CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The hill tract, a region of uplands formed by a detached part of the Deccan Plateau, lying between the Bangladesh plains to the south and the Assam plains to the north, is the State of Meghalaya. One of the 28 states of India, Meghalaya became the full fledged 21st State of India on January 21st, 1972. Meghalaya shares its boundaries with Assam (on the east and the north) and with Bangladesh (on the west and the south). The State has a total area of 22,429 square kilometers and a population of 23,18,822\(^1\) of which 11,76,087 are male and 11,42,735 are female. Meghalaya is now divided into seven administrative districts namely – Jaintia Hills, Ri Bhoi, East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills. The State has a sixty member unicameral legislature, the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and a twelve member Council of Ministers. Meghalaya is under the jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court,

Assam and a circuit bench of this court is located at Shillong, the capital of the State.

**TABLE 1.1 Basic Features of Meghalaya as on January 21st, 1972.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Khasi &amp; Jaintia Hills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (in sq. kms.)</td>
<td>14405</td>
<td>8084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>605084</td>
<td>406615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Civil Sub-Divisions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Community Development Blocks</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Meghalaya is predominantly inhabited by the three tribal communities namely, the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo. These three tribes practice matriliny with some variations. These tribes belong to the "Indo-Chinese Linguistic Family" of which two important sub-families are the Mon-Khmer and the Tibeto-Burman. The Mon-Khmer includes among other communities, the Khasi and the Jaintia while the Tibeto-Burman includes the Garo. The Khasi have been classified into five main sub-divisions corresponding to certain geographical areas of Meghalaya –

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a) Khynriam, that is, the Khasi who inhabit the central plateau;
b) Pnar or Synteng, that is, the Jaiñtia who inhabit the eastern area;
c) Bhoi who are concentrated in the northern area;
d) War who inhabit the southern area;
e) Lyngngam, who inhabit the western area bordering the Garo hills.

### TABLE 1.2 Basic Features of Meghalaya as on January 21st, 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Districts &amp; Name of New Districts</th>
<th>Date of Creation</th>
<th>Area in sq. kms.</th>
<th>Population (2001 Census)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Khasi Jaifttia Hills</td>
<td>February 21st, 1972</td>
<td>3819</td>
<td>299108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Khasi Hills</td>
<td>October 28th, 1976</td>
<td>2820</td>
<td>660923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Khasi Hills</td>
<td>October 28th, 1976</td>
<td>5247</td>
<td>296049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ri-Bhoi</td>
<td>June 4th, 1992</td>
<td>2376</td>
<td>192790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garo Hills</td>
<td>October 23rd, 1976</td>
<td>2603</td>
<td>250582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Garo Hills</td>
<td>October 23rd, 1976</td>
<td>3715</td>
<td>518390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Garo Hills</td>
<td>June 18th, 1992</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>100980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>January 21st, 1972</td>
<td>22429</td>
<td>2318822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While trying to ascertain the origin of the Khasi people, scholars have presented a number of views. These views range from the cultural and linguistic affinities that the Khasi share with other communities in South East Asia (as highlighted by P.R.T.Gurdon, Hamlet Bareh, G.A.Grierson
among others) to the views that rest on oral tradition (as highlighted by R.T. Rymbai, Hamlet Bareh among others). Speaking on the origin of the Khasi, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee makes an important observation, “they appear to be descended from some of the earliest Mongoloid immigrants into India who changed their language through contact with Austric speakers, either in Burma or in the soil of India, in pre-historic times”.

Traditional political institutions are an important component of the tribal milieu of North-East India. Such institutions evolved in tribal societies to bring order and to regulate settled life among the inhabitants. In the case of the Khasi and Jaintia people the development of traditional political institutions in the pre-colonial period has been gradual. These institutions evolved beyond the confines of village settlements to higher forms exhibiting remarkable foresight in the village leaders and their kin groups. The highest territorial principality that evolved was the Hima, that is, the state. The highest political office among the Khasi is that of the Syiemship under an administrative head called a Syiem, Lyngdoh, Sirdar or

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Wahadadar\(^4\). At present there are 25 Khasi states (\textit{ki Hima} Khasi), the important states being Khyrim, Mylliem and Cherra.

The term "state" is used to refer to traditional Khasi principalities as these principalities cannot be referred to by any other English term. Hence the term "state" is used in a very general sense because like the state the \textit{Hima} too has some very discernible characteristics – a demarcated territory, a stratified population, a system of administration and independence especially in the pre-British period. The \textit{Hima} is a territorial conglomeration of communes and independent villages falling under the jurisdiction of administrative heads known as \textit{Syiem, Lyngdoh, Sirdar} or \textit{Wahadadar}. The usage of the term ‘state’ to refer to traditional Khasi principalities was made popular by the British who referred to these principalities as ‘Cossyah’ states or ‘Kasia’ states. In terms of administration, the Khasi states were differentiated from the 33 villages (also known as British Areas) which were directly taken over by the British. Subsequently, the term Khasi state continued to be used till the time of India’s independence and after and also after the inauguration of the Constitution of India. The United Khasi-Jaiñtia Autonomous District Council and later the Khasi Hills Autonomous District

Council replaced the use of the term Khasi state with the term *Elaka* to signify any administrative unit in the districts under its jurisdiction as specified in Appendix I, II and III in the United Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills Autonomous District (Appointment of Chiefs and Headmen) Act, 1959. (The usage of the term ‘state’, in the present study, as far as the Khasi states are concerned will be in small and not in capital letters).

The *Hima* underwent a gradual process of evolution spanning centuries. In its evolution it was able to adjust and adapt itself to changing needs and circumstances. The *Syiem*, in exercising his functions as head of his *Hima* is assisted by a Council, *ka Dorbar*. There are two types of Councils, a) a State Council, that is, *ka Dorbar Hima* which is a popular Assembly; b) an Executive Council, that is, *ka Dorbar Synshar* composed of a smaller group of councilors designated as *Basan, Lyngdoh, Myntri* who are vested with executive powers.

The Shillong state, that is, *ka Hima* Shillong was one of the oldest Khasi states among the traditional Khasi principalities. According to tradition the Shillong administrative heads, *ki Syiem* Shillong were of divine
origin and were called *ki 'syiem blei' or ruler* gods. This *Hima* no longer exists; it was bifurcated in 1853 into two *Himas*, *Hima* Khyrim and *Hima* Mylliem. In both these *Hima* the respective *Syiem* is elected from his clan (that is, the *syiem* clan) by a small electoral college by a simple majority. The electoral college of Khyrim consists of a total number of thirty electors, while the electoral college of Mylliem consists of a total number of forty-eight electors. The present *Syiem* of Khyrim is Balajied Singh Syiem, while the present *Syiem* of Mylliem is Latho Manik Syiem.

Prior to the advent of the British, the Khasi states (*ki Hima Khasi*) exercised independent control over their respective areas. The arrival of the British at the periphery of the Khasi Hills, a consequence of the receipt of the right of *Dewani* over the Bengal *Subah*, brought the English East India Company into trade relations with the Khasi people. The British suppressed all the insurrections (occurring between 1829 and 1839) of the Khasi states that had opposed their authority. The Khasi states ultimately came to be under the “protection and authority of the Government” (that is, the British government) and were bound to “obey without demur all the mandates of the

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Government". Some of the Khasi states were categorized as semi-dependent (these were Cherra, Khyrim, Nongstoin, Langrin and Nongspung) and others as dependent (there were twenty states in this category each of which was under an administrative ruler designated either as Syiem, Lyngdoh, Sirdar and one Khasi state, a confederacy was under a Wahadadar). In addition to these Khasi states, there were thirty-three villages that were under the direct control of the British (these included the Shillong British Portion, Jowai Sub-division, Nongpoh, Myrdon among others). Thus the British introduced new changes in the administration and organization of these states. The British administrative policy was designed throughout their rule to keep these areas isolated and to rule them cheaply through a multi-tier administrative system involving the traditional chiefs as agents of colonial interests. Even in matters of customary laws like those

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governing the succession of chiefs they did not hesitate to interfere ruthlessly⁹.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the existing traditional political institutions of the Khasi, with special reference to Hima Khyrim and Hima Mylliem;
2. To analyze the Anglo-Khasi relations, the position of the Khasi states between 1946 to 1950 in relation to India;
3. To examine the events that affected the position of the Khasi states after the enactment of the Constitution of India in 1950, the relations between the Khasi states and the Autonomous District Councils (with special emphasis on Hima Khyrim and Hima Mylliem);
4. To analyze the current demand for constitutional recognition of the Khasi states and the role played by the Syiem of Khyrim and Syiem of Mylliem in this regard;

5. To critically analyze the various memoranda submitted by the Federation of Khasi States to the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution.

While examining the traditional political institutions of the Khasi with special reference to the Khasi states, *ki Hima* Khasi, the objective of this study is to examine and analyze the events on the eve of India’s independence and after that had affected the position of the Khasi states. The emphasis of the study is on the role played by *Hima* Khyrim and *Hima* Mylliem in attempting to actively revive and spearhead the Federation of Khasi States (hereinafter FKS), the umbrella organization of the Khasi states, especially in the late 1990’s. This attempt is undertaken by the two *Himas* with a view to regain their position and status that constitutionally felt short of their expectations.

With India’s independence drawing near, a serious question arose as to the status of the 25 Khasi states. When British paramountcy was almost drawing to an end in 1947, the Khasi states were faced with two possibilities - to either join any of the new Dominion governments (that is, India or Pakistan) or to remain independent. In July 1946, the Federation of Khasi
States was revived to seriously discuss this impending situation. During this period, Sardar Vallabhai Patel headed the States Department which was entrusted with the task of negotiating with the 550 odd Indian states\(^\text{10}\). He urged these states to join the Indian Union, and thereby maintain the unity of the country in the realm of three important subjects – defence, foreign affairs and communications. On August 8\(^{\text{th}}\), 1947, the Khasi states signed an agreement to accede into the Indian Union on the three subjects. On August 8\(^{\text{th}}\), 1947, the Khasi states signed the Standstill Agreement. They agreed that from August 15\(^{\text{th}}\), 1947, all existing administrative arrangements between the Province of Assam and the Indian Dominion on one hand and the Khasi states on the other, should continue for two years or until modified arrangements are arrived at by the concerned authorities. Thus during this period the federated states enjoyed judicial, administrative, legislative and revenue powers\(^\text{11}\). By August 17\(^{\text{th}}\), 1948, all the constituents of the Federation of Khasi States had signed the Instrument of Accession thereby acceding to India, though they refused to merge. The concerns of the Cabinet Mission (1946) on the future of the minorities after independence were addressed when the Constituent Assembly of India created an Advisory

\(^{10}\) Syiemlieh, D.R.: *op.cit.*, p.60.

Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas headed by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. A Sub-Committee was also set up for the North-East, the North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Sub-Committee. This Sub-Committee was headed by Gopinath Bordoloi and J.J.M.Nichols Roy was one of the members. One of the recommendations that this Sub-Committee proposed in 1947 was for the creation of District Councils to look after the affairs of the six principal hill areas of Assam, including the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. A very vexed question arose before the Khasi people, “whether it would be better for the Khasis to be directly associated with the Indian Dominion in Delhi in terms of the Instrument of Accession signed by the Khasi states, or by their being under the Government of Assam under the provisions of the proposed Sixth Schedule of the Constitution”\textsuperscript{12}. Before these differences could be resolved, the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 adopted the provisions of the draft Sixth Schedule with several modifications. An executive order of the Government of Assam brought the

short life of the Federation of Khasi States to an abrupt end from January 25\textsuperscript{th}, 1950\textsuperscript{13}.

When the Constitution of India came into force on January 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1950, the Khasi states were reconciled with the state of Assam, without any agreement of merger and disregarding the provisions of the Standstill Agreement\textsuperscript{14}. The Constitution read that the territory of Assam “shall comprise the territories which immediately before the commencement of the Constitution were comprised in the Province of Assam, the Khasi States and the Assam Tribal Areas”\textsuperscript{15}. The Khasi states and non-state areas became a part of the United Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills District. With the implementation of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule, the Khasi states became a part of the United Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills Autonomous District. Moreover with the creation of the Autonomous District Council, the powers and functions of the Khasi states were further reduced. The Khasi states became functionaries under the authority of the Autonomous District Council, the United Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills Autonomous District Council and later the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council.

\textsuperscript{13} Simon, I.M. (Ed.): \textit{op.cit.}, p.43.
Since 1950, the Khasi states under the umbrella organization, the Federation of Khasi States have been making representations to the Union Government as well as to the State Government of Meghalaya to highlight their cause and how they have been constitutionally undermined. They have petitioned the said governments on numerous occasions to constitutionally recognize and restore their rights and privileges. During the last few years this movement for constitutional recognition has gained momentum. A National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (hereafter NCRWC) was set up by the Union Government on February 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2000. Among the various issues that this Commission was entrusted to examine, was the issue on “Decentralisation and Devolution: Empowerment and Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions”. The Advisory Panel of the NCRWC entrusted with the mentioned issue prepared a Consultation Paper, “Empowering and Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions/ Autonomous District Councils/ Traditional Tribal Governing Institutions in North East India” on the basis of inputs it had compiled and collated from various sources. The Federation of Khasi States under the leadership and guidance of Hima Khyrim and Hima Mylliem, has been actively involved in forwarding its views and recommendations to the Commission.
Of late, this issue relating to the demand for constitutional recognition of the Khasi states has generated considerable interest among scholars, local institutions and non-governmental organizations. A number of organizations have also held seminars and workshops to examine the functioning and relevance of traditional tribal organizations in North-East India. In addition, newspaper articles written by various scholars have also contributed their part in creating awareness amongst the public on the issues at hand. The present position of the Khasi states, *ki Hima Khasi*, has its roots in the past when they exercised independent control over their respective areas. An important question that arises today is that, if these traditional political institutions are given constitutional recognition, how well will they adjust and adapt themselves to the changed political environment?

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In present day society, political activities occur within the framework of the most encompassing and embracing organization, the state. This organization was by no means a universal feature of all societies. Studies undertaken on political organizations of ethnic groups across the world have
revealed a spectrum ranging from well developed states at one end to stateless or acephalous societies at the other. These academic and research oriented studies have today produced a voluminous treasure of literature containing a crucial component in theoretical models and formulations. It is from this vast array of available literature that a study on Khasi traditional political institutions and state formation can draw inference. It may also be pointed out that the emergence, development and experience of Khasi polity formation does not follow any distinct theoretical formulation but rather, strikingly exhibits features of various models of polity development across the world.

The difficulty that a research scholar faces while studying traditional institutions of North-East India is that the earlier writings on the subject lie buried in learned journals, official documents which are beyond the reach of general readers. Nevertheless, attempts had been made by British officers to document their experiences while travelling throughout North-East India. While throwing light on the different facets of tribal life in North-East India, these documents however have their limitations. They had been prepared to serve in general, the functional needs of British administration.
Research activity, with reference to North-East India, has witnessed a remarkable increase in the last few decades of the previous century. Scholars of various disciplines have been able to successfully compile and document their findings on research activity in the various North-Eastern states of India. Such findings are of immense value for they introduce a research scholar to the richness and diversity of research activity in the region.

Today, there is an immense wealth of material available on various aspects of the Khasi society. The emergence of the Khasi states as traditional political institutions has also received adequate attention of scholars. However, the constitutional position of the Khasi states after 1950 and the subsequent changes that followed, have not received the desired attention. The attempt of this study is to analyze the remedial measures that the Khasi states have taken (especially after 1950) in order to regain the position and identity within the Indian political framework. The emphasis will be on two Khasi states in particular, Hima Khyrim and Hima Mylliem.

In *The Early State*\(^\text{16}\), Claessen and Skalnik argued that there exists a socio-political organization called the early state in between the non-state

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and state organizations respectively. The early state manifests certain characteristics – a sizeable population that makes social categorization, stratification and specialization possible; population is stratified and the emerging classes can be distinguished; government is centralized, it has sovereign power to maintain law and order; a common ideology exists, which gives legitimacy to the ruling stratum. On the basis of these characteristics, twenty-one case studies of early states were presented by various scholars and inferences were drawn about their functioning.

In an article written in Current Anthropology, Claessen¹⁷ examines how four aspects condition the internal dynamics of the early state, and how with effective implementation, they would contribute to the transformation of the early state into a mature state. These aspects include societal format, level of economic development, type of legitimation and degree of bureaucratic organization.

Lawrence Krader\textsuperscript{18} examines a number of societies according to the relative complexity of their governmental arrangements – simple societies (Eskimos, Bushmen); societies with institutions leading to the state (Crow, Kpelle); emerging states where central power is more developed and more articulate (Ankole); states fully formed (Egypt, Mongols) by integrating all parts of society under one sovereignty and all geographic localities and provinces in one polity.

\textit{African Political Systems}\textsuperscript{19} is a comparative study undertaken by various scholars, it deals with the social organizations and political institutions of a number of African societies. Max Gluckman in his study of the Kingdom of the Zulu, observes that the Zulu nation is a federation of tribes whose separate identities were symbolized by their respective chiefs. This nation was headed by a king chosen from a powerful aristocratic Zulu lineage. In exercising his authority the king was assisted by his councilors, \textit{ldunas}. The chiefs of the various tribes scattered throughout Zulu land were appointed by the king from amongst his close relatives. These chiefs were bound to the king by strong kinship ties of mutual assistance and by their

common membership of royal lineage. I. Schapera while studying the political organization of the *Ngwato* of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, notes that the lowest political unit is the family group, *Kgotlana* where descent is traced from a male ancestor. Every family group is under the leadership of an elder or *Mogolwane*. The ward or village, *Motse* represents the second tier of political organization. It is under the authority of either a hereditary headman, a *Dikgosana* (descendant of the royal family) or a common headman, a *Mothanka* who is appointed by the chief of the tribe from amongst the commoners. Finally at the top is the office of the tribal chief who belongs to the ruling dynasty and claims authority to royalty. These case studies have been highlighted to show that certain African societies have been organized as primitive states where there exists a centralized authority and judicial system.

In contrast to these two tribes is the Nuer\(^{20}\), a pastoral people of Sudan which represents a stateless society (there is absence of a central institutional authority). The basic unit among the Nuer is the family. Related lineages form clans and the combination of clans form Nuer tribes. Lineages play a

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strong political role, members of every lineage can participate in decision-making, share territorial rights and have common rights and obligations. Among the Nuer, there is no specialized governmental structure, there are no laws or law-givers. Influential men in Nuer society usually come from a dominant clan. The position most resembling a political office is that of the leopard-skin chief. His main function is the settlement of blood-feuds. He is simply a mediator in specific social situations and his mediation is successful because it is acknowledged by the warring parties. The African tribes reviewed above demonstrate the central role of the kinship in the integration and decision-making process of both primitive states and the so-called stateless societies.

The process of polity formation in India and the North-Eastern part of India has also received adequate attention at the hands of scholars of various disciplines. In her book *From Lineage to State*\(^\text{21}\), Romila Thapar makes an attempt to historically examine the development of the pastoralist, *Rig Vedic* society of the mid-first millennium B.C. in the Ganges valley. The study explores the changes that take place from a lineage based society to the

establishment of the state system in an emerging peasant economy. The use of the term 'lineage' society in preference to 'tribal' society emphasizes the centrality of lineage in all aspects of society, particularly in relation to power and access to resources.

A.S. Altekar has made a comprehensive attempt to examine various aspects of ancient Indian polity encompassing the origin, types, nature and functions of the state, state administration and the administrative machinery at various levels and the relationship between the state and the citizen. He has brought about a synthesis of data and information drawn from widely divergent sources which include theoretical and literary works on the subject as well as inscriptions and historical records. Hindu polity working under a society characterized by the caste system dictated that government was primarily the function and duty of the *Kshatriyas* assisted to some extent by the *Brāhmanas*.

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Surajit Sinha in an edited volume presents ten case studies on polity formation in the pre-colonial tribal regions of Eastern and North-Eastern India. The growth of these polities has been decisively conditioned by various factors such as ecology, patterns of surplus generation and extraction, military organization, warfare and conquest and networks of socio-cultural interaction among chiefdoms, principalities and states. The case studies on polity formation among the Jaiñtia and Khasi are of particular interest to this study being undertaken.

In the Impact of the West on the Khasis and Jaintias, P.N. Dutta presents an exhaustive account of the relations between the British and the Khasi and Jaiñtia. The book examines the subsequent developments that take place between 1765 A.D. and 1874 A.D. and the changes in the political, administrative and material aspects of the Khasi and Jaiñtia society. In his description of the Khasi political institutions, Dutta has not attempted to trace their origin and development. He only discusses the office of the Syiem, making a passing reference to the concept of Syiemlieh and Syiemiong.

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P.R.G. Mathur\textsuperscript{25} also examines certain features of Khasi society which include cultural contacts, traditional political system, the Muslim Khasis among others. His emphasis has been to examine the impact of western civilization and the role of Christian missionaries. His discussion on the Khasi solidarity movements pays very little attention to the activities of the Federation of Khasi States (especially after 1950) and places more emphasis on the genesis of political parties in Meghalaya and their role in the hill state movement.

\textit{Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya}\textsuperscript{26} is a collection of articles contributed by various scholars to discuss the various facets of tribal culture. The papers related to the Khasi traditional political institutions (such as the Syiemships, Lyngdohships) provide valuable background and analysis to the origin and development of the institutions, their relations with the British and the events that followed after India's Independence.

\textsuperscript{25} Mathur, P.R.G.: \textit{The Khasi of Meghalaya: Study in Tribalism and Religion}, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1979, pp.106-111.

D.R. Syiemlieh\textsuperscript{27} provides a deep and rich source of information on the relations between the British and the tribal inhabitants of Meghalaya. This book examines the indirect system of administration that the British had carried on in the hills through the traditional chiefs. It takes a look at the effects of this administration on the social, economic and political ethos of the people. It also examines the position of the Khasi states on the eve of independence, and also their position between 1947 and 1950.

Helen Giri\textsuperscript{28} examines the impact and consequence of British administration on the Khasis (up to 1947), while also including a profile of the Khasi and Jaiñtia and their early contacts with other communities. The book provides a practical and detailed account of the factors that interplayed on the fate of the Khasi states till 1947 A.D.

R.S. Lyngdoh\textsuperscript{29} presents an exhaustive account of the traditional institutions that exist among the three tribal communities of Meghalaya. He examines the political and constitutional developments that took place after the annexation of the hill areas by the British, the developments that took

\textsuperscript{27} Syiemlieh, D.R.: \textit{op.cit.}, pp. x,16, 69,152-164,194-205.
\textsuperscript{28} Giri, Helen: \textit{The Khasis under British Rule}: 1824-1947, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 1998, pp.5-8, 32-33, 224-225.
place between the period 1935 to 1947, the framing and implementation of the Sixth Schedule, the Autonomous District Councils, the movement for a separate Hill state and the creation of Meghalaya. His views are interesting in so far as he provides an analysis to the various developments including the reasons behind the Federation’s failure in realizing the objectives of the Khasi states.

A close analysis of the above mentioned reviews (which include those of Mathur, Chattopadhyay, Syiemlieh, Giri and Lyngdoh) reveals that the scholars have dwelt at length in examining the genesis of Khasi traditional political institutions, their relations with the British, and their relations with India after independence. However, none of these scholars have examined the position of the Khasi states after 1950 despite the fact that their writings have been published only recently between 1982 and 1998 A.D.

*Power to People in Meghalaya*

Power to People in Meghalaya is a collection of papers contributed by various scholars. These papers critically examine the Sixth Schedule, the functioning of the Autonomous District Councils while also dwelling on the relevance of the 73rd Amendment to the tribal areas of North-East India.

These papers also attempt to ascertain whether the provisions of the 73rd Amendment are in conflict with or complementary to the provisions of the Sixth Schedule and how would the provisions of the former contribute to maintaining the traditional tribal ethos. Juanita War’s paper on “Panchayati Raj and Traditional Khasi Institutions: A Comparison” examines a revivalist role that the traditional Khasi institutions can play under a new political framework at the grassroot level.

*Ka Lawei U Khasi* 31 examines, though briefly some aspects of Khasi society namely the origin of the Khasi, the concept of clanship and matriliny, language, land ownership and traditional administration and occupation. The author notes that a Khasi constructs his racial identity on three important tenets: his clan, his dialect and his association with the land. *U Khasi u tei ia ka jaidbynriew ha ki lai tylli ki mawbyrsiew: ka kur, ka ktien bad ka khyndew*. The author’s views on the traditional form of governance are very brief. He examines the present system of electoral politics, its vices and concludes that these vices are responsible for the rot that exists in Khasi society today. With regard to the origin of the Khasi, he shares the same views that have been offered by earlier scholars.

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Khasi Heritage is a collection of essays that have been contributed by different scholars on Khasi thought, religion and culture. This book examines the establishment of Ka Seng Khasi, the important personalities associated with this organization, many aspects of Khasi religion and culture, the various Khasi festivals, music and certain customs among the Khasis. An essay on the position of the Khasi and Jaintia hills upto 1874 has also been presented including the pledge of Balajied Singh Syiem, the Syiem of Hima Khyrim on his assumption to office as Syiem (on 26th August, 1978).

Ki Syiem Khasi bad Syteng is perhaps one of the earliest writings available in Khasi that throws light on the genesis of the Khasi and Jaintia rulers. The author examines sixteen such states beginning with the state founded by the Malngiang rulers, that is, ki Syiem Malngiang. He examines the emergence of the Shillong rulers, that is, ki Syiem Shillong, the subsequent bifurcation of this state in 1853, and the emergence of the Nongkrem rulers, that is, ki Syiem Nongkrem (who are known today as ki Syiem Khyrim) and the Mylliem rulers, that is, ki Syiem Mylliem. The author has relied on the earlier writings of a number of scholars such as Gait, Wade,

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33 Lyngdoh, H.: op.cit., pp.ii-x. 81-102, 103-114.
Gurdon in addition to folklore which has been handed down from generation to generation.

*Ka Pomblang Nongkrem*\(^{34}\) is a small booklet, the contents of which have been extracted from *Ka Niam Khasi* by Homiwell Lyngdoh. This booklet throws light on the emergence of the *Syiem* and the *Lyngdoh* clans, *Ki Jait Syiem bad Jait Lyngdoh* and the religion and investiture ceremonies associated with the appointment of a *Syiem* or a *Lyngdoh*. This book makes an interesting observation, that the *Syiem* as well as the *Lyngdoh* clans are not original or founding clans of either the village (*Shnong*), the commune (*Raid*) or the state (*Hima*). These clans (the *Syiem* and the *Lyngdoh*) have been ordained by the elders and citizens for performing the sole purpose of administration. "*Ki jait syiem bad ki jait Lyngdoh ki long ki jait jong ki kam raid ki kam hima, kiba ki bakhraw bad ki khun ki hajar ki la pynkhamti ha ki*".

*Ki Hima Khasi hapoh ka India Union*\(^{35}\), is perhaps the earliest written and often quoted publication that examines (both in English and Khasi) the

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agreements entered into between the Khasi states and the Indian Dominion. These included the Instrument of Accession, Annexed Agreement among others. The author of this publication raises his concern about the emergence of a number of political parties (in 1948) whose objectives though seem to be the same, to firmly establish, improve and maintain continuity of the Khasi land and its people, ‘ban pymneh pynsah pynbha ia la ka Ri ka Jaid bynriew la jong’. The content of the publication is however limited, it could have served a better purpose to the general reader and to the research scholar had it included more information and published at a later period.

*Ki Hima Khasi*36 briefly examines the Khasi states under British rule and their accession to the Indian Union through the various agreements. This book also examines in a more detailed manner the establishment of the Khasi States Constitution Making Durbar, the proceedings of this *Dorbar* and the members of the *Dorbar*. The book has also examined the general apprehensions of some of the members of this *Dorbar* with regard to the proposals of the Sixth Schedule.

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In *Ka History Ka Ri Hynniewtrep*\(^{37}\), the author examines the history of the *Hynniewtrep* people, their position before and after the advent of the British, the period before independence and the emergence of a number of Khasi organizations, the relations of the Khasi states with the Indian Dominion between 1947 and 1950, the Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the Autonomous District Councils and the General Elections of 1952. The contributions of Nongbri to the subject are not new and have been covered by earlier scholars. He has however examined in detail a controversial yet important subject – the role played by *Hima* Nongstoiñ during the period of accession of the Khasi states to the Indian Union. He has also examined in brief the reasons which accounted for the Federation of Khasi States’ failure to achieve its objectives.

*Khanasmari: U Khun U Hajar Ka Ri Hynniewtrep*\(^{38}\), examines the sixteen traditional administrative zones that exist in the East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaiñtia Hills and Ri Bhoi districts. This book has compiled basic statistics with regard to the district and block that each village is under and the population of each village (ST and non ST). The efforts of the editor


are innovative and are in addition to the efforts of Shullai who had published his hypothetical *Ki Khadhynriew Tylli Ki ‘Zone’ Ka Ri Hynniewtrep*\textsuperscript{39}.

**DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS**

To understand the genesis and organization of the Khasi states, primary data has been collected from existing works on these traditional political institutions, archival and government records, folklore and tradition. A visit to the National Archives, New Delhi was also undertaken in 2007 to examine recorded material relevant to Anglo-Khasi relations. Interviews and personal meetings with traditional heads and members of their councils especially those of *Hima* Khyrim and *Hima* Mylliem were also undertaken to understand how these traditional political institutions exist today. These interviews were conducted in a very cordial atmosphere and the statements recorded have been very informative to the research work undertaken. While examining the relations between the British and the two Khasi states, Khyrim and Mylliem and the constitutional developments between 1946 and 1950 relating to these two Khasi states, secondary sources have also been

made use of. A number of visits have also been made to the office of the Khasi Hill Autonomous District Council to collect data and documents and to interact with a number of officers on issues which affect the relations between the KHADC and these traditional political institutions and which are relevant to the research work undertaken. As this study is of current significance, newspaper reports, articles, seminar papers and proceedings of various organizations, correspondences between the Government of India, the Government of Meghalaya and the Khasi states and Autonomous District Council records have also been used as sources of data. To collect data from the field (which includes interaction with the respective Syiem, members of their councils, government officials, scholars, social activists and members of the general public) the following methods were used - unstructured interviews and structured interviews. In the unstructured interview method a broad framework of questions was prepared under which the interview was conducted. During the interview further questions were spontaneously formulated and the information as well as the answers provided enriched the interview. In the structured interview method a set of ten pre-determined, sequenced questions were used to elicit the views of the respondents. Both
these methods were conducted through a person-to-person interaction by the research scholar himself.

CHAPTERISATION

This study has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter I Introduction.

Chapter II Traditional Political Institutions of the Khasi: Anglo-Khasi relations and their position between 1946 to 1950 (with special reference to Hima Khyrim and Hima Mylliem).

Chapter III Constitutional Position of the Khasi states after 1950.

Chapter IV Demand for Constitutional Recognition.

Chapter V Conclusion.