Chapter-V

ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION II: PROBLEMS AND ISSUES RELATING TO LAND AND LAND RELATIONS

The Opposition constitutes the line that demarcates between democracy and dictatorship since it functions as the guardian or watchdog of the liberty of the people. It can be defined as the alternative Government and serves as a focus for the discontent of the people.\(^1\) As Gilbert Campion defines, "the Opposition is the party for the time being in the minority organised as a unit and officially recognised which has had experience of office and is prepared to form a Government when the existing ministry has lost the confidence of the country. It must, therefore, have a positive policy of its own and not merely oppose destructively."\(^2\)

In the legislature, the Opposition exposes the Government's omissions and opposes those measures which are contrary to the public interest. The majority enjoys the mandate from the people to conduct the affairs of the State and continues in office as long as it possesses this mandate; the Opposition though in minority is also an essential component of the legislature and it also represents the electors and, therefore, acts as a check on the ruling party.\(^3\) Through constant scrutiny and criticisms of any Government policy, it keeps the Government on its toes, making it accountable for its actions to the legislature. It is the function of the legislature to


enquire into the conduct of the administration and exercise control over the activities of the Government through various parliamentary methods or devices.\footnote{Ibid., p.81.}

Meghalaya, similar to other hill states of the North East occupies a unique position in the country in the sense that it is a State where the majority population belong to different tribal categories and where the responsibility of political and social decision making is vested on them with regard to which, their monopoly can neither be questioned nor challenged by any other ethnic group. The three main groups inhabiting Meghalaya are the Khasis, Jaintias (Pnars) and Garos (Achik) and they have their own unique customs.

In this chapter, attempt is made to study the role of the Opposition party(s) in the Assembly with regard to the Land Tenure System and Land Relations, and other such related issues or problems contained within this issue. This chapter will attempt to trace the origin of this particular issue and how it was initiated in the Assembly and the subsequent debate and discussion that ensued thereafter, whenever this issue was raised. The role of the Opposition in articulating the problem in the legislature will be studied. The study covers the first three successive terms of the Legislative Assembly (i) 1972-1978; (ii) 1978-1983; (iii) 1983-1988. However, the problems and issues relating to land under cantonment or lands under the occupation of the defence forces will not be discussed in this study as they form part of another area which is not intended to be included in this study.

Meghalaya similar to other hill states of the North East occupies a unique position in the country, in the sense that it is a State where the majority population belong to different tribal categories and where the responsibility of political and social decision making is vested only on them with regard to which, their monopoly can
neither be questioned nor challenged by any other ethnic group. The three major groups inhabiting Meghalaya are the Khasis; Jaintias (Pnars) and Garos (Achik) and they have their own unique customary ways in regard to matters relating to land.\(^5\) The Khasi-Jaintia-Garo Societies were traditionally characterised with a customary tenure with regard to land. the “customary tenure” refers to ‘the distribution of rights to use land or to dispose of/use/rights over land as recognised by the community, the distribution pattern is not necessarily based on statutory or recorded evidence, the institutionalised relationship being more often than not a product of evolution through local customs and community acceptance rather than legislative intervention.’ A characteristic feature of this tenure system is the absence of the concept of land as a marketable commodity and lack of any distinction between community ownership of land and the right of an individual or group to occupy and use a piece of land at any given point within the framework of the rights of the community as a whole.\(^6\) The nonexistence of land records, lack of cadastral surveys, inaccessibility and hill terrain encouraged the continuation of the traditional pattern. The agrarian structure is, therefore, characterised by an increasingly number of uneconomic holdings.\(^7\)

With the adoption of the Sixth Schedule in 1950 and creation of District Councils in 1952, the homeland of the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos graduated from the Scheduled Districts of 1874; to Backward Tracts of 1919; to Partially Excluded ad Excluded Areas 1935 and finally to the Autonomous District Councils of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills of 1952. The Autonomous District Councils were

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constitutionally provided with sufficient amount of autonomy to protect their tradition, custom and integrity.

Since the creation of the District Councils in Khasi-Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills a few legislative measures was undertaken by them with regard to matters relating to land. In the 35 years of their existence no District Councils appeared to have felt the need for initiating land reform measures with specific reference to:

a) abolition of intermediary rights,

b) fixing of ceiling, and

c) tenancy reforms.

Of the 8(eight) enactments on land by the District Councils only 3(three) are somewhat related to land reform measures in the sense that these enactments prohibited the transfer of land from tribals to non-tribals and from non-tribals to non-tribals thereby, establishing the legal rights of only the tribals over land and thus strengthening the attempt to check alienation of tribal lands and concentration of the same in non-tribal hands. These enactments concerning transfer of land were no doubt a good start but since no follow-up measure for progressive land reforms was attempted by the District Councils of Meghalaya, therefore, after the Autonomous State of Meghalaya was set up and the Provisional Assembly instituted the members of the Provisional Assembly felt the importance of this issue and since the existing law on the subject of land was set aside by the Supreme Court, the new government felt that need for proposing a new policy by introducing the Bill on Transfer of land. As agriculture is the mainstay of the people, therefore, land and land relations are bound to play a pivotal role even in the politic of the State and so the issue was bound

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to be raised and discussed in the Legislative Assembly in order for legislation on this
issue to be passed. In the Provisional Legislative Assembly, the issue on land and land
relations was given due importance by the ruling party as well as the Opposition
party(s) since any legislation was going to have a tremendous impact on the State as a
whole and in particular the constituencies of individual members of the Assembly.

The issue of land and land relations was introduced in the Provisional
Legislative Assembly since Meghalaya was an Autonomous State in 1970-71. It was
focussed from the first Address of the Governor in the March session of 1971. In the
Governor’s Address a statement on the policy of the Government towards land read as
henceforth “the system of land tenure in Meghalaya differs from place to place and
also that the entire area has also not been cadastrally surveyed. District Councils are
being financially assisted to evolve a system by which ownership of land can be
identified so that the credit requirements of the agriculturalists can be more easily met
by the different financial institutions.” This statement generated discussion in the
House between members of the ruling party as well as the Opposition culminating in
the demand of land reforms which was the need of the hour for the State. The side of
the Opposition lacked numerical strength as practically all the members of the House
belonged to the ruling party with the exception of few Congress(R) members. This
demand received unanimous support of the House to be implemented. But in the
next session, the April session the Opposition withdraw support to the demand for
land reforms, when the leader of the Congress(R) (Shri Akramozzaman) instead raised the
issue of enunciating the land distribution and land settlement and further insisted for
the introduction of a Ceiling Act at the earliest to prevent exploitation of the farmers.

He further pressed the Government to initiate a solution to the land problem

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10 Debates on the Governor’s Address March 1971.
especially in the Garo Hills District which he represented, as the "land capitalism" was acute here, he stated. No further debate on this issue raised, took place in this session.11 An intense debate on the issue took place in the winter session when the Government introduced the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Bill 1971. This Bill generated heated debate and criticisms from the Opposition especially the Leader of the Opposition, and they offered stiff resistance to the passing of the Bill. The Opposition under the leadership of Shri Akramozzaman strongly opposed the move of the ruling party to pass the Bill which he deemed went against the interest of the non-tribals who constitute sizeable part of his electorates. This opposition further intensified when the Leader of the Opposition moved an amendment Motion to the Bill and called for the formation of a Select Committee comprising both ruling party and opposition members to scrutinise the Bill and to make amendments especially with regard to one Clause which he stated was against the interests of the non-tribals while very much favouring and protecting the interests of the tribals whom the member felt constitute the majority in the State. The Opposition [Congress(R)] felt that the non-tribals were the minority group in the State and, therefore, their interests should be protected. The Bill, it was felt by the Opposition to be against non-tribals who were also residents of Meghalaya. The Motion for amendment of the Bill was, however, defeated and the Bill was carried through and passed during this session. This Bill considered to be an important bill for an emerging State did not receive intense scrutiny and discussion as members of the Opposition could not initiate or introduce any concrete stand to support the amendment moved by their Leader. The ruling party easily defeated the amendment and ensured easy passage of the bill because of their numerical strength. The Bill was passed and enacted in 1971. But this

11 Proceedings of the Provisional Legislative Assembly of Meghalaya April Session 1971.
Bill could not solve the problem generated in the land tenure system and land relations of the Autonomous State and this issue continually cropped up for discussion in successive Legislative Assemblies.\textsuperscript{12}

**First Legislative Assembly 1972–1978**

In the First Assembly from 1972-1976, the numerical strength of the Opposition was practically non existent as the ruling party gained absolute majority in the first General Elections, 1972. From 1976-1978, the numerical strength of the Opposition was raised following the split in the ruling party (APHLC) after it merged with the Congress(I). The second phase of the Assembly saw the conglomeration of the Opposition comprising regional parties — the HSPDP, the APHLC\textsuperscript{*} led by B.B. Lyngdoh and some Independent members.

In the first Assembly of the new State the issue of Land and Land Relations formed a basic issue for the people. When the issue was brought and raised in the House, intense debate ensued from members of the House — both ruling and opposition. This issue was first raised when the Government sought to introduce the Meghalaya Land and Revenue (Application and Amendment) Bill in the 1972 session. The introduction of this Bill resulted in protest from the Opposition and the Independent member (M.N. Majaw) moved a Motion seeking for the Bill first to be circulated for eliciting public opinion before being adopted by the House. Other members of the Opposition strongly supported for the move for amendment leading to heated discussion between members of the ruling party and the Opposition. Yet the

\textsuperscript{12} Proceedings of the Provisional Legislative Assembly of Meghalaya Winter Session November 1971.

\textsuperscript{*} After the merger of the APHLC with the Congress(R), some members of the APHLC left the ruling party ad revived the APHLC under B.B. Lyngdoh.
Opposition were unable to successfully carry the amendment move through. This Motion was defeated and the Bill was passed and adopted making the Government successful.\footnote{Proceedings of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly (20th June, 1972).}

In 1973 session, this issue emerged and occupied centre stage when the Government proposed to set up the Land Reforms Commission in order to undertake an indepth study/survey of the lands in the Khasi Hills District. This proposal raised stiff objections from the Opposition as they felt that the proposed survey must not be confined only to the Khasi Hills District but must cover the entire lands in the State, as only this can facilitate the finding of a solution to solve the problems related to land tenure system and land relations. The Opposition in this session moved a Cut Motion to this effect to represent strong disapproval of the policy of the Government and to ventilate its grievances against the proposed move of the Government. This move did not yield any result as they were unable to thwart or stall the Government in its move and the only option left was they decided not to extend their support to Government on this move. The Opposition further insisted that the Government set the record of rights and ensure that cadastral survey of land was carried out. The first Cut Motion was tabled by the Independent member (H. Hadem) that the total provisions of 47,000 under Grant No.13 for the Directorate of Land Records be reduced by Rs.100. The aim of this Motion was to discuss the failure of the Department to maintain the up-to-date records of the area within the State as well as the working of the particular department. The other three Cut Motion Notices by Congress(R) member (Maham Singh); HSPDP members (H.S. Lyngdoh and Y.F. Lyngdoh) were not moved as these members later supported the first Cut Motion. This Motion ended in withdrawal as after the debate and after clarification from the Leader of the House as well as the
minister concerned, the mover withdraw his Cut Motion. The original demand for the grant was put to vote. The Motion was carried and the demand was passed and granted. In this session, the Opposition were partially successful in ensuring close scrutiny of the proposal and demand of the Government who had to clarify its stand on the floor of the House before the demand was granted. This Opposition successfully utilised the Cut Motion to ensure debate and scrutiny of the policies of the Government with regard to land system in the State.

In the session of 1974, originally four Cut Motion Notices were submitted by the Opposition but because of the similarity of their demand, the Speaker bracketed all the four Motions to one Motion moved by the Independent member (M.N. Majaw). This Cut Motion seeks to reduce the supplementary demand for grant of Rs.44,000/- to Re.1/- under Supplementary Demand No.1 for Land Revenue-Land Records; Sub-head Land Reforms Commission. This Motion sought to oppose the setting up and the continuation of the Land Reforms Commission. This Motion was supported by some Independent members, but the main Opposition party — the HSPDP remained silent on this and supported the move of the Government. The Motion was, therefore, negatived and the Cut Motion was lost. The demand of the Government was passed after being voted by an overwhelming majority. The Opposition though in minority, but, had there been no division in its ranks, would have forced the Government to clarify its position in regard to this Commission and to give justification for its continuation. But because of the division in the Opposition the demand was easily granted. Another discussion of this issue during this session was when the Meghalaya Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Bill 1972 under Article 200 of the Constitution (to exclude the 3 Wards of Shillong from its

purview) was sent back by the Governor for reconsideration by the House. The ruling party members were in favour of amendment but the Opposition were against amendment of the Bill. The ruling party was able to endorse their stand as they were in majority and the Motion was carried through wherein the suggestions of the Governor were accepted. The Opposition, particularly the HSPDP bitterly disappointed with not being able to stop the passage of the amendment of the Bill staged a walk out in protest led by the Leader of the Opposition, H.S. Lyngdoh, and refused to participate in the proceedings during the voting of the Motion. The Bill was passed without the presence of the entire Opposition when the Report of the Land Reforms Commission was tabled in the House, its recommendations also generated prolonged debate between the two sides. The Opposition raised objections to certain clauses of the Report of the Commission. However, there was lack of unity of the Opposition to sustain their criticisms and the Commission was deemed to be successful, as the Report was tabled in the House. The Opposition through the Independent member (M.N. Majaw) introduced the Amendment to the Meghalaya Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Bill 1974 which seeks to amend Clause I and II of the Government Bill. The Bill was introduced and intense discussion followed. During the ensuing debate two other members (P.N. Choudhury and D.N. Joshi also moved amendments to the Amendment Bill 1974. Their motion was lost by voice vote. The Amendment Bill of M.N. Majaw after lengthy debate was put to vote but it was lost by voice vote.

Following the tabling of the Report of the Reform Commission for the Khasi Hills in the latter part of the 1974 session, where due to lack of cohesiveness in the * Meghalaya Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Bill 1974.

Opposition, the Motion was left pending and got carried into the 1975 session of the Assembly. In this session the Government sought to introduce the cadastral survey of lands in the Khasi Hills, as was recommended by the Commission. This move of the Government initiated intense discussion in the House as the Opposition felt that cadastral survey should be undertaken for the whole State and this was not possible without proper demarcation of boundaries. Three Cut Motion Notices were submitted during 1975 by the HSPDP members (R. Lyngdoh, S.D. Khongwir and F.K. Mawlot).

a) The first Cut Motion to be taken up was the Motion moved by R. Lyngdoh that the total provisions of Rs. 1,31,000/- under Grant No. 6 on Land Revenue, be reduced to Re. 1/-. This Motion sought to highlight the problems of delay of registration and compensation and criticised the Government for encouraging the land owners to give or issue patta. Some members sought clarification on the statement made by the Minister for Revenue with regard to sales deed. The mover of the Motion after being satisfied with the clarification, withdrew his Motion.

b) Another member of the HSPDP (S.D. Khongwir) also withdrew his Motion which was similar to the first one.

c) The third Cut Motion was submitted by HSPDP member (F.K. Mawlot) and was similar to the first Motion but the aim of the discussion was different. The aim of this Motion was to urge the Government to undertake a cadastral survey of the land in the State. During the voting, the mover was absent but the Motion was put before the House. It was negatived and the Cut Motion was lost.

Though the Opposition made use of Cut Motion to thwart the moves of the Government especially when the Report of the Land Reforms Commission was tabled, but they were unable to prevent the continuance of the work of the
Commission but succeeded only in initiating discussion in the House and discussed the demands of the Government.\(^{16}\)

During the 1976 session of the Assembly, the issue was raised when some members of the Opposition while debating on the Governor’s Address referred to the statement made with regard to setting up of land reform measures together with District Councils. The HSPDP member (Y.F. Lyngdoh) was against any land reform measures as this will affect the existing customs and patterns of the people, and was in favour of only cadastral survey and record of rights. Another member from the Garo Hills [Akramaouzzaman, Congress(R)] pressed the Government for abolition of the jothdari system prevalent in this District.\(^{17}\) In this session, the Minister for Revenue, moved a Resolution with regard to the issue of land. This Resolution was adopted with the exception of the Leader of the Opposition who refused support to adopt this Resolution “seeking for protection of the indigenous people from exploitation.

In this session, another Bill with regard to land system was introduced — the Meghalaya Transfer of Land [(Regulation) (Amendment)] Bill 1976. The Bill did not evoked much response from the Opposition with the exception of HSPDP member (H.S. Lyngdoh) and an Independent member (M.N. Majaw). The former while welcoming the move of the Government to introduce this Bill felt that there should have been more measures to regulate this issue. The latter supported the above statement of the HSPDP member that there ought to be changes in the Bill at a later period. At the same time, the member made reference to an earlier Amendment Bill on this subject which was brought by the Opposition, but was not endorsed by the Government. He drew the attention of the House to the fact that though similar in

\(^{16}\) Proceedings of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Debates 1975.
\(^{17}\) Debates on the Governor’s Address 1976.
nature, the ruling party rejected the Opposition sponsored Bill but easily adopted the Government Bill thereby referring to non co-operation between members both ruling party and Opposition in the House, but the ruling party being in majority its will prevailed. When the Resolution on Urban Land Ceiling Act was moved, the issue was brought back into focus and there was general discussion on this. But due to its being introduced at the later stage of the session, members of the Opposition stated that there was hardly time to study and analyse the provisions of the Resolution as the House was to be shortly adjourned and were, therefore, against adopting this Resolution. This subject and subsequent discussion was carried over to the next session.¹⁸

In the 1977 session, the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Acts and Rules which was earlier introduced in the Assembly session of 1976, dominated the proceedings of the session. Members of the Opposition raised objections to certain provisions in the Act. Mostly favouring the erstwhile Land Transfer Act of the District Council which they deemed had generated commendable performance. The Opposition in the form of Private Members' Bill introduced a counter Bill, to Meghalaya Transfer of Land Regulation (Amendment) Bill 1977 by R. Lyngdoh which did not include the provision “time limit”, a provision* which most members were against when discussion of the sponsored Government Bill was introduced. This Bill did not receive much support from the members of the House and ultimately the Bill was negatived and lost. In this session, the issue of patta system or sales deed emerged and evoked strong reaction from the Opposition who favoured abolishment of the system and pressed for the introduction of a Bill to ensure speedy compensation

¹⁸ Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Debates 1976.
* Provision — “Seeking for protection of the indigenous people from exploitation.”
to people whose lands were acquired by the Government. This discussion further
gained momentum, when APHLC member (B.B. Lyngdoh) former Minister for
Revenue brought to the attention of the House, about the presence of such a Bill
framed by the previous Government, thereby implying that this Bill was put aside by
the present Government. This evoked heated reactions from the Opposition.

a) The Opposition then moved two Cut Motions to press the Government, to clarify
the position of the Government on this issue. The first Cut Motion was moved by
the HSPDP member (S.D. Khongwir), a Cut Motion on amount of Rs.13,99,000/-
under 229 – Land Revenue “be reduced to Rs.100/-. The Motion was about the
sale or transfer of land and not about allotment. This Motion insisted on giving
patta to the Government in all those cases where the Government acquired land,
to ensure speedy compensation to the owners, as well as the lessor and the
‘lessee’, so as to avoid undue hardships to the occupant of the land. This Motion
was later on withdrawn.

b) Another Cut Motion by another member of the HSPDP, seeking to highlight the
delay in land compensation was also withdrawn.

The Cut Motions were withdrawn after the Government had assured the House
that the matter was being looked into. This goes to show that the Opposition amply
made use of the devices to seek clarification from the Government regarding its
programme and after satisfying itself from the clarification and assurances from the
Government withdrew their Motions. These Motions of the Opposition served as
devices with which the Opposition tried to ensure that no Bill sponsored by the
Government were readily accepted by the House but ensured that discussion ensued
after each move of the Government. In this session being the last before the second
General Elections to the State, the issue on land relations occupied centre stage and
was widely discussed and debated in the House as the issue was considered of great significance particularly to a new State, as it was a core issue.19

Table-5.1: List of Cut Motions submitted by the Members of the Opposition 1972-1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Notices submitted</th>
<th>No. of Cut Motions admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Independent; Cong(R); HSPDP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 2-Withdrawn, 1-Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to this subject, the Opposition utilised Cut Motions whenever any policy or Bill of the Government was introduced in the House. By utilising Motions to ensure that the Government do not readily get such policy or bill passed in the House, the Opposition though aware of their numerical strength, but ensured that full discussion and debate follow any such move of the Government, thereby proving that it sought to be a viable Opposition keeping the interest of its constituents in focus, and ensuring that the public are made aware of such moves of the Government. Because of their numerical strength, the Opposition were unable to endorse their opposition nor compel the Government to endorse their stand but were able to ensure that any action of the Government received scrutiny and discussion of the House before being passed or implemented. Lack of unity among the Opposition hamper any move to consistently pursue their agendas and as such they were no match for the ruling party. There was division in the ranks of the Opposition and in most cases, individual members raised objections and Opposition to any move made by the Government. In only one instance, the Opposition presented a united front when they staged a walk

out in the voting of a Bill they were adamantly against being passed. In another instance where they acted in unison was when they refused to extend support to the Government on a particular matter. The Independent members usually were the ones who were vociferous in their arguments and opposition towards Government policy and were persistent in their efforts to seek clarification and answers from the Government. Though the numerical strength of the Opposition from 1976 slightly rose with the presence of the APHLC (B.B. Lyngdoh group), but the Opposition did not form one major Opposition but remain fragmented and this had an effect on their performances in the House as each group was concerned with its own interests.

Second Legislative Assembly 1978-1983

The Second Legislative Assembly was instituted after the 1978 General Elections. In the initial year 1978-79, the Assembly was marked by political instability as there were frequent change of Government. The main Opposition in this period was the UMPDF, a coalition of the INC and some Independents. From 1979 onwards, however, there was political stability with the installation of the INC and APHLC a ruling coalition. The Opposition comprised the regional parties — APHLC, PDIC and some Independents.

In the 1978 session of the Second Assembly, the issue of land and land relations was taken up once, amidst heated exchanges on both sides. Heated exchanges erupted when the Opposition drew the attention of the Government to its Notification dated 7th June 1978 which was published on the 8th June 1978 whereby transfer of land was prohibited from “tribal to non-tribal” and from “non-tribal to non-tribal,” irrespective of the fact whether the non-tribal is a bonafide resident of Meghalaya or any other State. This Notification clearly indicated the Government’s
intention to implement the Meghalaya Transfer of Land Regulation Act 1971 despite the fact that as a result of severe criticisms in previous sessions, it was not implemented. But this time the Government had serious intention of implementing the Act as indicated by the Notification. The Opposition (UMPDF) especially those members whose constituents were made up mostly of non-tribals though bonafide residents of Meghalaya raised their objections to the intention of the Government and severely criticised it for going against the interest of a certain section of the residents of Meghalaya. The Government on its part, however, accused the Opposition stating that this Act was already passed by the House in 1971, and members of the UMPDF, at that time had not raised any objection, in the process the Bill was passed. Claims and counter claims flowed from both sides each accusing the other of introducing and passing of the Act. The House was adjourned though this problem continued. The Opposition introduced a Cut Motion on this seeking to reduce the demand of the Government of Rs.39,40,000/- under Grant No.15 to be reduced to Re.1. This Motion aims at raising opposition to the Land Transfer Act and its provisions. This Motion was later withdrawn by the mover after receiving assurances from the Government.20

In 1979 session, the issue received considerable attention from the Opposition. In this session, the Government introduced the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) 1979. This Bill generated heated discussion in the House. The Leader of the Opposition moved a Private Members’ Bill, the Amendment to the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 1979 countering the Government Bill. This Bill seeks amendments to Clause II of the Bill be adopted (that is substituting old wordings with new wordings in this Clause). Heated exchanges erupted as the ruling party supported the Government Bill whereas the Opposition

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supported the Bill moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition was prevailed to withdraw his Motion as it was similar to the Government's Bill but refused to do so. The Motion was put to vote but it was defeated, as the ruling party commands majority in the House and they refused to endorse it. The Government sponsored Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 1979 was adopted and passed. Though the Government did not lend its support to such Bills, the discussion on these Bills had been fruitful, since individual members had drawn the attention of the Government to the necessity of changes in the existing laws.21

This issue was not raised in the 1980 session. But in the 1981 session this issue dominated proceedings in the House and the House witnessed heated discussion between the two sides. Twice members moved and introduced amendments of their own, and thrice the Meghalaya Land Act generated intense debate and in one session, the member from Garo Hills raised questions on the issue of land relationships in Garo Hills.

The lone Janata member (M. Rehman) raised questions when the Meghalaya Land Transfer (Amendment) Act was introduced in April 1981 session. Initially, welcoming the Amendment initiated by the Government, but at the same time criticised the Clause 4B of the Act stating that Amendment would not be of any use as this will have an adverse effect on permanent residents of the State who are non-tribals. Further, the member moved a separate amendment with regard to Clause 4B and urged the House to consider the sentiments and interests of people of all sections of Meghalaya. Therefore, he appealed to the House to consider his suggestion and endorse the amendment he proposed. The Government refused stating that the

Meghalaya Land Transfer (Amendment) Bill 1981 was introduced after having considered all the drawbacks and correcting them. The member was asked to withdraw his Motion but on his refusal to do so, it was put to vote but was lost by voice vote. The member staged a walk out in protest.

Another PDIC member (M.N. Majaw) moved the Land Acquisition (Meghalaya Amendment) Bill 1981 but this Bill was considered withdrawn due to the absence of the mover from the House on the day it was taken up.

Two members of the Opposition moved separate Private Members’ Bills to seek amendment to Bills introduced by the Government. The other incident which raised question in the House was when the Relief and Rehabilitation Scheme granted to Garo families who had migrated to Meghalaya from the erstwhile East Pakistan (Bangladesh) during the Indo-Pak War 1971, was brought up and discussed in the House. As part of this scheme, the Government had allotted 89 bighas of land to 45 Garo families. In this session, the PDIC member (M.N. Majaw) drew the attention of the House to the reality of the situation which was different from the claim of the Government. The member questioned the contradictory statement of the District Council that no land had been given to any non-tribal. The reality was different as in 1981, 600 bighas of land was requisitioned by the Soil Conservation Department to help the villagers of Monabari village. In reality the officials clandestinely made hasty measurement of this reclamation in favour of the Muslim from Goalpara District of Assam by issuing 13 Annual Pattas. The member insisted the Government to reply to this question on whether the “District Council had issued these pattas to the non-tribals”, and pressurised the Government independently to conduct a survey on whether this allegation had any bases or not. This matter was even brought up and discussed in Parliament. This unsettled the Government wherefore the Chief Minister
had to clarify the questions raised and issue a statement on this development, clearly refuting the allegations made against the District Council as well as the Soil Conservation Department.

The PDIC member (M.N. Majaw) introduced the Land Acquisition (Meghalaya Amendment) Bill 1981 in which he incorporated a number of important matters connected with land relations in Meghalaya. The member stated that he was prepared to send it to a Select Committee if the House allowed for the introduction of the Bill. The Government was unwilling to endorse this move stating that the Government of India was considering certain amendments to the Land Acquisition Act to ensure "uniformity and basic law of land acquisition for all States." The Government was, therefore, the competent authority to send its recommendations on this to the Government of India. Further, the Chief Minister opposed the Private Members' Bill terming it to be full of complications. The member justified his Bill to prevent delay in legislation. This Bill receives support from the other Opposition members with APHLC member (S.D.D. Nichols Roy) asking members to give their suggestions and recommendations to incorporate them in the Bill and sent to the Select Committee entrusted with studying amendments of the Land Acquisition Act to ensure a uniform Land Transfer Act for all the States. The Government at this juncture called for deferment of the discussion on the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 1981 which it had introduced as it had received communication from the President about the presence of a Committee to study this problem. This move to defer the discussion and introduction of this bill received severe criticisms from the Opposition as they felt that the Government lack seriousness and commitment to solving this problem, as it called for discussion on this issue to be deferred though a Special Session had been called to discuss this issue.
The Opposition, therefore, sought information about the policy of the Government with regard to lands leased out to non-tribals in the European wards as these lands remained vacant due to non-occupation of these lands. They further render advice to the Government to reclaim such lands to be used for public purposes. In this session, the issue of land and land relations received much attention and occupied centre stage in the House as a result of the policies introduced by the Government.22

The discussion on the issue of land in the 1982 session of the Assembly before the Third General Elections to the State was focused on the issue discussed in the previous session. In this session members of the Opposition simply sought clarification and information on the Government’s intention to these issues. They reiterated their demand for reclamation of lands leased out to non-tribals. The Opposition also sought information on Government’s intention on whether compensation will be paid to owners whose lands are acquired by the Government for public purposes. In this session, the issue of land and land relations was carried over from the previous session in 1981 and no new developments took place.23

The second Assembly of the State covering the period 1978-1983 saw the Opposition utilized Cut Motions, moved amendments to Bills introduced by the Government and introduced Private Members’ Bills in the House to counter policy of the Government though without much success as their Motions were either withdrawn or lost when put to vote. In this session, the Opposition were more aggressive and dogged the Government to justify and clarify its position with regard to this issue. In this session too, the Government was not successful to solve the vexed issue of land

22 Proceedings of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly 1981.
problems as any move on its part did not escape close scrutiny from the Opposition and lengthy and heated discussion usually ensued.

**Third Legislative Assembly 1983-1988**

The Third Legislative Assembly 1983-1988 commenced after the General Elections in 1983. Except for a brief period in the beginning, the ruling party was the Congress(I), with the exception of one month from February-March 1983 when the regional parties were in the Government. Initially, the strength of the Opposition comprising the regional parties – APHLC, HSPDP, PDIC and some Independents was strong but gradually due to defections to the ruling party the numerical strength of the Opposition dwindled especially of the APHLC. Another development in the Third Assembly was the merger of the APHLC and HSPD to form the HPU which became the main opposition in the latter part of the term 1986-87. The HSPDP though considerably weaker was revived by some loyalists under the leadership of H.S. Lyngdoh and became the second main Opposition group. The Opposition were not united but were fragmented.

The issue of land relations received considerable attention only in two sessions of the Third Assembly that is from 1984 to 1987 sessions. In the 1984 session the issue was raised by the APHLC member (P.R. Kyndiah). He drew the attention of the House to a news item in which the Government had stated “that all Government lands held by individuals, under different kinds of leases will be settled by the Government.” This statement agitated the public particular those sections who stand affected by this proposed move, and the member was ventilating their grievances by raising these questions. Another member from Garo Hills (P. Rava) moved a Motion seeking to discus the matter on necessity of production of Permanent Residential
Certificate (PRC) in the land settlement in *Mouza No.IV* of West Garo Hills. Highlighting the difficulties of locals suffering in *Mouza No.IV* in respect of land transfer. He observed that since land settlement is the jurisdiction of the Garo Hills District Council, therefore the Government ought to empower the District Council to keep in check any nefarious attitude of those holding the *Mauzza* land (*Mouzzadars*) by insisting on the Permanent Residential Certificate. This action will ensure protection of *Mouzza No.IV*. Those supporting the Motion agreed with the statement made by the member who moved the Motion and urged the Government to insist on production of such document on the part of the non-tribal who wants to transfer his land to another non-tribal. This Motion was opposed by members who belonged to another community. The member (Md. K.R. Khan) defending his stand stated that production of this document does not guarantee prevention of illegal transfer of land, as genuine. Residents of Meghalaya who belong to other communities are in most cases denied this certificate. Further, he observed that the District Council was the competent authority to ensure legal transfer of land, since a law had been promulgated to regulate transfer of land in Meghalaya. This statement in turn was opposed by the Opposition who stood by earlier stand of insisting on the Certificate for this particular *Mouza IV* as it is the only provision to safeguard the land to be enjoyed by the people of Meghalaya. The Government supported the earlier stand taken by one of its members of accrediting the District Council as the competent authority for the whole District. With regard to initial allotment, the Government assured the House particularly the Opposition, that this would be done taking into consideration the Assam Land Regulation Act which was present; whereas regarding transfer of land, the Meghalaya Land Transfer Act would be considered. This ensued in heated discussion, whereby in conclusion, the Government stated that the matter under
discussion was outside the purview of the law and that transfer of land could not be restricted. The discussion of this issue in this session ended unresolved with no commitment from the Government towards ensuring a solution.24

In the 1985 session, the issue was taken up by the Independent member (H. Hadem) who observed that the Government’s tendency of amending the Land Transfer Act would have an adverse effect on the policy of land in the State as the provisions of the Act itself guarantee to safeguard and preserve the land for the original inhabitants of the State. He, therefore, urged the Government against introducing any amendment to the Act in the future. The HSPDP member (H.S. Lyngdoh) moved a Motion to discuss the Land Transfer and Land Acquisition but this Motion was lost as it lacked support from the other members of the Opposition.

In the 1986 session, the issue of land relations was brought to the House when HPU member (K. Singh) moved a resolution on the issue of the Land Transfer Amendment Bill 1981 but it was not adopted as no discussion took place over this proposed move of a member of the Opposition.25

The 1987 session witnessed a resurgence of this issue as in this session intense discussion ensued following the Government’s introduction of the 20-Points Programme in the wake of directive from the Central Government. This was necessitated following the Government’s move to distribute surplus land to the landless mostly belonging to the other community. A resolution was moved by the HPU member (W. Syiemkong) seeking a discussion not to implement the programme as this will affect the existing land regulation in the State. The member questioned the meaning of the term “surplus” as in Meghalaya people were still short of land due to

25 Proceedings of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly 1985-86.
the hilly and stony terrain. Two observations were made by the Opposition. Some members raised objections to the proposed usage of surplus land as land is considered scarce in Meghalaya. Other members sought clarification from the Government on who constitute the "landless" people in Meghalaya as even most of the indigenous people — the real owners of the land according to customary laws were landless.

Each side supported their own observations and stand. Members of the Opposition supported the resolution whereas the ruling party supported the move of the Government as being taken for the betterment of the living conditions of all sections of people in Meghalaya. Strong objections were raised by the ruling party members against charges of the Opposition that the programme was a policy of the Congress party being in the ruling chair, and further clarifying that this was a national policy of the Central Government for the betterment of all. Further, reiterating that the Congress party never took any decision arbitrarily but through consensus of all and it was never the intention of the Government to forcibly acquire lands as was charged by the Opposition.

The Opposition also brought a Cut Motion to initiate discussion on the Government's decision to claim lands for mining purposes. The Cut Motion was introduced by HPU member (H. Hadem) seeking to reduce the demand of Rs.80,83,000/- to reduce to Re.1/- under Grant No.56 for Land Revenue. In the ensuing discussion the Opposition raised apprehension that in most cases lands acquired by the Governments always remained vacant, and this the members feared, would generate encroachment. The members further urged the Government to adequately compensate owners for land acquired. In the case of acquisition for mining purposes the members of the Opposition vehemently opposed it and supported the Cut Motion. The Motion was put to vote but it was lost. However, it secured assurances
from the Government for a thorough study of the case and that the matter would be dealt according to the provisions of the Constitution. Further, replying to questions asked on surplus land, the Government assured the House that the matter had been referred to the Central Government which, in turn, had replied that it had no intention of disturbing the customary tribal rights.

Another Cut Motion on the same subject of Land Revenue was submitted to the Speaker by the same member. But when the Speaker asked the member to move his Motion he did not comply and the Motion was considered withdrawn.26

In this Third Assembly (1983-1988), the issue of land in Garo Hills District received due attention. Opposition members were in favour of issuance of PRC for any transaction of land between the people residing in Garo Hills so as to safeguard the interest of the indigenous people. This was not received well by members from other groups wherein reservations were raised, as it was felt this will hamper transactions of land to genuine permanent residents of Meghalaya who do not belong to the indigenous community. Another issue receiving considerable attention in this session was the question of surplus land. Members of the Opposition raised strong protests to the Government's use of the term “surplus land”. Stating that in Meghalaya there is dearth of surplus land and were against requisitioning of land by the Government. Cut Motions were brought to initiate discussion of this issue in the House. Resolutions and Amendments were also initiated by the Opposition. Though these devices were not accepted by the Government, they succeed in ensuring full discussion of this issue and the Government was forced to clarify its stand and to give assurances to the House on its decisions and actions towards any development in this regard.

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The Opposition utilised the discussion during the Budget session whenever this subject was included.

a) In 1973, when the subject of land was mentioned in the budget with the proposed setting up of the Land Reforms Commission there was discussion when members of the Opposition sought clarification on whether there would be changes in the land tenure system.

b) When the budget was presented during the 1975 session, the Government also laid on the table of the House, the Report of the Land Reforms Commission, and invited discussion of members from all sections. The HSPDP was the most active party that participated in the proceedings of the Land Reforms Commission. This ensured that there was intense discussion in the Budget session 1975.

c) Two members, Akramozzaman [Congress (R)] and Y.F. Lyngdoh (HSPDP) actively participated during the 1976 Budget session, when there was general discussion on the budget, presented. The former called upon the Government to abolish the system of land tenure or the Zamindari system in Garo Hills as he stated that this system is a "stumbling block on the operational side of the Land Reforms Commission" while the latter stated and urged the Government to undertake cadastral survey of the whole State to facilitate maintenance of land records.

The issue of land and land relations considered to be a core issue was viewed with serious concern by the Opposition keeping in mind the interests of their constituents. This was revealed by the Motions and amendments tabled by the Opposition at regular intervals whenever the Government initiated or introduced any bill on this subject. From the time of the Provisional Legislative Assembly when this
subject appeared in the Governor’s Address in the statement that “land reforms was needed in the State”, the issue dominated proceedings of the three successive Assemblies (1972-1988).27

The introduction of the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) 1971 in the Provisional Assembly created the first heated exchanges between the two sides. Vehement opposition were voiced by opposition members whose constituents also constitute a sizeable number of non-tribals but were bonafide and permanent residents of this State and so this Act is an infringement of their rights. The Opposition in most cases often took advantage of loopholes in the Governor’s Address with which to badger the Government through general criticisms or by making amendment Motions to certain specific proposals in it. There was no unity among the members of the Opposition in most cases, and this coupled with their weak numerical strength affected the fate of these Motions. So though the Opposition were most active during the Debate on the Governor’s Address in pointing out weaknesses in the Government’s policy, programmes and administration, there was little chance for the Opposition to modify the Motion of thanks moved by members of the ruling party. After lengthy and heated debates, such Motions were adopted as the ruling party were in majority and opposition sponsored Motion and amendments were voted down either by voice vote or after vote count.

The Opposition utilised questions to elicit information on the actions of the Government particularly with regard to the reports of the Land Reforms Commission constituted by the Government. Adjournment Motions were utilised for initiating discussion and obtain information from the minister concerned regarding policies and decisions of the Government. The Opposition used Cut Motions particularly in the

27 Governor’s Address in the Provisional Legislative Assembly of Meghalaya 1971.
Third Assembly to initiate discussion and to thwart the proposals or demands of the Government, to be easily acceded to without having a full discussion in the House. Members of the Opposition also moved Private Members’ Bill to counter the bills introduced by the Government though without success. Most of the questions asked caused a stir in Government circles, yet all the questions were not meant to ventilate public grievances. Rather some of the questions were asked from the political point of view, or represent vested interest of constituents of the members or simply to obtain a statement of general policy from the ministers concerned which is often the case.

In articulating the problems and issues of land and land relations, more often the Opposition were never united and this was one of the causes why Motions sponsored by the Opposition were easily defeated. Yet at times they were able to vehemently persist with their agenda and demands to achieve their objective — to draw the attention of the House to the problem at hand and compelled the Government to either issue a statement or give information to the House. In certain cases the Opposition managed to wrest assurances on the matter from the Government. What was not achieved by the Opposition from the Government was the acceptance of their proposal and suggestions by the Government. A case in point is the walk out by members of the Opposition to protest against adamant attitude of the Government though the Government sponsored Motion was carried by the House.

The subject of land and land relations can be considered an important issue as this has an impact on many developments in the State. The problems on this issue has eluded solution for a decade though successive Governments had introduced several Acts and Regulations to regulate the transfer and transactions of land. This contentious issue continue to crop up in successive Assemblies whenever new developments and initiatives were proposed by the Government. Till date no Act
acceptable to all sections of residents of Meghalaya has been introduced or passed by the Legislative Assembly.

**Table-5.2: List of Calling Attention Notices raised by Opposition Members in the First Assembly 1972-1978**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Member</th>
<th>Name of the Elected Constituency</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Single Member Calling Attention Notices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D.D. Lapang</td>
<td>Nongpoh</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>S.D. Khongwir</td>
<td>Mawlai</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H.E. Poshna</td>
<td>Nongtalang</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>H. Hadem</td>
<td>Mynso-Raliang</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>G. Mylliemngap</td>
<td>Sohryngkham</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the First Assembly 1972-1978, Table-5.2 shows the number of Calling Attention Notices submitted by the Opposition with regard to the issues of land, boundary and law and order. In this Assembly with the exception of one notice in 1973, all the notices tabled in this Assembly concerned one particular issue only and that is the Boundary problem. Being a newly formed State this issue was bound to occupy an important part in the proceedings of the House particularly by members whose constituency stands affected in any problems arising in the border areas between Meghalaya and Assam.

From the above table, it can be seen that most of the members of the Opposition who sought discussion of the boundary issue through submitting Calling Attention Notices were Independents with the exception of one member of the HSPDP.

The HSPDP though in its constitution laid stress on this issue, yet in this Assembly it did not actively participate in tabling such notices to ensure discussion of this issue in the House regarding any developments taking place in any of the areas bordering Assam. The APHLC which became one of the Opposition parties in 1976
did not resort to tabling of Calling Attention Notices to draw the attention of the Government towards the boundary issue. Independent members were very active in this period with regard to the boundary disputes and problems.

**Table-5.3: List of Calling Attention Notices raised by Opposition Members in the Second Assembly 1978-1983**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Member</th>
<th>Name of the Elected Constituency</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Single Member Calling Attention Notices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B.K. Roy</td>
<td>Pynthor-Umkhrah</td>
<td>UMPDF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>G. Mylliemngap</td>
<td>Sohryngkham</td>
<td>APHLC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B. Choudhury</td>
<td>Laban</td>
<td>UMPDF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Second Assembly 1978-1983, Table-5.3 indicates the number of Calling Attention Notices tabled by the Opposition on the three issues – land, boundary and law and order problems. The two issues taken up in this Assembly through tabling of Calling Attention Notices were on boundary problems and law and order problems. Two issues tabled by UMPDF members on law and order problems in 1979 were considered similar and clubbed together. The other by the APHLC member in 1978 concerned boundary problems.

From the table, shown it indicates that the movers of the notices on law and order problem were representatives whose constituencies are in Shillong, the capital and are, therefore, directly affected by the then prevailing situation.

The lone notice on boundary problems was raised by the member of the APHLC.

**Table-5.4: List of Calling Attention Notices raised by Opposition Members in the Third Assembly 1983-1988**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Member</th>
<th>Name of the Elected Constituency</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Single Member Calling Attention Notices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W. Syiemlong</td>
<td>Nongspung</td>
<td>HPU</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H.S. Lyngdoh</td>
<td>Pariong</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table-5.4 shows the number of Calling Attention Notices tabled by the Opposition on any of the three issues concerned. In this Assembly only 3(three) Notices all on boundary problems or incidents were tabled in the House. All the three Notices were raised in the last session 1987 of the Assembly.

In this Assembly the HSPDP played an active role in drawing the attention of the House to problems in the border areas through tabling of Calling Attention Notices. Both the members were originally members of the HSPDP, the former stayed with the HPU while the latter went back to the old party (HSPDP). Being members of the HSPDP, this issue was bound to occupy an important role as stated in its Constitution and successive manifesto of the party.

The Opposition utilised the Calling Attention Notices to the maximum to draw the attention of the House towards any developments or incidents in the areas bordering Assam. In the three Assemblies the Opposition’s usage of Calling Attention Notices was not uniform. Rather, it started dwindling from the First to the Last Assembly. In the First Assembly maximum number of notices were tabled numbering 7(seven). In the Second Assembly only one notice concerned the boundary issue while in the Third Assembly all the three notices are with regard to this issue. From this, it can also be stated that this issue occupied centre-stage in the First Assembly of the new State. This indicated that members of the Opposition whose constituency falls in areas or adjoining areas bordering Assam were influenced to draw the attention of the House to any incident in these areas and that the matter should be settled as early as possible as this had an adverse impact on these areas. Whereas in the successive Assembly, the number of such notices had dwindled considerably as other matters were considered of importance — 1(one) notice in the Second Assembly and 3(three) in the Third Assembly.
This indicated that this issue continually dominated proceedings of the House whenever any incidents occurred in these areas. The Opposition through such notices ensured full discussion in the House on such incidents and at times compelled the Government to promise an enquiry on a particular incident.

The other notices tabled by the Opposition in these Assemblies concerned the law and order problem in Shillong, the capital city. Three notices — one in 1973 tabled by the HSPDP member and two notices in 1978 tabled by the UMPDF members who represents constituencies in Shillong.

From the tables shown, it can be seen that the Opposition were never united or uniform in their endeavour to draw the attention of the House towards these problems. This can be seen from the Three Assemblies wherein in the First Assembly majority of members who tabled Calling Attention Notices were Independents; whereas in the Second and Third Assemblies the movers were members of political parties but in some cases whose constituencies were not affected by developments or incidents in the border areas. In the First Assembly with regard to the boundary problem, the political parties did not introduce any notices though this new Assembly was beset by many problems and issues on boundary and also to a certain extent some law and order problem. In the two successive Assemblies, the political parties participated in tabling notices with regard to the issues concerned. The HSPDP the oldest surviving regional party sought to initiate discussion on the boundary problems only in the Third Assembly.

**Cut Motions**

The voting of the demand for grants affords the Opposition an opportunity to oppose any move of the Government and to ensure that any demand of the
Government receives close scrutiny from the opposite benches. During the period 1972-1988 and with regard to the issues concerned — land, boundary and law and order problems, several Cut Motions were moved by the Opposition, ventilating their disapproval of the policy underlying the demand moved by the Government.

Table-5.5: List of Cut Motions submitted by the Opposition Members in 1972-1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Notices submitted</th>
<th>No. of Cut Motions Admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Independents; Congress(R); HSPDP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the First Assembly 1972-1978 a total number of 13(thirteen) Cut Motions were submitted and only 7(seven) Motions were admitted as is shown in Table-5.5. Of the 7(seven) Motion admitted for discussion in the House and after full discussion, the Motions were either withdrawn by the mover after clarification or replies from the Government, or were lost after being put to vote. None of the Motions were accepted. The Motions in this Assembly were all concerned with the land and land relations issue. So in this Assembly maximum numbers of Cut Motions on any initiatives by the Government dealing with land and land relations were moved though without securing any decisive outcome.

The members of the Opposition seriously concerned with this issue were the HSPDP and the Independents, the HSPDP being the main Opposition from 1972-1978. Independent members were also very active with this issue and it was envisaged
that these would culminate in a Land Reforms Act to the satisfaction of all sections of
Meghalaya. Members of the Congress(R) though in the ruling coalition of
Congress(R) and APHLC till 1976, yet moved Motions against the Government as the
proposed policy of the Government would adversely affect the rights of section of
constituents of its members. So demands for grants by the Government on any
policies or programmes were not readily accepted by members of the Opposition but
made use of initiatives for full discussion in the House through their Cut Motions.

Table-5.6: List of Cut Motions submitted by the Opposition Members in 1978-1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Notices submitted</th>
<th>No. of Cut Motions Admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>UMPDF</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>PDIC; APHLC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-5.6 indicates the number of Cut Motions moved by the Opposition with
regard to the three issues undertaken that is land and land relations; boundary
problems and law and order problem. In this Second Assembly 4(four) Cut Motions
were submitted though only 3(three) Motions were admitted by the Speaker for
discussion in the House. The Motions introduced in this Assembly were concerned
with all three issues. In 1978, 2(two) Cut Motions were admitted — one on boundary
and one on land. The Motions were later withdrawn. In 1980 session 2(two) Motions
were submitted and only 1(one) was admitted because of their similarity. This Motion
concerned the law and order situation as a result of the situation in 1979. This Motion
was lost when put to vote.
In the Second Assembly, the three issues were actively pursued by the Opposition as a result of policy(s) initiated by the Government. In this 1978 session for the first time members of the Congress party as part of the UMPDF actively participated in the discussion of issues on land and boundary problem by moving the 2(two) Cut Motions in 1978 session. Whereas in 1980 session, Opposition comprising the regional parties moved Motions to initiate discussion on the demand of the Government for requisition of forces for the maintenance of law and order in Shillong.

Table-5.7: List of Cut Motions submitted by the Opposition Members in 1983-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of Notices submitted</th>
<th>No. of Cut Motions Admitted</th>
<th>Withdrawn/Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>APHLC &amp; HSPDP</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>HSPDP &amp; HPU</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>HPU</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Third Assembly covering the period 1983-1988, the Opposition were very active in responding to any policy or demand of the Government with regard to the matter concerning the three issues mentioned as is indicated in Table-5.7. In the previous Assembly the number of Motions on these issues were less whereas in this Assembly total number of 14(fourteen) Cut Motions were submitted and only 9(nine) Motions were admitted for discussion. Similar to previous fate of Motions these Motions too were either withdrawn or lost when put to vote. In the 1985 and 1986 sessions, Cut Motions were moved by Opposition to ventilate their disapproval and opposition of the workings and continuance of the Chandrachud Committee for studying the boundary problems. Total number of 12(twelve) Cut Motions on this issue were submitted and only 8(eight) Motions were admitted to initiate discussion in
the House. In the 1987 session the 2(two) Cut Motions submitted concerned the land and land relations problems. Only 1(one) was admitted but when put to vote it was lost.

In this Assembly, the two main regional parties — APHLC and HSPDP introduced the Cut Motions indicating their serious concern over this boundary issue and expressed their disapproval of the Government's appointment of this Committee. The HSPDP viewed with serious concern the developments of the boundary problem with no solution in sight after many years.

The Oppositions' utilisation of Cut Motions was put to maximum with a view to hinder ready acceptance of any demand for grants by the Government to ensure smooth functioning of any of its policies or programmes. Though the demands were always passed, the Opposition through their Cut Motions ensured that full discussion took place before such passage. The number of Motions moved in the Assembly was not uniform as is indicated in Table-5.7. This issue taken up were not the same with the exception of Motions against the Chandrachud Committee in 1985-86. In the first Assembly Cut Motions were introduced to discuss the demands by the Government pertaining to the issue of land and land relations.

In this Assembly as many as thirteen(13) Cut Notices were submitted on land and land relations issue. In the Second Assembly only 1(one) Motion was submitted on land relations and in the Third Assembly, 2(two) Motions were submitted on this issue. This issue continued to appear in successive Assemblies pending solution to be acceptable to all. The second issue boundary problem was raised through 1(one) Cut Motion in the Second Assembly whereas in Third Assembly the Opposition moved several Cut Motions 12(twelve) to voice their disapproval over the appointment and workings of the Chandrachud Committee. During the period 1972-1988 only once in
the Second Assembly was a Cut Motion used by the Opposition against demands of the Government to requisition outside Police force to deal with the law and order problem in Shillong.

Though most of the Cut Motions introduced by the Opposition on supplementary grants and general grants were usually withdrawn after clarification and assurances from the Government, yet they served as valuable instruments for the Opposition to criticise the policies of the Government and voice their disapproval of any policies therefore ensuring the general public are made aware of these issues of vital importance to the State. The regional parties as indicated by the tables, as Opposition parties introduced Cut Motions to any demands of the Government, whereas the Congress(R) a national party actively sponsored such Motions in the Second Assembly on the issue of land by members of another community representing the interest of a section of their constituents who were against the policy of the Government with regard to land relations in Meghalaya.

**Resolutions**

Resolution may be in the form of a declaration of opinion, or a recommendation or may in the form to record either approval or disapproval by the House of an act or policy of the Government. Members may give notice of resolutions relating to matters of public interest.
Table-5.8: Resolutions Moved by Opposition Members in the Three Assemblies 1972-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>Resolutions moved by Opposition</th>
<th>Resolutions moved by Ruling Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>HSPDP (L) PDIC (L &amp; O)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>PDIC (B)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Congress(R) (L)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>PDIC (L &amp; O)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Assembly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>HSPDP (L &amp; O)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>HPU (L)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>HPU (L)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(L) - Land issue; (B) - Boundary problem; (L & O) - Law and order problem.

From the Table-5.8, it can be seen that in the First Assembly 1972-1978, 4(four) Resolutions were moved. Three(3) were Resolutions moved by the Opposition and 1(one) was moved by the Minister for Revenue on the issue of land. The Resolutions moved by the Opposition were lost but the Government sponsored Resolution was adopted.

Only 1(one) Resolution on question of Law and Order problem was moved by the Opposition in the Second Assembly 1978-1983. The Resolution moved in 1980 was not adopted.

During the Third Assembly 1983-1988, three Resolutions were moved in 1985, 1986 and 1987. In this Assembly issues of Land and Land Relations and Law
and Order problem were considered important and the Opposition moved Resolutions on Law and Order problem in 1985 but 1986 and 1987 Resolutions on land were moved by the HPU.

The Independent members (later PDIC) moved 2(two) Resolutions in the First Assembly — one on boundary issue another on law and order problem. Whereas the main Opposition – the HSPDP moved Resolution once only on the issue of land relations. In the Third Assembly the two main regional parties indicated their disapproval of the policy of the Government by moving Resolutions — 2(two) on issue of land and 1(one) on law and order problem.

The two issues that warranted the maximum number of Resolutions were land and land relations issue and law and order problem. The First and Third Assemblies witnessed the same number of Resolutions moved by the regional parties who were in the Opposition. The Resolutions were either lost or withdrawn.

In these Assemblies, the PDIC played an active role in recording disapproval of the policies of the Government in tackling the law and order situation in Shillong once in 1973 and twice in 1980 sessions after the capital witnessed tension in these previous years. The HPU and HSPDP the two main regional parties also moved Resolutions on land relations issue indicating the intensity this problem generate in the minds of the Opposition by the actions, decisions and policies of the Government. Almost all the resolutions proposed by the Opposition were not accepted but the resolution of the Government was almost unanimously adopted with the exception of the Leader of the Opposition who was absent.
Legislation: Private Members' Bills and Government Bills

In a Cabinet form of Government the legislative business is generally divided into two groups, namely, the Government business and the Private Members' business.

In the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly every Tuesday and Thursday is allotted for the transaction of the Private Members' Bills. The Opposition and other private members fully utilised this opportunity. During the period 1972-1988, with regard to the three issues undertaken some bills were introduced in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. Most of the Private Members' Bills were indirect legislative proposals, which aimed at altering the Government's legislations by inserting new clauses, omitting some clauses and modifying Government's amendments.

Table-5.9: Private Members' Bills introduced by Opposition and Ruling Party Members in 1972-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Name of Party</th>
<th>Private Members' Bill moved by Opposition</th>
<th>Private Members' Bill moved by Ruling Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>PDIC</td>
<td>Meghalaya Land and Revenue (Regulation) Bill, 1974</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congress(R)</td>
<td>Amendment Bill to the above Bill</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APHLC</td>
<td></td>
<td>1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill, 1977</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Congress(R)</td>
<td>Meghalaya Transfer of Land Regulation (Amendments) Bill, 1979</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APHLC</td>
<td></td>
<td>1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>PDIC</td>
<td>Land Acquisition (Meghalaya Amendment) Bill, 1981</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1973 - Meghalaya Transfer of Land Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 1973 introduced by the Government comprising the recommendations of the Governor, was passed.

* 1979 - The Government Bill – the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 1979, was passed.
Table-5.9 indicated the Private Members’ Bills by the Opposition and ruling party during the Assemblies with regard to the issues of land, boundary and law and order. All the Private Members Bills were concerned with the sole issue of land relations. In the First Assembly Private Members’ Bills by the Opposition were introduced in two sessions - 1974 and 1977 sessions. Both the bills were lost or considered negative by the Speaker of the House. The lone Government sponsored Bill in 1974 was passed. In the Second Assembly, in the 1979 session only one Private Members’ Bill introduced by the Opposition and one Government sponsored Bill was moved. The Bill of the Opposition was lost; the Government sponsored Bill was passed.

The Third Assembly’s sole Private Members’ Bill was introduced by the PDIC in 1981. The Bill was lost.

These Bills moved by individual members were all based on the issue of land and land relations. Though the Government did not extend support for such bills as they contravenes its own bills, however, the discussion on these bills were fruitful, since individual members of the House had drawn the attention of the Government to the necessity of changes in the existing laws by introducing amendments to bills passed by the Government.

With regard to the issue of land relations members of the Congress(R) expressed concern over the proposed move by the Government’s introduction of Bills on land as it was felt that this would adversely affect and infringe the rights of certain sections of the residents of Meghalaya and in this regard, the party whose members who moved these bills were members of a particular community, moved such amendments seeking changes in the Bills proposed by the Government. In this connection, the Congress(R) moved two Amendment Bills – one in 1974 seeking
amendments to the amendment Bill 1974 of the PDIC member the Meghalaya Land and Revenue (Regulation) Bill 1974 and another in 1979 the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 1979, seeking amendments to certain clauses in the Bill passed by the Government.

Another Opposition party viewing with serious concern the Bills being introduced by the Government was the PDIC. The party introduced two Private Members' Bills twice – one in 1974 seeking amendments to the Clauses I and II of the Government Bill, and another in the 1981 session the Land Acquisition (Meghalaya Amendment) Bill, 1981. Both the Bills when put to voice vote after discussion were lost.

The attitude of the Government was negative as indicated by the position of the Government towards the Amendment Bill moved by the PDIC which was lost by voice vote, due to opposition from the ruling party which refused to endorse the amendments sought. However, the same amendments which were not endorsed by the Government later were made the main provisions of the Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) (Amendment) Bill, 1976 introduced by the Government. Though stiff resistance was offered by the Opposition alleging the Government of adopting double standards and negative in its approach towards the Opposition, this Bill was passed as the Government never favoured the Opposition, the Opposition never miss any opportunity in drawing the attention of the Government and the House towards the need of changes in the State of existing laws and public grievances.

Motions on Policy and General Interest

The discussion on a matter of general public interest and policy or situation or statement provides ample opportunities to the Opposition to enlighten itself. The
notice of the Motion is required to be given in writing addressed to the Secretary. The Speaker decides the admissibility of a Motion with reference to the rules and disallows any Motions or part thereof which abused the right of a Motion.

Table-5.10: Motions Moved by Opposition Members 1972-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Name of Party</th>
<th>No. of Motions Introduced</th>
<th>Issues on which Motions are based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Independent HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motions Introduced in First Assembly

Table-5.10 indicated the number of Motions introduced or moved by the Opposition with regard to the Boundary issue considered to be vital to the new State. Total number of 5(five) Motions were moved solely on this issue. This indicated the matter to be of general interest and concern.

The HSPDP which remained the main continuous Opposition party in the First Assembly raised maximum number of Motions on this issue as the boundary issue occupied prominence in the Constitution of the party.

Table-5.11: Motions Moved by Opposition Members in 1978-1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Name of Party</th>
<th>No. of Motions Introduced</th>
<th>Issues on which Motions are based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>HSPDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>PDIC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motions Introduced in Second Assembly

In the Second Assembly 1978-1983 less number of Motions were moved by the Opposition. Motions were moved only in two sessions – 1979 and 1982 sessions of the Assembly. Motions moved in this period also were on the issue of boundary. Both the Motions were closed after the members were satisfied with the reply and clarification of the minister concerned.

In this Assembly, the HSPDP and the PDIC, regional parties in the Opposition moved Motions seeking clarification and discussion in the House on matters relating to the boundary issue.

Table-5.12: Motions Moved by Opposition Members 1983-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Name of Party</th>
<th>Number of Motions Introduced</th>
<th>Issues on which Motions are based</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984 APHLC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 HSPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-Land, 1-Boundary</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motions Introduced in Third Assembly

Table-5.12 indicated the number of Motions moved by the Opposition in the Third Assembly. In this Assembly 2(two) Motions on the boundary issue were moved by the APHLC and HSPDP each in 1984 and 1985. Only one issue concerning land relations where a Motion was moved by HSPDP in 1985. Total number of 3(three) issues were introduced in this Assembly.

In this Assembly, the HSPDP again moved two Motions one on land and one on boundary. For the first time, the APHLC being an Opposition party moved a Motion on the boundary issue. The Motions were closed after discussion, and no concrete solution was arrived at.
In all the three Assemblies, the issue generating maximum number of Motions moved by the Opposition was the boundary issue. This issue totally dominated the first Assembly when Motions were raised by the Opposition in successive sessions with the exception of the 1976 session when there was a change in the set up of the House. Thereafter, in successive Assemblies — the Second and Third Assembly continuously were raised in the House by the Opposition though not with the same intensity as in the First Assembly, clearly indicating the level of the importance of this issue in the minds of the public. Members of the regional parties especially the PDIC and HSPDP viewed with serious concern any developments or incidents arising with regard to the boundary issue.

The HSPDP showed consistency with regard to monitoring any developments on the boundary issue. In the three successive Assemblies, the party raised Motions on this issue. The First Assembly saw the maximum number of Motions raised by the party in successive sessions of the Assembly from 4(four) in 1972-1978 to 1(one) in 1978-1983 and 1(one) in 1983-1988. The party indicated its commitment to solving this issue facing the new State though without much success as all the Opposition sponsored Motions on this issue were either closed or withdrawn. The other regional parties — PDIC, APHLC and Independents also moved Motions on this issue seeking discussion in the House.

This boundary issue occupied a vital stance in the politics and development of the new State. During this period several incidents occurred necessitating the Opposition to move Motions to initiate discussion in the House and the Government to clarify its position with regard to the solution of this problem. The Government was forced to take steps to meet some of the demands of the Opposition arising in the House on the discussion of the Motions.
Adjournment Motions

Adjournment Motions are considered powerful weapons in the hands of the Opposition to be used to tackle any moves of the Government. The purpose of an adjournment Motion is to draw the attention of the House to a definite matter of urgent public importance and to seek discussion on the subject forthwith by adjoining the business before the House. This gives an opportunity to a member to raise an issue to discuss it on the floor of the House.

Table-5.13: Number of Adjournment Motions Moved by Opposition Members in 1972-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Name of Party</th>
<th>Number of Motions Introduced</th>
<th>Issues on which Motions are based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>UMPDP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-Boundary 1-Law &amp; Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disallowed  Ruled out of order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>PDIC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Admitted for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>HPU</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-Land 1-Law &amp; Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Admitted for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disallowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table-5.13 is shown the number of adjournment Motions moved by members of the Opposition in the three successive Legislative Assemblies on the three issues undertaken for study. From the above table, it can be seen that adjournment Motions on the three issues – boundary, land, law and order were moved once in each Assembly that is 1979 session only in the First Assembly; 1982 session in the Second Assembly and 1987 session in the Third Assembly. With regard to the three issues, the boundary issue was taken up twice as also the law and order problem whereas land issue was taken up once only in the last Assembly. Some of the Motions were admitted by the Speaker and ensuing debate followed in the House, others were either disallowed or ruled out of order by the Speaker.
In the 1979 session two adjournment Motions were moved by the same party (UMPDP – the coalition of regional parties in Opposition) seeking discussion on the two issues but both Motions were not admitted for discussion thus thwarting the attempts of the Opposition to initiate discussion in the House. In 1982 only the PDIC moved a motion for discussing the boundary issue. The Motion was admitted and discussion ensued making for a victorious move by the Opposition. The newly formed HPU moved two adjournment Motions in 1987 session seeking to bring to the attention of the House the land problem and law and order problem in the State. One Motion was admitted for discussion whereas the other was disallowed. This caused for mixed reaction from the main Opposition party as there was mixed results of the Motions it had moved in the House.

The Opposition’s utilisation of the opportunities of moving adjournment Motions resulted in mixed results. The number of Motions admitted by the Speaker was few considering that the Opposition moved few motions on these issues. The attitude of the Government towards these moves was not favourable since the Government always tried to minimise the importance of the issues even though the subject of an adjournment Motion was of public importance. Most of the Motions were tabled with a view to redressing the public grievances and calling the Government to public accountability. These served well enough to draw the attention of the House and the public to the existing grievances.\(^\text{28}\)

To conclude, therefore, it can be stated that the Opposition in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly for the most comprising the regional parties have utilised devices in its armory with which to thwart the adverse moves or policies of the Government; to initiate discussion on the stated issues in the House; to draw the

attention of the House to a matter considered to be of urgent public importance, to hamper any adverse actions of the Government; to seek clarification and answers from the Government with regard to the issues considered of significance to the developments of the State.