIRAH	7,347	4,679	1. Peter Garnet Marbaniang 2. Pranesh Chandra Biswas	APHLC IND	2,346 3,059 1,446	4,505 (61.32)	174 (3.72)
15.	NONGTHYMMAI	8,442	4,255 (50.40)	1. Brington Buhai Lyngdoh 2. Ekestemshan Kharkongor 3. Emlyn M. Roy 4. Gollas Marbaniang 5. Plissibon Marbaniang	APHLC IND IND IND IND	1,269 417 820 1,070 514	4,099 (48.09)	165 (3.85)
23.	MYLLIEM (ST)	7,821	4,483	1. Francis Syiem 2. Jormanick Syiem 3. Lambourne Kharlukhi	IND APHLC IND	1,421 1,921 1,027	4,369 (55.86)	114 (2.54)

In 1972 the APHLC which sponsored the separate Hill State movement got 32 out of 60 seats. The Congress secured 9, HSPDP 8 and Independents 11. APHLC on its own formed the Government which lasted almost the whole term. But the Congress leadership in the latter period, started the politics of manoeuvring to win over the majority section of the APHLC and it succeeded in its attempt in 1976. Capt. Sangma and his allies convened a meeting of the APHLC at Mendhipathar to merge the APHLC with the Congress. Some APHLC legislators from the Khasi Hills and one from the Garo Hills protested against such action. But Capt. Sangma got the whole hearted support of the Garo and Jaintia Hills legislators and succeeded in getting the prepared resolution passed on 16th November 1976. On 19th November 1976, the APHLC was admitted into the Congress at the Jawahar Nagar Session of the party. As such, the APHLC Government had to resign and the Congress Ministry was formed on 22nd November 1976 under the leadership of Capt. Sangma.

On 1st January 1978 however, at the national level, Congress was split into two. One group was led by Brahmanan Reddy and the other by Indira Gandhi herself.

In Meghalaya, the Pradesh Congress Committee under Capt. Sangma owed its allegiance to B. Reddy, in spite of the fact that they joined the Congress in 1976 in response

to the desire of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The other Congress group (Indira) in Meghalaya was led by E.P. Gayen.

At the National level, the Congress group led by Reddy was not only recognised but was temporarily given the symbol of the "cow and the calf" until finally decided by the Supreme Court. The Indira faction also obtained the recognition of the National Party from the Election Commission and was allotted the symbol of the "hand" in the 1978 State Assembly Elections. This split was a serious set back for the Congress party in Meghalaya to consolidate its position.

The Public Demands Implementation Convention (P.D.I.C.) is the youngest of all the regional parties in Meghalaya. Prof. G.G. Swell who after being expelled from the APHLC started this party to implement the 16-point programme and the demands of the people. The PDIC was recognised as the State political party only on 21st September 1978. So candidates sponsored by this party for the 1978 elections were regarded as Independents.

The parties contesting the political battle in 1978 Assembly elections were: APHLC, C.P.I., HSPDP, I.N.C.(I) and INC(R).

In the 1978 Assembly Elections in the Greater Shillong Areas, the Reddy Congress sponsored Francis Well Syiem

(Mylliem); Upstar Kharbuli (Malki-Nongthymmai); P.G. Marbaniang (Laitumkhrach); B.K. Roy (Pynthorumkhrach); A.S. Khongphai (Mawkhar); D.N. Joshi (Mawprem); and Bhaskar Choudhury (Laban). The Indira faction sponsored Usha Bhattacharya (Laitumkhrach); E.P. Gayen (Pynthorumkhrach); B.K. Biswa (Jaiaw); H.G.R. Pariat (Mawkhar) and Neena Rynjah (Laban). The CPI had Binoy Lahiri from Pynthorumkhrach and Jokendro Lanong from the Jaiaw constituency.

In the Pynthorumkhrach and Mawprem constituencies there were no APHLC candidates. Candidates in the other constituencies were - Jormanick Syiem (Mylliem); Bindo M. Lanong (Malki-Nongthymmai); Alexander Warjri (Laitumkhrach); P. Ripple Kyndiah (Jaiaw); D.D. Pugh (Mawkhar); Rayland Singh Lyngdoh (Laban) and Stoshon Roy Nongrum (Mawlai). The HSPDP candidates were - Lambourne Kharlukhi (Mylliem); David Lyngdoh (Malki-Nongthymmai); Felben Synrem (Pynthorumkhrach); Wilford Lyngdoh (Jaiaw); E. Sher Singh Jyrwa (Mawkhar); Ochondro Singh Syiemlieh (Mawprem); Richard M. Toi (Laban) and S.D. Khongwir (Mawlai). Altogether there were 52 candidates in the Greater Shillong Areas, of which 23 were independents. Upstar Kharbuli, B.K. Roy, D.N. Joshi, P.G. Marbaniang and Bhaskar Choudhury of the Reddy Congress were declared elected in their respective constituencies. Upstar Kharbuli, P.G. Marbaniang and Bhaskar Choudhury defeated

their nearest APHLC rivals Bindo M. Lanong who polled 2267 votes, Alexander Warjri's 1554 votes and 1307 votes of Rayland Singh Lyngdoh. Upstar Kharbuli polled 2704 votes, P.G. Marbaniang 3983 votes and Bhaskar Choudhury 1932 votes respectively. In Mawprem D.N. Joshi's 2789 votes had him elected against Harendra Kumar Dutta's 889 votes. B.K. Roy of Pynthorumkhrach who polled 1575 votes made the other eight candidates to forfeit their security deposits. All the candidates of the Indira faction had to forfeit their security deposits in the Greater Shillong Areas.

Among the APHLC candidates only D.D. Pugh in Mawkhar and P.R. Kyndiah in Jaiaw were elected defeating E.S. Jyrwa an HSPDP who polled 1277 and S.M. Jyrwa an independent who polled 2081 votes. D.D. Pugh polled 1730 votes and P.R. Kyndiah 3020 votes respectively. The HSPDP defeated their nearest rival, the APHLC in Myllem and Mawlai constituencies. Lambourne Kharlukhi polled 2078 votes against 1935 votes of Jormanick Syiem in Myllem. S.D. Khongwir polled 4756 votes against 1875 votes of Stoshon Roy Nongrum.

All the independents were defeated in the Greater Shillong Areas. This shows that neither the independents nor the Indira group had any roots in this area. The Reddy faction secured five of the seven seats contested in these areas - thus securing two more seats than the three seats of 1972.

But the politics of Meghalaya did not remain static even after the 1978 Assembly Elections. In this election, no party got an absolute majority to be able to form a ministry on its own. The INC(R) got 20; APHLC-16; HSPDP-14 and independents including the PDIC-10.

Under the crucial circumstances the tribal students and youths came forward into the political scene and brought together the leaders of the Regional Parties (APHLC-HSPDP-PDIC) to come to an understanding, and combining into a single party, for formation of a ministry and preventing Congress regime or Presidential Rule. But crisis arose over the question of choosing the leader who would head the ministry. A church leader who happened to be present at the meeting settled the problem by drawing of lots.

Under this agreement D. D. Pugh, the General Secretary of the APHLC was chosen the Chief Minister. But this ministry collapsed within a year. B.B. Lyngdoh another aspirant for political power from the APHLC entered into an alliance with the Congress, HSPDP and PDIC. They united themselves into a political group known as the United Meghalaya Parliamentary Democratic Forum (UMPDF). Here an understanding was reached that B.B. Lyngdoh would be the Chief Minister for two years and Capt. Sangma would be the Chairman of the State Planning Board. On expiry of two years arrangements would be exchanged.

This was an opportunistic arrangements among the leaders for sharing power only. B.B. Lyngdoh had to face unprecedented agitation against the Foreign Nationals mainly led by student leaders and supported by splinter group of APHLC and PDIC. But they were successful in tackling the problem and restoring law and order. The UMPDF run the administration of the State for about two years but they did not come closer to one another. Instead, they faced the electorates separately during the 1983 Assembly Elections.

In the meantime, the Indian National Congress (Reddy) in Meghalaya once again joined the Indian National Congress (I) under Capt. Sangma after Indira Gandhi was voted to power in the mid-term 1980 Parliamentary Election. The PDIC was recognised as the State political party by the Election Commission of India on 21st September 1978. The parties in the political fray for the third Assembly Elections were - APHLC, CPI, HSPDP, INC(I), Janata and PDIC.

In 1983 Assembly Elections the Indian National Congress(I) candidates for the Greater Shillong Areas were - H. Aiontis Roy Kharphuli, Upstar Kharbuli, Tiplut Nongbri, B.K. Roy, Maya R. Kyndiah, W.H.D. Syngkon, D.N. Joshi, Bhaskar Choudhury and Damnot J. Wankhar. Of these, B.K.Roy, D.N. Joshi and Bhaskar Choudhury were declared elected from their respective constituencies of Pynthorumkhras, Mawprem

and Laban defeating their nearest rival J.M. Pariat and Hereford Sawian both independents and Garland Nonglait of the APHLC. B.K. Roy polled 2993 against J.M. Pariat's 1968 votes, D.N. Joshi polled 3,375 to H.S. Sawian's 2,262 votes and Bhaskar Choudhury 2,588 to Garland Nonglait's 1,668 votes.

The APHLC had Oris Lyngdoh, Bindo M. Lanong, J. Khonglah, P.R. Kyndiah, Korbar Singh, Garland Nonglait and Anthony Jala in the Greater Shillong Areas. Oris Lyngdoh, Bindo M. Lanong, J. Khonglah, P.R. Kyndiah and Korbar Singh were elected. In Myllem Constituency, Oris Lyngdoh polled 2,943 votes against Dentis Mohon Roy Kharkongor's 2,608 votes. Bindo M. Lanong's 3,313 votes unseated Upstar Kharbuli's 2,298 votes in Malki-Nongthymmai constituency whereas in Laitumkrah constituency J. Khonglah who polled 2,968 votes turned the table against the sitting M.L.A. P.G. Marbaniang's 2,399 votes. In Jaiaw P.R. Kyndiah was again elected for polling 4,102 votes against S.M. Jyrwa's 3,138 votes. In Mawkhar, Korbar Singh's 1772 votes clinged forward to W.H.D. Syngkong's 1,496 votes.

The HSPDP sponsored Lambourne Kharlukhi, B.C. Swer, P.G. Marbaniang, S.M. Jyrwa, Hardinge Massar, Richard M. Toi and S.D. Khongwir. Lambourne Kharlukhi, B.C. Swer,

Hardinge Massar and Richard M. Toi had to forfeit their security deposits. P.G. Marbaniang and S.M. Jyrwa were only second in preference to the APHLC candidates in their respective constituencies. The only HSPDP candidate who won is S.D. Khongwir in Mawlai for polling 4,274 votes against Anthony Jala's 3,669 votes.

The PDIC and Janata had one candidate each but, both were defeated. The former Dentis Mohon Roy Kharkongor in Myllem polled 2,608 votes and the latter Robindra Das Choudhury in Laban polled 42 votes. He also lost his security deposit.

The C.P.I. candidates Dalington Dympep, Jokendro Lanong and Binoy Lahiri lost their deposit for polling 97 votes, 527 votes and 588 votes in Mawkhar, Mawprem and Laban Constituencies respectively. In Greater Shillong Areas, no independent candidates were elected. There were 26 independents out of 55 contesting candidates. Twenty three of them lost their security deposits.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE NINE CONSTITUENCIES

In the nine constituencies of Greater Shillong Areas, the total electorates ranged between 8,629 in Mawkhar to 13,390 in Jaiaw. Among these, the highest number of males and females are found in Jaiaw (6,699 males and 6,691 females). The lowest ratio of males 4,259 being in Mawkhar

and of females 4,186 in Mawprem. The total votes polled was the highest in Myllem 8,991 votes and the lowest in Malki-Nongthymmai 7,423 which is 78.93 percent and 66.19 percent of the total votes polled. The total valid votes polled in comparison with the total electorates was the highest in Myllem (8,712 votes or 76.48 percent) and the lowest in Mawkhar (5,460 votes or 63.27 percent). The highest number of rejected votes (193 votes) is registered in the Pynthorumkhrak constituency.

In Greater Shillong Areas what we find is that every constituency has its own peculiarities. In the Myllem constituency the electorates are always tilting towards the regional parties. It seems as if they are testing different candidates in each election until they find a suitable one to represent them. In 1972 they elected an APHLC candidate Jormanick Syiem but, were not satisfied with his representation. So in 1978 they voted for an HSPDP candidate Lambourne Kharlukhi. But this candidate could not understand the minds of the voters nor their urgent needs and so in the third Assembly Election they once again voted for an APHLC candidate. This time they elected Oris Lyngdoh. In the three Assembly Elections held so far three different candidates were chosen unseating the sitting M.L.A. in each election. None of these candidates have satisfied the voters so far.

The INC has no roots here. Though they sponsored candidates for the 1978 and 1983 elections they, had to forfeit their security deposits.

In the Malki-Nongthymmai constituency, an independent Upstar Kharbuli was voted to power defeating the CPI and other Independents in the 1972 elections. On being an M.L.A. he joined the INC and was elected again. This time on a party ticket. On his second tenure Upstar Khabuli was engaged in the politics of defection. In the meantime, Bindo M. Lanong of APHLC, a candidate second in preference to Kharbuli brought home to the electorates the need for a regional party candidate in their constituency. After all, it was the regional party that gave them Statehood and they alone can preserve the distinct identity of the tribal people. On the wave of such regionalism and observing in Malki ground the hectic movements of the tribal youths to form the regional party ministry in Meghalaya in 1978 made them elect an APHLC candidate Bindo M. Lanong in the 1983 elections.

In the Laitumkhras constituency Peter G. Marbaniang contested the 1972 election as an APHLC candidate and was elected. In 1978, he again contested the election, this time as an INC candidate and was again elected. However,

in 1983 he contested the election as an HSPDP candidate but was defeated by the APHLC candidate Dr. J. Khonglah. The Congress ticket was given to Tiplut Nongbri who secured the third position. So in the Laitumkhrah constituency personality swayed the minds of the voters in the first two Assembly Elections. But Marbaniang's constant defection from one party to another made the electorates cast their vote in favour of another personality Dr. J. Khonglah of the APHLC in the 1983 election. Tiplut Nongbri of the Congress being a woman could not sway the minds of the voters due to the socio-customary laws prevailing among the Khasis where a woman's place is in the home and the hearth and politics is left to the male-folks of the society.

In Mawprem and Laban the electorates were stable in their voting decision. Whoever the candidate may be, in the Opposition, they always voted for D.N. Joshi and Bhaskar Choudhury and their votes kept on rising in each election. In the Mawprem Area, the INC secured 3,202 votes in 1972 which went down to 2,789 votes in 1978 firstly due to the change of candidates from Maham Singh to D.N. Joshi, secondly, the Assembly constituencies of Laban and Mawprem were reconstituted by sandwiching the Shillong Cantonment in between them and thirdly, due to the Congress split into Congress (R) and Congress (I). However, D.N. Joshi in 1983

surpassed the previous record by securing 3,375 votes. Similarly, in the Laban constituency, the electoral strength kept on rising from 1708 in 1972 to 1932 in 1978 and finally to 2,588 votes in 1983 in spite of the change of candidates in 1978 (Bhaskar Choudhury) from 1972 (Parsvanath Choudhury).

The Malki, Laitumkhrach and Nongthymmai Assembly constituencies of 1972 were reconstituted for the 1978 Assembly Election into Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrach and Pynthorumkhrach constituencies. In the Pynthorumkhrach constituency, the Congress (B.K. Roy) has been dominating the scene. In 1978, B.K. Roy polled 1,575 votes and in 1983 he polled 2,993 votes.

The Mawkhar and Jaiaw voters are very stable in their decision of electing a representative. In all the Assembly Elections they voted for an APHLC candidates and their votes kept on rising in successive elections. In the Mawkhar constituency the APHLC secured 1,474 votes in 1972 which went up to 1,772 votes in 1983. Similarly, in Jaiaw 2,489 votes of 1972 went upto 3,020 votes in 1978 and finally to 4,102 votes in 1983. In the elections held so far, three different APHLC candidates contested from Mawkhar constituency but in Jaiaw the same candidate is enjoying the confidence of the voters.

In the Mawlai constituency also, the voters are clear in choosing their representative. In 1972, S.D; Khongwir of the unrecognised HSPDP party contested as independent and was elected securing 2,830 votes. In the second and third election, he contested on party ticket and polled 4,756 votes and 4,274 votes respectively. Here the APHLC is only second in preference to the HSPDP. In 1972 the APHLC polled 2,215 votes which went down to 1,875 votes in 1978 and then rose upto 3,609 votes in 1983. In all these elections, three different candidates were sponsored by the APHLC - E. Bremly Lyngdoh, Stoshon Roy Nongrum and Anthony Jala. The Congress is nowhere in position in this constituency.

On the whole, it can be analysed in the Greater Shillong Areas that the APHLC, HSPDP and INC are dominating the scene in their own strongholds. In 1972 the INC got 3 seats, APHLC - 4 seats and Independents including the HSPDP - 2 seats. In 1978, the INC - 5, HSPDP - 2 and APHLC - 2. But in 1983, the INC again lost the two seats and the HSPDP one seat that they had secured. The position today stands as: INC - 3, APHLC - 5 and HSPDP - 1. In 1983, leaving the Malki-Nongthymmai constituency the voters seem to have come back to their ten year old that is, 1972 voting decision in these areas.

In Meghalaya, the third Assembly Elections was held on 17th February 1983. In this election the INC(I) secured 25 seats, the APHLC obtained 14 seats, the HSPDP - 15 seats, PDIC - 2 seats and the Independents - 3 seats. The Regional Political Parties (APHLC, HSPDP and PDIC including Independents) formed the Meghalaya United Parliamentary Party (MUPP). Under this agreement, it was decided that B.B. Lyngdoh would be the Chief Minister for the first two years and Hopingstone Lyngdoh for the remaining term. The Ministry was sworn in on 2nd March 1983. However, the MUPP Government faced a no-confidence motion on 31st March 1983. Thus the 29-day old Ministry was defeated by 31 votes to 27 votes (leaving the Speaker one member did not vote). Capt. W.A. Sangma, the leader of the Congress (I) was called upon to form the Government on 2nd April 1983. His Ministry was a coalition one and was termed 'Meghalaya Democratic Front'.

CHAPTER - VI

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ELECTIONS

The smooth functioning of a democratic form of government largely depends on the active involvement of its entire population - both males and females. This is particularly applicable in the case of India which has pronounced the lofty ideals of liberty, equality and secularism. The Constitution of India has guaranteed equal rights to all citizens. No discrimination is made on the basis of religion, race, caste or sex. But the political consciousness among the women-folk of the country in general and in Greater Shillong Areas in particular is far from what it should have been, even after thirty-nine years of Independence. The present chapter is an attempt to study the role and the degree of political consciousness among the females during the 1983 Assembly Elections in Greater Shillong Areas.

In the 1983 Assembly Elections three female candidates filed their nominations in three constituencies in Greater Shillong Areas. Maya R. Kyndiah and Tiplut Nongbri were sponsored by the INC(I) for the Jaiaw and Laitumkhrach constituencies respectively. Evandalyne Massar contested the elections as an independent candidate from the Pynthor-umkhrach constituency.

In the Jaiaw constituency, the APHLC has a stronghold. Its elected member Shri P.R. Kyndiah has been active in politics for over a decade. The Jaiaw constituency is a cosmopolitan area having a tribal majority. These tribal electorates are attached to the idea that the APHLC fought for their Statehood. So, in spite of other aspiring candidates, their loyalty would return back to the APHLC on the polling day.

In the Laitumkhrah constituency, for the first time in 1978, the INC(R) sponsored Shri P.G. Marbaniang. He was the sitting APHLC candidate who had defected to the INC. The INC(R)¹ won the elections in 1978. But by 1983, P. G. Marbaniang had again crossed floor and joined the HSPDP. So in 1983 the INC(I) thought, Tiplut Nongbri, then as now in Delhi University to be the most appropriate candidate to contest the elections. But the electorates though favouring the Congress (I) were doubtful to their candidate because she was neither popular with the voters nor in the socio-cultural activities of the constituency.² Moreover, she is married outside her community which made most of the constituents electorates have a lukeworm attitude towards her.³

1. For details regarding INC, INC(R) and INC(I) see Chapter II above.

2. Answers available from the Questionnaires given to the electorates of Laitumkhrah constituency.

3. Ibid.

Tiplut Nongbri faced a four-cornered contest with Justine Khonglah (APHLC), Peter G. Marbaniang (HSPDP) and Kister Kharkongor (IND). T. Nongbri could poll 1,410 votes out of 6,957 valid votes polled. P.G. Marbaniang polled 2,399 votes and J. Khonglah who was elected polled 2,968 votes. Thus T. Nongbri was only third in preference to P.G. Marbaniang and J. Khonglah in the Laitumkhrach constituency. In 1978, the INC(R) candidate polled 3,983 votes whereas in 1983, INC(I) could poll only 1,410 votes. Thus the INC(I) lost 2,573 votes.⁴

In the Pynthorumkhrach constituency the INC(I) and the CPI had their own candidates to sponsor. Since the INC(I) had a stronghold and the sitting candidate was contesting the elections the regional parties thought it was futile to set up a candidate there. In the constituency of nine contestants, E. Massar also filed her nomination to contest the electoral battle. But she lost her security deposit for securing 59 votes only.⁵

In India, women were first given the right to vote and contest elections under the Government of India Act 1935. Under this Act, which remained valid upto the

4. Ramakrishnan, V., Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook: Assembly Elections 1983, Shillong, 1983.

5. Ibid.

independence of India in 1947, two female candidates were elected. These women were Miss Mavis Dunn and Bonniely Khongmen in 1937 and 1946 respectively. But on closer scrutiny, it is found that these two candidates were elected because firstly, the Shillong constituency was reserved for women and secondly, they had to contest against women candidates only. Neither under the composite State of Assam (1947-71) nor under the present State of Meghalaya (1972-83), we find any women candidate elected from Greater Shillong Areas. In comparison with the patrilineal society of India, the women-folk out here are economically in a strong position and to a certain extent independent. On observations during elections, it was seen that females took a more active part in the whole election process.⁶ Right from the preparing of tea and eatables, making of banners, campaigning either on foot or in vehicles which usually started at night-fall, attending meetings, casting of votes, waiting for the election results; women outnumbered men. So a curiosity naturally arises among scholars that in spite of being so enthusiastic citizens why they do not elect a female to political office. To probe into this, a sample of two hundred respondents were taken on the

6. The observation report available from the present writer's involvement in the 1983 Assembly elections as a voter.

simple random basis. These respondents were classified into the age groups of below 30 years, between 30 to 50 years and above 50 years. They were further categorised into urban/rural and the literates/illiterates.

In the constituencies of Greater Shillong Areas the electorates ranged from 8,629 to 13,390. The sample voters were selected in such a way that at least 21 to 23 voters were taken from each constituencies of Greater Shillong Areas and about 11 sample voters from those areas of the Myllem constituency which form the part of the Greater Shillong Areas. Out of the 200 sample constituents contacted only 186 responded. Fourteen voters flatly refused to give any answer even though interviewed. When a voter was contacted and he/she was not available or had left the place for one reason or the other, another voter next to him in the Electoral Roll was interviewed.

Among the females who were below 30 years of age about 6% were rather vague in answering why women had not come up in equality with men in the society. According to them, "a man knows better about the affairs of the society". To quote one, "Even in household matters though we make a decision we still take the final word from our brothers and uncles." Some others (9%) described their position as,

"Already we are over-burdened with the earning, rearing and household work. Where do we get time to devote for the affairs of the society". On the other hand, there were some radicals in the group (2%) who justified their stand by saying,

Even though I know better about the problems of my locality or my constituency and the immediate demands of the people, but when the male members sit and discuss these aspects among themselves, somehow, I cannot interrupt them and express my views. But next time I will make it a point to be active in politics.

Some females expressed that they did vote for a woman candidate but unfortunately they could not poll enough votes to win the elections.

The men-folk on the other hand gave conflicting replies. Nine percent of the sample electorates kept on stressing their age-old traditions where men were busy fighting wars and managing the affairs of the society, they would delegate the custody of their property and valuables and children in the hands of the females. Till today, a female is only a custodian of their property and not the owner. To them the society is functioning smoothly. One of the voters said: "If there is any lacuna in it, naturally, the females or in that case anyone else would have come forward to fill in the gaps." Some others express their

parochial view, "If women manage the affairs of the society, how can you imagine them facing a battle against opponents (men)? What will be the consequences?"

Others (6%) who were aware of the present system of government wanted the women-folk to articulate themselves equally in society. According to one respondent, "I do not know what is wrong with our ladies. We advise them to come to the forefront of socio-economic, cultural and political activities of the society. But they do not, though verbally they accept the concept of equality". Another respondent expressed, "Leadership training is the innate capabilities of an individual. Either a female do not possess it or does not exert themselves freely with it."

Among the females belonging to the age group of 30 to 50 years ten percent favoured the age-old convention to carry on. That is, "a woman's place is in the house and the man's in the Durbar (Assembly/Council). It is only a matter of interest that makes a woman more active during elections." Highly educated and politically conscious females who constitute only a fraction ($1\frac{1}{2}\%$) of the respondents felt the need of educating the weaker sections of the society. They rationalised their stand as, "We are more free and independent than most of our sisters in India. Surprisingly,

females from the patrilineal societies have successfully raised their voice. Even Muslim ladies belonging to the purdah system have demanded their rights. So why not we?"

Another respondent expressed;

Both in(sic) urban and rural areas and practically every locality in Greater Shillong Areas have women associations. These organizations are involved in charitable works and social services which, in turn, can lead to campaigns for social reforms. But ladies when compared to men tend to lag behind political aspirations and attainments. Voluntary organizations where women dominate are concerned more with social work rather than political enlightenment. Women devote more time towards destitutes, orphans, helpless and drunkenness than towards alarming price-rise.

According to one respondent, it is her contention that their main drawback is, women-folk do not unite themselves. To quote her, "In elections, women outnumber men (in some areas) in exercising their franchise. If these ladies unite themselves we can easily raise our voice in society."

The ladies with liberal stand ($3\frac{1}{2}\%$) balanced their view by expressing, "We do have a division of labour in society and we should stick to our own work. Though I have interest and know fairly better about political aspects, I will never offer myself for any elections. But, if the male members and, the society as a whole so will it, I may contest the elections."

The menfolk belonging to the 30 to 50 years category (10%) also harped round the traditional convention which has evolved the present structure. According to them, "Our society is matrilineal in system but patrilineal in practice." This concept was further expressed as, "Women manages the house and we the Durbars. Women were not allowed to attend the Durbars in the past. This convention is carried on even today. But if they do then we have nothing left. We will become a non-entity in the society". While another replied, "If a woman leaves her duties and devotes her time in politics then who will look after her work? Even if she contests the elections, I will not exercise my franchise in favour of her."

Three percent were rather vague in answering about what should be the role of women in today's electoral politics. One percent, who belong to the affluent group in society expressed, "We need to educate our men so that, in today's world women should have equal share and responsibilities in society. Unless men are mentally prepared to accept this, women cannot achieve a fair deal". A candidate respondent on the other hand gave his pathetic view, "we tell them (sisters, cousins etc.) to canvass for us by addressing gatherings. They perform it once or twice and then go back to their inarticulate self and do the other auxiliary works of the elections".

The sample constituents (30%) who are 50 years and above however, upheld their conservative view. They wanted their age-old tradition to carry on. According to them, "when men have managed the affairs of the society effectively for so long, they can still look after it today." Same views were expressed by the illiterates and the unemployed.

To the rural and the illiterates, politics is a subject beyond their conception. Most of the unemployed also gave a very passive response. Among the urban and the literates especially ladies who are employed expressed their consciousness of equality in a democratic set up. Educated females clarified, that their status ought to be one where they desire to expand their mind, nurture their individuality and master the art of reason. All that is demanded of the society and its male oriented institutions is that they should stop regarding us as inferior beings and treat us as equal. The greater understanding should be generated amongst people with regard to women's importance in the community for the social, psychological and economic life of the nation. People should be made aware of a still greater contribution that women should make towards national, social and cultural development if they are given equal opportunity and equality of treatment as wives, mothers and social

workers. This should be done simultaneously and effectively without sacrificing or making one social role suffer for the cause of other. No society can progress if half of its population (women) is submerged in the morass of obscurity and subjugations.

Men, especially the rural and the illiterate went to the extent of saying, Ka Sylar kynthei kam ju kynih. Lada ka sdang ban kynih baroh kiei kiei kin kylla khongpong. (A hen never crows. If she starts crowing, everything will go topsy-turvy). Educated men who have seen other societies functioning effectively ratified their stand by expressing that females of their society ought to be politically liberated from this standpoint. Some steps are being taken for a change in this direction. For example, recently (1986) in Nongthymmai the women-folk with the help and consent of the men-folks have filed a case in the Subordinate District Council Court, that in the democratic set up, a woman should be allowed to be lected to the post of a Rangbah Shnong* (local headman). This case is yet to be decided.

There were other males who frankly said that they did vote for a female candidate. But the majority of the citizens are doubtful of their performances. Even ladies do not have confidence in women candidates. This idea ought

*T.S. 3 of 1986. Elizabeth Laitphlang and others versus Syiem of Myllem pending for disposal in the court of Shri J. Reendohn, Presiding Officer, Subordinate District Council Court, Khasi Hills, Shillong.

to be changed if they want to reach this goal, while another replied, "Yes, women do contest elections. But candidates are scrutinised not only during elections. Their performances are judged during those times when the campaigning fever is not in the air. Now, when we look at that period we find no woman who could be worth being elected."

One expressed his sentimental view that, "A mother knows the problems and needs of a child in the house. If she governs the society as a whole, most of our human problems would be solved. I have always voted for a female candidate."

In the traditional Khasi society, the men-folks managed the affairs of the society and attended the Durbars (Councils). Women at large did not participate in the political affairs of the society. Only a selected number of females like the Ka Syiem Sad (Queen) of Khyrim and the Syiem's (King's) mother in other States had access to political power. The rest were conventionally left to manage the affairs of the home and hearth. Only under certain circumstances, women were given the post of chieftainship. Under similar circumstances, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a female Syiem ruled over the Nobosohphoh State.⁷

7. See also Bareh, H. Khasi Democracy, (Ri Khasi Press: Shillong), 1964, p. 56.

Though, females were usually excluded from the sessions of the Durbars, at times; they were allowed to listen to the debates as observers. So, the traditional society was governed only by the menfolks.

But the traditional Khasi society was not a male-dominated society. They followed a matrilineal structure where the right of residence, descent and inheritance follows from the female line. It was only with the advent of the British and the hegemony of their patrilineal ideas, that their values and norms crept into the life of the Khasis. But the western education and the idea of liberalism evolved the feeling of brotherhood and equality among the people. This gave the Shillong females a better deal.

Prior to 1919, women had no right to vote. Only British male subjects above twenty-one years of age were given the right to vote. However, under the Act of 1935 women were given the right to vote and to contest elections. But the right to vote was a restricted one. Females, who were literates, wives of persons who were assessed to municipal, cantonment or small town taxes of land owners who were assessed to land revenue and income tax were given the right to vote. If a voter had more than one wife, the senior wife was given the right to franchise. A woman who had been registered as a voter by virtue of her husband's property

qualification, continued to have the right even after the death of her husband till the end of her life or remarriage. In the event of her husband ceasing to possess property qualification before his death she ceased to be a voter. Again, wives of retired, pensioned or discharged officers, non-commissioned officers or soldiers of His Majesty's Regular Forces or of Assam Rifles or pensioned widows or mothers were given the right to vote. Thus under the Act of 1935 women exercised a limited right to vote.

The Government of India Act, 1935, moreover, provided for the representation of women by the reservation of the Shillong seat in the Assam Legislative Assembly, since the female voters' number was greater in that constituency than in any other. The Act also permitted women to contest election for the reserved and general seats. In 1937, two tribal women contested the reserved seat as independents - Miss Mavis Dunn and Berlina Diengdoh. There were 2199 women voters in the Shillong constituency. Of them, 1228 or 55.84 percent of the voters exercised their franchise. Miss Mavis Dunn polled 938 votes and was selected. Thus for the first time in the political history of Assam, a tribal woman became a member of the Legislative Assembly.

In 1946, the number of women that contested the general elections particularly from the Shillong women reserved

seat was three. They were Bonniely Khongmen, Mavis Dunn and Berlina Diengdoh. Bonniely Khongmen was nominated by the Congress and the rest were independents. The total number of votes polled was 2878 out of which Bonniely Khongmen polled 1454 votes thus being elected by an absolute majority.⁸

However, the act of 1935 was revoked with the achievement of Independence in 1947. This resulted to females losing their reserved constituency. The Constitution of free India envisaged the Universal Adult Franchise as one of the principle features. This means all adult citizens above twenty-one years of age will have the right to vote irrespective of religion, race, caste or sex. Here, women at large were given a fairer deal. In the post independence era, and in the 1952 Assam Legislative Assembly elections, two female candidate filed their nominations for the Shillong seat. They were Mavis Dunn and Monorama Mehta. But both of them were defeated by their male rival J.J. Nichols Roy. Monorama Mehta lost her deposit and Mavis Dunn polled 1622 votes out of 14188 valid votes polled.⁹

8. Rao, V.V., & Hazarika, N., A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Vol. I (Assam) 1874-1980, S.Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1983, p. 172.

9. Ibid.

In 1957, Bonniely Khongmen was sponsored for the Shillong seat by the Congress. But she was defeated by Braj Mohan Roy of the E.I.T.U. Khongmen polled 6063 votes only out of 18,578 votes polled. The main cause for her defeat was that the E.I.T.U. was spearheading the movement for the separation of the Hill Districts from Assam and form a separate Hill State. Elections were also held in 1962 and 1967 but no female candidate contested it from the Shillong constituency.

Meghalaya attained Statehood on 21st January 1972. Election to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly was held on 9th March 1972. In Greater Shillong Areas the number of aspiring women candidates to be chosen as popular representatives were as follows.

TABLE - I ¹⁰

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1972						
Sl. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of Candidate	Party affiliation	Total votes polled	Votes polled by the candidate	
8.	MAWKHAR	SMT. SILVERINE SWER	IND	4,452	197	G.D.F.
12.	LABAN	SMT. M.S. DUNN	IND	4,127	1,183	
15.	NONGTHYM-MAI (ST)	SMT PLISSIBON MARBANIANG	IND	4,090	514	S.D.F.
10.	Ramkrishnan, V., Chief Electoral Officer, <u>Election Handbook, 1972 Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Elections, 1972, Shillong.</u>					

TABLE - II¹¹

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1978						
Sl. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of the Candidate	Party affiliation	Total votes polled	Votes polled by Each Candidate	
16.	MALKI - NONGTHYMMAI	SMT. DROSILY MUKHIM	IND	6,976	589	S.D.F.
17.	LAITUMKHRAH	SMT. USHA BHATTACHARJEE	INC(I)	6,190	123	S.D.F.
22.	LABAN	SMT. NEENA RYNJAH	INC(I)	4,557	238	S.D.F.

TABLE - III

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1983						
Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Name of the Candidate	Party affiliation	Total votes polled	Votes polled by each candidate	
17.	LAITUMKHRAH	TIPLUT NONGBRI	INC	7,150	1,410	
18.	PYNTHORUM-KHRAH	EVANDALYNE MASSAR	IND	8,519	59	S.D.F.
19.	JALAW	MAYA R. KYNDIAH	INC	9,507	1,892	

The above tables show that females did contest in the elections but they were repeatedly defeated. In 1972,

11. Source: Ramakrishnan V., Chief Electoral Officer, Election Handbook, 1983, Shillong, 1983.

two of them lost their security deposits. In 1978, the votes polled by women candidates went down and all of them had to forfeit their security deposits also. However, their position was greatly improved in the 1983 Assembly Elections. Out of the three female candidates only one candidate lost her security deposit.

In 1972, the total votes polled in the constituencies where women contested was 12,669 and the female candidates together polled 1,894 which is 14.72 percent of the total votes polled. In 1978, the total votes polled increased to 17,723 but only 950 votes or 5.3 percent were polled by the women candidates. In 1983, out of 25, 176 total votes polled, the female candidates together could poll 3,361 votes or 13.3 percent.

On achieving a separate State of Meghalaya in 1972, the female candidates enthusiastically contested the elections. But the electoral battle sobered their yearnings to participate in practical politics. The politics of Meghalaya is to a certain extent influenced by the National Politics. In 1972, no political party sponsored a female candidate. In the case of the Congress they had an electoral understanding with the APHLC in the Garo Hills. In 1977, the Congress Party was defeated in the Lok Sabha elections.

Moreover, in January 1978, the Indian National Congress was split into INC(R) and INC(I). The INC(R) was led by Brahmananda Reddy and the INC(I) by Indira Gandhi herself. On 17th February 1978, the Second Assembly Elections was to be held in Meghalaya. So Indira Gandhi with very little time left, formed a branch of her party in Meghalaya in January 1978. She sponsored two women candidates in Greater Shillong Areas for the 17th February Assembly Elections. But the candidates polled the lowest percentage of votes. By 1980, however the INC(I) once again came back to power in the mid-term Lok Sabha elections. In course of time the INC(R) merged themselves into the INC(I). So for the 1983 Meghalaya Legislative Assembly election they had enough time to scrutinize and sponsor women candidates from Jaiaw and Laitumkhrah constituencies respectively. The candidates fared much better in these elections. One fact observed in Greater Shillong Areas is that though there is a constant rise in the number of votes polled from 12,669 in 1972 to 25,176 in 1983 in constituencies where female candidates contested yet, the number of women candidates in each election remained the same. Moreover, in all the three Assembly elections different female candidates contested the elections.

If we take the constituency-wise break up of the female candidates we find that in Mawkhar constituency a female candidate contested but only once in 1972 and polled 197 votes forfeiting her security deposit. In Laban constituency Mrs. M. Selma Dunn polled 1,183 votes in 1972 which went down to 238 in 1978 in favour of Miss Neena Rynjah. This was because of the political change and unpopularity of the latter. Similarly, in Nongthymmai 514 votes of Mrs. Plissibon Marbaniang was further increased by 75 votes of Mrs. Drosily Mukhim in 1978 who polled 589 votes.

On comparing 1978 and 1983 Assembly Elections, it is seen that in 1978 the female candidates in Laitumkhrah (Miss Usha Bhattacharjee) could poll 123 votes forfeiting her security deposit but in 1983 the votes rose upto 1,410 votes. In Pynthorumkhrah and Jaiaw constituencies women for the first time entered the electoral battle. In Jaiaw, Mrs. Maya R. Kyndiah could secure 1,892 voters whereas in Pynthorumkhrah, Mrs. E. Massar could sway the minds of only 59 voters.

In the Patrilineal society of Uttar Pradesh the ninety-two women candidates in 1974 rose up to one hundred sixty-two but in Greater Shillong Areas the contestants remained three from 1972 to 1983. Moreover, from 21

successful (women) in 1974 in Uttar Pradesh the number rose to 31 in 1985¹² but in Shillong areas following the matrilineal structure, no female candidate won the elections.

At the decision-making level, political parties (whether National or Regional are mainly represented by the men-folks of the society. Moreover, Table II shows that leaving the Congress (I) no other political parties sponsored any women candidates in Greater Shillong Areas. In an interview with the presidents and party members of the APHLC, HSPDP, PDIC and CPI, questions were asked that though a majority of females were active in the whole election process at the mobilisation level why were they not sponsored for the Assembly Elections? According to Dr. M. Sangma President of the APHLC¹³ to quote one,

In a meeting hardly three to four female members would attend the meeting. They would remain silent observers in such sittings. When asked if they have any suggestions to contribute, they would reply that 'what the other members decided is the best'.

He further clarified that, "we do not discriminate women participants but they should come forward and involve themselves actively. Then only we can sponsor them for any election."

12. Jha, J.L. "Women participation in Electoral Politics in U.P." in Teaching Politics Vol. X, No. 1, 1985, Delhi University, 1985, p. 103.

13. Dr. M. Sangma, President of the APHLC was interviewed on 20th September, 1986.

In other fields of the society women are also outnumbered by men. For example, if we look at the Statistical Handbook of Meghalaya 1978, we find that out of 18,973 employees on 31st March 1977, the female employed numbered 2,569 and males 16,404 constituting 13.54% and 86.46% respectively. Among these employees again, 938 males are gazetted whereas only 107 females are gazetted. In the non-gazetted category, there are 1,063 males and 2,144 females. But in the Grade IV category we find 835 males and only 318 females. This statistics shows that women lag far behind than men in the administrative field.

CHAPTER - VII

CONCLUSION

On the eve of its inauguration as a State on 21st January 1972, Meghalaya was divided into sixty single member constituencies. The constituencies: Myllem, Malki-Nongthymmai, Laitumkhrach, Pynthorumkhrach, Jaiaw, Mawkhar, Mawprem, Laban and Mawlai falls in the Greater Shillong Areas. The first general election to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly was held on 9th March 1972. In this election the APHLC was voted to power (APHLC secured 32 seats, the INC - 17 and Independents 11). But the elected members hoodwinked the masses by deciding in the Mendipathar Conference on 16th November 1976 to merge with the Congress. They were formally inducted into the Congress on 19th November 1976 at the Jawahar Nagar Session of the AICC. In the Second General Election held on 25th February 1978 no party secured an absolute majority. Therefore political instability emerged resulting in the formation of coalition governments. There were also defections.

The third Assembly election was held on 17th February 1983. In this election, the electorates in the Greater Shillong constituencies varied from 8,629 in Mawkhar to 13,390 in Jaiaw constituency. In most of the constituencies we find that the females especially the tribal women took an active part in the election. Moreover,

the voters between 30-50 age-group took the election more seriously than the other age groups. If we take the community and religious-wise break-up of the voters we find that only the Khasis, Jaintias, Bengalees and Nepalis are represented. These elected representatives belonged to Christianity, Hinduism and the Indigenous Khasi religion. Voters belonging to other communities or religion were not represented at all in the elections. Excepting one Marwari candidate who did not enjoy the confidence of the voters no candidates from other groups had ever contested. Non-representation of community and religion did not however, daunt the voters' spirit. They participated in the election equally and sportingly.

Coming now to the sample electorate a question was asked: When was the last General (Assembly) elections held? Here most of the voters were confused of the actual date because two other elections were held after it, District Council and Lok Sabha. Moreover, candidates repeatedly elected in constituencies were spontaneously identified than fresh winners. Regarding the sitting M.P. only a small section of the sample voters knew that the Lok Sabha election for Shillong Parliamentary Constituency in 1980 was boycotted on the issue of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh to North-Eastern Region. Again, the sample constituents

were at a loss in identifying the election symbols. Though they knew that 'Flower' and 'Lion' belong to the APJLO and HSPDP respectively they were confused with the INC's symbols - 'hand' and 'cow and a calf'. Only a fraction of the constituents knew that 'spade' is the symbol of the PDIC. In the media of communication we find more males came in contact with the mass media and printed materials. The females were influenced by inter-personal media. They also said that only when they could find time and in a relaxed atmosphere they would read newspapers and other handbills.

Questions were asked from the sample electorate regarding the local and the national problems facing the society. It is observed that educated voters assigned higher priorities to law and order, security within the country, defence, corruption, bribing, problems in Punjab and Assam etc. The female voters laid stress on high price-rise, unemployment, housing facilities, drinking water supply, breakdown of law and order system in the country, inadequate food stuffs in fair-price shops and co-operative; sanitary conditions of roads and lanes, fall of public morality and the like.

Regarding the preference of the candidate some voters emphasized the personality of the candidate while

others looked at the party of the contestants. Moreover, the candidates who actually won the elections were themselves highly educated. Two of them are medical practitioners, four post-graduates, two graduates and one matriculate. In addition to this, some of them also hold LL.B. and B.T. degrees. Besides being representatives of the people, social workers and political activists, they also earn their livelihood as Medical practitioners, Advocates, Lecturers and Journalists. These representatives who belong to fifty years and above (leaving Oris Lyngdoh of Myllem constituency and B.K. Roy of Pynthorumkhras constituency) have been elected as MLAs ever since Meghalaya was inaugurated. The MLAs belonging to the other age group have been active members or supporters of their respective parties. Ethnically, five MLAs belong to Christianity, three to Hinduism and one to the Indigenous Khasi Religion. Being seasoned politicians, three of them were elected for three terms, while two of them were elected for a two term and the remaining four for a single term.

The political parties that contested the 1983 elections in Meghalaya are the J.N.P.; C.P.I.; I.N.C.(I); A.P. H. L.C.; H.S.P.D.P.; and the P.D.I.C. At the national level, the Janata party won the majority of seats in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections. The main programme of the party

was to end Emergency and restore people's fundamental rights, to uphold the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press, repeal the Maintenance of the Internal Security Act (MISA) and the Forty-Second Amendment of the Constitution, to delete the right to property from the list of fundamental rights, This party also pledged to end unemployment, give higher priority to rural development, eradicate illiteracy, provide drinking water for all etc. But the party being a heterogeneous group of non-communist opposition parties disintegrated within two years. So most of the policies and programmes which were promised to the people could not be implemented. In Meghalaya, though the JNP has no base yet Rabindra Das Choudhury was sponsored from the Laban constituency in the 1983 Assembly elections. But he had to forfeit his security deposit.

The next political party to be assessed is the C.P.I. Since 1943, a provincial committee of the CPI was set up in Assam. In 1972, a separate unit of the C.P.I. was also created in Meghalaya. The CPI is time and again driving home to the people of the present disparities in society. They try to explain to the people that in today's world there should be no inequality among human beings. All people are born equal. But the masses according to the active member of the CPI have not yet understood this message of the CPI. The other programmes which the party highlighted

are: immediate implementation of land reform measures; nationalisation of big industries, banks and insurance companies; minimum wages for all; fixed working hours; free the tribals especially of Meghalaya from the economic, cultural and political oppression. In spite of the eye-catching programmes and policies of the CPI for the general improvement of the oppressed lot yet, the ethnic group of Meghalaya have not so far reconciled to the CPI's ideas. Even after eleven years of functioning the CPI has yet to gain a seat in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly.

We now come to the performance of the INC. With the passage of time the Indian National Congress (INC) which fought for the independence of India evolved into the INC(I) (Indira). In Meghalaya, a regional party secured majority of seats in 1972. But the INC with its politics of manoeuvring was able to install its own government by 1976. In the 1978 and 1983 elections though no party secured an absolute majority to govern the State. Yet, the INC(I) formed a coalition government with the split group of the regional parties like the APHLC, HSPDP, and PDIC to run the affairs of the State.

The INC is the oldest organisation in the country. From its very inception it has committed itself to end

poverty and improve the economic standard of the people. The main aim and objectives of the party is to establish socialist society in which both the public and the private sectors will be allowed to work together for economic development, where agriculture will be given maximum attention and small and large scale industries enough encouragement. The party also stands for non-alignment, non-violence, twenty-point economic programme and five-point programme of Sanjay Gandhi. In addition to these, in Meghalaya the party has promised to protect and preserve the distinct identity of the tribal people, their customs, languages, culture and traditions. Reservation of seats in the services for the scheduled tribes has been further extended for ten years till 1990.

Coming to the regional political parties, the APHLC and the HSPDP are the two important organisations. The main reason for the APHLC and the HSPDP to form themselves into a political party was to demand a separate State of Meghalaya at par with other States of India. Once this objective was achieved, the parties harped round the emotional slogans. "Protection and Preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people, their customs, traditions, language and culture." The APHLC claimed to be a regional party having a national outlook. The main programmes of the APHLC and the

HSPDP was to move towards self-sufficiency in agriculture, exploit the mineral and natural resources, to irradiate illiteracy and unemployment, to adopt border area rehabilitation programme, border road schemes, regrouping of villages in the border areas of Garo Hills and the like. The HSPDP went a step forward and resolved to get more authority from the government in the administration of the North Eastern Hill University so that it could render more help to the University's tribal students.

Another regional political party is the PDIC. The PDIC on the other hand, wanted to voice for the agricultural labourers and farmers. It pledged to fight for their legitimate rights. The farmers do not get remunerative prices for their crops. These perishable goods like potatoes are bought by the middle man at a very low price, which at times do not suffice even the cost price. So the party wants to remove the present exploitation of farmers and provide them a fair deal in the society. The party also pledges to settle the boundary dispute between Meghalaya and Assam, to restore back the lands which are either in Bangladesh and Assam, to erect a supply gate at Byrnihat, to restore the Tataw hills which has been taken over by the ICAR and the like.

So far as the manifestoes of the different political parties in Meghalaya are concerned, they have something in common, for example, the regional or State political parties resolved to detect and deport all foreign nationals who have entered into the State. At the same time, the manifestoes of the political parties in Meghalaya highlighted international, national and local problems of the society. In 1983, the main problem agitating the minds of the citizens was the foreign national issue. The immigrants had infiltrated into the North-Eastern Region from the erst-while East Pakistan and Bangladesh. The other eye-catching slogan which swayed the mind of the constituents was the protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people. Other problems like inadequate education, inter-state boundary dispute, uplifting the farmers and using modern techniques of cultivation, exploiting the natural resources for the betterment of the State, providing opportunities for the youth to utilise their talents in the proper channel, restoration of the reserved seats, unemployment, land reforms and economic development. The parties also pledged for remedial measures like - health and sanitation, drinking water supply, electrification, sports, financial assistance, clean administration, resident accommodation with reasonable rents, roads and communications and the all round development of the State,

In addition to these certain special emphasis have been laid by different political parties. The Congress party highlighted their achievements in the socio-economic field and emphasized that it alone can bring stability and unity in a State like Meghalaya. The other parties charged the Congress for all the ills confronting the society. The Congress party laid stress on the 20-point economic programme and the central leadership of (late) Indira Gandhi. The regional parties on the other hand, stressed that Meghalaya is a land of the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos and so, they alone should be the best judge in the governance of their State.

On the eve of the election the political parties, candidates and their supporters carried on door to door campaign, organised street-corner meetings, processions, shouting of slogans round the constituencies, distributing pamphlets, leaflets and manifestoes, sticking posters and appeals at vantage points of the constituencies to attract as many voters as possible. The contesting candidates also organised feast to win the goodwill of the voters. Some of the parties invited all India leaders like Mrs. Gandhi, P.A. Sangma, Mrs. M. Kidwai etc. to campaign for them. Newspapers, especially the local, openly advertised in favour of a particular party or candidate. Some parties also gave television sets to create a favourable image for themselves.

But unlike the rest of India no unruly scenes were reported from any part of Greater Shillong Areas. Everyone accepted the electoral battle sportingly and fairly.

In Jaiaw, Mawprem and Laban constituencies it was observed that wall writings like 'Vote for D.N. Joshi. Stamp your vote on the hand' was mutilated into an independent candidate Narayan Joshi's name. Miscreants made the symbol 'sun' on the alphabet 'D', the symbol 'hand' was changed into the symbol 'sun'. Similar writings were seen in the Jaiaw constituency where P.R. Kyndiah's name was changed into Maya Kyndiah and vice versa. This created confusion in the minds of the public regarding the candidates' party identification. In Laban constituency Bhaskar Choudhury's name (INC(I)) was changed into Manas Choudhury's name (IND).

Each recognised political party was allotted two broadcasts over the All India Radio. Radio reaches the electorates largely missed by newspapers. Majority of the housewives listen to radio during their daily chores. Some of the local newspapers openly advertised for a particular candidate or party. The candidates selected vantage points like main roads, bus stops, tea shops, cinema houses and walls of schools and colleges to advertise their election campaign.

The Congress (I) campaign was displayed so lavishly that it would make everyone salivate but they consoled themselves by saying "after all they get a lot of money from the Centre". Some of the candidates even calculated how many votes he is likely to poll. A candidate in an interview said that if all his loyal voters would have cast their vote, he could have easily won.

In the analysis of the election results we find, that in Greater Shillong Areas the total electorates ranged in between 8,629 in Mawkhar to 13,390 in Jaiaw. Among these the highest number of males and females were found in Jaiaw, 6,699 males and 6,691 females. The lowest ratio of males 4,259 being in Mawkhar and of females 4,186 in Mawprem. The total votes polled was the highest in Myllem 8,991 votes and the lowest in Malki-Nongthymmai 7,423 votes which is 78.93 percent and 66.19 percent respectively of the electorate. The total valid votes polled in comparison with the electorates of Greater Shillong Areas was the highest in Myllem (8,712 votes) and the lowest in Mawkhar (5,460 votes) that is, the total valid votes polled in these areas was between 63.27 percent (Mawkhar's) and 76.48 percent (Myllem's). The highest number of rejected votes were found in the Pynthorumkhras constituency (454 votes) and the lowest in Laitumkhras constituency (193 votes). This constituted 5.32 percent and 2.69 percent respectively in

comparison with the total votes polled in these constituencies. Out of the sixty-two contestants in Greater Shillong Areas we find that thirty-four of them had to forfeit their security deposits.

In the 1983 Assembly Elections there were two-triangular contest in Jaiaw and Mawlai, four-cornered contests in Laitumkhrah and Mawprem. Two constituencies — Myllem and Malki-Nongthymmai had seven-cornered contests and there were eight-cornered, nine-cornered and ten-cornered contests in Mawkhar, Pynthorumkhrah and Laban constituencies respectively. On scrutiny, all except one (Bina Acharya's) nomination were accepted.

S.D. Khongwir of the Mawlai constituency polled (4,274) the largest number of votes but the greatest marginal difference was between B.K. Roy's 2,993 votes and Surjit Kumar Dhar's 9 votes in the Pynthorumkhrah constituency. The smallest marginal difference 276 votes was found in Mawkhar constituency between Korbar Singh (1772 votes) and W.H.D. Syngkon (1,496 votes).

In Greater Shillong Areas we find that the uncertain constituencies were Malki-Nongthymmai, Myllem and Laitumkhrah. In Malki-Nongthymmai constituency there was a stiff contest between Upstar Kharbuli and Bindo M. Lanong, in

Laitumkhrach between P.G. Marbaniang and Dr. J. Khonglah and in Myllem between Oris Lyngdoh and Dentis Mohan Roy Kharkongor. In other constituencies though we find that the APHLC has a stronghold in Jaiaw and Mawkhar, the HSPDP in Mawlai and the INC(I) in Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorumkhrach constituencies. Yet, there was a key contest between Korbar Singh and W.H.D. Syngkon in Mawkhar constituency and between P. Ripple Kyndiah and S.M. Jyrwa in Jaiaw constituency.

(On observation in the Greater Shillong Areas it was seen that the women-folk took a more active part in the whole election process.) Right from the preparing of refreshments, banners, campaigning and waiting for the election results women outnumbered the menfolk. But in spite of being enthusiastic participants, no women was elected from Greater Shillong Areas either under the post-independent composite State of Assam or in the present State of Meghalaya. While probing this issue the respondents clarified that "women manage the house and men the affairs of the society. It is only a matter of interest that makes a woman more active in politics". The ladies on the other hand, stressed that they would like to contest the election but they must be supported by the men-folk and the society as a whole. But it is heartening to hear that in the Nongthymmai area

the ladies with the help of the gentlemen have filed a case in the Subordinate District Council Court for the post of (a local headman) Rangbah Shnong in a democratic set up. This case is yet to be decided which means women may be emancipated from this angle.

Communal riots as found in the rest of the country was not observed in the Greater Shillong Areas during election time. The electorates of these Areas that is, the tribal people, the Scheduled Castes and others (non-tribal and other minority groups) reacted differently to the Assembly elections. The scheduled castes had no representatives and so they remained indifferent to the whole election process. Among the seats with dominant non-tribal groups namely, in Laban, Mawprem and Pyntherumkhrak tribal people as well as non-tribal groups contested the elections. So majority of the voters were represented. But in Mawkhair constituency we find that the non-tribal groups had but one candidate who does not enjoy the confidence of the voters. So they too, did not ardently participate in the elections. As common in Indian electoral battle we had expected a great tussle of stone-throwing, disrupting election meetings, abusing and threatening the opponents' supporters especially between the Congress and the Regional parties or between the APHLC and the HSPDP but, no such cases were reported from any part of the Greater Shillong Areas. In fact, the same

supporters were found to be canvassing for different candidates on different days. Most of the electorates maintained a neutral attitude towards the candidates.

The tribal-non-tribal issue did not arise because as stated earlier the non-tribal groups had their representatives in Mawprem, Laban and Pynthorumkhrah constituencies. Only in the Mawkhar constituency, a non-tribal contestant had no support from his constituents. A peculiar fact observed in the Mawkhar constituency over the years is that a non-tribal voter would never support a non-tribal candidate. They would rather cast their vote for a tribal candidate and enjoy his confidence than giving it to a non-tribal candidate who would serve his own interest. Taking advantage of this, the tribal candidates and their supporters employed all the election techniques to capture as many non-tribal votes as possible.

Lastly, the dispute between the national and the State party was exploited to the maximum extent in these areas. The Congress (I) stressed that if they want their State to progress and prosper they should vote for Congress (I). This party declared that they alone were capable of bringing stability in the Centre (after the Janata regime 1977-79) and the State of Meghalaya (after the 1978 elections). They accused that the State parties are only engaged

in factional disputes among themselves. Those that brought the Statehood of Meghalaya have themselves joined the Congress for the further development of the State. The Congress (I) wanted the electorates to realise this, shake off their loyalty to the State parties and vote for Congress (I).

The State parties on the other hand, accused the Congress for all the ills and corruptions confronting their society. They spread the notion that the Congress party is a Dkhar (outsiders) party serving their own interest in Meghalaya at the expense of the tribal people. The State parties brought home to the people that they have time and again fought for the protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people. They further spread xenophobia that if they vote for any national (outsiders) party, one day, they will be uprooted from their own State and become an insignificant minority in the hands of the non-Meghalayans.

Some reforms were suggested. For example, the single-member constituency has often failed to reflect the true popular will or exact electoral divisions. The basic contradiction is that parties securing a relatively small proportion of voters are able to bag a majority of seats. For example, in Mawkhar constituency the elected representative enjoys the confidence of 1772 voters out of 8,629 electorates.

Even after several general elections to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of the State, one of the peculiarities in this country is the haphazard growth of political parties regardless of their validity. The multiplicity of parties had been not only creating confusions among the electorates but also administrative problems during the elections whenever the number of contesting candidates is large.

The recent trend of non-serious candidates jumping indiscriminately into the election fray makes the task of the election machinery difficult in making administrative arrangements even such routine matters as printing of ballot papers. It has also the effect of confusing the electorates and upsetting the election campaign of serious candidates. The following preventive measures would help tackle the problem effectively:

- (a) Increasing the security deposit;
- (b) Increasing the minimum number of votes required for the refund of security deposit from one-sixth to one-fourth; and
- (c) Denial of facilities like telephone connection, subsidies, printing papers etc. to independent candidates.

APPENDICES

Some of these suggestions arise from the experience which the country has gained during the last forty years. In short, the immediate reforms should be to:

- a) strengthen the party system;
- b) end the disparity between the popular votes secured and the number of seats obtained under the present single-member constituency system,
- c) curb the money power in election;
- d) stop the misuse of official machinery and other corrupt practices;
- e) establish proper voting rights and election procedures, and
- f) provide speedy disposal of election petitions.

APPENDIX - IQUESTIONNAIRE - IQUESTIONNAIRE TO THE SAMPLE ELECTORATES FOR MEGHALAYALEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (1983)

1. Name :
2. Sex (Male/Female) :
3. Age - Below 30 :
30 - 50 :
50 and above :
4. Literacy: Illiterate :
Below Matric :
Matric and Above :
5. Community: Scheduled Tribe :
Others :
6. Religion: Indigenous Religion: :
(Please specify)
Christians :
Hindus :
Muslims :
Sikhs :
Others :
7. To which community do you belong? :
8. Occupation: Business :
Government :
employee :
Profession :
Labourer :
Non-earner :
9. Income: Below Rs. 500 :
Rs.500 - Rs. 1000 :
Rs. 1000 and above :

10. INTENTION TO VOTE: Intended to vote
 Not intended
 Undecided
 Non-Response/Don't know (NR/DK)
11. KNOWLEDGE OF THE ELECTION DATE:
1. When was the last General Assembly Election held?
 2. When are the next General Assembly Elections going to be held?
12. KNOWLEDGE OF BEING A VOTER:
1. Do you know that you are a voter? Yes/No/D.K./N.R.
13. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTY SYMBOL AND NAME OF CANDIDATE:
1. What are the names of the candidates who contested for the M.L.A. seat?
 2. To which parties did they belong?
 3. What were their election symbols?
14. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SITTING MP'S and MLA'S:
1. Who was the sitting M.L.A. from your constituency?
 2. Did he contest the 1983 Assembly seat of Meghalaya Legislative Assembly?
 3. Who was the sitting M.P. from your constituency?
 4. Did he contest the 1983 M.P. seat from your constituency?
15. POLL VERDICT:
1. Would you tell me who has won the seat for the Assembly from your constituency?
 2. Would you tell me the names of two candidates who were next to the winning candidate for the seat of M.L.A.?
 3. Name the important leaders who were defeated in the Assembly Elections of 1983?
16. PROBLEMS: NATIONAL/LOCAL
1. What are the general problems facing the country?
 2. What are the particular problems facing your constituency?

17. SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT ELECTION:

1. From where do you get information about election?

MASS MEDIA

1. Radio/Films
2. Newspapers
3. Public meetings
4. Printed materials
5. Others

INTER-PERSONAL MEDIA

1. Relation/Friends
2. Neighbours/Villagers
3. Party/Candidate
4. Trade unions
5. Professional Organizations
6. Local formal leaders, and
7. Others

18. NEWSPAPER:

1. Do you read or listen to newspaper?
2. Do you read more than one newspapers? If yes, how many?
3. What newspapers do you read?

19. PLACE OF READING THE NEWSPAPERS:

1. At Home
2. At place of work
3. At public places like shops/restaurants
4. At political party office
5. At public reading room
6. Nowhere in particular

20. RADIO:

1. Do you get news from the radio? Yes/No/D.K./N.R.
2. Did you attend any election meeting? Yes/No/D.K./N.R.
3. Did you see any election poster? Yes/No/D.K./N.R.
4. What purpose did your voting serve?

- i) To elect representative
- ii) To assert one's right to vote
- iii) To strengthen one's party
- iv) To support one's candidate
- v) Voted to serve no purpose
- vi) Other reasons

21. INTER-PERSONAL MEDIA:

1. Do you think most of your friends are from INC(I), APHLC or HSPDP?

22. CONSIDERATION FOR VOTING A CANDIDATE:

1. Village Consensus
2. On the advice of the village headman
3. Merit of the candidate
4. Party of the candidate
5. Clan consideration
6. Raising of local issues
7. Support of feudal elements
8. Others (religion, community etc)

23. REASON FOR VOTING A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE:

1. Personal merit
2. Being local candidate
3. Poast record of work
4. Personally approached by candidate
5. Candidate/supporter's personally known to voters
6. Others

24. REASONS FOR VOTING A PARTICULAR PARTY:

1. Likes the party
2. Past performance of party
3. Voted for ruling party
4. Voted for the same party
5. Voted for the party because of family tradition
6. Desires change in the leadership
7. Others

25. FOR TRIBALS AND NON-TRIBALS:

1. Why did you vote for a tribal candidate instead of a non-tribal candidate?
2. Why did you vote for a non-tribal candidate instead of a tribal candidate?
3. Are you a constant voter for
(Name of the candidate for different constituency)?
Why?

QUESTIONNAIRE - II
(For Chapter - VI)

1. Name :
2. Age :
3. Sex (Male/Female) :
4. Urban/Rural :
5. Literate/Illiterate :
6. In Meghalaya, the tribal women inherits property. But in other States they do not. Women in Meghalaya do not win elections but in other States they do win. Why?
7. Do you think women should contest elections. If so, Why?
8. Though you are a male/female. Did you vote for a woman candidate?
9. During election tiems, women were very active preparing food, campaigning, voting and waiting for the results. But why don't they win elections?

APPENDIX - IITABLE - I15-MYLLIEM ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total Votes polled	Valid Votes polled	Votes rejected
Male	Female	Total			
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,596	5,794	11,390	8,991	8,712	279
Names of Candidates			Party affilia- tion	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. H. Aiontis Roy Kharphuli			INC	1,109	SDF
2. Dentist Mohon Roy Kharkongor			PDC	2,608	
3. Lambourne Kharlukhi			HPD	1,402	SDF
4. Oris Lyngdoh			AHL	2,943	E
5. W.S. Roy Thangkhiew			IND	168	SDF
6. Stonely A. Nongrum			IND	383	SDF
7. U Toju Singh Giri Nongkhlaw			IND	99	SDF

TABLE - II

16-MALKI-NONGTHYMMAI ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,576	5,638	11,214	7,423	7,127	296
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Bindo M. Lanong			AHL	3,313	E
2. A. Blingstodar Diengdoh			IND	175	SDF
3. Bnein Bareh			PDC	705	SDF
4. J.N. Giri			IND	174	SDF
5. S. Shynrang Khonglah			IND	23	SDF
6. B.C. Swer			HPD	439	SDF
7. Upstar Kharbuli			INC	2,298	

TABLE - III

17-LAITUMKHAH ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,512	5,390	10,602	7,150	6,957	193
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Justine Khonglah			AHL	2,968	E
2. Kister Kharkongor			IND	180	SDF
3. Peter G. Marbaniang			HPD	2,399	
4. Tiplut Nongbri (W)			INC	1,410	

TABLE - IV

18-PYNTHORUMKHRAH ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
6,448	5,922	12,370	8,519	8,065	454
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Binoyendra Narayan Roy Choudhury			IND	802	SDF
2. Dal Bahadur Gurung			IND	97	SDF
3. Evandalyne Massar (W)			IND	59	SDF
4. James Marvin Pariat			IND	1,968	
5. Lohit Ranjan Das			IND	1,122	SDF
6. Robinson K. Tongwah			IND	786	SDF
7. B.K. Roy			INC	2,993	E
8. B.P. Singh			IND	229	SDF
9. Sujit Kr. Dhar			IND	9	SDF

TABLE - V

19-JAIAW ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
6,699	6,691	13,390	9,507	9,132	375
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Maya R. Kyndiah (W)			INC	1,892	
2. P. Ripple Kyndiah			AHL	4,102	E
3. Sain Manick Jyrwa			HPD	3,138	

TABLE - VI
20-MAWKHAR ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
4,259	4,370	8,629	5,729	5,460	269
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Dalington Dympep			CPI	97	SDF
2. Hardinge L. Massar			HPD	352	SDF
3. Hari Narayan Chowkhani			IND	12	SDF
4. W. Humphrey Dolly Syngkon			INC	1,496	
5. Korbar Singh			AHL	1,772	E
6. Neville Rufus Laitphlang			IND	332	SDF
7. Pollington Pyrtuh			IND	253	SDF
8. E. Shersingh Jyrwa			IND	1,146	

TABLE - VII
21-MAWPREM ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,446	4,186	9,632	6,760	6,329	431
Names of Candidates			Party affi- liation	Valid votes polled	Votes rejected
1. Dhruba Nath Joshi			INC	3,375	E
2. Hereford Sanderson Sawian			IND	2,262	
3. Jekendro Lanong			CPI	527	SDF
4. Narayan Joshi			IND	165	SDF

TABLE - VIII
22-LABAN ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,079	4,626	9,705	6,819	6,486	333

Names of Candidates	Party affiliation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Arthur P. Massar	IND	752	SDF
2. Bhaskar Choudhury	INC	2,588	E
3. Binoy Lahiri	CPI	588	SDF
4. Garland Nonglait	AHL	1,688	
5. Hasibuddin Ahmed	IND	143	SDF
6. Kanti May Deb	IND	125	SDF
7. Karadoklie E. Tariang	IND	75	SDF
8. Manas Choudhury	IND	372	SDF
9. Richard M. Toi	HPD	133	SDF
10. Robindra Das Choudhury	JNP	42	SDF

TABLE - IX
23- MAWLAI ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCY

Total Electorate			Total votes	Valid votes	Votes
Male	Female	Total	polled	polled	rejected
1	2	3	4	5	6
5,702	5,714	11,416	8,720	8,392	328

Names of Candidates	Party affiliation	Valid votes polled	Remarks
1. Anthony Jala	AHL	3,669	
2. Daminot J. Wankhar	INC	449	SDF
3. Stanlington David Khongwir	HPD	4,274	E

QUESTIONNAIRE - III

While interviewing the candidates who contested the 1983 Assembly Elections, questions were asked on their socio-economic positions, their reasons for contesting, the method used for contesting the election and the reasons for losing/winning the elections. Some of the questions asked were:

1. In which place (village/shnong), religion and where do you belong?

2. What is your Educational Qualifications?

Phd.
LL.B.
M.A..
B.A.
Matric
Others

3. Previous political experience

Elected in 1972
" 1977
" 1978
" 1980
" 1983
Elected since upto

4. Professional background of the candidates:

Social worker
Doctor
Teacher
Lawyer
Business
Journalist
Government service
Students leader
Others

5. Age group of the candidates

Above 60
Between 51 - 60
" 41 - 50
" 31 - 40
" 21 - 30

6. Economic background of the candidate (to know whether they belong to upper, middle or lower class) on the basis of income and property?
 7. Why did you contest the 1983 Assembly Election?
 8. From which party did you contest of were you an independent candidate?
 9. What were the methods used by you for Electioneering?
 10. What were the reasons for winning/losing the elections?
-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. C.P.I. Appeal to Voters, Shillong, 1983.
2. C.P.I. On Burning Problems of Meghalaya, Ambee Press, Shillong, 1983.
3. Dr. Bioyendra Narayan Roy Choudhury, (Independent Candidate of Pynthorumkhras Constituency); An Appeal, Kamala Art Press, Shillong, 1983.
4. Election Manifesto of the H.S.P.D.P., Shillong, 1983.
5. Election Manifesto of the INC(I), Shillong, 1983.
6. Gandhi Indira; Shrimati Indira Gandhi's Appel to the Voters of Meghalaya; Delhi, 1983.
7. Interviews: Binoy Lahiri, Secretaty GPI, 9 March, 1985.
 _____ Dalington Dympep, Ex.Member CPI, 20 April, 1985.
 _____ D.N. Joshi, Member MPCC(I), 11 August, 1986.
 _____ Gilbert Shullai, Member HSPDP, 7 August, 1983/24 June 1985.
 _____ H. S. Lyngdoh, President HSPDP, 6 November, 1986.
 _____ Imti Imchen, Assistant General Secretay PDIC, 29 September 1986.
 _____ Korbar Singh, Ex. Member APHLC, 15 June, 1985.
 _____ M. Sangma, President APHLC, 20 September, 1986
 _____ Sanbor Swell, President PDIC, 20 September, 1986.
 _____ W.H.D. Syngkon, Member MPCC(I), 8 July, 1984.

9. Indian Census 1971, Meghalaya, Part 1-A-General Reports, Delhi, Controller of Publications, 1981.
10. Jyrwa, E.S. Appeal of E.S. Jyrwa (Bah Liw) M.L.A. Candidate. To the voters of Mawkhar Constituency, Shillong, 1983.
11. Ka Election Manifesto Jong Ka Seng APHLC; Shillong, 1983.
12. Ka Nongrim Trei Kam naka bynta ka synshar-khadar bad ka Pynroi-Pynsan ia ka Meghalaya, Public Demands Implementation Convention (PDIC), Khasi-Jaintia Press, Shillong, 1983.
13. Ka Manifesto jong ka Public Demands Implementation Convention, (PDIC); Khasi-Jaintia Press, Shillong, 1983.
14. Massar, H.L. Appeal to the Voters of Makhar Constituency No. 20; Shillong, 1983.
15. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 15-Mylliem Assembly Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
16. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 16-Malki-Nongthymmai Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
17. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 17-Laitumkhras Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
18. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 18-Pynthorumkhras Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
19. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 19-Jaiaw Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.

20. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 20-Mawkhar Constituency, Shillong, 1983.
21. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 21-Mawprem Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
22. Meghalaya at a Glance, Directorate of Economics, Statistics and Evaluation, Government of Meghalaya, Shillong, 1978.
23. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 22-Laban Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
24. Meghalaya: Electoral Roll 1983, 23-Mawlai Constituency, New Press, Shillong, 1983.
25. Ramakrishnan, V. Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya, Election Handbook, Assembly Elections 1983, Shillong, 1983.
26. Ramakrishnan, V. Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya, Election Handbook, Assembly Elections, 1978, Shillong, 1978.
27. Ramakrishna, V. Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya, Election Handbook, Assembly Elections 1972, Shillong, 1972.
28. Reports on the Land Reforms Commission for Khasi Hills, Government Press, Shillong, 1974.
29. Tayeng, J. Census of India 1981, Series - 14, Meghalaya, Director of Census Operations, Meghalaya, Shillong, 1981.

30. Singh, Korbar. KA-APIL, Shillong, 1983.
31. Singh, Maham, Speech of Bah Maham Singh, Member,
AICWC, Shillong, 1983.
32. Syngkong, W.H.D. Ka Jingkyrpad, Shillong, 1983.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

- APHLC 1960-1974 Souvenir, Shillong Printing Works,
Shillong, 1974.
- Ayyar, K. All India Election Guide, Oriental Publications,
Madras, 1956.
- Bareh, Hamlet. Khasi Democracy, Ri Khasi Press, Shillong,
1964.
- Bertrand Gabrielle. Secret Lands where Women Reign,
Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1958.
- Brass Paul, R. Caste Faction and Party in Indian Politics
Vol. II. Election Studies, Chanakya Publications,
Delhi, 1981.
- Bhattacharya, U.S. Local Government in Khasi Hills, Vivek
Publishing Co., Delhi, 1980.
- Bhambri, C.P. & P.S. Verma. The Urban Voter: Municipal
Election in Rajasthan, National Publishing House,
Delhi, 1973.
- Bailey, F.G. Hill Politics and Social Change: Orissa in
1959, University of California, 1973.

- Chaube, S.K. Hill Politics in North East India, Orient Longman Ltd., Calcutta, 1973.
- Chie Nakane. Garo and Khasi: A Comparative Study in Matrilineal System, Mouton and Co., Paris, 1967.
- Centre for the study of Developing Societies, Party System and Election Studies, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1967.
- Das Gupta Pranab. Life and Culture of Matrilineal Tribes of Meghalaya, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.
- Datta Ray, B. Electoral Politics in Meghalaya, NEICSSR, Shillong, 1978.
- Dr. Chattopadhyay, S.K. Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya, Dy. Director of Public Instruction, Meghalaya, Shillong, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1985.
- Dube, M.M. & Jain, K.L. Election Laws and Procedures, Vedpal Law House, New Delhi, 1985.
- Dutta, P.S. (Ed.), Electoral Politics in North-East India, Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1986.
- Eugene Burdick, "Political Theory and the Voting Studies in E. Burdick & Arthur S. Bradbeck (ed) American Voting Behaviour, Illinois, 1959.
- Eulau Heinz, et.al., Political Behaviour, New Delhi, 1972.

- Goswami, B.B. (ed) Cultural Profile of Shillong, Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India, Calcutta, 1979.
- Gurdon, P.R.T. The Khasis, Cosmo Publications, Delhi, 1975.
- Ganguly B. & Mira, Voting Behaviour in Changing Societies: West Bengal - A Case Study, Sterling Publications, Delhi, 1975.
- Hardgrave Robert L. India Government and Politics in a Developing Nation, Freeman, Delhi, 1979.
- ICSSR, New Delhi, Studies of the Fourth General Elections, Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1972.
- Information Bulletin, XXVII, Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Novasti Press Agency, Czechoslovakia, 1986.
- Jha, N. "Women Participation in the Electoral Politics in U.P." in Teaching Politics: Special Features on General Elections 1984-85 Tables, Vol. XI, No. 1, Delhi, 1985.
- Kogekar, S.V. & Richard Park (eds), Reports on the Indian General Elections 1951-52, Bombay, Popular Book House, Bombay, 1956.
- Kashyap, Subhash C. (ed.) Election and Electoral Reforms in India, Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, 1971.

- Kini, N.G.S. The City Voter in India, Abhina Publications, New Delhi, 1974.
- Mazumdar Vina (ed). Symbols of Power-Studies on the Political Status of Women in India, Allied Publishers, Delhi, 1979.
- Mehta Prayag, Election Campaign, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1975.
- Morris Jones, W.H. The Government and Politics of India, B.I. Publications, New Delhi, 1974.
- Mishra, B.B. The Indian Political Parties, Oxford Publication, Delhi, 1978.
- Myron Weiner, Politics of Scarcity, Bombay, 1962.
- Myron Weiner & John Osgoodfield, Electoral Politics in the Indian States: Three Disadvantaged Sectors, Manohar Publication, Delhi, 1975.
- Myron Weiner & Rajni Kothari (ed.), Indian Voting Behaviour, Firma L.K.M. Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1965.
- Namita Catherine Shadap Sen (Mrs. A.L. Basham), The Origin and Early History of the Khasi-Synteng People, Firma LKM Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1981.
- Nimmo Dan, The Political Persuaders, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1970.
- Plamenatz, J. Ideology, Macmillan, London, 1970.
- Prasad, R.C. The Nature Electorate, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1975.

- Quarishi, Z.M. Election and State Politics in India: A Case Study of Kashmir, Sandeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1979.
- Rao, V.V. & Hazarika N. A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Vol. I (Assam) 1874-1980, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1983.
- Rao, V.V. et al., A Century of Government and Politics in North East India, Vol. II (Meghalaya) 1973-1983, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1984.
- Rao, V.V. Local self Government in India with Special Reference to Assam and North East India, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1963.
- Roy, Hipshon (ed.), Khasi Heritage, Ri Khasi Press, Shillong, 1979.
- Reports on the Land Reforms Commission for Khasi Hills, Government of Meghalaya, Government Press, Shillong, 1974.
- Sachidananda, The Tribal Voter in Bihar, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976.
- Shiv Lal, The Election Archives, CA-33 Tagore Gardens, New Delhi, Vol. 9 & 10, No. 1 to 4, 1978.
- shiv Lal, The Election Archives : Meghalaya Assembly Elections 1972, CA-33 Tagore Gardens, New Delhi, Vol. 3 & 4, No. 34, 1972.

- Shiv Lal, The Election Archives, Congress Manifesto, Assembly Elections 1972, Vol 3 & 4, No. 41, CA-33 Tagore Gardens, New Delhi, 1972.
- Singh, R.P. Electoral Politics in Manipur: A Spatio-Temporal Study, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1981.
- Smith, T.E. Election in Developing Countries, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., New York, 1960.
- Shanpru, T. Ka Jingshisha Halor ka Jingshakri ia ka Jaitbynriew Jong Ngi (Ki Kam ki kren khamjam ban ia ki Ktien), Ri Khasi Press, Shillong, 1983.
- Verma, S.P. & Iqbal Narain and Associates; Voting Behaviour in a Changing Society: A Case Study of the Fourth General Elections in Rajasthan, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1973.
- Verma, V.P. A Study of Voting Pattern and Behaviour in the Fourth General Election in Bihar, Institute of Public Administration, Patna University, Patna, 1969.

C. ARTICLES

1. "All Set for Meghalaya Polls", Implanter, (Shillong) Vol.XV, No. 8.
2. "APHLC Commit to Serve the People Through a Clean Government", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol, X, No. 8.

3. "APHLC Confident of Coming Back to Power", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 6.
4. Anklesaria Shanaz, "Manifestoes have little to offer to women", The Statesman, (Calcutta), Vol. CSSSII, No. 34506, p. 7, 1983.
5. "Campaign in full swing", Implanter, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XV, No. 13.
6. Chaudhury Neerja, "What women voters feel?" The Statesman, (Calcutta), 4th February, 1983, Calcutta.
7. Chhabra Ravi, "Women at the Polls," The Statesman, (Calcutta), 22nd January, 1977.
8. "Common Platform", Ropeca, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. VII, No. 9.
9. "Congress (I) manifesto released", Implanter, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XV, No. 8.
10. "Congress Vrs. Congress", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 8.
11. Desai, A.h. "Women's movement in India - An Assessment" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 20, No. 23, Delhi, 1985. ✓
12. "Eighteen point Manifesto placed before the electorates", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 10.
13. "Election Campaign gains momentum", Ropeca, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. VII, No. 6.

14. "Election Tempo gains momentum in Meghalaya", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 12.
15. "Election Tempo gets Warmer", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 7.
16. "Election to Assam and Meghalaya Assembly", Ropeca, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. VII, No. 8.
17. "Electoral Refoms in India - A Syndicate Report" in Smt. Sinha, R. (ed.) The Administrator, 1984, Vol. XXIX, No. 1 & 2, New Delhi.
18. "General Elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XV, No. 7.
19. "Gone with the wind", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 7.
20. "Government confident of fair and peaceful elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol.X, No. 7.
21. "Independent Candidates", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 12,
22. "Indira Congress formed in Meghalaya", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 6.
23. "Industrialisation only answer to Unemployment", The Shillong Times, (Shillong), Vol. XXXVIII, No. 40, 1983.
24. "Issues and Elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 13.

25. Lyngdoh, B.B. "Why this unstability?" The Shillong Times, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 28.
26. "Lyngdoh and Lyngdoh", The Statesman, (Calcutta), 1983, Vol. CXXXII, No. 34228.
27. Limaye Madhu, "Money and Muscle Power distort our electoral system", The Telegraph, (Calcutta), Vol. V, No. 105, 1986.
28. "Meghalaya - All set for General Elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 9.
29. "Meghalaya goes to poll", Implanter, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XV, No. 14.
30. "Meghalaya ready for elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. XV, No. 14.
31. "Meghalaya ready for elections", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 13.
32. "MPCC not likely to get Congress Symbol", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 3.
33. "Mrs. Gandhi Campaign(s) in Meghalaya", Ropeca, (Shillong), 1983, Vol. VII, No. 7.
34. "More women voters in Andhra Pradesh", The Statesman, (Calcutta), 5th January, 1983.
35. "No ideal solution", The Statesman, (Calcutta), 1983, Vol. CXXXII, No. 34475.

36. Nongbri, T. "Problems of Matriliney: A Short Review of the Khasi Kinship Structure" in Journal of North-East India Council for Social Science Research, (Vol. 8, No. 1, Shillong, April 1984).
37. "Peaceful and unprecedented turn out in Meghalaya Polls", Implanter, (Shillong) 1983, Vol. XV, No. 15.
38. "Political maturity", Ropecta, (Shillong) 1983, Vol.VII, No. 10.
39. Politicus, "Between then and now - Election Analysis", (I-Series), Ropecta (Shillong) 1983, Vol. VII, No. 7.
40. Politicus, "Between then and now - A political Analysis" (2-Series) Ropecta (Shillong) 1983, Vol.VII, No. 9.
41. "Protection and preservation of the distinct identity of the tribal people", Ropecta, (Shillong), 1983,
42. "Recognised National and State Political Parties", Implanter, (Shillong) 1978, Vol. X, No. 9.
43. "Real and unreal Congress", Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 1.
44. "Regional parties are being challenged by leaders of a National Party", Ropecta, (Shillong) 1983, Vol. VII, No. 9.
45. Samuel S. Eldersveld. "Theory and Method in Voting Behaviour Research" in Heinz Eulau, et al., Political Behaviour, New Delhi, 1972.

NEHU Library
 Acc. No. 102066
 Acc. by 17/6/89
 Date
 Class by
 Sub heading by 227
 Category
 Transcribed by

46. "Settlement of Assam Boundary Dispute pleaded",
Implanter, (Shillong), 1978, Vol. X, No. 21.
47. Sing Kynpham, "The Kingship System of the Khasis",
Social Research. Journal of Institute of Social
Research, Vol. 2, No. 2, Apr-June, 1982.
48. "The Aftermath", Ropecta (Shillong) 1983, Vol. VII,
No. 11.
49. "Token Reforms", The Statesman, (Calcutta), 1983,
Vol. CXXII, No. 34455.
50. V. Eshwar Anand, "Voting for Democracy -1", The States-
man, (Calcutta) 1983, Vol. CXXXII, No. 34438.
51. V. Eshwar Anand, "Voting for Democracy -11 Bench-mark
needed to check drift", The Statesman, (Calcutta),
1983, Vol. CXXXII, No. 34439.

D. JOURNALS AND PERIODICALS

1. Economic and Political Weekly, Delhi, 1985.
2. Implanter, Shillong, Bi-weekly, 1978-1983.
3. Journal of North-East India Council for Social Science
Research, Vol. 8, No. 1, Shillong, April 1984.
4. Ropecta, Shillong, Biweekly, 1983.
5. Social Research, Journal of the Institute of Social
Research, Vol. 2, No. 2, Apr-June, Shillong 1982.
6. The Administrator, Vol. XXIX, No.1-2, New Delhi, 1984.
7. The Shillong Times, Shillong, Weekly, 1978-1983.
8. The Statesman, Calcutta, Daily, 1978-1983.
9. The Telegraph, Calcutta, Daily, 1983-86.