In 1893, a representation was submitted by 49 rate payers of Shillong requesting the Chief Commissioner to introduce the elective system. But the Chief Commissioner was not in favour of the election system in Shillong. He said that as the population of Shillong is composed of several distinct sets of people. There are Europeans, the Khasis the Bengalees, the shop keepers ... Muhammadans and a sprinkling of Assamese. The only chance of our getting the municipality to work smoothly is to get upon the board at least one representative of each leading Sect, while recognising the European official character of the station by making European official influence dominant. Every such consideration points out to the necessity of our filling the municipal board by nomination rather than by election.\(^1\)

The Bengal Municipal Act, 1876, does not contemplate the election of municipal commissioners. The Chief Commissioner introduced an informal method of election. But the person elected by the rate payers must receive the approval of Government.\(^2\) It was only in 1920, almost 40

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years after the formation of the Shillong Municipality that the elective system was introduced.

Electoral Divisions: In 1905, Shillong station was divided into five single member constituencies excepting the Mawkhar constituency which returned three members. Thus seven members were elected from five wards.

In 1921 the Municipality was divided into ten single member constituencies, and at the first general election held on 23rd June, 1921, ten ward commissioners were elected. In 1931, the Municipality was divided into 12 wards with 13 elected members, i.e. each ward was a single member ward excepting Laitumkhrah which was the only double member ward. In 1974, Shillong Municipality was divided into 27 single member wards on the basis of populations. Each ward contains equal number of voters.

Franchise.

The Municipal Act of 1884, laid down uniform qualifications for municipal voters. Further those who resided within the municipal limits for 12 months before the date of election and paid a tax of Rs. 3 per annum to the board, graduates or licentiates of a recognised University and pleaders or income tax payees were registered. In 1920,

5. L.S.G. - No. 155M. Shillong 17.1.1921.
when the Government decided to introduce the elective system in Shillong a complex socio-political question arose. Khasi society being Matriarchal, property is owned by the Khasi women. The bulk of the Khasi rate payers at Shillong were women. The Chief Commissioner thought that if women were debarred from the right to vote at Shillong, as many as 44 percent qualified rate-payers would be removed from the electoral roll. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, amended the Bengal Municipal Act, 1884 in order to enable the Khasi women to participate in Municipal Elections.8

At first the franchise was extended in the British portion of the Shillong Municipality. But in January 1921, it was extended to non-British portions also.9 In January 1921, the qualifications of the voters were prescribed. They were 21 years of age resident within the limits of the Municipality for not less than 12 months, immediately preceding the date of election, registered as a voter-payment of not less than Rs.3 as rates or assessed to income tax, a licentiate or passed Intermediate Examination, a pleader or has

8. Letter No.121 of 29.7.1920 from Education Department; Government of India.
9. No.5962M of 14.10.1920 from Foreign Department; Government of India.

*British portion of the Municipality consisted of three wards - Police Bazar ward, Jail Road Ward and European Ward.

during the same period, paid Rs.50 per annum as rent in respect of a holding which is assessed at not less than Rs.600 per annum.10

It is clear from the above that disqualification of females was abolished. But minimum taxpaying qualification was kept at Rs.3. As regards tenants they should have paid Rs.50 as rent.11 There was very little change in the qualifications of the Municipal voters since 1921. But the right to vote was limited - and not even 50 per cent of the rate payers had the right to vote.12

In 1923, franchise was further widened and sex disqualification was removed - property qualification was lowered. Those who paid Rs.2 during the year preceding the date of election - occupiers of buildings whose monthly rental value was not less than Rs.50 were given the right to vote. On 18 October 1954 the Municipal Board requested the Government to introduce adult franchise.13

In 1957, franchise was further extended and the tax paying qualification was lowered to Rs.1 but adult franchise was

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not introduced. While members of Parliament State Legislature and of the District Council are elected by adult franchise it is strange that the municipal commissioners should be elected by a restricted franchise. As long as municipal franchise is a privilege of some, municipal boards cannot be considered as democratic bodies.

Further elections are not held at regular intervals. The last election was held in 1966 and the next elections should have been held in 1971. But it was not held. In spite of repeated requests by the Board, elections were not held on the ground that fresh delimitations of wards had become necessary. The Board was dissolved in July, 1973, but elections were not held so far. Thus the board does not exist. The administration is carried by an Executive Officer appointed by the State Government.

Preparation of Electoral Roll.

Preparation of the electoral roll is the responsibility of the Magistrate who should publish the preliminary electoral roll sixty days and revised register thirty days before the date of election. The Chairman of the Board has to inform the public about the publication of the preliminary electoral roll so that objections and claims

might be entertained. The Magistrate's decision in this regard was final. The Magistrate after taking into consideration objections, published the revised roll 30 days before the date of election. A voter having qualifications in more than one ward, should be registered in the ward in which he generally resides. Residential qualification is insisted on the ground that a resident is interested in the ward in which he live.\textsuperscript{15}

It appears that the preparation of the electoral roll was not fair. There seems to have been some amount of manipulation even though the Deputy Commissioner is responsible for its preparation. For instance on 21.10.71 the Shillong Municipal Board adopted a resolution which says:

"The meeting ... expresses its disappointment at the manner in which the enumeration of the Municipal voters has been carried out. A large number of eligible voters under Section 14 of the Municipal Act, 1957 have not been enumerated."\textsuperscript{16}

The present writer, resided in the municipal area for a decade and yet he was not registered as a voter even though he is qualified to be a voter. We therefore,

\textsuperscript{15} Election Rules, Assam Gazette, Part-IIA, 18.2.1959.

\textsuperscript{16} P.S.M; 21.9.1971.
presume that many others would not have been enumerated particularly the poorer sections.

The procedure for the election of members is as follows. The election officer should notify the number of seats available for contest, the wards in which elections would be held, the dates and places at which nomination papers should be submitted, and the date on which they would be scrutinised, and the date on which poll would be held, should be notified at least six weeks before the actual date of election. Then commences the second stage - personal declaration and the filing of nomination papers by the candidates. The nomination must be signed by the proposer and the seconder and must be submitted to the Returning Officer by the candidates on or before the date prescribed. The names of the candidates are published in each ward for general information. But in 1924 there was a little modification in the procedure. The nomination paper had to be presented 15 days before the date of election to the Magistrate. The decision of the Magistrate was final so far as acceptance or rejection of nomination papers is concerned.

There is no right of appeal against the decision.17

After the scrutiny of the nominations the Magistrate should inform the candidates whose nomination papers have

been accepted. Any candidate may withdraw within the prescribed date.

As regards the method of voting the Shillong Municipality adopted secret ballot. The Board appointed one of its members as a presiding officer. He was assisted by a committee. Each ward had a small committee for this purpose. Each voter was supplied with a ballot paper. He placed a cross mark against the name of the candidate for whom he wanted to vote, and placed it in the ballot box. The Shillong Municipal Board adopted an unanimous resolution for the introduction of symbols in the place of the existing method of election so that illiterate voters might be able to exercise their franchise. But the Government turned down the proposal.

Disputes.

In order to settle election disputes quickly, law provided the appointment of the District Judge for the purpose. But a petition disputing the election had to be submitted within 21 days after the declaration of the result. The petition had to be accompanied by a deposit of Rs.50. The

decision of the District Judge was final. The municipal elections were held in the middle of 1937. There was only one election petition. The Judge ordered that a fresh election should be held.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1959 new rules have been framed under which an election petition should be filed before the munsiff within 30 days from the date of announcement of the result. If the aggrieved party was not satisfied with the decision of the District Munsiff he could take an appeal to the District Judge whose decision was final.

Provision was made to deal with illegal and corrupt practices. Election of a ward commissioner could be set aside if it was secured by inducing the voters to give or refrain from voting in favour of any candidates by offering bribe or any gratification.

**Percentage of Poll.**

In the Assembly and Parliamentary elections about 62 percent of the electors from Shillong exercised their vote in 1972,\textsuperscript{22} but the proportion of the electors who exercised their franchise at the civic elections held in 1966-67 was

\textsuperscript{21} A.R.Municipal 1937-38.

\textsuperscript{22} Report on General Election, 1972, P.21.
considerably less. It was about 50 percent.\textsuperscript{23} This indicates the apathy of the voters. This may be attributed partly to the fact that the voter does not consider civic poll as important. There is also another reason for dull poll. A vast majority of Shillong town's population consist of Government employees - who cannot contest elections. Therefore they are reluctant to exercise their franchise. How to induce voters to take active part in civic elections? The only way is to penalise absenteeism at the poll. But that is not desirable. Compulsion will not create interest. This is common in all countries where elections are held. In some places the percentage of poll is not even thirty percent. The main reason for the apathy is that the people have no knowledge of civic administration. The candidates that contest civic elections are not attractive personalities. Finally, an average voter is not a political animal. He is economic and more concerned with his economic activities rather than with political affairs of his city, town, village. In these circumstances the civic poll will continue to be dull.

\textbf{The Term of Office.}

During the period 1876 to 1956 the term of office was three years. But under Assam Municipal Act, 1956, it was

\textsuperscript{23} Young India, 6.7.1967.
was fixed at four years. The Government may, however, extend the term of office of Commissioners by one year at a time and such extensions shall not be for more than two years.

Qualifications of Members.

Regarding qualifications and disqualifications of members, they were the same which were prescribed to the voters, which we had already noted (see page 78). But there is one disqualification—sex so far as the members were concerned.

Although the Khasi ladies were given the right to vote as early as 1921, they were not qualified to be members of the Municipal Board. It was in 1937 that the sex disqualification was removed after the introduction of Provincial autonomy. Women were qualified to be members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures. They could become even Ministers but not municipal commissioners. Women demanded the removal of sex disqualification. Accordingly in 1937 the Removal of Female Ineligibility (Amendment) Act removed this disqualification and enabled women to contest local elections.

Prior to 1924, political convicts could not be members of the municipal boards; they could be members of the rural boards. The Legislative Assembly recommended that
this disqualification should be removed and representations were made to the Governments on this subject. For instance on 16th February, 1928, a representation was made to the Governor Sir E. Lawrie Hammond, for the removal of disqualification of MacDonald Kongor, on the ground that he was a political convict. He declined the request on the ground that MacDonald Kongor was convicted under sec. 12 I.P.C. for harbouring certain offenders in March, 1925.24

Finally, legal practitioners who appear on behalf or against the board should be excluded from the membership of the board.

Payment of Salaries.

Members were not paid any remuneration for the services rendered. Sometimes some members drew a daily allowance of Rs. 5/- for attending the meeting of some committees though this was not permissible.

Removal of Members.

The state Government could remove any member of the board provided there was a resolution of the board by a two-third majority. However all Acts provided for the resignation of membership without assigning any reason.

Rights and Obligations.

The first and foremost obligation is that whether they are elected or appointed members should take an oath

24 Letter No. W 559 L.T.C. Shillong of 3.3.1928 from Secretary, Transferred Department.
of allegiance to the Indian Constitution.

Under the Act of 1956, a ward commissioner may be absent for four consecutive meetings for sufficient reason.

Non-payment of municipal dues within three months of service of the demand notice may disqualify a Commissioner from membership.

Let us analyse the membership of the Shillong Municipal Board. In 1921 there were ten elected members; of them ten per cent were Bangalees, 40 per cent were Europeans, 20 per cent Khasi, 20 per cent Muslim and 10 per cent Marawari. Of the ten members 30 per cent were businessmen. There was not a single teacher or lawyer in the first elected Board. Besides these ten elected members there were six appointed members in the Board. They were officials.

In 1939 there were 13 elected members. Of them not even one was a European. The Europeans element was completely eliminated.

Of the thirteen elected members 38 per cent were Bangalees, 46 per cent Khasis, 8 per cent Muslims and 8 per cent Nepalis.

As regards their professions 23 per cent were lawyers, 15 per cent Physicians, 15 per cent school teachers

an active or retired Government employees and others 9 per cent. Business community was totally unrepresented.

The average age of the members was 42. Thus the administration was entrusted to matured persons. As regards educational qualifications, 8 per cent were medical graduates, 8 per cent licentiates in medicines, 23 per cent were bachelor of Arts or Science, 15 per cent under graduates, 38 per cent matriculates and 8 per cent under matriculates.

Apart from the thirteen elected members there were four appointed Commissioners. They were all graduates.

In 1949, 39 per cent were Bengalees, 38 per cent Khasis, 15 per cent Marawari, 8 per cent Nepalis. The Assamese and Muslim communities were not represented.

As regards their occupation 23 per cent were retired government employees; 15 per cent businessmen, 15 per cent Lawyers, 8 per cent teachers, 15 per cent Physicians and others 24 per cent. The average age of member was ++.

Regarding the academic qualifications, medical graduates 8 per cent, licentiate in medicine 8 per cent graduates 15 per cent, under graduates 15 per cent, matriculates 39 per cent, under matrics 15 per cent.

In 1955, Assamese were 15 per cent, Bengalee 31 per cent, Khasi 46 per cent and Nepali 8 per cent. The Muslim and Marawari communities were not represented.

As regards their professions - retired Government servant 23 per cent, businessmen 15 per cent, teachers 38 per cent, Physician 8 per cent, homeopath 8 per cent, others 8 per cent. Legal profession was unrepresented among the elected members. The average age of the members was 41.

Regarding the qualifications of the members medical graduates were 8 per cent, homeopaths 8 per cent, postgraduates 8 per cent, graduates 30 per cent, matrics 38 per cent, non-matrics 8 per cent.

Apart from thirteen elected members there were four appointed Commissioners.

In 1967, Assamese were 8 per cent, Bengalee 31 per cent, Khasi 31 per cent, Marawari 15 per cent and Nepali 15 per cent. As regards their occupations, there was 8 per cent retired government employees, 8 per cent ex-servicemen, businessmen 61 per cent, college teachers 8 per cent, others 15 per cent. Undoubtedly there was over-representation of business Community - whereas

physicians, lawyers and school teachers were unrepre­
sented in the Municipality. For the first time in the 
history of Shillong Municipality college teachers obt­
ained representation in the Board. The average age of 
the members was 44 in round figures.

Regarding educational qualifications, post-grad­
uates were 8 per cent, graduates 46 per cent, under­
graduates 8 per cent, matrics 30 per cent, below matric 
8 per cent. There was 16 per cent increase in the num­
ber of graduate members. Hence the board of 1967 may be 
rightly described as the Board of elites.30

Thus the membership was satisfactory. A majority 
of them had adequate educational qualifications. The 
voters seem to prefer experienced persons to be their 
representatives.

Elections to the Khasi Hills District Council.

Elections to the District Council is direct.

Direct election is the very core of democratic Govern­
ment - the elected members will feel that they are res­
ponsible to the people. This feeling does not exist if 
he is indirectly elected. An indirectly elected member 
thinks that he is not a representative of the people but 
delegate of the board that elected him. He is likely to

30. Sources : All the analysis was based on the personal 
interview with living and relatives of 
dead members.
seek its counsel on all important issues that are discussed in the District Council. There is also another reason why indirect election is not desirable. The village council is more likely to view the election of members as a sort of patronage to one of their own villagers instead of searching for an outsider. Further, it may facilitate corruption because the number of electors will be small. It is therefore doubtful that the system of indirect election will produce the result that is expected of it by its founders.31

After the first election held in 1952, there were 18 elected and 6 nominated members. Out of 18 elected members 9 were Congress against 9 independent. But total Congress strength went up to 15 as all the 6 nominated members were also from the Congress party. There was public resentment against the principle of nomination; as a result this principle was abolished from 1957 and all the 24 seats were exposed to elections.32

In 1957, there was the second general election to the Council. The Eastern India Tribal Union put up candidates on the Hill State issue and 15 of its candidates were returned as against 3 Congress, 2 independents and

+There was no elections in 1962 and life of the Council was extended upto 1967.
2 belonging to the K & J Hills Conference. The second District Council met on 7th January 1958. The party position from 1958 to 1967+ was that the E.I.T.U. held a majority of the seats.33

The position after the third election in 1967 was that A.P.H.L.C. had 23 seats and independent 1. All the A.P.H.L.C. candidates were returned on the separate Hill State issue. The Congress party was completely wiped out from the Khasi Hills District Council.34

The position after the last election held in 1962 was A.P.H.L.C. 12, Hill State People's Democratic Party 12, Congress 4, and independent 2. But Hill State People's Democratic Party with the support of Congress and independent members became the majority party in the District Council.35

The general election to the District Council were not held at regular intervals. The first and second general election to the Council were held in 1952 and 1957. After that on some pretext or other elections were not held at regular intervals. For instance, the third election was held after nine years instead of after five years.

+There was no elections in 1962 and life of the Council was extended upto 1967.
33. All figures were collected from the Secretary to the District Council, H. Bathew.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
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, election to the District Council also should have been held at regular intervals. However elections to the District Council was by and large free and fair.\textsuperscript{36}

**Electoral Divisions.**

For the election of members K & J Hills autonomous district is divided into 18 single member constituencies by the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner must see that each constituency is equal to other. This is important because on it depends the effectiveness of representation. Each constituency must contain as nearly as possible, equal number of voters. In that case each voter has potentially the same weight. It is true that some concession must be made to geography. However, equality is the principle that should be followed as a guide and be followed as far as it is practicable.\textsuperscript{37}

In the first general election held in 1952, 18 members were elected from 18 constituencies.

\textsuperscript{36} Rao, *A Century of Tribal Politics*, 1976, P.290 and PP.244-45.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
The District Council was divided into 24 single member constituencies in September, 1957.\textsuperscript{38}

There was no general election in 1962 and life of the Board has been extended upto 1967. In the third general election held in 1967, there was no change in the figure; 24 members were elected from 24 constituencies.

In the last election held in 1972, the District Council was divided into 29 single member constituencies.

**Franchise.**

The District Council Rules of 1951\textsuperscript{39} laid down uniform qualifications for voters. He must be a citizen of India. He must be a resident in a constituency for not less than 180 days. He must be of 21 years. He must not be of unsound mind. He must not have been disqualified from voting under the provisions of election laws. For non-tribals, one must have resided permanently within the autonomous district for at least 12 years on the qualifying date. In other words, qualifications of voters are more or less identical with the Assembly electors.

\textsuperscript{38} U.K. & J Hills District Council (Second Amendment) Act, 1957.

\textsuperscript{39} Rule 128 of the Rules of 1951.
Preparation of the Electoral Roll.

The procedure for the preparation of the electoral roll is simple. The electoral roll of a constituency of the State Legislative Assembly relating to the areas comprised within a constituency of the District Council is adopted as the electoral roll for the District Council elections. The preparation of the electoral roll is entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner. At least three months before the date fixed for general election a copy of the electoral roll was published. Any person whose name did not appear in the register and who claimed the right to vote could apply to the Deputy Commissioner for the inclusion of his name within fifteen days from the date on which the list is hung-up. The Deputy Commissioner should consider all objections and decide them within two weeks from the date of submission of the petitions. The register thus made up to date was final and those whose names were entered in it alone had the right to vote.

In the preparation of the electoral roll, the Deputy Commissioner had to observe three basic principles. There should be an electoral roll for every territorial constituency - no person who did not possess the prescribed qualifications should be registered and no person should be registered in more than one Constituency. 40

There may be some omissions but they were not of such a magnitude as to affect the results of elections.

**Procedure for the election of Members.**

The procedure for the election of members is as follows. The Returning Officer should notify the number of seats available for contest, the constituencies in which election would be held, the dates and places at which nomination papers should be submitted, and the date on which they would be scrutinised, and the date on which poll would be held, should be notified at least three weeks before the actual date of election. Then comes the second stage - personal declaration and the filing of nomination papers by the candidates. Each candidate has to be proposed and seconded by two electors. The nomination has to be signed by the proposer and the seconder. The candidate must sign a declaration that he had agreed to be nominated. He must also declare that he has selected one of the symbols mentioned in the list of symbols. The nomination paper must be presented to the returning officer on or before the prescribed date. Along with the nomination paper the candidate must deposit Rs.150/-.

If a candidate polls less than one-eighth of the total number of votes polled, he shall forfeit his deposit.
After the scrutiny of nominations the Returning Officer should inform the candidates whose nomination papers have been accepted. Any candidate may withdraw within the prescribed time limit. While accepting the nomination paper, the Returning Officer must see that the candidate did not suffer from any disqualifications mentioned in the Act.

Symbol System and Method of Voting.

Voting at elections of the District Council should be conducted by symbol system. The following symbols should be used for this purpose:

4. Tiger 5. Lantern 6. Tree

The method of voting was by secret ballot. Each voter was given a ballot paper. He will record his vote by stamping the symbol assigned to the candidate of his choice and dropping the ballot paper in the box. The symbol system was convenient for the illiterates as they could stamp the symbol without reading the candidate's name.

42. Rule 133(6) of the Rules of 1951, Appendix-VII.
Settlement of Election Disputes.

Under the Rules of 1951, any one interested in the election may file an election petition against a successful candidate before the Governor within 30 days after the declaration of the result. The petition had to be accompanied by a deposit of Rs. 100. The Governor may appoint a Commissioner to hear and report on the election to the Governor. The decision of the Governor is final.

The elections were free and fair. There was no instance of any corrupt practice at the time of elections to the Khasi Hills District Council.

Percentage of Poll.

The percentage of poll was moderately good. It was generally above fifty percent of the total electorate.

The Term of Office.

The term of office of the members of the District Council was five years. A five-year term enables a member to execute a plan of action before relinquishing office.

The five-year term commences from the date appointed for its first meeting. Provision has been made for the extension of the term of members. But such extension shall be for a period of one year at a time.
Unfortunately extension of the term has become almost a normal affair. This is not desirable as the extension of the term is the negation of democratic process. Only under ordinary circumstances extension should not be granted.

Membership.

The members of the District Council are representatives. As regards qualifications and disqualifications of members, they were the same which were prescribed to the voters, which we had already noted at page 100.

Removal of Members.

The Sixth Schedule and the rules made thereunder did not provide for the removal of members of the Council either by the District Council or by Government. In case of any controversy whether a member acquired any disqualification, the matter is referred to the Governor and his decision is final.

Any member may resign his seat in the District Council at any time without assigning any reason.

Rights and Obligations.

The rights and obligations of the members of the District Council are almost identical with the members of any legislature. A member of the Council has the right to access to records, right to put questions, right to move ----------------------------------------------- - --
resolutions, right to introduce bills, right to participate in the debates and the right to vote according to his own conscience. But these rights are subject to certain limitations. For instance, no question should be asked on any matter which is subjudice and any matter relating to the conduct of any judge or any magistrate.

The member has also the right to call attention of the executive committee to any urgent matter like waste of public funds.

Probably the most important obligations of the members is oath taking. If a member does not take the oath before the prescribed date he ceases to be a member.

Another obligation of the members is the regularity of attendance in the District Council meetings. If a member is absent without permission for 30 consecutive days or more the Chairman should inform the Council and he may declare the seat vacant.

Unlike the Shillong Municipal Board, non-payment of the dues to the District Council will not disqualify the member from membership. But it is desirable that the members should set an ideal to the people in the payment of dues.

Again, every member of the District Council must be liable for the loss or wilful misapplication of money.
property of the District Council. Such losses must be recovered from the members concerned. This obligation was not imposed on the members and as a result there is misuse and/or wastage of funds.

The final obligation of the members must be that they should not evince interest in any contract made with the District Council. At present such an obligation is not imposed on members. If a member is engaged on behalf of the District Council as a legal practitioner or medical practitioner and received payment for such services it was not considered as evincing interest in a contract but it is desirable that the member concerned should not participate in the deliberations when such matters were discussed. At present the member of the District Council is not subject to this obligation. It is therefore suggested that this obligation should be imposed on them.

Payment of Salaries and Allowances.

At present the members of the Khasi Hills District Council are getting a salary of Rs.300/- plus a fixed travelling allowance of Rs.100 per month.  

Now the question is whether a salary should be paid to the members. If a salary is fixed people at the lower rung of the social ladder may be encouraged to enter the District Council. The middle class may not touch it even with a barge pole. So there is risk of persons without any sense of responsibility becoming members and looking up the District Council as a source of huge profit. Since becoming a member depends on success in elections, elections will be fought not on principles but with a view to getting a job. It logically follows that there should be no payment of salary. But then there is the practical question. Members of the District Council should not be taxed beyond a certain limit. If this is accepted the members must be paid travelling allowance so that they may be able to meet the incidental expenditures connected with their attending the meeting of the District Council. If this principle is accepted the members of the District Council should not be paid a salary. But they are paid Rs. 400 per month. This may be considered as an exorbitant sum.46

Let us now analyse the elected membership of the Khasi Hills District Council.

In 1952 there were 18 elected members of them 72.3 percent were Khasis and 27.7 percent were Jaintias. Of

the 18 members 16.6 percent were teachers, 5.5 percent were Licenciate physicians, 27.7 percent were businessmen, 27.7 percent agriculturists, 11 percent were clergymen and 11 percent were retired government employees. There was not a single lawyer in first elected Council.

As regards educational qualifications, 27.7 percent studied up to primary standard, 38.8 percent matriculates, 5.5 percent under graduates and 27.7 percent graduates. The average age of the members was 43. Thus the administration was entrusted to veterans. Besides these 18 elected members there were six nominated members in the Council. In 1957, the nominated element was eliminated completely in the Khasi Hills District Council because the Government nominated a non-tribal to the District Council.

Regarding party affiliations - 9 of 18 elected members belonged to the Congress and 9 members were in the opposition. The party affiliation of 9 opposition members is not known. Hence unlike the Shillong Municipal Board; membership of the Khasi Hills District Council was divided along party line.

48. Ibid.
The election to the Third District Council was held on 1967 instead of 1962. In 1967, like 1957, all the 24 members have been elected. Of them 73.2 percent were Khasis and 24.4 percent were Jaintas. Hence there was a slight fall of Jaintia membership from 1952. Out of 24 members 12.2 percent were teachers, 36.6 percent were businessmen, 8.3 percent were contractors, 8.3 percent were agriculturists, 8.3 percent were clergymen, 8.3 percent were retired government employees and 12.2 percent having other categories of vocations. So, medical and legal professions were un-represented in the third term of the District Council - and highest representation came from the business profession. The average age of the member was 38. Hence the District Council leadership came down to younger members.

Regarding academic background - 42 percent were upto primary standard, 61 percent matriculates, 12.2 percent under graduates, 8.3 percent graduates, and 4.6 percent master degree holders. There was a great rise in the number of matriculates from 38.8 percent in 1952 to 61 percent in 1967 - whereas there was a corresponding fall in the number of graduates from 27.7 percent in 1952 to 8.3 percent only in 1967. Master degree holders were represented for the first time in 1967.
Regarding party colour of the members - 23 members belonged to the A.P.H.L.C., against one independent member. So, the Congress party was completely wiped out from the Khasi Hills District Council in 1967.

In 1972, there were 29 elected members. Of them 88.4 percent were Khasis, 3.4 percent were Jaintas and 6.8 percent were Bengalees. Hence there was 15 percent rise in Khasi membership and 18 percent fall in Jaintia membership - whereas Bengalees were first represented in the Council of 1972. Reasons for sharp decline of Jaintia membership was due to creation of a separate Jowai District Council in 1967. Out of 29 elected members, 3.4 percent were lawyers, 17 percent were teachers, 23.8 percent were businessmen, 6.8 percent were contractors, 13.6 percent were agriculturists, 3.4 percent were clergymen, 17 percent were retired government employees and 13.6 percent having other professions. So, the medical profession was unrepresented in the Council - whereas lawyers were represented for the first time in the fourth term of the District Council. As in 1967, the highest representation came from the business occupation. On the other hand university and college teachers were totally unrepresented in the Council until now. The average age of the member was 36. Besides these elected members there
was only one nominated member.

As regards educational qualifications - 6.8 per cent studied up to primary standard, 27.2 per cent were matriculates, 27.2 per cent were under-graduates and 37.9 per cent were graduates. Hence highest number of members were graduates - whereas master degree holders were unrepresented in the Council. 49

The present party position is 12 A.P.H.L.C., 12 H.S.P.D.P.; 4 Congress and 2 independent members. So the A.P.H.L.C. had lost its absolute majority of 1967. The Congress party again came back to Council with a small number of members - whereas H.S.P.D.P. emerged as a new political force among the Council membership. 50

Thus the membership was broad based. A majority of them had formal education and local background. The electors seemed to prefer persons of younger generation to be their representatives.

49. Sources: All the analysis was based on the personal interview with living and relatives of dead members. Secretary to the Khasi Hills District Council, H.Bethaw, also supplied many vital information.