CHAPTER IV

KHABIL HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Constitutional Position:

Before 1919 the Khasi Hills was classified as a backward area. Under the 1919 Act also the Khasi Hills had no representatives in the Assam Legislative Council. Under the Act of 1935 they were classified into three, the Excluded, Partially excluded and Frontier Areas. The Excluded Areas were the Muga Hills, the Lushai Hills and the North Cachar Hills. The Partially excluded Areas were the Garo Hills, the Mikir Hills and the British portions of the K & J Hills other than the Shillong Municipality and Cantonment. The Frontier Areas were Balipara, Sadiya, and Lakhimpur Tracts, inhabited by tribes in an early stage of development. The Governor of Assam exercised authority over the frontier tracts as the Agent of the Governor General. The cost of administration of these tracts was borne by the Central Government. Whereas the partially excluded areas were administered by the Provincial Government subject to the powers of the Governor to withhold or apply the laws of the Provincial Legislature with or without modifications.1

Progress in Khasi Hills:

Among the Partially excluded areas, the Khasi Hills was the most advanced, because of their close contract with the plains, and also because the capital of Assam was located in the Khasi Hills.

Inspite of the general backwardness of the partially excluded areas - they made some progress. The Khasi Hills supplied some ministers before 1947.

While there was progress in education, there was not much economic development. Agriculture was practically the only occupation and it was still the primitive one of jhuming, except of course the terraced and irrigated cultivation in certain areas of the Khasi Hills.

As regards local government there were no self-governing bodies in any hill district, except the Shillong Municipal Board. However, the Khasi polity was democratic in the sense that the village Durbars were created by the general assent or election.  

Before 1947, there was discussion about the future of the hill areas.

The federation of the Khaki States: In 1945, when India's political future was being discussed, the Khaki States also considered their own future. In 1946, the Khaki Chiefs formed an organisation known as the federation of the Khaki States with the object of preserving the rights and customs of the Khaki people in the event of India becoming independent. The federation signed a Standstill Agreement with the Governor of Assam in July 1947.

There were extremists among the Khakis - Wickliffe, the heir-apparent of the Syiem of Nongstoin who advocated independence for the Khaki States. Wickliffe, it was alleged, tried to induce the Syiem of Nongstoin and other Sylsens to accede to Pakistan. When he could not accomplish it he left for Pakistan.

There was another party under the leadership of G.G. Swell who desired the separation of the Khazi Hills from Assam and administered directly by the Government of India.

There were extremist groups like the Hill Union and the Khazi National Durbar which demanded that all the people from the plains residing in the Khazi Hills should

Also Bareh, H - The History of the Khazi People, 1967, PP. 238-244.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
quit the Khasi Hills immediately after the withdrawal of the British from India. They also demanded the right to self-determination with the right to secede from the state of Assam; that they should have the right to form a federation of their own within the Indian Union. The federation should be given adequate representation in the Advisory Committee constituted by the Constituent Assembly. The federation should be equal in status along with other provinces.?

Proposals of the Cabinet Mission: The Cabinet Mission suggested that there should be an Advisory Committee on the Rights of Citizens, Minorities and Tribal and excluded Areas. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that a powerful committee should be set up to make proposals for the administration of the tribal areas. Accordingly, the Constituent Assembly set up an Advisory Committee in terms of the Cabinet Mission statement of 24 January, 1947.8 This Committee appointed a sub-committee, known as the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee with Gopinath Bardoloi as its Chairman. The Sub-Committee coopted two members from each of the hill districts they visited.

   Also Bareh, H - The History of the Khasi People, 1967, PP.238-244.
Bordoloi Committee:

The witnesses that appeared before the Bordoloi Committee suggested various means of reorganisation of the tribal areas. Let us consider the Khasi Hills. Rev. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy suggested that there should be a Khasi and Jaintia Federated state consisting of the Khasi states, Sirdarships and Jaintia Hills. The federated state shall be federated with the Province of Assam. It shall have a National Council of 29 members four of whom shall be women. The term of the Council shall be five years. Twenty-five of the 29 members shall be elected by adult franchise from single member constituencies. The women members shall be elected according to rules prescribed. The National Council must undertake the codification of customs in all the units of the federation. The National Council shall have a chairman elected by it. It shall have a secretary and an executive committee elected by the National Council consisting of three members, one of them shall be president. The Executive Council shall hold office for 5 years. The Chairman of the executive council shall be ex-officio president of the federated state. The president shall hold office for 5 years.

All legislation passed by the National Council must receive the assent of the Executive Council which shall
have right to withhold its assent and return any bill passed by the National Council to it for reconsideration. It may veto any bill which would be detrimental to the interests of the Federated State.

The federated State shall have a High Court of Appeal to hear appeals from the subordinate courts. The judges shall hold office for five years. This is rather a peculiar provision. The decisions of the Court shall be final. It shall have both criminal and civil jurisdiction.

As regards finance, all revenues from the District shall belong to the federated State. It shall pay certain amount to the provincial Government of Assam for the administration of certain subjects and institutions which would be utilised by the Federated State.

The Federated State shall send four elected members to the Provincial Legislature. The Provincial Legislature shall not have the right to legislate on all subjects for the Federated State. In other words, the National Council may or may not apply any Provincial legislation or might apply with such modifications as it might think necessary. Rev. Nichols Roy appears to have circulated these proposals among others, and they made the same proposal. 9

Recommendations of the Bordoloi Committee.

The Bordoloi Committee was assisted by a famous anthropologist, Dr. B.S. Guha. Dr. Guha said that assimilation cannot take place by the sudden breaking up of existing tribal institutions. There should be evolution on the old foundations. But evolution should come from the tribe itself. At the same time, contact with outside world should be maintained. Some of the tribal systems should be retained until there is change in the way of life of the tribal people. The Bordoloi Committee accepted this view.

Second, as regards lands, the hill people demanded that there should be control of immigration and allocation of land to outsiders. Such control should be vested in the tribals themselves. The Committee recommended that the District Council should have power of legislation over the occupation and use of land, other than land comprising reserved forests. But the Bordoloi committee excluded the reserve forests from the purview of the local councils, because there was need for centralised management of forests.

Third, the committee also recommended that the nature of cultivation of land should be left to the tribes themselves. The committee felt that jhuming should be discouraged
wherever possible, but interference with jhuming might be misunderstood by the tribals. Therefore the control of jhuming should be left to the local council.

Fourth, the committee also recommended that the people should have full powers of administering their own social laws and codifying them. The code of criminal procedure and civil procedure should not be applicable to the hill districts though officials were expected to be guided by the spirit of these laws. Therefore, the committee recommended that except suits arising out of special laws, all ordinary suits should be disposed of by the tribal councils or courts. In respect of civil and criminal cases where non-tribals are involved, they should be tried under regular law and the provincial Government should make special provision for the disposal of these cases.

Fifth, the committee recommended that primary schools and dispensaries and such other institutions should be managed by the District Councils. As regards secondary education, the committee thought that the hill people would not be able to look after this subject. Therefore it should not be entrusted to them.

Sixth, the Committee recommended that the District Councils should be endowed with legislative powers over the use of land, village forests, agriculture and village and town management in addition to the administration of
the tribal and local laws.

Seventh, as regards financial powers of the District Councils, the committee did not accept the demand of the hill people that all power of taxation should be vested in the District Council because that would deprive the provincial and central Governments the powers of taxation in these areas. Moreover, the district councils like the local authorities might not levy taxes adequately, since they were subject to local pressures. Therefore, the committee recommended the allocation of certain taxes and financial powers to the councils. That is they have all the power of taxation which they had in plain districts.

As regards financing of the hill areas, the committee did not accept the suggestion that a fixed proportion of the provincial revenues should be set apart for expenditure on the hill areas, because on what basis such a sum should be fixed, population, area or revenues derived from the hill district. The Committee also thought that the provision of the non-votable items in the budget would be distasteful to the legislature and contrary to the democratic spirit. Therefore, the commission suggested that the Government of Assam should prepare a development programme for the hill areas and the scheme should be financed liberally both by the central and Provincial Governments.
Eighth, as regards minerals and mines, the tribals demanded that revenues accruing from the exploitation of minerals should not go entirely to the provincial Government and that the District Council should get a share of it. In order to ensure this, the tribals demanded that the control of minerals should be vested in the district councils. But the committee said "we consider that the best policy is to centralise the management of minerals, in the hands of the Provincial Government subject to the sharing of revenues from minerals and mines. Further, no license or lease should be granted without consultation with the District Council concerned."

Ninth, the committee considered the problems of migration of the plains people into the hill areas. The hill people were afraid of their exploitation by the non-tribals. Therefore, they demanded that they should have powers similar to those of the Chin Hills Regulation. Realising the deep feelings of the tribals in regard to this matter, the Committee recommended that the District Council might by three-fourths vote introduce a system of licensing money-lenders and traders.

Tenth, the committee considered the vesting of emergency powers in the Provincial Government. That is, sometimes the district councils might misuse the powers. What
should be done? The committee thought that Governor should have the power to declare an act or resolution of the District Council null and void, if the safety of the country was threatened by such act or resolution. The committee went to the extent of saying that the Governor should have the power to dissolve the district council if necessary. It may be remembered that some of the Hill districts are on the frontier and therefore the Governor should have this power.

Eleventh, the committee thought that there was no justification for the exclusion of any area either partially or completely. Therefore, all these areas should be represented on the basis of adult franchise in the Legislative Assembly.

Twelfth, as regards the basis of representation of the hill districts in the legislature, the committee thought that there should be adequate representation for all the districts, not only in the Provincial legislature but also in the federal legislature. Again, representatives from the Hill districts must be tribals.

Thirteenth, the Committee also recommended that Provision should be made for the review of development work periodically by a commission to be appointed by the Governor.
Fourteenth, the tribals also demanded that the existing boundaries of hill districts should be redrawn so that all tribals of the same stock might be brought together. The Committee did not accept this view except in the case of the Mikir Hills.

Finally, the committee recommended that non-tribals might be represented in the district councils.\(^\text{10}\)

The Bordoloi committee and the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly met in a conference and the Schedule was amended in some respect. The Schedule as amended by the Joint Conference was presented to the Constituent Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly and the Sixth Schedule.

When the Sixth Schedule was taken up for discussion by the Constituent Assembly some of its members were opposed to the creation of the district councils because they might ultimately lead to the establishment of another Pakistan in this country.

"If you see the background of this Schedule you will find that the old British mind is still there. There is old separatist tendency and you want to keep them away from us. You will thus be creating a Tribalstan just as you have created a Pakistan. There is no need to keep any

\(^{10}\) Report, Bordoloi Sub-Committee, 1947, Appendix, Part-I. Also; Rao - A Century of Tribal Politics, 1976, PP. 176-182
Tribalstan away from us. In this Schedule you will find that an Act of Parliament cannot be imposed on them unless they consent to it ... such thing is impossible and therefore, I say that this Schedule has been conceived in a way the background of which is to keep them away from us and to create a Tribalstan," said Kuladhar Chaliha.

Another member Professor Shibban Lal Saksena said that he had no objection for the establishment of the district councils, but a provision should be made for the absorption of the areas in the province of Assam. But Rohini Kumar Chowdhury was totally opposed to the formation of the district councils.

Jaipal Singh, a tribal himself, cautioned the members of the C.A. to be realistic in their approach to the tribal problems of North East India.

Rev. Nichols-Roy contended that the hill tribes had a better culture than many in the plain areas.

It is clear from the above that there were some in North East India who wanted to assimilate the hill areas even by force, if necessary. They displayed an imperialist attitude. They did not make a distinction between

12. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
integration and assimilation. This is unfortunate and it was responsible for the disintegration of Assam. For, assimilation involves a total loss of cultural identity of the group that is being assimilated. This leads to fear, tension and increasing alienation from each other. For building a strong state, cultural identities of the groups need not be eliminated. Instead of emphasizing cultural differences economic interdependence should be encouraged. Therefore, we should lay emphasis on integration and not on assimilation.16

Dr. Ambedkar defended the creation of the District Councils. He said that the Assam Tribals, unlike those in other parts of the Country had their roots in their own civilization and culture. Their laws and customs were different from those of others. In other words, the position of the tribals of Assam was analogous to the position of the Red Indians in the U.S.A. In America there were areas within which the Red Indian lived. The United States Government felt that their laws and way of life were so distinct that it would be dangerous to bring them immediately within the range of laws made by the white people for the whites and white civilization. This was the main reason

why the district councils have been created. Yet there are certain unifying factors in the District Council scheme which nullify any tendency towards isolationism and separatism. 17

What are they?

First, the executive authority of the Government of Assam would be exercised even in the autonomous districts. This is an improvement over the provisions contained in the Government of India Act, 1935, under this Act, the administration of the Excluded Areas were carried on by the Governor in his discretion. But under the constitution, administration of these areas would be carried on by the Governor on the advice of the Council of Ministers.

Second, all the laws made by the Assam Legislative Assembly and the Parliament were binding on the district councils, unless the Governor thought that they ought not to apply.

Third, these areas would be represented in the Parliament and the Legislative Assembly and thereby enable their representatives to play their role in the legislative process for the whole country, including the tribal areas.

Fourth, the Governor is authorised to suspend, dissolve or supersede a district council. Thus the district councils resemble municipal boards in some respects.

Fifth, the laws and regulations to be made by the district councils would be subject to the consent of the Governor.

Finally, with regard to the application of the laws passed by Parliament and the Assam Legislative Assembly, the Governor must act according to the advice of the Council of Ministers. Originally, it was provided that the Governor must accept the decision of the district council provided the resolution was passed by a 3/4 majority. The Constituent Assembly thought that the district council might prevent the application of any law to these areas. To overcome this difficulty the minister was authorised to extend any law passed by Parliament or the State Legislature to any area. This provision is intended to bring about the gradual integration of the tribal areas with the mainstream.

The recommendations of the Constituent Assembly were embodied in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. In other words, the broad principle behind the establishment of district councils was to provide the hill tribes with an inexpensive and simplified local government which would safeguard their traditional way of life and secure them maximum autonomy in their own affairs. After the first general elections in 1952, a district council was constituted for the K & J Hills autonomous district.

Administrative Areas.

Under para 20 of the Sixth Schedule of the constitution and with the inauguration of the Constitution of India on 26th January, 1950, the autonomous district of K & J Hills was constituted comprising such territories which before the commencement of the Constitution were known as the Khasi states and the K & J Hills District, excluding any areas for the time being comprised within the Cantonment and Municipality of Shillong; but including so much of area comprised within the Municipality of Shillong as formed part of the Khasi States of Mylliem. In other words, excepting the British Portion of Shillong Municipality and the Cantonment Areas of Shillong, the other areas formed part of the K & J Hills autonomous District.

Further, Para I of the Sixth Schedule provided that the Governor may by public notification include any area in the list of Autonomous areas, create a new autonomous district increase or decrease the area of any autonomous district, define the boundaries of any autonomous district and finally exclude any area from the list of autonomous districts. Thus the Governor is the final authority for the creation, abolition and modification of the administrative area of the autonomous District Councils.

By notification on 23rd November, 1964, the Governor of Assam was pleased to create a new autonomous district to
be called the Jowai district by excluding the Jowai sub-
division from the K & J Hills district with effect from
1st December, 1964.19

Constitutional Structure.

In October, 1951, the State Government framed Rules
under para 2 of the Sixth Schedule for the Constitution of
the District Councils for the autonomous districts speci-
fied in Part A of the table appended to para 20 of the
said schedule.20

Originally the Council had 18 elected members and
6 nominated members. Thus the Government retained the
right to nominate one-fourth of the total strength.21 But
there was public resentment against the principle of nomi-
nation as a result of which it was abandoned.22 Since 1972
the Khasi Hills District Council has 29 elected members,
and the one member nominated by the Governor on the advice
of the Council. All the members are elected on the basis
of adult suffrage.

The term of the Council is normally for five years.
The qualifications for membership were almost the same as

19. Assam Government Notification No.TAD/R/50/64 dated
23.11.1964.
20. Assam Government Notification No.TAD/R/13/51 dated
15.10.1951.
21. A.P.L.A., 10.6.1952, Speech by Finance Minister,
M.Bora.
22. District Council's representation to Patashkar
Commission, Item No.1.
those prescribed for the membership of the State Legislature. The Council shall meet at least once in three months. It is interesting to note that the ancient Khasi custom of manhood suffrage has been replaced by universal adult suffrage.

Legislature.
In accordance with Rule 10 read with Rules 32 and 33 of the Autonomous District Councils Rules, 1951 there shall be a chairman and a Deputy Chairman who are duly elected by the Council. The Chairman is responsible for conducting the business of the Council in session and presides over its meetings. In his absence the Deputy Chairman should preside. The Chairman has his own office under the control of a Secretary who is provided with a small staff. The rule permits members to address the Council in any of the recognised languages. Most of the members address the Council in the Khasi Language. A copy of the proceedings must be sent to the Governor along with an English translation.

Executive.
Under Rule 19 of the Autonomous Districts Rules 1951 there shall be an Executive Committee with the Chief Executive Member at the head and two other members to exercise

the functions of the District Council. Rule 20 provides that the C.E.M. shall be elected by the Council and two other members shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Executive Members from amongst the members of the District Council. Here is a striking similarity with the wordings of Articles 163 and 164 of the Constitution of India. Article 163 provides that there shall be a council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor. Article 164 provides that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor and other ministers shall be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister. Whereas the ministers hold office during the pleasure of the Governor, - this clause is absent so far as executive members of the District Council are concerned. But under para 16 of the Sixth Schedule, the Governor may dissolve the District Council and order fresh elections. Therefore, by implication it is clear that the executive committee holds office during the pleasure of the Governor.

Rule 21 of the Autonomous Districts Rules 1951 further states that when the Chief Executive Member vacates or resigns his office, the other members of the Executive Committee shall also cease to hold office. Hence the Executive Committee works as a team like the State Council of Ministers. Rule 22 of the above Rules clearly mentioned
that the Executive Committee shall be collectively responsible to the District Council and may be removed by a vote of no confidence passed by the Council.

Let us now consider the constitution of the Executive Committee in the Khasi Hills District Council. Of all the autonomous districts, the Khasi Hills is the most advanced in the matter of political consciousness and therefore there was always contest for the office. The first District Council met on 3rd July, 1952 for the election of the C.E.M. There were two candidates, J.Rynjah and B.M.Roy. Both of them were retired civil servants and came to office with vast administrative experience but had no political experience. Rynjah polled 16 votes and B.M.Roy 5. Rynjah took a khasi and a Jaintia - R.War and E.Poshna. Exactly six months after his election Rynjah had to face a no-confidence motion. The chairman fixed 5 December for the consideration of the motion. When the mover was called upon to move the motion he refused to do so.24

On 9th July, 1953, J.Rynjah the C.E.M. resigned on health ground. The District Council met on 13 July, for the election of the C.E.M. There were two candidates, B.M.Roy and Hobell Rynjah. B.M.Roy walked out on a point of order. Hobell Rynjah polled 17 votes and B.M.Roy polled

no vote. Hobell Rynjah, while forming his Cabinet, retained E. Poshna and removed R. War and in his place J.E. Tari-ang was taken.25

On 25 February, 1954, Bormanik Syiem tabled a motion of no-confidence in the Executive Committee. Leave was granted as seven members supported the motion. Bormanik Syiem said that the Executive Committee suspended Jormanik Syiem hastily; appointed 23 electors for the Mylliem Syiem-ship which was improper and so on. The motion was carried by 11 to 10 votes; and Hobell Rynjah had to bow out of office26 for the first time in its history. The District Council met in February for election of the C.E.M. There were two candidates B.M. Roy and Nongrem. B.M. Roy polled 12 votes. He selected H. Cotton and H. Hadem as members of the Executive Committee. It appears that while selecting members of the Executive Committee one was invariably selected from the Jaintia Community. B.M. Roy had to listen to the same music in May, 1956 with which he treated Hobell Rynjah in February 1954. On 21 May, 1956, Hobell Rynjah sought leave for the introduction of a motion of no-confidence in the B.M. Roy's Government. Hobell Rynjah said that the District Council did not cooperate with the Government; did not accept Rupees one lakh from the Government for border relief scheme and did not take over primary education.27

Also P.K.H.D.C., for the period concerned.
27. Rao - op.cit, PP.277-278.
All these charges were no doubt true. But the real reason for the no-confidence was the lust for power. Thus B.M. Roy was removed from office on 23rd May by a vote of no-confidence.28

The District Council met on 25 May, 1956 for the election of the C.E.M. The old rivals B.M. Roy and Joyosing Rynjah again contested. It may be remembered that Joyosing Rynjah resigned in 1953 for reasons of health. Joyosing Rynjah polled 15 votes and B.M. Roy, polled no votes.29 Even his proposer and seconder did not vote for him. Rynjah continued in office till the next general election to the District Council.

The second District Council met on 7th January, 1958 and elected B.M. Pugh as the C.E.M., for the first time by an unanimous vote. Pugh took Henry Cotton and T. Cajee as members of the Executive Committee. B.M. Pugh was compelled to resign in 1960. He was succeeded by T. Cajee. Cajee took Edwingson Bareh and Rokendro as members of the Executive Committee. After the death of Cajee in March 1963,30 Edwingson Bareh was elected as C.E.M. after a contest. But he and his rival H. Hadem polled equal number of votes and Bareh was elected by the Casting vote of chairman. Bareh

took Hopingstone Lyngdoh and retained Bokendra Dkhar who was in the Cajee Cabinet. Bareh ceased to be a member of the Executive consequent upon the creation of a autonomous district of Jowai in 1964. Wilson Reade was elected as the C.E.M. Reade did not make any change in the composition of the Executive Committee of Bareh. Wilson Reade was succeeded by Justman Swer. Swer was the only C.E.M. who remained in office for a longer period of five years. He selected Humphrey Nongrum and Darwin D. Pugh as members of the Executive Committee. When D.D. Pugh resigned, S. Kalwing was appointed as a member.

Justman Swer's term was over in 1972. In the election held in 1972 to the District Council, A.P.H.L.C. was not able to get an absolute majority of the seats. Therefore, Hill State People's Democratic Party was called upon to form the Government. L.G. Shullai was elected C.E.M. Shullai selected Miss Luisa Brosila Lamin and Syrtok Sing Nongrum as members of the Executive. The inclusion of a woman as member of the Executive Committee is significant. The Khasi Hills District Council is the first District Council in North-East India to have a lady as a member of the Executive Committee.

On 14 June, 1975, Gilbert Shullal resigned without assigning any reason. The main reason for his resignation was that an honest man cannot fit himself in Khasi Politics. He was attacked by various interests. He was bullied by the parties that supported him in his election to the office of the C.E.M. He was assailed by his own partymen. The chronic instability with which Khasi politics was permeated threatened him. Since Shullal was a fairly honest man he got out of the office. The Hill State People's Democratic Party selected B as starwell Wanniang to be the C.E.M. and B. Diengdoh and Marcus Lyngdoh to the E.Ms. But the Sitting members of the Executive Committee S.S. Nongrum was not willing to vacate the office. The C.E.M. therefore retained Nongrum, dropped the lady member L.B. Lamin and in her place took Blingstodar Diengdoh. The disappointed candidates Marcus Lyngdoh and Luisa Brosila Lamin left the party.34


The Khasi Hills District Council existed for about quarter of a century. How did the council functions all these years? At first, all the District Councils consisted of one-fourth as nominated members. The Minister

nominated non-tribals to the District Councils. The tribals resented the presence of non-tribals in the Council. Therefore, the District Council eliminated the nominated element completely. However, since 1972 only one member is nominated by the Governor on the advice of the Council.  

General elections to the District Council were not held at regular intervals. The first and second general election to the District Council were held in 1952 and 1957. After that, on some pretext or other, elections were not held at regular intervals. Sometimes elections were held once in nine years instead of five years. The extension of the life of the Council should have been under extraordinary circumstances. When elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly were held at regular intervals, elections to the District Council also should have been held at regular intervals.

Another interesting feature is that the number of persons elected for more than a single term was less than fifty percent. In other words, the number of persons elected for a single term was more than one half of the total strength. Thus, at every election, many who held

35. Information given by the Deputy Secretary (Law) Khari Hills District Council, on 5.11.1976.
office for more than one term were not re-elected.

In the Khasi Hills, the Syieas continued to function as independent rulers and realised revenues from various sources. Thus, the District Council was not a vigorous body. It failed to exercise practically any control over the chiefs. Instead of occupying a subordinate position, the chiefs continued to levy and collect taxes which is the primary responsibility of the District Council. Hence the Khasi Hills District Council did not command respect of the people.

There were a number of regional political parties in this part of India. Several of them existed for a short time. Three of them existed for a long time. They were the B.I.T.U., the A.P.H.L.C., and the H.S.P.D.P. We suggest the introduction of the national political parties in North-East India so that political integration may take place at a rapid rate.

The Governor has "sledge hammer type of powers". He may at any time, annual or suspend any act or resolution of the District Council which is likely to endanger the safety of the Country and take such steps as be considers necessary including the suspension of the Council. But he has no power to dissolve the Council without the recommendation of the Commissioner to be appointed under
para 14 of the Sixth Schedule and hold fresh elections.

The Governor never exercised these powers at any time. Further, the procedure prescribed for the dissolution of the District Council is dilatory. We think that the Governor should have the power to supersede or dissolve the District Council with or without the recommendation of the Commission. Supersession is a serious punishment than dissolution. In case of dissolution, elections to the District Councils must be held immediately after dissolution. In case of supersession, the council is dismissed and the administration is taken over and entrusted to an administrator for a period of one year or so and then elections are held and administration is handed over to the new council. Thus, there is a vital difference between supersession and dissolution. Provision ought to be made for the supersession of the Council. Generally a District Council will not be superseded except when there is total failure on the part of the Council.

Supersession does not undermine the autonomy of the District Council. No objection has been raised against the provision for the dissolution and supersession of the State Legislative Assembly. Why an objection should be raised against such provision so far as the District Council is concerned?
At first, there was no provision of auditing the accounts of the Council by the Accountant General. It was in 1969 that provision was made for auditing the accounts of the District Council. Even then, no provisions have been made for surcharging improper expenditures. At present, the Comptroller and the Auditor General is held responsible for auditing the accounts of the Council. He must submit an audit report of the District Council accounts to the Governor who shall place it before the District Council. The absence of surcharge resulted in infructuous expenditure. We therefore suggest that a person who has been surcharged for Rs. 1000 and over should be debarred from the membership of the Council.

There were frequent changes in the leadership of the Executive in the Khasi Hills. Rarely a person held office of the C.E.M. for more than one term. The frequent changes in the office of the C.E.M. may be attributed to the fact that the first three C.E.Ms. were retired civil servants with no political experience.

There was no frequent change in the chairmanship of the District Council. No chairman was removed by a vote of no-confidence. Sometimes a chairman resigned the chairmanship to become an E.M. or C.E.M. Sometimes an E.M. was shunted to chairmanship to accommodate an aggressive
member of the party as E.M. It appears that disappointed politicians are dropped into this office. No member of the fair sex was elected to this office. Most of the chairman held this office for a single term. By and large they were non-controversial.

State Government and the District Council

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Sixth Schedule was that the schedule does not spell out for the co-ordination of the various activities of the District Council and that of the State Government. There is no Government machinery to review and assess the normal functioning of the Council. The only relationship between the Government and the Council is the approval of its legislation by the Governor, sanctioning of grants to meet the regular costs of its administration or the expenditure for certain development schemes.

The District Councils in general and Khasi Hills District Council in particular are functioning almost independently of the State Government and of the Central Government, "extremely jealous of their powers enjoined on them by the constitution ... The States Reorganisation Commission was surprised that the Councils were not making use of the experience of the Deputy Commissioner in the administration of the district."