

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN MEGHALAYA

Edited by
B. Datta Ray

North-East India Council

for

Science Research

NE

324.54164

ELE; 9

copy 1

Printed at
Ambee Print,
Police Bazar, Shillong.

NE
324.54164
ELE;9

59991
et 517/83
Aug 21/110

PRICE
Rs. 6.00
Library Edition Rs. 10.00

Published by
B. Datta Ray
North-East India Council
for Social Science Research
B. T. Hostel
SHILLONG - 793003
Meghalaya

F235
601

PREFACE

Electoral Politics in Meghalaya is a micro-level study of the VI Lok Sabha Election from the two Parliamentary Constituencies in Meghalaya. We have tried to state the main trends of politics of the State during inter-election years in the State to serve as a back-drop for understanding the electoral politics of VI Lok Sabha Election. We have reproduced for analysis the Election Manifestos of the State level and National level political parties. Politics of nomination and electoral alliances were parts of our study. We have tried to portray the issue orientation, strategy and style of election campaigning with coverage of state and local dimensions. The poll verdicts and their meaning for state politics in terms of causes and success and failures of various political parties in the field have also been analysed. We have also reproduced the earlier parliamentary election results in the Appendixes. The results of the 1971 Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Election with a short analysis of voting pattern have also been shown as background statistics.

In this brief study we followed historical, analytical and sociological approaches to understand the voting behaviour of the people.

Political parties in Meghalaya do not have much tradition of organising wide spread democratic movement highlighting the grievances and difficulties of the people. The lack of political consciousness of the masses is the natural outcome of the absence of strong democratic movement in the state. The peculiarities of socio-economic conditions of the State and the inability of the national political parties to adjust their methods of

work with the peculiar socio-economic milieu seem to be the salient factors in electoral politics in Meghalaya. There is a total absence of urban proletarian consciousness. The urban centres are still agglomeration of villages. The political climate of the state lacks sophistication and deeply betrays a tribal state in transition. This is a major sociological conclusion emerging from the study of the voting pattern of the Sixth Lok Sabha Election in Meghalaya. The election results should also serve as a warning to force what is commonly called National Integration by taking over wholesale regional movements.

We are grateful to Capt. Williamson A. Sangma, Chief Minister, Meghalaya, Mr. Maham Singh, Prof. P. G. Marbaniang, Mr. B. B. Lyngdoh, Mr. P. Ripple Kyndiah, Mr. P. N. Choudhuri, Prof. G. G. Swell, Mr. Hopingstone Lyngdoh, Mr. Purno A. Sangma, Mr. N. K. Rustomji, Mr. V. Ramakrishnan, Chief Electoral Officer, Officer-on-Special Duty (Election), Officers and staff of the Election Department, Government of Meghalaya, Mr. P. C. Biswas, Dr. B. K. Roy, Mr. Jerlie E. Tariang, Mr. D. N. Joshi, Mr. Benoy Lahiri, Mr. P. Misra, Mr. Akramozzamn, leaders and grass-root workers of the various political parties and of Trade Unions and the Deputy Commissioners of the Districts for their help and co-operation. But for their ready help the study would have remained incomplete and and inaccurate. Such a study of current political development cannot wholly satisfy persons with political commitment. We can assure readers that social scientists always try to be non-partisan.

I thank my colleagues in the North-East India Council for Social Science Research particularly Dr. B. Pakem, Prof. A. Begum, Prof. B. B. Dutta, Prof. D. Bhagawati, Prof. S. Sen, Prof. P. Passah, Prof. P. C. Kar, Prof. M. Kar, Prof. K. Chakravarty, Mr. N. K. Dhar and Dr. D. N. Majumdar for their work under obvious constraints,

I take this opportunity to thank Prof. Barun De, Director and Dr. S. K. Choube, Fellow, of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, for their support. We are grateful to Rev. Brother R. B. Vieyra, former Principal of St. Edmund's College, Shillong for his constant encouragement to our study.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Hem Dutta and Mr. H. Gupta for their secretarial assistance and to Mr. M. Chakravarty of Ambee Print for agreeing to print this study expeditiously.

6 February, 1978.

B. Datta Ray