Chapter-I

EMERGENCE OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS IN MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya, the twenty-first State of the Indian Union came into existence on 21\textsuperscript{st} January, 1972. It was carved out of the State of Assam. The first step leading to the formation of Meghalaya was the grant of Autonomous State for the same territorial jurisdiction on 2\textsuperscript{nd} April, 1970. When Meghalaya was formed it originally comprised two districts — United Khasi Jaintia and Garo Hills Districts. The present system of representative institution in the State was evolved over a long period, in the process had undergone several changes and been influenced by various factors and situations prevailing over the years.

Before coming into contact with the British, some form of democratic practices prevailed where representative institutions existed in the hill areas, particularly, in the Khasi Hills. During the nineteenth century, however, when the annexation of the entire hill areas by the British was total, the indigenous people lose not only their rights and liberty but their administrative traditions and institutions got eroded.\textsuperscript{1} With the British administration becoming firmly entrenched after annexation, the traditional institutions for so long responsible in running the administration in these areas were replaced by the modern form of administration introduced by the British. The hills were automatically caught in the vortex of radical political and administrative changes which the British rule introduced.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lyngdoh, R.S.: \textit{Government and Politics in Meghalaya}, Sanshar Publishing House, New Delhi, 1996, pp.36-37.
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The British administration of the hills initially was carried on through the operation of paramountcy and political practice, similar to other areas under the British rule. This paramountcy was based mainly on treaties concluded with native rulers, engagements and issuance of *sanads* and usages though, simultaneously, British supremacy existed independent of the traditional institutions. The British administration was governed by the design to ensure isolation of these areas from the plains through the introduction of the multi-tier system that indirectly involves the traditional chiefs as agents of colonial interests. The much professed British policy of non-intervention in the hills was tampered with as and when the convenience or need was felt to suit British interests. Later on, this caused serious erosion of the long practiced indigenous institutions of these areas. The assumption of power over the whole of India by the Crown in 1858 ushered in a more definite and formal relationship between the twenty five Khasi States and the British Government. In this period the District Deputy Commissioner acted and functioned as the Government’s Political Officer in carrying out the administration in these areas.\(^3\) Next, the State of Assam was constituted into a Chief Commissionership wherein the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills were also included in the administration of Assam.

Before the introduction of the 1917 Reforms, the entire Assam was declared to be a scheduled district under the Scheduled Districts Act of 1874. When Bengal was partitioned, the hill areas of Assam became a part of East Bengal and Assam. In 1917, the Montagu-Chelmsford report recommended that the typically backward areas be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Reformed Legislative Council, which meant that if a territory was wholly excluded from the scope of reforms, no legislation should be

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enacted and no resolution should be moved in the legislative council affecting the areas concerned. Legislation for such areas are to be undertaken entirely by means of Regulations made by the Governor-General in Council. The Government of India agreed to the recommendation of exclusion from reforms but did not assent to the taking over of their administration. Further, the Government recommended that as all the hill areas were not totally backward, therefore, total exclusion was not desirable. The areas should be classified into two — the areas in which reforms should not be introduced and the areas in which reforms may be introduced. The Garo Hills were declared totally backward areas and were included in the list of the completely Excluded Areas. These would remain under the control of the Governor, and legislation for these areas would be by means of Regulation. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills were considered less backward and were put in the list of Partially Excluded Areas and were to be administered by the Governor-in-Council, with the legislature being empowered to make laws for these areas. To this effect the Khasis and Jaintias in the British enclaves demanded representation in the Legislative Council but not the Garos.4

The national movement and political consciousness sweeping throughout the country together with the stipulations of the Act of 1919 stating the Governor-General-in-Council can declare any territory in British India to be backward area had an adverse impact on the hill areas, creating an awareness of their position under the British rule and spurring them to make certain demands of the Government. Prior to 1920, these areas were not represented in the Legislative Council as a result of their

being classified as backward tracts but henceforth they were affected by the changes taking place in 1920 and became a part of this significant change.\(^5\)

The changes resulted in the creation of the Shillong Urban constituency and the subsequent election of the representatives of the hill areas to the Assam Legislative Council, wherein the age of representation had been ushered into these areas. Simultaneously, giving representation to the other totally backward areas, in 1921, the Governor of Assam nominated one member to represent the Garo Hills.\(^6\) From 1874 up to 1927, the hill areas of North Eastern India had no share in the Provincial Government. In 1927, the representative from the Shillong Urban constituency, Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy was appointed minister in the Assam Legislative Council though for a brief period.\(^7\) This further generated more political awareness amongst the hill people that crystallized in the establishment of the Khasi National Durbar, comprising all the Khasi chiefs, on 4\(^{th}\) September, 1923. This can be considered the first political organisation in Khasi Hills, whereas in the Jaintia Hills the Jaintia Durbar as a socio and cultural organisation was established in 1900. With the emergence of the Khasi National Durbar the leaders of the Jaintia Durbar sought to activise it as a political platform whose aim was the demand for revival of the Sutnga State and raise it to the status of any Khasi State. This organisation in 1957 became a component part of the Eastern Indian Tribal Union (EITU). The Khasi National Durbar being a common organisation for all the Khasi states sought to bring about unity among the Khasis and improve the system of administration in the Khasi States.\(^8\) It was only in 1927-28 that full scale political activity was generated in the

Khasi and Jaintia Hills following the announcements in the British Parliament that an Indian Statutory Commission and an Indian States Committee was to review and make recommendations for changes in the administration of British India and the Indian States. This unified the Khasi chiefs who met and formed the Federation of Khasi States in 1933 whose main objective was to act as the representative and administrative organ of the Khasi States. The Federation presented a memorandum to the then Viceroy demanding that they should be placed in direct relations with the Viceroy through a Political Agent appointed exclusively for the states in the Khasi Hills. This demand was rejected. The Khasi chiefs met the Viceroy again in 1938 wherein they reiterated their previous demand including a new demand for representation in the federal legislature, and curtailment of the powers of the Deputy Commissioner which the Government, however, did not entertain. These developments reflected the growing political consciousness and ambition of the Khasi chiefs.

Under the Government of India Act 1935, the Khasi-Jaintia and Garo Hills were declared as partially Excluded Areas and were, therefore, represented in the Assam Legislative Assembly. After the 1937 elections in Assam, under the Provincial Autonomy Scheme the representative of Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills too was represented by two elected members.

In March 1928, N.E. Parry formulated a plan for the future of the hill areas suggesting for the establishment of a North Eastern Frontier Province comprising the hill areas of Assam and Burma. This remained the central focus of the British administration until the changed scenario emerged preceding independence. The angle of approach to this question has been changed as a result of the constitutional

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developments taking place between 1930-1935. Until 1930 the plan was to place these hill areas under an Indian administration. A new phase, however, developed after 1935 with the aim of separation of these areas from India and Burma, and to establish a Crown colony directly administered by Britain. This plan was met with little interest by the people of these areas and was resisted by certain tribal leaders.\footnote{Syiemlieh, D.R.: \textit{Op. cit.}, pp.189-190.} On the eve of the British departure, the whole of India became hectic as to the constitutional adjustment that would serve best for the people. In 1944, at the first Hills Youth Union (HYU) comprising representatives from Naga, Lushai, Khasi-Jaintia and Garo communities, wherein public attention was focused on the need for evolving of a separate pattern of administration for the hill districts of Assam in the new constitutional set up. The interim period was eventful for during that time the Federation of Khasi States was revived in 1946 and it managed the affairs of the states according to the powers derived from the Instrument of Accession and Annexed Agreement signed with the Dominion Government. The party supporting this Institution was the Khasi States People's Union. However, the Khasi-Jaintia National Conference (KJNC) another party was opposed to the continuance of the Federation and came forward with the plan for the Autonomous District Council in the regular set up. The seeds of oppositional politics had been sown even before Meghalaya became a State. Agitations of the two parties filled up the constitutional forums during the last stage. During the plebiscites held in 1948, the Khasi States People's Union swept the polls, and during the Khasi constitution making Durbar it secured majority of members present that the Federation should continue. However, during the final arrangement, the Sixth Schedule was applied to both states and British areas.\footnote{Bareh, H.: \textit{Op. cit.}, pp.157-158.}
transfer of power from Britain to the Dominions of India and Pakistan was laid down in the Cabinet Mission Plan of May 1946 in which the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy in consultation with the British Government issued a statement embodying their suggestions and recommendations towards a solution to the Indian political question. The position of the States was further elucidated by the Cabinet Mission in its memorandum of State’s Treaties and Paramountcy in 1946 which stated that with the transfer of power His Majesty’s Government would cease to exercise paramountcy.\textsuperscript{14} The Cabinet Mission further suggested that the void caused by the lapse of paramountcy be filled up either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India or by entering into particular political arrangement with it or them. It further made provisions for the entry of the States into the proposed Union of India\textsuperscript{15}. This led to differences of opinions and agitations between the two parties of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills on acceptance or non-acceptance of the suggestions put forward. The seeds of oppositional politics had been sown in these areas even before Meghalaya attained statehood.\textsuperscript{16}

On February 1947, the British Government made a declaration to quit India, and on this day, the Standing Committee of the Federation of Khasi States met and prepared a Draft Constitution for its future course of action which was then circulated to all the Khasi States for their consideration and approval which was presented in the Constitutional Assembly by its representative. The proposal of the Draft Constitution was not accepted by the Constituent Assembly as it was deemed too rigid, and it,

therefore, made suggestions for changes to be made. While the Federation of Khasi States were hammering out its plan for its future relationship with the successor Government, great changes were taking place over the whole country, which culminated in the transfer of power from the British to the Indians. The States Department of free India came into existence on July 1947 to take charge of the negotiations with the rulers of different states. Further, the Government of India entrusted the task of negotiating with the rulers to Lord Mountbatten, who was then the Crown representative. Lord Mountbatten called a special full meeting of the Chambers of Princes on 25th July 1947, wherein he advised the rulers to accede to any of the Dominions* in regard to three subjects — Defence, External Affairs and Communications. It was against this background that the Federation of Khasi States faced a dilemma. The decision to arrange a referendum in Sylhet clearly indicated that Sylhet would become a part of Pakistan. For centuries, the Khasis had trade relations with both Assam and Sylhet. The dilemma was how to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable views expressed by various leaders and organisations in Khasi and Jaintia Hills wherein on the one hand, the representative of Khasi Hills, Rev. J.J.M. Nichols Roy, in the Assam Legislative Council favoured the idea that the Khasi States should be brought within the framework of the Sixth Schedule of the Draft Constitution of free India. This was opposed by leaders of the Khasi States’ People Union who strongly supported the stand taken by the Federation to separate the Khasi States from Assam and placing them in direct relation with the Government of India. The prevailing situation would have generated great confusion but most of the Khasi chiefs gradually decided to accede to the Indian Union.

* During this period the British dominion of India was divided into India and Pakistan dominions.
On August 1947, the Federation of Khasi States signed the Instrument of Accession and also authorized its representative in Delhi to sign the Standstill Agreement with the Indian Union on their behalf as it was realized that after the British left India, a vacuum would be created in the administrative arrangements between the Khasi States and the Indian Union. The administration of these areas was finally brought under the Indian Government. In order to make the stop-gap arrangement between the Khasi States and Federation of Khasi States on the one hand and the Dominion of India and the Province of Assam on the other, an agreement was signed by the Federation of Khasi States on August 1947.\(^{17}\) Further, with the adoption of the Indian Constitution, the Khasi States and British areas became part of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District within the State of Assam as stipulated by the Indian Constitution. As for the Garo Hills, there does not appear to have been much resistance as in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills to its integration into India.\(^{18}\) Consequent to the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly, the hill areas under the present State of Meghalaya, were constituted into two Autonomous District Councils, namely, the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council as envisaged in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. This Schedule gave a certain measure of self-government a taste of their own representative institution to these areas, though the laws and regulations to be made by the District Councils were subjected to the control and assent of the Governor of Assam. The first District Councils were formed in 1953-54 after the General Elections of 1952. The first representative institution under the Indian Constitution was ushered in the areas with the functioning of the United Khasi-Jaintia


Hills Autonomous District Council and the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council. The transfer of power in 1947 brought in a number of political and administrative changes in the hill districts of the present Meghalaya paving the way for the formation and functioning of representative institution which led to the developments of demand for statehood and the setting up of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly as the State Legislature.

In the midst of all these developments new elements for tribal solidarity rather than individual existence started taking roots in the post-Independence period in which history became integrated among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos. The movement for a separate Hill State was spearheaded by the Khasi National Durbar, a socio-political organisation that had emerged from the British period wherein they had stated for a separate hill districts for Khasi Hills on the eve of Independence. By 1952, this movement had gained momentum in the whole of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District. The formation of the District Council was the stepping stone to the formation of the State of Meghalaya, as the provisions of the Sixth Schedule were unable to generate adequate power to safeguard the interests, customs and traditions of the hill districts, they were meant to serve and this generated in the areas concerned to strive for more autonomy. It is against this backdrop that in 1954, the Conference of the members of the Executive Committees of the Lushai Hills, North Cachar Hills, Garo Hills and the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Councils met in Shillong and discussed the need to launch a movement for a separate State and agreed

to proceed with its demand for such a State. The year 1954 can, therefore, be regarded as a landmark in the political history of the districts of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills, when the movement demanding separation from the State of Assam gained momentum.

The Hill State demand assumed the dimension of a mass movement during the visit of the States Reorganisation Commission in 1955 to vent their disapproval of its recommendations which was against grant of demand for a separate State. The demand for separate state drew considerable attention when, in the second General elections of 1957, the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) spearheading the demand for a Hill State fought the elections on the issue of separate Hill State swept the polls in most of the Hill districts. This tremendous success at the polls made them more vocal and the demand for separation from Assam became more vociferous. At this time, the Garo Hills was represented by the Garo National Council and the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills by the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) which were both component units of the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU). The major issue that had ensured resounding victory in the 1957 elections to the EITU experienced a lull when a coalition ministry was formed between the Congress and the EITU in the Assam Legislative Assembly under B.P. Chaliha ministry. The EITU as a political party was doomed not to survive as the two parties which formed the ministry had conflicting interests and this had an adverse influence on their relationship. This union broke apart as a result of the controversial language bill which seeks to make

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Assamese the sole official language in the whole State of Assam including the hill districts.\textsuperscript{27} With the introduction of the Assam Official Language Bill in July 1960 in the Assam Legislative Assembly, it generated stiff opposition in the entire Hill districts accelerating the demand for separation from Assam by these areas.\textsuperscript{28}

**The Assam Official Language Bill and Opposition politics – An Analysis**

The introduction of the Assam official Language Bill in the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1960 was the final and vital factor which made the dream of a separate State not impossible for the hill districts of Assam. It was during this period that the hill state movement took a new turn when the Eastern India Tribal Union, a coalition of the ruling party, pulled out of the coalition of the B.P. Chaliha ministry. This indicated the firm resolve of the leaders to continue with the movement which had been suspended when the leaders of the hill districts were in the coalition. The exit of the leaders of the hill areas from the coalition resulted in the coming together of all the leaders of all political organisations under the auspices of the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) paving the way for a strong opposition to the intended action of the Assam Government. The role of the people from these areas as an Opposition to the government policy had taken firm roots and eventually ensured their victory and their success in forming an alternative measure. The Eastern India Tribal Union was disbanded paving the way for the formation of the All Party Hill Leaders’ Conference (APHLC)\textsuperscript{29} wherein the Council of Action of the APHLC resolved to adopt peaceful

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and constitutional methods for the achievement of a hill state.\textsuperscript{30} In the Conference at Haflong, the APHLC voiced its strong and determined opposition to the stand taken by the Assam Government and henceforth the demand for full autonomy accelerated, with the successive delegations meeting the Prime Minister and Home Minister on this issue. The last delegation that met the then Prime Minister, Nehru, was in November 1960 wherein he presented his own plan to the delegation as an alternative to the hill state demand. This clearly indicated that the APHLC as an Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly was successful in voicing the opinions of the hill districts which were against the passing of the controversial Bill, in the process, the party proposes an alternative in the form of demand for Hill State comprising all the hill districts of Assam.\textsuperscript{31}

The success of the APHLC in their endeavour as the party representing the hill districts resulted in the Central Government initiating various schemes and proposals to resolve the continuing problem between the Assam Government and the hill districts without sacrificing the stand of either side. The first such proposal was the Scottish Pattern advocated by the Government of India in 1960-62. This scheme suggested for a loose federation with certain autonomy. The APHLC thought differently as it was felt that this proposal would not be able to tackle the language problem nor safeguard the interests and satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the hill areas and, therefore, the proposal was rejected.\textsuperscript{32} In the ensuing elections of 1962, the

\textsuperscript{30} Rao, V.V. et al., \textit{Op. cit.}, p.42.
\textsuperscript{32} Ray, B. Datta and Agrawal, S.P.: \textit{Op. cit.}, p.63. The following were the Schemes, Proposals, Commission and Plans put forward by the Government of India from time to time:
2. Nehru Plan
3. Pataskar Commission
4. Union Territory Plan
Scottish Pattern Plan was made the poll issue and the decision of the APHLC was made known. This election witnessed keen contest between the ruling Congress and the APHLC which secured landslide victory for the latter. This indicated that the party though in the Opposition commands the acceptance of their electorates on the decision made and ensured its efficient functioning as an Opposition. The next proposal was the Nehru Plan advocated in 1963 whose objective was “full autonomy for the Hill Districts” subject to the preservation of the unity of the State of Assam. This proposal was agreed by the leaders of the APHLC to give it a fair trial at its Tura Conference in 1964 but the ruling Congress in Assam showed its dissention to this proposal in its present form. In the meantime a three-man Commission known as the Pataskar Commission was appointed to work out the details of the Nehru Plan. Certain recommendations were made by the Commission which did not find favour with the leaders of the APHLC who rejected the recommendations. After the rejection of the Pataskar Commission Report by the APHLC, several alternative proposals were made, such as the Union Territory Plan by some leaders of the Congress Party suggesting that Khasi-Jaintia Hills be converted into a union territory. This proposal was rejected even by the District Congress Committee. This showed that the two parties had vast differences of opinions though they were members belonging to the districts. However, the APHLC was the only political party that could mobilize mass support by launching a non-violent direction action by the end of 1966 after the two successive proposals — the District State Plan proposed by the Central Home Ministry and the Vishnu Sahay Plan influenced by the Ausgleich of 1867 scheme.

5. District State Plan
6. Vishnu Sahay Plan
7. Federal Plan
8. Mehta Plan
between Austria and Hungary and the government of Ireland Act, 1920 as well as the Cabinet Mission Plan 1946 suggestions for making these districts into a federation, could not satisfy the aspirations of the hill districts. In December 1966, the Government sent an important member of the Planning Commission, Tailok Singh to visit the hill areas and suggest or recommend a solution to the ongoing hills state problem. The Tailok Singh Plan was also drawn on the lines of the Vishnu Sahay Plan recommending the constitution of the North East India into a regional federation. He, therefore, strongly urged that in the interest of the country and the North-East, the existing union between the hills and the plains was to be ended, and recommended the area be constituted into a union territory which was stiffly opposed by the hill districts. Thus 1966 witnessed intense political activity in the hills, wherein the party representing the hill districts, the APHLC effectively and determinedly carried out the opposition to the policy of the Assam Government and carried forward the hill state movement, pressurising both the Assam Government but mostly the Government of India through successive delegations to find a solution to the problem. These developments were considered of prime importance in view of the strategic position of the entire North East which shared international boundaries with China and then East Pakistan.

On January 1967, the Government of India announced its decision to reorganize the State of Assam on the basis of federal structure conferring upon the hill districts equal status with the rest of Assam. This proposal was welcomed by the people from the Hills but met with stiff resistance from the people of the plains.

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Under such circumstances the APHLC was compelled to launch a non-violent direct action on September 1967 and urged the Government of India to implement its decision or create a separate State for the hill areas. The Government urged the APHLC to participate in a joint discussion involving the Government of India representative, the Assam Government and members of the APHLC, but this yielded no solution, instead creating bitterness amongst the two contending parties. Not succeeding in finding a solution, the Government of India next appointed the Mehta Committee consisting of the Government of India, and representatives of various political parties of both the plains and hill areas. The recommendations of this committee include grant of maximum autonomy to the hill areas, but the Federal Plan must not be the basis for reorganisation. The ruling Congress accepted the recommendations as even though it grant maximum autonomy but maintained the unity and integrity of Assam. The APHLC, the major Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly refused to accept the Mehta Plan on various grounds, one of which, was the APHLC was never a party to its formulations. The Government of India was finding difficulty in satisfying either side. The APHLC as a party representing the hill districts was getting firm roots in these areas, and hence the people were willing to abide by any decision of the leaders of the APHLC.

On December 1967 the APHLC stated that since the Government of Assam refused to accept the Federal Plan, a hill state should be formed, at the same time it threaten to launch a direct action if this demand was not conceded. On September 1968, the Government of India announced its plan of reorganisation of Assam which contemplated the formation of an Autonomous State within Assam, with jurisdiction over the two existing districts — the Khasi-Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. This indicated

the success of the APHLC as a party representing the people of these areas and as well as an Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly by being able to prevail in their endeavour even to the Government of India. This Autonomous State Plan was finally approved and accepted by the APHLC on January 1969, though initially they resisted as in the envisaged plan only United Khasi-Jaintia and Garo Hills were included with the exception of North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills who intended to remain with Assam. The acceptance of the Autonomous State Plan was not unanimous as a section of youth leaders who differed with the other leaders of the APHLC left the party. The party which had remained unified so long was marred by discord on the eve of their achievement of their own hill state. This would later have an adverse impact on the APHLC as a political party spearheading the hill state movement.

The hill districts of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills had undergone several changes as a result of the developments prior to the formation of Autonomous State. The Autonomous State Plan was the culmination of several plans and proposals initiated by the Government of India wherein the Central government had tried to satisfy the aspirations of both the ruling Congress and the Opposition — the APHLC. Following the 22nd Amendment of the Indian Constitution on December 1969, the Bill for the formation of the Autonomous State of Meghalaya was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha simultaneously and the Autonomous State of Meghalaya was born on 2nd April, 1970. Under the provisional arrangement chalked out, Meghalaya would have its own legislature which is the Provisional Legislative Assembly consisting of representatives from Meghalaya itself. In addition, it would

37 Ibid., pp.412-415.
also have representation in the Assam Legislative Assembly and also in the Assam Cabinet if appointed. The Provisional Assembly would consist of not more than 35 and not less than 5 members who shall be elected from single member constituencies through adult franchise. But until this was constituted, the Provisional Legislative Assembly consisting of not more than 55 and not less than 35 members would be constituted. These members would be elected by an electoral college in each Autonomous district consisting of all the elected members of the existing Autonomous District Councils by proportional representation and by single transferable vote. Three members were also to be nominated to represent the minority communities in Meghalaya. This Assembly would cease to operate once the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly was constituted under the Meghalaya Act 1970, paving for the second representative institution of the new State to be. Representative institutions or State legislature had finally been formally established with the formation of the Provisional Legislative Assembly which unlike Autonomous District Councils were given autonomy from the Assam Legislative Assembly. This legislature would include the ruling party and the opposition party or parties.

The Provisional Legislative Assembly of the State of Meghalaya had two sessions during 1970. The first session was held at the Garo Hills District Council chamber that lasted for one day only, the 14th April, 1970. The Assembly in this session, elected R.S. Lyngdoh as the Speaker who was present when the members were administered their oath by the Governor. The session was then adjourned and met again in the Assembly Chamber from 20th-22nd April, 1970. the second or Budget


* List of Members of the Provisional Legislative Assembly is given in the Appendix.
Session was held from 21st September to 5th October, 1970. This legislature was, therefore, constituted to carry on the affairs of the Autonomous State.

The Autonomous State of Meghalaya, similar to other newly emerging states, was beset with many challenges and problems especially in its relations with the full-fledged State of Assam, as the constitutional status of the Autonomous State was less than that of Assam. Moreover, the Government of Assam could direct the Government of Meghalaya to undertake agency functions. These actions generated in the minds of the leaders of the Autonomous State to take decision as to revert back to their original demand for a full-fledged State. So with this intention, in its session on 22nd September, 1970, the session of APHLC adopted a resolution urging upon the Government of India to take steps for upgrading Meghalaya into a full State. This was followed by a Resolution passed by the Meghalaya Provisional Legislative Assembly demanding full statehood. Taking cognizance of these developments on 10th November, 1970, the Union Government made a decision to take up a final Reorganisation of Meghalaya into a full state.

Towards the close of October 1971, the North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Bill was almost ready. It was introduced and passed both by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in 1971. The State of Meghalaya was finally inaugurated on 21st January, 1972. On January 1972 morning, the members of the Provisional Legislative Assembly were sworn in as members of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. The

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The twenty-five Khasi States that existed prior to the advent of the British, imbibed some form of representative institutions. This system ceased to function, once the British annexed the entire hill areas. The next State of emergence of representative institutions from these areas was during 1920-1921 when as a result of political changes in the country, the British administration was compelled to make changes in the system of administration in these areas. Provisions were made for representation of these areas into the Assam Legislative Council with the creation of

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the Shillong Urban Constituency to represent Khasi-Jaintia Hills and nomination of one member from the Garo Hills. In 1937, with the promulgation of the Government of India Act 1935, the number of representation was increased that is three single member constituencies were created for Khasi-Jaintia Hills — Shillong, Shillong-Women and Jowai. Garo Hills was represented by two single member constituencies.

Next, under the Indian Constitution, the Garo Hills was allotted 4(four) seats and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills 5(five) seats. Thus the areas now covered by Meghalaya were represented in the Assam Legislative Assembly by 9(nine) members. Though they were not endowed with a separate representative institution even after independence, since they were still a part of Assam, but they were adequately represented in the legislature of Assam.47

Changes were brought in, with the setting of the two Autonomous District Councils of United Khasi-Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. Representative institutions had emerged in the hill districts, consisting of 24(twenty four) member each, of whom 18(eighteen) were elected and 6(six) were nominated. The setting up of the Autonomous District Councils can be considered to be a prelude for further political developments in the hill districts.

The political developments during 1960 necessitated the Government initially to grant Autonomous State to the hill districts of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills. With this, the second representative institutions of these areas was set up in 1970. The Provisional Legislative Assembly of Meghalaya consisted of 38 members indirectly elected and three nominated members bringing the total strength of the House to 41(forty one) members.

The full-fledged State of Meghalaya was inaugurated two years later on 21st January, 1972, paving the way for the setting up of a full-fledged representative institution of their own with the setting up of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly consisting of 60 elected members. The setting of the representative institution in Meghalaya was achieved after a period of struggle from the British period to the period of free India and intense struggle and demands preceded the year 1972, when Meghalaya was finally declared a State.\(^4\)

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