INTRODUCTION

The administration of Khasi-Jaintia Hills is an exceptionally interesting field of study. These hills are situated between 25°5'W and 26°10' North latitude, and between 90°45' and 92°47'E East longitude, and bounded on the North, by Kamrup and Nowgong (Assam), on the South, by Sylhet (Bangladesh) and cachar (Assam), and on the East, by the Karbi Along and North Cachar Hills Districts (Assam). Now a component part of Meghalaya, Khasi-Jaintia Hills are divided into three districts - East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, and Jaintia Hills. According to the Census Report of 1861 the total area of these hills was 5,554 square miles with a population of 462,152. Prior to the independence of India in 1947, half of Khasi-Jaintia Hills, including the suburbs of Shillong, was outside the limits of British India, consisting of Small States in political relations with the Government of India, which enjoyed legal autonomy in the management of their local affairs; of the remainder, called the Jaintia Hills and British villages in the Khasi Hills were formed into a District of Assam and hitherto was known as the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District.
On 15 August 1947 British rule in India ceased and erstwhile British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. The Indian Independence Act which brought forth this change stated:

As from the appointed day the Suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of the Indian States, all obligations of His Majesty existing at that date towards Indian States of the rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise,

The Federation of Khasi States signed an agreement on 8 August 1947 to accede into the Indian Union on the three terms of defence, communication and foreign policy. On the following day the Khasi States signed the standstill Agreement. The States agreed that with effect from 15 August 1947 all existing administrative arrangements between the Province of Assam and the Indian Union and Khasi States would continue in force for a period of two years, or until new or modified arrangements would be arrived at. Twenty of the twenty-five states signed the Instrument of Accession in favour of India on 15 December 1947, Nobosophoh signed on 11 January 1948, Mawlong on 10 March 1948, Rambrai on 17 March 1948, and Nongstoin on 19 March 1948. The Instrument of Accession had the same terms as the Standstill
Agreement signed earlier in August, 1947. On 25 January 1950 in an order passed by the Governor of Assam, the existing administrative set up in the Khasi States was replaced by the administration under the Deputy Commissioner for the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. Integration of the Khasi States into the Indian Union was completed by executive notifications and the promulgation of the Constitution of India.

The Khasi Hills Act (Act VI of 1835) introduced Political Agency in Khasi Hills and on 11 February 1835 Capt. Lister of Sylhet Light Infantry was appointed to the charge of the Agency. Shortly afterwards Jaintia Hills were also brought under the Command of Capt. Lister. The end of the Political Agency of Col. Lister marked the formation of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District comprising the British portion of Khasi-Jaintia Hills territory in 1854 under the direct supervision of the Assam Commission. Initially the administration of the district was entrusted upon a Principal Assistant Commissioner. The designation of the Principal Assistant was soon changed to Deputy Commissioner in 1861. The remaining portion beyond the territories comprizing the district, was consisted of twenty five Petty States in immediate political relations with the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. It was essentially a political district and of
a non-regulation character like its counterparts in Assam. According to the Garo Hills Act (Act XXII of 1869) which wax extended to the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District in 1871, the district became a deregulated one and a special system of administration in the district level was introduced. In 1916, the administrative convenience forced upon the government to place Shillong Municipal area, both British and non-British along with its enclave the Shillong Cantonment towards a normal administration.

For the judicial purposes Shillong was declared to be a district and a sessions division under the same Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. The Government of India Act, 1935 came into force from 1 April 1937. Under Sub Section 1 of Section 91 of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Government of India (Partially Excluded Areas) order 1936 was enacted which declared the British portion of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, other than the Shillong Municipality and Cantonment to be Partially included Areas. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, the function of the Crown in relation to the Indian States was exerciseable in India by the Crown Representative and the Governor General was appointed as the Crown Representative for this purpose. The Governor of Assam, while dealing with the Khasi States, acted as
an Agent to the Crown Representative and while dealing with other areas of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills was answerable to Provincial government.

From the above it would appear that prior to the coming into force of the Constitution of India, there were five administrative units and were administered in different methods, namely (i) British portion or normal areas of Shillong which included European ward, Police Bazar Ward and major portion of Jail Road Ward of Shillong Municipality; (ii) Cantonment Areas of Shillong; (iii) Shillong Administered Area which included the nine wards of Shillong within Mylliem Syiemship where Municipal Administration was carried on; (iv) Partially Excluded Areas which meant the Jaintia Hills and the British villages in Khasi Hills; (v) Khasi States Areas

Under Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the autonomous district of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills was constituted comprising such territories which before the commencement of the Constitution on 26 January 1950 were known as Khasi States and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District, excluding the area comprised within the Cantonment and Municipality of Shillong. But this new district included as much of the area comprised within the Municipality of Shillong which formerly formed part of the Khasi state of Mylliem. It was provided that for
certain purposes mentioned therein no part of the area comprised within the Municipality of Shillong should be deemed to be within the autonomous district. It would appear from the above definition of the Autonomous District of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills that territorially excepting the British portion of Shillong Municipality and the Cantonment areas of Shillong, the other areas formed part of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills autonomous district.

with the inauguration of the Constitution of India, the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District continued to exist within the area which was outside the autonomous district of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills. By a notification dated 31 March 1951, the Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Assistants to the Deputy Commissioner in Khasi-Jaintia Hills District were appointed respectively ex-officio Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner; and Assistants to the Deputy Commissioner of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. By a notification issued on 23 November, 1964, the Governor of Assam created a new autonomous district by separating the Jowai Sub-division from the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District with effect from 1 December 1964. However, Part A of the table appended to paragraph 20 to the Sixth Schedule remained unchanged and the Jowai Autonomous District was
not mentioned as a separate autonomous district and Sub-para 2 of the paragraph 20 continued describing the territorial extent of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District as before although in view of the notification of the Governor creating the Jowai Autonomous District the said provisions of Paragraph 20 Sub-paragraph 2 and the table were deemed to be amended. It was only on the coming into force of the North Eastern Area (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 which substituted Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the autonomous district of Jowai known as the Jowai District was included in the table Part II. But the United Khasi Hills District was continued to be mentioned as such and Sub-paragraph 2 of Paragraph 20 practically remained unchanged although Jaintia Hills or the Jowai Autonomous District was taken out of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District.

By the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act, 1969, the autonomous State of Meghalaya was formed within the State of Assam comprising the territory of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District which by necessary implications included the Jowai Autonomous District and Garo Hills District.

Thus it would appear that the British portion of Shillong and the Cantonment areas were outside the
Autonomous State of Meghalaya. The Deputy Commissioner, Khasi-Jaintia Hills District used to administer on behalf of the State of Assam in the British Portion of Shillong and in respect of matters of public order and general Police administration in the entire Khasi and Jaintia Hills and used to administer on behalf of the Autonomous State of Meghalaya in respect of matters other than Police and public order in other areas of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District.

On 21 January, 1972, the North Eastern (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, came into force, and the autonomous Sub-State of Meghalaya attained full statehood. The new State comprised of the territories which formed the erstwhile sub-State and also included in cantonment and Shillong Municipal areas which did not form part of the Sub-State. By a notification issued on 21 February 1972, the Jaintia Hills were formed into a separate district with Jowai as the headquarters, which meant the elevation of the Jowai Sub-division into the status of a district in the bifurcation of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District into two. The residuary area of the existing district of Khasi-Jaintia Hills was formed into a separate district known as the district of Khasi Hills with its headquarters at Shillong. The areas which were known as British Portion and the Cantonment in the Municipality
of Shillong prior to the commencement of the constitution of India were formed into a district known as the District of Shillong with its headquarters at Shillong. By a notification dated 14 June, 1973, the Governor of Meghalaya in exercise of power under Clause (f) of Sub-Paragraph 3 of Paragraph 1 of the Sixth Schedule was pleased to pass an order changing the names of the autonomous district of the united Khasi-Jaintia Hills and Jowai Autonomous District to Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills and was further pleased to make the consequential amendments to Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution by substituting the Khasi Hills District in place of the United Khasi Hills District and the items 1 and 2 in part II of the Table to Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule was substituted as:

(i) Khasi Hills District,
(ii) Jaintia Hills District.

Over this territory presently occupied by the three districts of East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, remained during the colonial period under the dual charge of an officer known as the Deputy Commissioner, He was a District Magistrate and collector in the Khasi-jaintia Hills District and the Political Officer for the Khasi States.

The focal point of the present study is the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi-Jaintia Hills District and Political
Officer of the Khasi States. This study is an analysis of the evolution and growth of political and Civil administration in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills territory under the stewardship of the Deputy Commissioner on the canvas of India in general and Assam in particular. It is intended to throw light on some unexplored aspects of British administration in the hills and the unique position held by the Deputy Commissioner in British India as well as in Imperial British Indian administration.

India under the British consisted of two parts - British India and the territories of Native States. The Native States belonged to a separate political system under the British. The government exercised administrative control of varying nature and degree over these States in different stages of mutual relations between the paramount power and the States, out of which the said political system emerged. The present study is intended to have a glimpse at the development of a political system in the Khasi States in the context of a general system as practised elsewhere. Definite emphasis is given to examine the character of the political administration under the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi-Jaintia Hills District as the Political Officer.

British India having been the direct responsibility of the English, they formulated a well organised colonial
system which was an admixture of oriental and oxidental form and ideas. The district happened to be the fundamental administrative unit on whose framework was built up civil, criminal, and police jurisdiction and also those of welfare and technical services. The District collector became the chief if executive Officer, the rulers and governor of his district representing within his jurisdiction the might of government and responsible not merely for the collection of revenue/ but the interpretation and execution of government policy as a whole. Thus the District Collector was the nucleus of the system and the district, its key-link and the centre of life in the Indian empire of the British.

While in Bengal, the Cornwallis School had been introducing an over-legalistic system of District administration which was based on European principles of government/ the Munro School in Madras and Bombay was gaining ground. The Munro School successfully established a system of district administration which was a combination of European ideas and the Indian indigenous institution and sentiments. This patriarchal form of district administration ultimately carried the day and came to be followed universally in the British Indian administration.

The three presidencies - Bengal, Bombay and Madras - were initially governed on a system laid down by elaborate
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regulations. But large territories had gradually been added to the British colony and it was plainly impossible to govern all those new people in accordance with the letters and spirit of the law of the older provinces. For simple people* as simple a system of administration as possible roust be designed which would bring them closely into touch with British officers/ and would conform with the spirit but not with the letter of Regulations. These territories were commonly known as non-regulation territories and the districts therein were called the non-regulation districts. Unlike his counterparts in the regulation districts, the officer-in-charge of these new districts came to be known as Deputy Commissioner.

The Deputy Commissioner\textsuperscript{1} was an executive who represented the government in the district, headed the hierarchical officialdom, exercised considerable statutory powers of supervision and control over various local bodies, subordinate officers, etc.. But this is a too limited definition and too partial a jurisdiction for the Deputy Commissioner\textsuperscript{2}, of a non-regulation district. He was, virtually, what a Subadar in the Mughal Sub\textsuperscript{2}a was. The regulation and non-regulation thus represented the extreme of the rule of law and rule of man.

\textsuperscript{1}During the twenty years which followed the Mutiny there was a rapid process of assimilation and unification
throughout British rule. Certain differences had never been eliminated, but the rule of law was soon established throughout the Provinces. Subsequently the various activities of the district Officer were further whittled away by the establishment of highly centralised departments, inspite of the transfer of certain power to such elected bodies as Local Boards and Municipalities. When the responsible government had been approaching in the administration since 1919, the interference of the politicians came as a challenge to the existing predominance of the district officers in the policy making of the government. The Subadari system in its extreme form was only extended to a segment of British India. The position of the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills amid the situation resulting in the growth of departments and gradual autonomy granted to the Indians at the Provincial administration provides a classical case in the British Indian Colonial administration.

The British administration in India was mostly impersonal in character but the efficiency of the government in the deregulated territories of hills and frontier tracts the personal initiative, drive and imagination of the individual officers counted much.