

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MEGHALAYA: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KHASI AND GARO WOMEN**

Thesis Submitted to Mizoram University in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

By

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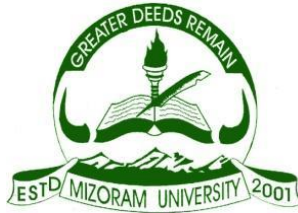
## **DECLARATION**

I, Ibabitnam Mawkhroh, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of the work done by me and the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that Smt. Ibabitnam Mawkhroh has prepared the thesis titled “*Political Participation of Women in Meghalaya: A Comparative Study of Khasi and Garo Women*” under my guidance and supervision for the Ph.D. degree in Political Science of Mizoram University. In preparing the thesis, Smt. Ibabitnam Mawkhroh has complied with all the requirements as laid down in the Ph.D. Regulation of the University. This thesis is the original work of the scholar and has not been submitted for any degree to any other University.

Date:.....

**Prof. JAGADISH KUMAR PATNAIK**  
(Supervisor)

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

**IBABITNAM MAWKHROH**

Dedicated

To

My beloved Parents who had left for the Heavenly Abode

***(Late) Shri. Phlesdes Balieh***

(Died on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2010)

&

***(Late) Smt. Setila Mawkhroh***

(Died on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012)

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ADC	:	Autonomous District Council
AICC	:	All India Congress Committee
APHLC	:	All People Hills Leaders Conference
BJP	:	Bharatya Janata Party
CEM	:	Chief Executive Member
CPI	:	Communist Party of India
CSDS	:	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
CSWO	:	Civil Society Women Organisation
DCC	:	District Congress Committee
DCF	:	District Consumer Forum
DRDA	:	District Rural Development Agency
FKJGP	:	Federation of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo People
GHADC	:	Garo Hills Autonomous District Council
GSU	:	Garo Students' Union
HNYF	:	Hynniew Trep Youth Federation
HPU	:	Hill State People's Union
HSPDP	:	Hill State People's Democratic Party
ICSSR	:	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IIFS	:	India International Friendship Society
ILP	:	Inner Line Permit
INC	:	Indian National Congress
INSTRAW	:	International Research and Training Institute for Advancement of Women
JHADC	:	Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council
KHADC	:	Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council
KHNAM	:	Khasi National Awakening Movement
KLSK	:	Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei
KSU	:	Khasi Students' Union
KVI	:	Khadi and Village Industries
KWADA	:	Khasi Women Welfare and Development Association
MDC	:	Member of District Council
MLA	:	Member of Legislative Assembly
MPA	:	Meghalaya Progressive Alliance
MP	:	Member of Parliament
MPCC	:	Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee
MSCW	:	Meghalaya State Commission for Women
MU	:	Mothers' Union
MWA	:	Meghalaya Women Alliance
MWF	:	Meghalaya Women Forum

NAW : National Alliance of Women  
NCP : Nationalist Congress Party  
NCW : National Commission for Women  
NEHU : North Eastern Hill University  
NEN : North East Network  
NERC : North East Regional Centre  
NGO : Non Governmental Organisation  
NHRC : National Human Rights Commission  
NREGS : National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme  
NRHM : National Rural Health Mission  
PfA : Platform for Action  
JNU : Jawaharlal Nehru University

## CHAPTER-1

### INTRODUCTION

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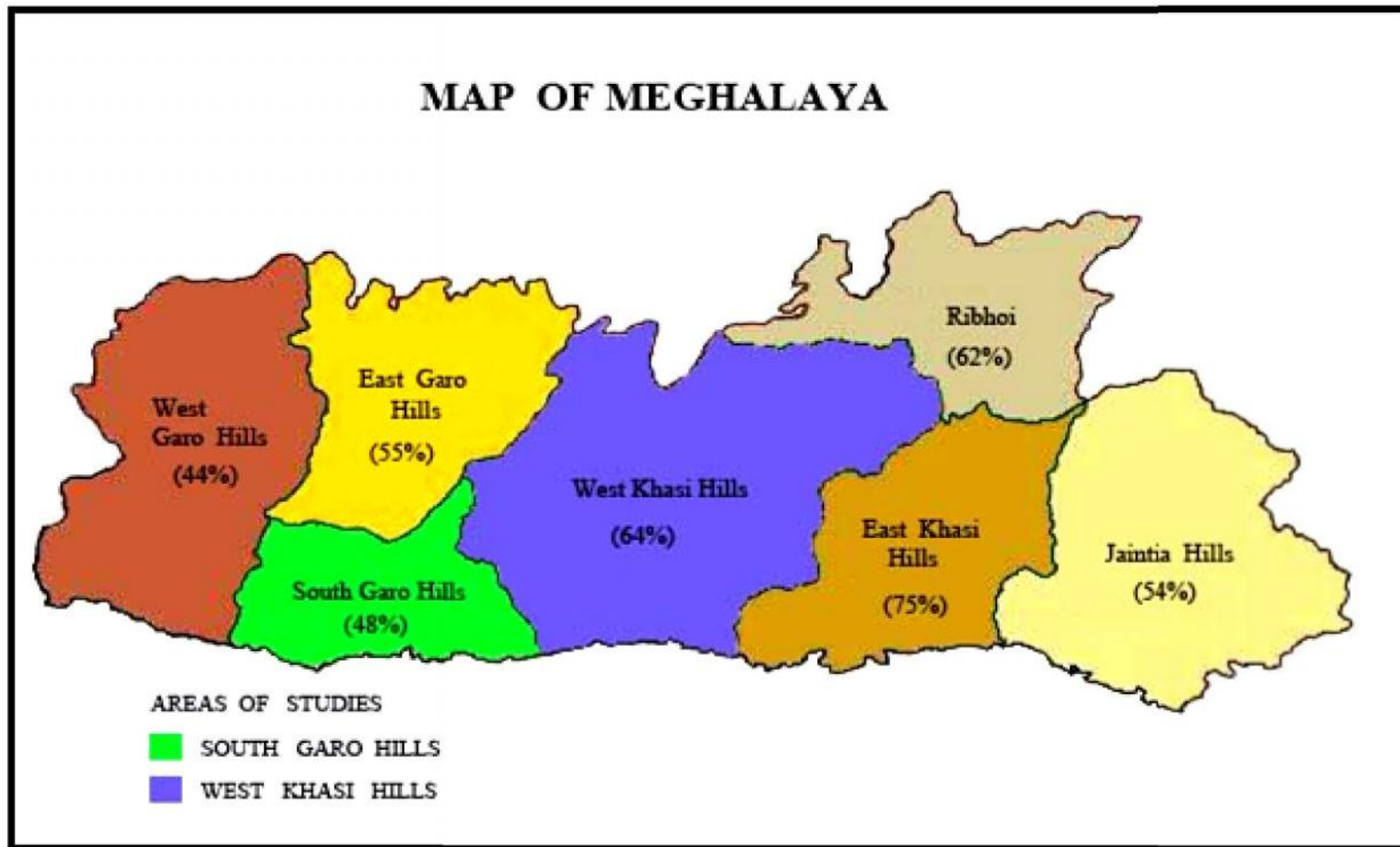


Fig. 1.1 Map Showing Areas of Studies and Female Literacy Rate (2001 Census)

**1.1 Introduction:**

Gender related issues are becoming an area of common interest in today's world. The realisation that a woman plays an important role in every sphere of activity has provoked the global community to have gender equality. 'Women rights are Human rights' is the slogan of the radical feminist. Article 2 of the UN Declaration of Human rights 1948 declared that all individuals, without distinction of race or sex, are entitled to equal rights.<sup>1</sup> Participation of women in the political process as equal partner with men is one of the important democratic principles. Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes argued that political power is a valuable good. As such, decisions made by the politicians who hold power, enforce decisions that affect people's choices.<sup>2</sup> Studies on political participation of women suggest that women were in a disadvantage position in view of their representation in decision making bodies. Besides the contribution that women have made towards the family and the society through different ways, their presence in the political arena is marginal around the world.

Academic discussion and women studies suggest that there is a need for gender equality, as women constitute almost half of the world population. Tickner suggested that "a genuine democratic state devoid of gender and other oppressive social hierarchies, would require a different definition of democracy, citizenship and human rights, as well as different relationship with the international system."<sup>3</sup> There are numerous studies on empowerment of women conducted by the United Nations (UN) since 1975 on worldwide bases. There are various conferences, seminars and research institute for the

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1 J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World politics* (New York: Columbia university press,2001),p.113

2 Pamela Paxton, Melanie M. Hughes, *Women, Politics, And Power: A Global Perspective* (London: Pine Forge press,2007),p.3

3 *Op.cit.*, pp.97-98

advancement of women that draws the interest of world community towards gender related issues.

Similarly, the Government of India has set up Commissions and Committees with the growing concerns for women issues. For instance, National Commission for Women, State Commissions for Women and the Women Studies and Development Centre, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Committee on the Status of Women in India etc. do address women issues in independent India. Important directions are also seen in different five years plan of the Planning Commission in India.<sup>4</sup> It may be noted that women representation in the legislatures in India also is still very low. The maximum number of women Cabinet Minister was three out of 30 Cabinet Ministers in 2001 and five out of 35 Cabinet Ministers in 2009.<sup>5</sup> The presence of women in Lok Sabha was 7.36 percent in 1996, 8.1percent in 1998, 9 percent in 1999, 8.3percent in 2004 and 10.9 percent in 2009.<sup>6</sup> Though there was an increase in percentage in 2009 but it had been very insignificant.

Gender Studies have also become an area of concern in North East India as well. Generally, the status of women in North East is considered to be better in comparison to the other parts of India, yet their representation in the decision making bodies are marginal. From the first State's election to Mizoram Legislative Assembly (1987) till last Assembly election (2008), there was only one woman who got elected.<sup>7</sup> The percentage of women representation in the Village Council 2009 was 1.49 percent only in the six districts of Mizoram.<sup>8</sup>

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4 See Anupam Hazra, "The Challenges of Empowering Women in India: Current Dynamics" in Harendra Sinha and J. Zorema,ed., *Empowerment of Women in North East India: Socio- Economic Perspectives* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd.,2011),pp.9-12

5 Irene Colbert, *Women and Politics and Women and Politics in Mizoram: An In-depth Study*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Political science (Mizoram: Mizoram University, 2010),p.61

6 Latha A. Pandit, "Political Leadership of Women: Constraints And Challenges" *Indian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. LXXI, No. 4, Oct-Dec,2010,p.1143

7 *Op.cit.*, p.216

8 Lalzahawma, "Women's Participation in Contemporary Mizo politics: An Analysis" in Harendra Sinha, J. Zorema, eds., *Women Empowerment of Women in North East India: Socio- Economic perspectives*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt.ltd,2012),p.127



There were no women candidate contested for MDC and that women became MDC only through nomination.<sup>9</sup> There was no woman contestant for 2004 and 2009 to the Lok Sabha Election in the states of Arunachal, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. There was one woman who contested in the 2004 Lok Sabha election and three women contested in the 2009 election from Manipur but none of them got elected. There were six women contested from Assam for the 2004 election and none of them got elected where all the 14 seats are filled by men. In the 2009 election, there were 11 women from Assam who contested to the Lok Sabha seat in which two women got elected out of the 14 seats. In Meghalaya, out of two seats, there was no woman contested for the 2004 election and three contested in the 2009 election and one got elected.<sup>10</sup> The number of women contested and elected in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha Election, clearly shows the marginal participation of women in politics in North East India. Referring to the political situation of women in Meghalaya, Nongbri suggests, “The need of the hour is political empowerment of women-where women can participate as equal partners with men in all policy matters.”<sup>11</sup> Women in the matrilineal society of Meghalaya too are not different from their neighbouring states. Their representation in the decision making bodies is still very low. There is only one woman in the present Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and three women Member of Autonomous District Council (MDC) in the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council.<sup>12</sup> Political participation by both the genders is considered crucial to have a complete democracy as they constitute half of the world population.

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9 Irin Colbert, *Op.Cit.*, p.227

10 *Ibid.*,pp.56-59

11 Tiplut Nongbri, *A Situational Analysis of Women and Girls in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: National Commission For Women,2005),p.73

<sup>12</sup> There was a slight increase in the number of women contestants in the recent 2013 Legislative Assembly Election. There were 27 women in the fray who contested for the election and it was for the first time four women get elected in Meghalaya legislature. In fact, there is a slight shift in power sharing with women leaders in the legislature under Dr. Mukul Sangma’s government. Out of the four elected women, three of them are those who got elected for the third times. They were appointed as ministers. Mrs. Ampareen Lyngdoh got Urban Affairs, Municipal Administration and Labour ministry. Mrs. Deborah Marak was appointed as a minister of Social Welfare, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Printing & Stationary and Secretariat Administration Department. Further, Mrs. Roshan Warjri became the first woman Home Minister in North East and second in India.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem:

Meghalaya has a unique feature of matrilineal system. The inheritance pattern is traced from the mother's side. The children have the mother's surname and daughters inherit ancestral property. In the Khasi family, the youngest daughter known as *ka khadduh* inherits the ancestral property.<sup>13</sup> In the case of the Garos, the *Nokna* (heiress) inherits the property who does not necessarily have to be the youngest daughter. After marriage, husbands come and stay with the wife or her family in both the communities in the case of the one who is supposed to inherit the property. While other daughters form a separate nuclear family consisting of the newly married couple only.<sup>14</sup>

In recent years, academics and researchers argued that the matrilineal status of women in Meghalaya is a myth than reality. Though women are considered to enjoy economic freedom as they inherit property, but the ground reality is debatable (this has been discussed in chapter 4). Though women in Meghalaya enjoy better position in comparison to the women elsewhere in India, politics and administration are best known to be the area of the male members.<sup>15</sup> Referring to the Khasi, David Roy wrote, "A man is the defender

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<sup>13</sup> However, there are instances that if the parents are rich, the ancestral properties are also shared to both sons and daughters though the largest share belongs to the youngest daughter. In fact, it largely depends on the parent's property and economic conditions of the family.

<sup>14</sup> In recent years the society witnessed the emergence of men's movement who challenged the prevailing system of inheritance and the practice of matrilineal system in Meghalaya. The movement is known as *Ka Syngkhong Rympei Thymmai (SRT)* headed by few Khasi men. Their stand was that men have no rights in Meghalaya. The campaign of the movements was to have the father's surname and equal distribution of wealth and property between male and female children. In fact, these groups favour a patriarchal society as they are influenced by the patriarchal values outside the state. The ground reality is that it will take the society to a chaotic future if the children's surname would be given as their father's surname. Incest is strictly unacceptable by both the communities and it is a taboo to get married to a person who belongs to the same clan.

<sup>15</sup> The social evils such as *sati*, *purda* system are not practiced by both the communities and bride price is unknown to them. On the wedding day, husbands are warmly welcomed by the bride's family without any demand in terms of material or kind from both sides. However, in recent years, women in Meghalaya suffer from domestic violence such as drunkard husbands, which often leads to deserted wives and children. Crime against women is also increasing with an alarming rate. There are 236 registered cases of crime against women reported in Meghalaya during 2012. There are 173 rape cases registered during 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 in which 118 are those who were below 18 years of age.

of women and the women, the keeper of his trust.”<sup>16</sup> The statement clearly demonstrates the subordinate position of women and man is the head of the family. The powerless position of the Khasi women is also seen in the statement of Bareh when he refers it to the position of a man in the Khasi society. He pointed out that in the Khasi tradition, a man is *U Nongda* (protector) and a woman *Ka Nongri Ing* (keeper of the House), the custodian of the family property. In his mother’s family, he has the position of *U knii* (The uncle) as the counselor and the position of the father in his wife’s house.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the position of the Garo women is also seen in the statement of Caroline Marak,

“Power rests with males and the mahari or the closely related members of the clan in the Garo traditional society including those who married into the clan. Women have no part in the field of administration decision making. Women cannot take part in any religious ceremonies and the priest or kamal is always a male in the Garo community.”<sup>18</sup>

The position of the Khasi women in the traditional society is well understood with the designations that are given to them. They were regarded as important members of the society in cultural activities as well as in the economic sphere. “Women were considered as ‘*ka Blei Ing*’ (Goddess of the House) and ‘*ka Lukhimai*’ (The Guardian of the Spirit of the House). The names suggest not only the moral attributes of virtue but also her role in the maintenance and the growth of her family.”<sup>19</sup> Politics and administrative affairs were however considered to be male prerogatives. Women in Meghalaya excel in professional studies, business and trade, civil services etc. They have actively contributed in different fields. For instance, Mrs. Rose Millian Bathew

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16 Quoted in R.S. Lyngdoh, *Government and Politics in Meghalaya* (New Delhi, Sanchar Publishing House,1996),p.9

17Hamlet Bareh, *History and culture of the Khasi People* (Delhi: Spectrum Publications,1997),p.301

18 Carolyn Marak, Status of women in Garo culture, in Saumen Sen, ed., *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House,2002),p.59

19 R. S. Lyngdoh, *Op.Cit.*

Kharbuli was the Chairperson of the UPSC; Mrs. Alvareen Dkhar was the Chairperson of the MPSC. Mrs. Silverine Swer, Mrs. E. N. Shullai, Mrs Patricia Mary Mukhim are Padmashree Awardees. There are notable Social workers like Mrs. Queenie Rynjah, and Mrs. Verna Ingty. In the field of sports women like Matsiewdor War Nongbri and Linza Syiem has been the pride of the State. Women are not lagging behind in any creative activities but their participation and representation in decision making level are comparatively very low.<sup>20</sup>

### **1.3 Methodology**

Quantitative and qualitative research method has been used in the present study to explore the political participation of women in Meghalaya. This method enables the researcher to assess the phenomena of participation in greater detail. The study is based on primary and secondary sources. Empirical analysis has been made on the basis of available data. Secondary data are collected from relevant official records, documents, reports, guidelines issued by various ministries of the state, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, books and journals on women of Meghalaya and the related areas. Data for primary sources have been collected through the technique of interviews, scheduled, and observation method whenever required. The universe of the study covers the urban and rural areas of Khasi and Garo hill of Meghalaya.<sup>21</sup>

The procedure for sample selection follows a multi-stage stratified random sampling based on female literacy rate of Meghalaya in accordance with the 2001 census. The criteria for selection of the area for field study were systematically classified into four stages:

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*,p.6

<sup>21</sup>In present study, when literacy rate has been selected as the criteria to select the fieldwork area, no separate calculations have been made for the Khasis and the Jaintias as per the records available in the Meghalaya Statistical handbook. The study focuses on the political participation of the Khasi and Garo communities as they are the major inhabitants of the State.

- 1) The first stage - the total female literacy rate in Meghalaya.
- 2) Second stage - the female literacy rate at the district
- 3) Third stage - the female literacy rate at the block level
- 4) Fourth stage - the literacy rate at the village level in which the literacy rate of the urban and rural area has been stratified accordingly (see fig.1.2).

The average literacy rate of the rural and urban areas has been deliberately selected so as to circumvent biasness in the selection of the most educated or the most illiterate respondents. According to 2001 census, the total female literacy in Meghalaya was 60 percent. The rural area of Meghalaya has the total female literacy rate of 53 percent while 83 percent is the total female literacy rate of the urban area. The total female literacy rate in the Khasi Hills was 67 percent in which 61 percent was the total female literacy rate in the rural of Khasi Hills and 84 percent was the total female literacy rate of the Khasi urban area.

Further, female literacy rate, district wise, was taken into account in which West Khasi Hills District (64percent of the female literacy rate) was selected out of the four districts of the Khasi Hills. It was selected on the basis that it has the closer percentage to the total female literacy rate of the Khasi Hills (67 percent). The same procedure has been followed in the second stage in which Mairang block has been selected (61 percent) which has a closer percentage to that of the total female literacy rate of West Khasi Hills (64percent). Mairang is situated at a distance of 45 Km from Shillong. Further, Mairang block was divided into female literacy rate of the urban and rural area. The female literacy rate of the Mairang urban is 79 percent and 58 percent the female literacy of the Mairang rural. Accordingly, Mairang block (Ward-1) has the same percentage to that of the Mairang urban and Thangmaw Jarain village having 57 percent of the female literacy rate which is a closer percentage to that of the rural Mairang 58 percent. Accordingly, Pyndemumiong of Mairang was selected as the urban area and Thangmaw village as the rural area for the field

study in the Khasi Hills. The same criterion of selection was also followed in the case of Garo Hills in which South Garo Hills district was the selected district and Baghmara was the selected block. Simultaneously, Dabram (ward-3) represents the urban area while Siju Dabakhol and Kolapara village represents the rural area for the field study in the Garo Hills respectively (see tables 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3).

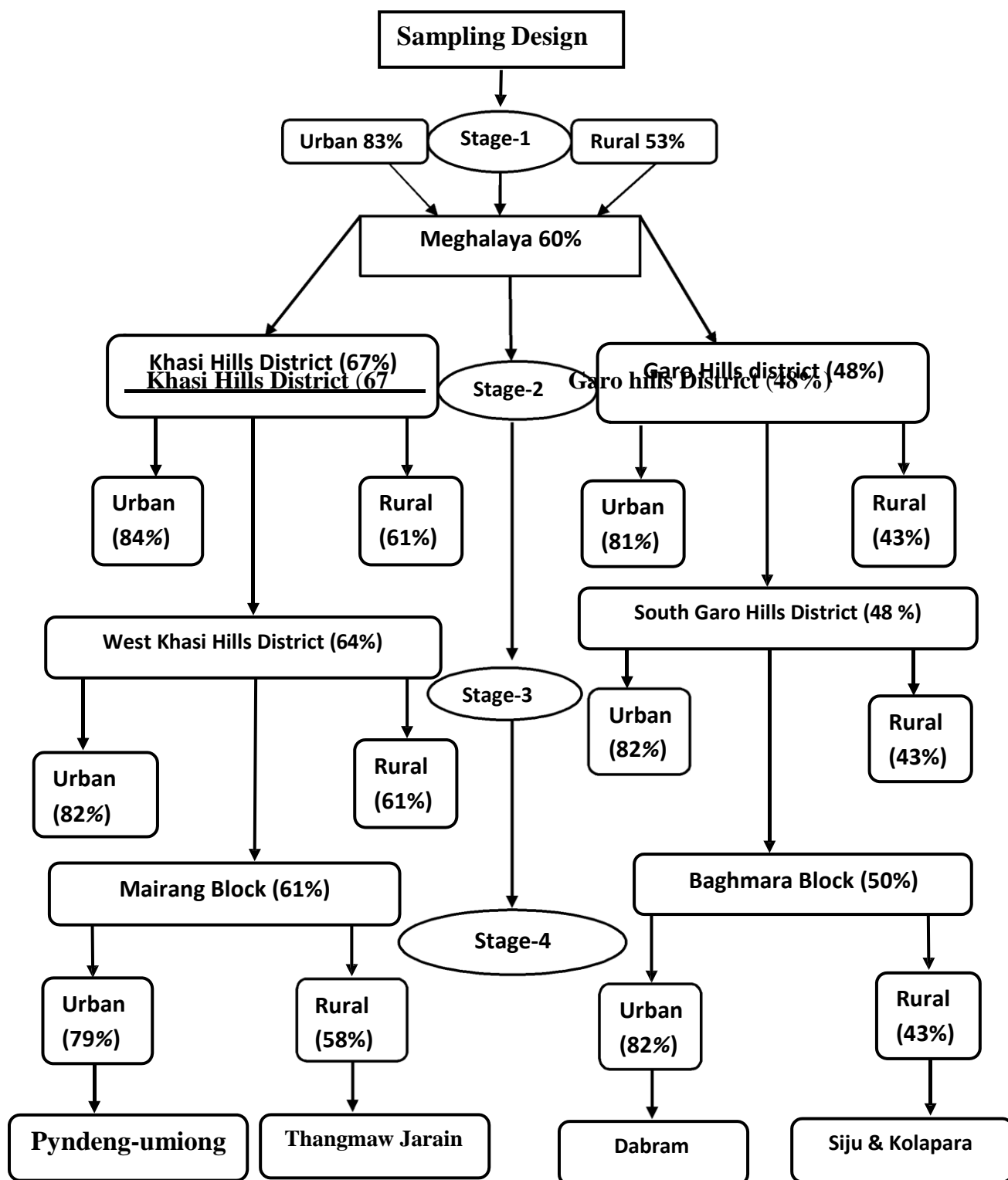


Fig. 1.2 Source: 2001 Census (Figures in percentages are the female literacy rate in Meghalaya)

**Table: 1.1 Female literacy rate in Meghalaya: District wise in percentage (%)**

<b>GARO</b>			
<b>Districts</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
West Garo Hills	44	39	82
East Garo Hills	55	51	78
<b>South Garo Hills *</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>KHASI</b>			
<b>Districts</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Ri Bhoi	62	62	72
East Khasi Hills	75	67	85
Jaintia Hills	54	50	88
<b>West Khasi Hills*</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>*Areas of Studies</b>			

Source: *Statistical Hand Book Meghalaya (2009-2010)*,

(Shillong: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Meghalaya, 2010).



**Table: 1. 2 Block level: Female literacy rate in percentage (%)**

WEST KHASI HILLS				SOUTH GARO HILLS			
Block	Total	Urban	Rural	Block	Total	Urban	Rural
Mairang	61%*	79%	58%	Baghmara	50%	82%	43%

**Table: 1.3 Village Level: Female literacy rate in percentage (%)**

KHASI		GARO	
Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Mairang T.C. Ward no.1 (79%) Pyndemumiong	Thangmaw Jarain (57%)	Ward no.3 (82%) Dabram	Siju (43%) & Kolapara (43%)

Source: *Statistical Hand Book Meghalaya (2009-2010)*,

(Shillong: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Meghalaya, 2010).

### **1.3.1 Sampling size**

The sample size has been taken equally 0.05 percent of the total households of the Garo and Khasi Hills separately. The same process is carried on in the rural and urban level. Households were the unit of analysis in which 0.05 percent was chosen from each sector (rural and urban) and one respondent from each household was selected. The total number of samples is N=209 (Garo n=79; Khasi n=130) respectively (see tables 1.4 and 1.5)

There were 209 respondents from urban and rural areas of Khasi and Garo Hills districts. The respondents were women only with an attempt to study the political behavior of women in Meghalaya. The given number of samples was selected randomly of the selected area from different professions. Besides the samples that we have discussed above, an in-depth interview was also conducted with few selected women politicians, those who have contested in the 2008 and 2009 General elections. It consists of successful and unsuccessful candidates with an attempt to study the political recruitment of women in politics. Interviews were also conducted with the civil society leaders both from Khasi and Garo Hills districts, with an attempt to study their contribution towards the political participation of women in Meghalaya. In fact, interview and observation methods helped in analyzing the qualitative political participation of women. It may be noted that the fieldwork was conducted from November 2009 and continued up to April 2010 which was just after the 2008 Meghalaya Assembly Election and 2009 Autonomous District Council Election.

**Table: 1.4 Sample Size (0.05% of Households)**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Total</b>
Garo Hills	70	9	79
Khasi Hills	96	34	130
Meghalaya	167	43	209

**Table: 1.5 Sample Distributions**

<b>District</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Town</b>
South Garo Hills	Baghmara	Siju Dabakhhol(34) & Kolapara(36)	Baghmara Town Ward No.3 (9)
West Khasi Hills	Mairang	Thangmaw Shyiap Jarain (96)	Mairang Ward No.1 (34)

Source: *Statistical Hand Book Meghalaya (2009-2010)*,

(Shillong: Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Meghalaya, 2010).

## **1.4 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were adopted in the thesis to study the role performance and political participation of women in Meghalaya:

1. There is a direct relationship between education, household income and exposure to mass media on the political awareness of women in Meghalaya.
2. The higher the education, higher family income and higher exposure to mass media lead to higher political participation among Khasi and Garo women.
3. Education has a significant impact on the political affiliations of both Khasi and Garo women.
4. Civil Society groups do not directly contribute towards women participation in politics but directly contribute towards participation of women in public sphere.

## **1.5 Objectives of the study**

1. To study the political participation of Garo and Khasi Women within the context of matrilineal system in Meghalaya.
2. To analyze the role of Khasi and Garo women in the decision making process.
3. To examine the role played by the civil society in promoting the Political Participation of women in Meghalaya in general and of Garo and Khasi women in particular.
4. To examine the political recruitment and role performance of Khasi and Garo women in Meghalaya.

## 1.6 Review of Literature

There are several studies conducted on the social, economic and political status of women around the world. Women are indispensable part of the society and the social role of women has been changing through ages with the spread of democracy and education. Women are getting more and more rights and privileges to have a better space in the society. Women in traditional societies are, however, expected to confine themselves to the household chores than politics. Undeniable, women personality traits are irreplaceable. Their tenderness towards babies, the caring character for young children, the aged as well the sick people have been considered the best area of women. As the political playing field in each country has its own particular characteristics, one feature is however, common. Throughout the world women face obstacles to enter political arena. Women all over the world have low representation in their participation in politics. As a whole there are 33,981 men parliamentarians in the world, women constitute only 4,512 that is 13.28 percent. Moreover, only 7.7 percent of the parliamentary group leaders and 9 percent of the party spokes person are women.<sup>22</sup> Women in some areas of North West Frontier Province (NWFP), tribal areas and Punjab were barred from voting in Pakistan general election. Women and men vote in separate polling station in Pakistan. This clearly shows that women are still facing discrimination and not considered equal to their male counterparts. “This is their tradition, we can do nothing” is the statement of one of the male candidates in Pakistan.<sup>23</sup>

Tickner (2001) in *Democratization, State, and the Global order; Gendered perspective* stated that “evidence suggests that democratic transitions in Latin America and Africa are opening up space for women’s political participation, women’s presence and influence in formal democratic political

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<sup>22</sup>Soorya Moorthy, “Women Yet to climb the political ladder” *The Hindu*, Thiruvananthapura, 17.June. 1997,p.25

<sup>23</sup> *The Shillong Times*, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2008

institutions has not been great...”<sup>24</sup> Tickner pointed out that the absence of women from political institutions has led the feminists particularly the western feminists to be suspicious of the state.<sup>25</sup> The book provides valuable information to the scholars and students towards understanding the concept of gender and politics at the global level from feminist perspective which is also relevant for the present study.

Barbara Nelson and Najma Choudhury (1994) provide valuable information about the women’s political engagement and political participation of the forty three countries of the world, including India. While the study is from the historical context, it gives an over view of the role and status of women in different parts of the world; however, the study does not represent the differences of the problems and status of women at different levels within a particular country.

R. Letha Kumari in *Women in Politics, Participation and Governance*, explores the status of women in the society and their political background at the global and particularly in the Indian context.<sup>26</sup> It focuses mainly on women and politics, particularly at the electoral level in the post-independent era. Analytical and scientific method is used for the study. Kumari stated that the Indian women are facing diverse problems and several sorts of disabilities and exploitation not only in politics but also in social life in the post-independence period. The author also observed that the process of development has failed to improve the social position of the under privileged section in general and women in particular. The book provides valuable information for the present research about the socio-political status of women in India and it also provides

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<sup>24</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Op.cit.*, p.97

<sup>25</sup> Feminist have been traditionally suspicious that the Western democratic traditions are patriarchal and favored men over women’s interest.

<sup>26</sup> R. Letha Kumari, *Women in Politics, Participation and Governance* (New Delhi: Authors press, 2006).

an insight about the reasons why women are found under-represented in the parliament.<sup>27</sup>

Neera Desai & Usha Thakkar,(2001) in the chapter on ‘Political Participation of Women in India’ reveal the fact that there is a low degree of political participation of women in India since the first general election held in 1951 to 2003 both at the national and state level.<sup>28</sup> They stated that even the North Eastern States which have low repressive culture against women also have low levels of women’s representation. The book further highlights some of the obstacles faced by women which prevent them from active participation in politics. The study gave valuable information for the present research. However, their concept of political participation of women in India mainly concerns with the participation of women in the formal politics through franchise, representation, as a member of the political parties and not including the participation of women in the decision making process through the various voluntary organizations nor in the form of strikes demonstrations, campaign etc who directly and indirectly influence the decision makers.

Chowdry in an article titled *Empowering boys and men to achieve Gender Equality in India* tries to justify the need for empowering boys and men to achieve gender equality in patriarchal social order in India.<sup>29</sup> The author pointed out that women in India are still lagging behind compared to men in every sphere. As such, the support assistance, understanding and involvement from the major partner - “the male” of the society is needed without which any attempt made by women folk to enhance their status would not be successful and true empowerment of women will not be possible without the psychological empowerment of boys and men to realized the importance of women in their various sphere of life.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*,pp.125-1136

<sup>28</sup> Usha Thakkar and Neera Desai, *Women in Indian Society* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Aparajita Chowdry, “Empowering Boys and men to achieve gender Equality in India” *Journal of Developing Societies*, 26,4(2010), P.415-454

The book *Women in Politics* by S. Pandey (1889) attempts to study the urban middle class women, educated, working women in the new Jaipur with the help of sampling and questionnaire method of data collection.<sup>30</sup> The survey tries to find out the attitude and awareness of women about the socially significant issues and the political involvement and awareness of both married and unmarried women. While studying the political participation of the working women, the study tries to investigate the politicization of the working women not only in terms of franchise but in terms of party and campaign activist, community activists, whether they act as protestors or public demonstrators. The survey was conducted in the year 1981-82 when Indira Gandhi had become quite a popular leader and the findings concluded that married women are more interested in politics compared to the unmarried women through the responses of women to the questionnaire. The book provides an interesting and valuable information for the present research as the study is from the historical perspective.

The book *Women and Politics in India* by Jhartha makes an in-depth study about the impact of family and education on political activists.<sup>31</sup> Jhartha pointed out that family and education are the major determinants which influence women's participation in politics. These two factors not only affect the nature and scope of the participation of women in politics but also determine the variations of the level of participation. The study provides an insight about the major determinants of political participation of women in Himachal Pradesh which would be a part of the present study in the context of Meghalaya.

Comparatively, women from North Eastern tribal states of India enjoy more power and freedom than their counterparts in other parts of the country. In the tribal society, women are also given equal status with men, and ill treatment against them is almost non-existent. Though women have social and

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<sup>30</sup> S. Pandey, *Women in Politics* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1889).

<sup>31</sup> Bhawana Jhartha, *Women and politics in India* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1996).



economic freedom in these North Eastern States, nevertheless discrimination exists in political arena.

Das (2010) in his article has explained political participation as those voluntary activities taken by the members of the groups with the aim to influence the government, and corporate bodies and their policies.<sup>32</sup> These activities may include: voting, campaigning, staging *dharna*, participation in a strikes/protest, marching, organizing rally, writing letters, submitting memorandum, signing petition, organizing meeting, contact officials and representatives, contributing fund and competing for public and party office. The paper has attempted to understand the role of group resources in the state politics and the extent of their political participation with the help of an empirical method in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to Colbert (2010), the Mizo society is basically a patriarchal and patrilineal society.<sup>33</sup> Mizo women are not kept in *Purdah*; unlike other society they have the freedom to move out and almost free in the society. Mizoram like any other North Eastern States has a dismal representation of women in politics. Colbert stated that “Mizo women are still yet to be liberated from the stronghold of patriarchy in all sphere of life...their participation in the politics of Mizoram seems to be marginal with few candidates at the State, District and Village Administration. Despite the visible presence of women in almost all aspects of life in the State of Mizoram, their presence in the various decision making apparatus seem to be almost nil”.<sup>34</sup> In her thesis *Women and Politics in Mizoram: An In-depth Study*, Colbert made an in-depth study of the role of women in politics of Mizoram with an exhaustive information about the historical involvement of women in administration. In her findings, women’s participation in the politics of Mizoram is almost negligible compared to their

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<sup>32</sup> Tapan Das, “Group Resources and Political Participation in Arunachal Pradesh” *The Indian Journal of Political science*, Vol.LXXI, No.3, July-Sept, 2010, pp.909-921

<sup>33</sup> Irene Colbert, *Op.Cit.*, P.32

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, P.34

male counterparts. Traditions and misinterpretations of Biblical teachings seemed to contribute to the biased attitude towards women. Colbert argues that the missionaries brought with them the patriarchal thought, reinforcing the already existing patriarchy in Mizoram. The study provides valuable information about the problems of women in entering politics in the patriarchal society of Mizoram. This will serve as a reference material for our research.

Sinha and Zorema (2012), book entitled '*Empowerment of Women in North East India: socio- economic perspectives,*' containing articles on empowerment of women in India and North East India. Majority of the papers are on empowerment of women in Mizoram.<sup>35</sup> They have also included a section on the "Political Empowerment and Women of Mizoram" contributed by four authors. Paul Debasish wrote on "Religion and Political Empowerment: A Study on the impact of Christianity on the Empowerment of the Tribal Women of Mizoram". He argued that the role of *Mizo* women in the history of the *Mizo* society remained unexplored, in spite of the contribution they have made to the society. It is further pointed that *Mizo* women had life without due political rights before the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram. But despite the rise of political consciousness in the post independent era, political parties and social organizations fail to address the importance of gender issues. He also highlighted that, the 33 percent reservation of seats for women in the Municipal Council election is the land mark decision in the Mizoram Government. But those who have contested in election are mostly public figures such as the representative of the civil society. The remark reflects that the participation of women in the civil society enhance their participation. This seem contrary to the situation in Meghalaya.

Lalrinchhani, in the article titled "*Political Empowerment in patriarchal Society: A study in Mizoram*" discussed the impact of patriarchal nature of the

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<sup>35</sup> Harendra Sinha, J. Zorema, eds., *Empowerment of Women in North East India: Socio- Economic perspectives* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt.LTD, 2012).

Mizo society on marginalized participation of women as decision maker.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, she pointed out that the teaching of Christianity did not undermine patriarchy but rather re-enforced it. She argued that the majority of the *Mizos* believed that women should not be decision makers as they followed Bible interpretations. The article provides information about the factors affecting the political participation of women in the patriarchal society of Mizoram. The present study also will be analyzing about the role of the church as well in the participation in Meghalaya.

In India, a good amount of literature on women is available in books and journals. Few publications, however, are available on women in Meghalaya especially on the comparative studies of the political participation of the Garo and the Khasi Women. Few research works are done on the matrilineal status, women entrepreneurs, etc. from the sociological and economic aspects though; it reflects the position of women in decision making process. Even though the area draws more and more interest to the researchers and intellectuals in the present time, but no previous research work has been found on the comparative studies of the political participation of the Garo and the Khasi women.

Chie Nacane (1967), analyses the differences in the structures of matrilineal systems of the Garo and Khasi social structures by taking the case study of few villages of the Garo and Khasi communities without giving any special reference to the status of the Garo and khasi women in the field of politics.<sup>37</sup>

Bawri (1987), attempts to analyze the electoral behavior in the state of Meghalaya.<sup>38</sup> The study examines the voting behavior of the electorate in the

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<sup>36</sup> B. Lalrinchani, Political Empowerment in Patriarchal Society: A Study in Mizoram, in Harendra Sinha, J. Zorema, eds., *Women Empowerment of Women in North East India: Socio- Economic perspectives* ( New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt.LTD,2012),p.121

<sup>37</sup> Chie Nakane, *Garo and Khasi : A Comparative Study in Matrilineal System* (Paris,1967)

<sup>38</sup> Soluchana Bawri, *Electoral Politics in Meghalaya; A case study of the Greater Shillong Areas During the 1983 Assembly Elections*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Political Science (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, 1987).

Greater Shillong of the state of Meghalaya during the 1983 assembly election. In one of the chapters she also discussed about the role of women in politics. The study reveals the fact that even though women are enthusiastic to contest elections, few women were able to come out successfully and win elections. While the study was confined to Greater Shillong where majority of the inhabitants are Khasis, it provides brief information about the role of the Khasi women. The present study would have a wider scope of study by comparing the political participation of both the Garo and the Khasi women.

L.S. Gassah (1988), attempts to examine the effects of the emerging political system on the traditional leadership in Jaintia hills of Meghalaya.<sup>39</sup> It is a comprehensive study about the evolution of the traditional institutions and leadership in the past up to the time when the new system under the District Council was introduced in the area as per the sixth scheduled to the constitution of India. The study examined the changes brought about by the new political system both under the colonial administration and District Council and their effect on the traditional leadership. While discussing the origin and historical background of the Jaintia's, Gassah gave a brief account of the Jaintia women. He asserted that the Jaintia society being a matrilineal society, women occupy a higher and distinct status with certain restrictions, especially in the political affairs and women's presence or participation in any political affairs is not countenanced.

Saumen Sen's work (1992), contains the collection of the papers presented in a seminar on the *Status of Women in the Tribal Culture of Meghalaya* in July 1988, sponsored by the North Eastern Regional Centre of Indian Council of Social Science Research.<sup>40</sup> The book discusses the status of the Khasi-Jaintia and the Garo women in the traditional culture societies and

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<sup>39</sup> L.S. Gassah, *A study of Emerging Political system and its effects on traditional leadership in Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dept. of Political Science (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, 1988), p.43

<sup>40</sup> Saumen Sen, ed., *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 1992).

the changing status of women in Meghalaya with the impact of education, Christianity and contact with other culture. The entire collection of papers attempts to disclose the fact that the matrilineal status of women in Meghalaya does not protect the power status of women; and politics is considered to be male prerogative. Carolyne Marak presented the paper on the *Status of Women in Garo Culture*, and she argued that the position of the Garo women in the traditional society had not been effected by the matrilineal system and women were in subjugation. Thus, the present research would try to sort out the problems on the basis of the comments and arguments provided by different scholars and intellectuals about the position of women in Meghalaya in the field of politics.

R.S. Lyngdoh (1996), attempts to trace the evolution of political thought among the Khasi and the Garo communities.<sup>41</sup> The study discusses the traditional, judicial and political systems of the communities. The book provides an interesting study about the social, cultural and political life of the Khasi and the Garo communities before British annexation and after the state attained its statehood. The author was delighted to present that the traditional form of political system in Meghalaya could not be found in any other parts of the country. They have always been more democratic than the Panchayat that exist in the neighbouring plains. While the author was trying to picture the political system of the Khasi and Garo communities, he opined that for generations Khasi and Garo women have been the custodians of property in whose strength the life and character of their men confide their hopes and aspirations. He further stated that the art of government and politics till recent past has been the monopoly of men whereas the hearth and homes were in the hands of women. The statement clearly shows the secondary position of the Meghalaya women as decision makers. However, the book does not present any specific study on women in particular.

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<sup>41</sup> R. S. Lyngdoh *Op.Cit.*, pp.106-123

The book edited by M.N. Karna, L.S. Gassah and C.J. Thomas (1996), contain research papers presented and discussed at the Sub-Regional Workshop on Panchayati Raj sponsored by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi and organized by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Shillong during October 12-14<sup>th</sup> 1995 .<sup>42</sup> The authors of the various articles attempt to analyze the effectiveness of the grass roots democracy and the relevance of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the State of Meghalaya. Mrs. M.P.R. Lyngdoh discusses on the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1992 and the 33percent reservation of seats for women as the effective steps towards empowerment of women. The Act is not affected in the sixth scheduled area of Meghalaya. There is no such reservation in the District Council in Meghalaya. Further, Lyngdoh stated that women now in Meghalaya have come up in every field in professional studies, business and trade, civil services and other fields. Moreover, she stated that women of Meghalaya are competitive, intelligent, practical, hard working and are very creative. These values and qualities will be properly used in the decision making level if they are presented in the local, state and national politics. But active participation of women in politics in Meghalaya is still an ongoing debate in which the present study would perhaps provide clear image of the problems faced by the women of Meghalaya till today.

Kyrsoi Shailin Mawlong (1990), provide a brief account about the socio-economic status and the political participation of the Khasi women in the traditional society and attempts to analyses the changing status of women in the Khasi society with the impact of education, Christianity and the contact with the people from outside.<sup>43</sup> The study shows that there are noticeable changes in the status of women almost in all spheres. In the field of politics women are becoming conscious of the need to take active part, as they are more independent to participate in the decision making process compared to the

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<sup>42</sup>M.N. Karna, *et.al.*, eds., *Power to People in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Regency Publications. , 1998)

<sup>43</sup> Kyrsoi Shailin Mawlong, *Status of Khasi Women: Sociological study of Educated Employed*, Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Department of Sociology (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, 1990)

traditional societies where women have no right to participate in the process of legislation, administration and judiciary and in the political decision making process. While Mawlong made an analytical study of the status of educated and employed Khasi women, it provides information about the status of the Khasi women in general, which will help the present research to have an in-depth study of political status of the Khasi women in comparison with that of the Garo women.

Khonglah's (2002), *Khasi Women and Indigenous Question* discusses the challenges that women are facing in the changing society in the context of inheritance and economic problems.<sup>44</sup> She argues that the patterns of inheritance of property by all women practiced in the traditional Khasi society are not relevant any more.<sup>45</sup> Khonglah further pointed out that education played an important role in improving the status of women with a number of working women in governmental and non-governmental organizations holding various kinds of post from lower grades to professional and non-professional areas. She also suggested that women are facing social change.<sup>46</sup> While discussing about the Khasi women and internal displacement, she pointed out that women are facing new challenges that they themselves need to encounter. Khonglah sees internal displacement in the case of Khasi people of a different nature; she refers it as 'rural-urban migration', and 'occupational mobility'. Regarding Khasi women and politics she argues that the insignificant representation of women in various decision making bodies in the matrilineal system should not surprise anybody because they are facing the same unequal

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<sup>44</sup> Cerila Khonglah, "Khasi women and the indigenous question" in Fernandes Walter, Barbora Sanjay *changing women's Status in India: Focus on the North East*, (Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, 2002),p.169

<sup>45</sup> Regarding the inheritance system, Khonglah observes the new challenges that women are facing today from those who demand changes in the heritance patterns and other rights.

<sup>46</sup> Khonglah discusses social change with regard to the demands of the movement to change the inheritance system. She also noted the division of the society between the haves and have not. She also highlighted the women representation in the local meetings which is traditionally debarred women from attending *durbar*, the traditional institution. She further pointed out that there are localities particularly in urban areas where women are allowed to attend *durbar* and express their views during the meetings in the recent years. They have co-opted women as members of its executive committee.

treatment in the society as in other parts of the country. The paper provides valuable information for the present study about the old and new challenges that indigenous women are facing in different spheres.

Andrew Simon attempts to analyze the role of women in Indian politics and discusses the contribution of Indian women in the freedom struggle and that women in India have proved to be equally active and competent in almost every field. He further argued that even though women constitute about half of the Indian population, yet since independence very few women represented either in Parliament or State Assemblies. Dealing with the topic *Women in the State of Meghalaya* the author exclaimed the dismal role of women in the area of politics which is not different from their counterparts, even though they are expected to play equally active role in politics with men for having the matrilineal structured society. The book provides a general picture of low representation of women in politics.<sup>47</sup>

Magreeta Jala (2002) observed that in Meghalaya markets are controlled and run by women. While discussing *Matrilini: Its Relevance to entrepreneurship*,<sup>48</sup> Jala pointed out that the failure of business among the *Khasis* are because of the matrilineal system followed by the society. Further, Jala observed that men were irresponsible in such a system, where they do not have the right of inheritance and ownership. When they were unmarried, the property belongs to their parents; and the property belongs to their wives when they got married. The study also shows that women play more important role in the Khasi entrepreneurship, in spite of their weakness. As such, the study made by Magreeta Jala is from the economic point of view. The present study deals with the role played by the women in politics.

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<sup>47</sup> Andrew Simons, *Women In Parliament: The case in India* (Shillong: Ri Khasi Press)

<sup>48</sup> Magreeta Jala, *A social Background of Khasi Entrepreneurship*, Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, Department of Sociology (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, 2002), pp.49-56



Amena Passah (2003) discusses the marginalization of women in politics in Meghalaya.<sup>49</sup> The study highlighted that Khasi women are not politically empowered and the traditional Khasi political system is difficult to call it a democratic system without the presence of women. The study provides brief information about the views of men and women about the participation of women in politics. This has been one of the areas of concern of the present research.

Ashok Kumar Ray and Athaparia, Rajendra Prasad (2006) have edited the seminar papers presented on *Women and Changing Power structure in North East India*.<sup>50</sup> The paper presenters analyse the status of women in North East India, comprising the state of Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya. Majority of the paper presenters on the status of Meghalaya women in the decision making criticized the low degree of political status of women in Meghalaya, besides enjoying a matrilineal structured society. While M.R.P. Lyngdoh presented a paper on the “Political Participation of Women in Meghalaya from Tradition to Modernity: Problem and Prospect” trying to give a brief account of the political participation of women both in the Legislative Assemblies and the Autonomous District Council of Meghalaya. Thus, the present research would perhaps provide a valuable study about the ongoing debate and discontentment about the marginalized position of women in the political field.

Kezhaleno Khatso’s (2004) work on *Khasi Women and Electoral Politics: A Study of the Greater Shillong Area* focuses on the participation of urban Khasi women in electoral politics.<sup>51</sup> She analyses the awareness, commitments, attitudes of women towards politics. In her study, Khatso

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<sup>49</sup> Amena Passah “ Women and political participation in Meghalaya- Some Insights” in *Proceedings of North east India History Association*,24<sup>th</sup> Session ( Guwahti:NEIHA,2003),pp.368-379

<sup>50</sup> Ashok Kumar Ray, Athaparia, Rajendra Prasad, eds., *Women and changing power structure in North East India* (New Delhi: Om Publications,2006).

<sup>51</sup> Ketzhaleno Khatso, *Khasi Women and Electoral Politics: A Study of the Greater Shillong Area*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Anthropology (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, 2004).

pointed out that post-graduate has the highest percentage of participation in politics while the illiterates show the highest percentage of dis-interested in politics and remain as apolitical group. The study provides valuable information for the present study about the political activity and attitudes of the urban Khasi women.

Nongbri (2008), focuses on the Khasi women and their contribution to the household economy.<sup>52</sup> The book analyses the prospects and constrains that women are facing in entrepreneurships. It examines the kinship roles, gender relations, economic conditions and the pattern of development that emerged in Meghalaya. The study provides valuable information and helps the present research to have a better understanding about the economic condition of the Khasi women.

### **1.7 Significance of the study:**

The preceding section makes an extensive review of the existing literature on women in general and of Khasi and Garo women in particular. There are references made on some specific works done on the electoral politics of women in Shillong which is predominantly inhabited by the majority Khasi community. Moreover, Shillong is the urban area which is the head quarter of East Khasi Hills district. The participation, attitude and opinion of the people who live in Shillong are not the same as those who live in the rural areas. Impact of urbanization, education and modernization has been least for those who live in the rural area. East Khasi hill district has the highest percentage of female literacy rate in comparison to other districts in Meghalaya. It has 74.8 percent in 2001 and 84.15 percent in 2011 census. While the percentage of female literacy rate in other districts does not cross 79 percent according to the 2011 census. The present study attempts to focus on the problems based on such disparities. As such, the research area was

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<sup>52</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, *Gender, Matriliny, And Entrepreneurship: the Khasis of North East India* (New Delhi: Zubaan,2008)

conducted in the districts which have the average female literacy rate which is closer to the total female literacy rate in the state. Further, the present study includes a comparative study of both Khasi and Garo women with an attempt to have a broader scope than the previous research works. It is also an attempt to avoid bias in the study by including samples both from rural and urban areas which provides a wider perspective on the political behaviour of women in Meghalaya. Interestingly, no research has been found so far on the comparative study of the political participation of women between Garo and Khasi women, though a few articles, research papers and books on Meghalaya may reflect the political participation of women in both the communities. This research attempts to plug the loopholes existing in the literature relating to women in Meghalaya. By making comparative study between Khasi and Garo women, the thesis deals with the political participation and role performance of women in Meghalaya empirically in a comprehensive way.

### **1.8 Limitation of the study:**

1. Though the present study attempts to have a wider scope than the previous research works, it mostly reflects the political behaviour of women in Meghalaya.
2. Interview was conducted with the successful and few unsuccessful politicians who have contested in the last MDC, Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Election 2008-2009 only. Though there were other women politicians who have contested and got elected in different years of the previous elections, we did not cover all of them.
3. Due to limited period, the number of respondents selected constitutes only 0.05 percent of household from each district in Khasi and Garo Hills. Therefore scheduled interview was confined to 209 respondents

only. The number of respondents mentioned does not include those whom I have conducted personal interview for our case study

4. Scheduled interview method and semi- structured interview method were used in the same manner both in Khasi and Garo Hills. Due to language problem, an interpreter was required in Garo Hills. As such, the conclusions were drawn from language used by the interpreter. With regard to the respondents in West Khasi Hills (rural area), women were reluctant to cooperate with the scheduled interview as no research has been conducted in the area before. They tend to over state or under state rather than giving the honest answer.

### **1.9 Chapterisation Scheme:**

Chapter-1 includes the introduction of the thesis. It first explains briefly about the low participation of women in decision making bodies around the world. The chapter also discusses in brief the insignificant number of women in decision making bodies in India and particularly in the North Eastern Region of India. It has been argued that the status of women in North East India, especially in Meghalaya where matrilineal system prevails, women are considered to have better status than other parts of India but political power as elsewhere are in the hands of the male members of the society. The chapter also includes the objectives, significance and limitation of the study. It further explains the methodology, sampling design and review of literature.

Chapter - 2 deals with the profile of Meghalaya. This chapter provides a back ground about the state of Meghalaya. It includes brief history of Meghalaya, traditional chief, topography, demography, industry and mining, agriculture, customs of the people, religion, statehood movement and the Autonomous District Council.

Chapter -3 is the theoretical framework of the thesis; it deals with the concept of political participation and role performance. This chapter explains

the concept of political participation as defined differently by different thinkers. It also discusses the nature and modes of political participation. The explanation on the significance of political participation of women has been examined from two perspectives that is, from gender-democratic perspectives and feminist perspectives. Lastly, the chapter discusses the relevance of the concept of political participation for the present study. The significance of the modes of political participation has been also emphasized on the measurement of political participation from two dimensions, that is, quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Chapter - 4 deals with the study on *Women and Politics in Meghalaya* (1937-2009). An analysis has been made on women representation in decision making bodies at different levels. The year 1937 to 2009 has been deliberately selected as the records of women representation in legislature was first seen in the year 1937. The year 2009 was the last general election that was held in Meghalaya. The different levels of decision making bodies have been discussed and analyzed on women representation in the traditional political institutions: as member of Autonomous District Council, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly and Parliament.

Chapter - 5 is the chapter on *Women and Civil Society in Meghalaya*. This chapter attempts to explain and understand the role of civil society in promoting political participation of women in Meghalaya. A semi-structured interview has been conducted with the leaders of the leading civil society groups in Meghalaya from Garo and Khasi Hills. Interestingly, in this chapter, an analysis has also been made on the impact of the agents of political socialisation on the political participation of women in Meghalaya. As such, the chapter attempts to explain the external factors and its impact on women representation in politics.

Chapter - 6 includes empirical analysis of the political participation of women other than those who have contested in the election. A comparison has

been made between Khasi and Garo women based on the field work conducted in Khasi and Garo Hills. Analysis has been made with the help of computer Ms-Excel and SPSS package. Discussion and arguments have been made by showing facts in tables and figures.

Chapter - 7 discusses the political recruitment and role performance of women politicians in Meghalaya. It includes the case study of few successful and unsuccessful women politicians. This chapter studies how successful women are able to come to power. It also includes analysis on the problems of the unsuccessful women candidates in the last MDC election. It further discusses the factors hindering participation of women in politics.

Chapter - 8 includes summary and conclusion of the thesis. It tries to sum up the major findings and analyses from each chapter. It also includes suggestions based on the results of the research conducted.

CHAPTER-2  
PROFILE OF MEGHALAYA

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The facts and information mentioned in this chapter have been compiled from different sources, mainly from secondary sources. The researcher does not claim any originality for this. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to provide a back ground about the state of Meghalaya.

### **2.1 Brief history**

The name “Meghalaya” literally means “The Abode of the Clouds”. It is one of the beautiful states situated in the North Eastern Region of India. It is famous for having the cleanest village in Asia and the wettest place on earth.<sup>1</sup> Before the British administration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo which are the major tribes of Meghalaya had their own kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> In 1835 the British incorporated Meghalaya into Assam.<sup>3</sup> Meghalaya, however, became a part of the new province of "Eastern Bengal and Assam", when Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1905.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter in 1912 Meghalaya became a part of Assam province when the partition was reversed.<sup>5</sup> At the time when India got Independence, Meghalaya enjoyed limited autonomy within the state of Assam that led to the demand for a separate statehood. Thereafter, Assam Re-organisation (Meghalaya) Act, 1969 accorded an autonomous status to the state of Meghalaya within the state of Assam on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1970.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971, Meghalaya was formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: the United Khasi -Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. It attained its full statehood on 21 January 1972.

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<sup>1</sup> Mawlynnong village is the cleanest place in Asia and Mawsynram is the wettest place in the world. These villages fall under the East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya.

<sup>2</sup> Kumud Borathakur, *Encyclopedia of Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2009), p.1

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Shyam Nath, *Panorama of North East India* (Delhi: Authorspress, 2004), p.117



## 2.2 Topography

Meghalaya is situated in the North Eastern Region of India bordered with Assam in the North and Bangladesh in the South. It lies between 25°6' N latitude and 89° 47' and 92° 47'E longitude. The State has an area of 22,429sq.km. In 1976, Meghalaya was divided into two districts as United Khasi-Jaintia hills and Garo hills. Later on, it has been divided into seven districts i.e. East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Ribhoi District, East Garo Hills, West Garo hills and South Garo hills District. Recently for administrative conveniences, four new districts have been created in 2012, namely, South West Khasi Hills, East Jaintia Hills, North Garo Hills and South West Garo Hills. Khasi hills form the central of Meghalaya which lies to the east of Garo hills. It has an area of 10, 298 sq.kms. To the western part of Meghalaya lies the Garo Hills with an area of 8171 sq. km. It is bounded on the north and the west by the district of Goalpara of Assam, on the east by the West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya; and on the South by the Mymensing District of Bangladesh.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.3 Demography

Meghalaya has a population of 23, 18,822 in 2001 in which 14, 44,170 are males and 14, 14,194 are females. According to 2011 census, it has a population provisional (P) of 29, 64,007 of which 14, 92,668 are males and 14, 71,339 are females.<sup>8</sup> The density of population per Sq.km is 127 in 2001 and 131 in 2010.<sup>9</sup> According to the 2011 census, the population in Khasi hills was 14, 68,040 and the population in Garo hills was 11, 03,115.<sup>10</sup> The sex ratio was 979 in 2001 and 980 in 2010.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2001 Census, there were 11,139 Scheduled castes, 19, 92,862 Scheduled Tribe and 3, 14,821 are those who belong to other categories.

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<sup>7</sup> Kynpham Singh, *Op.Cit.*,p.12

<sup>8</sup> *Statistical Hand Book Meghalaya(2010-2011)*, (Shillong: Directorate of Economics& Statistics, Government of Meghalaya, 2011),pp.2-3

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*,p.1

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*,p.3

The state is predominantly inhabited by three major tribal communities - the Khasis, the Jaintias or the Pnars and the Garos who together constitute 80 percent of the total population of the state. The state also has non-tribal communities such as the Bengalis, Marwaris, Nepalis and others who have come from other parts of India and the neighbouring states for professional jobs, business and educational purposes. The principal languages in Meghalaya are Khasi, Pnar (Jaintia) and Garo; with English as the official language of the State. Besides these, it may be noted that the Khasis and the Garos as well have distinct dialect which is sometimes difficult to understand by the Khasis or the Garos in general. For instance war-jaintias, lyngams language is different from the Khasi language and A'tong language which is used by the Garos who live in Siju area is different from the Garo spoken language.

The Khasis and the Jaintias were believed to be ethnically of Monkhmer origin migrated from Cambodia whereas the Garos belong to Tibeto- Burman Race.<sup>12</sup> The word Khasi is a generic identity of *U khynriam* (Western plateau), *U pnar* (Eastern plateau), U Bhoi (Northern slopes), *U war* (Southern slopes).<sup>13</sup> They are also known as “*ki khun u hynniewtrep*” in khasi language which means children of the seven huts.

According to the 2011 census (P), the literacy rate in Meghalaya has increased to 75.48 percent from 62.6 percent of the 2001 Census. The male literacy rate is 65.4 in 2001 and 77.17 in 2011(P) higher than the female literacy rate 59.9 in 2001 and 73.78 in 2011(P) census. According to 2011(P) Census, among the seven districts (excluding the newly created districts as no separate data available yet); East Khasi Hills has the highest percentage of literacy rate followed by West Khasi Hills district as the second highest with 80.9 percent. Jaintia hills district has the lowest literacy rate percentage with 63.26 percent. It is the only district that has the literacy rate of the female

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<sup>12</sup> Cerila Khonglah, “Khasi women and the indigenous question” in Fernandes walter, Barbora Sanjay,eds., *changing women's Status in India: Focus on the North East*, (Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, 2002), p.168

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

(66.71%) is higher than the males' literacy rate (59.75%). The second lowest is West Garo hills with 66.33 percent (Female has 63.34 percent; Male has 73.31percent of literacy rate). South Garo Hills showed an unprecedented increased from 55 percent in 2001 to 72.39 percent in 2011 census. The female literacy rate of South Garo Hills is 48 percent in 2001 has increased to 67.72 percent in 2011.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.4 Traditional chief

Both the Khasis and Garos have their own traditional political institutions with their traditional chief since time immemorial. The traditional administration of the Khasis is found at different level in a hierarchical order. It is managed and administered by the adult male members of the community. Primarily the Khasis have the "clan council" who manage the internal affairs of the people of the clan which is known as the *Dorbar Kur*. It is presided over by the clan's headman known as the *Rangbah Kur* chosen by the adult male members. He becomes *U Saidnia* or *Lyngdoh* of the clan. He also functions as the priest who performs all the religious rites.<sup>15</sup> Next to the *Rangbah Kur* is the *Rangbah Shnong* in which the people or the representatives of the clan elect their rulers based on the principle of adult franchise, and that he is known as the headman of the village.<sup>16</sup> Higher to the village council is the 'Raid council' which is also known as the *Raid Dorbar* presided over by the elected headman known as *Basans* and the *Lyngdoh*. The *Lyngdoh* in the capacity of "sacerdotal head" was influential because of his religious background.<sup>17</sup> *Basan* is recognized as the legitimate protector for future settler due to his seniority (prior settlement in the land).<sup>18</sup> They, however, dealt with inter-village issues comprised of adjacent Khasi villages. The *Raid* had its own council known as the *Raid Dorbar*. The highest supreme authority is the *Dorbar Hima*. It is

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<sup>14</sup> All the data in this section has been compiled from the *Statistical hand book, Op.Cit.*, p.116

<sup>15</sup> Kynpham Singh, "Syiem And Dorbars in Khasi Polity" in S.K. Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Tribal Institution of Meghalaya* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications,1985),p.13

<sup>16</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *The History And Culture of the Khasi People*( Printed at Calcutta: Published by the Author,1967),p.246

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,pp.247-248

composed of the *Syiems*, the *Bakhraws* or *Myntris*, the headman and adult male representatives headed by an elected chief known as the *Syiem* (or the king).<sup>19</sup> Kynpham Singh stated that according to Sib Charan Roy, the entire Khasi and Jaintia Hills used to be under one *Syiem*, Mailong Raja, whose seat of Government was Madur- Maskut, and whose sovereignty extended over a vast area from Manipur in the East to Mymensigh in the West, from Brahmaputra on the North to Dacca in the South.<sup>20</sup> According to Bareh, the existence of the *Syiem* or the Chief was the result of social contract and recognized him as the legitimate head of the whole area.<sup>21</sup> The *Syiem* should look after the administration of the state in the interest of the people. It may be noted that besides the main *Syiem*, there is a Deputy *Syiem* as well who is known as *U Syiem Khynnah* in khasi language or the Junior Prince. There are many *Syiemship* known as Nongkhlaw, Myllem, Nongspung, Langrin, Mariaw, Malai- Sohmat, Cherra and Rambrai *Syiemship*.<sup>22</sup> Regarding the law of succession of the *Syiems*, Bareh stated that it varies from place to place. He wrote,

“ The rule governing the first was that the *Syiemship* of the deceased should be inherited by the eldest of his uterine brothers, failing which the throne was to be inherited by his maternal cousin brother i.e. the eldest of his sister’s sons of the daughter of his ( the deceased *Syiem*) sister ranked next. If there were no heir from the male line, women were eligible, in that case the eldest sister of the deceased would become a *Syiem*, and failing which, the elder sister would rank next. In the absence of the collaterals, the throne would go to the eldest granddaughter of the sister of *Syiem*.”<sup>23</sup>

It may be noted that with the formation of the District Council, the appointment and succession of Chief and headmen shall be subjected to the approval of the District Council. There is also a provision that the District Council can remove and suspend the Chief if they violate the terms and

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<sup>19</sup> Kynpham Singh, *Op.Cit.*,p.21

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*,p.12

<sup>21</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *Op.Cit.*,p.249

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*,p.252

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*,p.250

conditions of his appointment.<sup>24</sup> As such, the Chief has to be accountable to the District Council and so it reduced their position to that of subordinate officials. In fact, it resulted in constraining relationship between the traditional chief and the District Council in Meghalaya till today.

The traditional political institution of the Garos revolves round the institution of the *Nokma* and the village council. Milton Sangma stated that the Garos entered Garo hills from different directions and each batch consisting of a clan settling in a particular area. They recognized their leader as the Headman called “*Nokma*” in the Garo language. He is the one who brought his people and settled them in a particular area of Garo hills.<sup>25</sup> The *Nokma*, however, does not enjoy autocratic powers as all the decisions are taken by the elders of the village in a joint assembly.<sup>26</sup> There are various types of *Nokmas* in Garo hills - the *Chalang Nokma*, *Gamni Nokma*, the *Gana Nokma*, the *Miteni Nokma* and the *A’ king Nokma*. Except the *A’ king Nokma*, all other *Nokmas* do not have political powers.<sup>27</sup> The Garo Hills District Council, under Act No.1 of 1960, defined “*A’ king*” as “any land held by a clan or *ma’chong* under the custody of the head of the clan or *ma’chong* called *Nokma* recognized as such by the District Council”.<sup>28</sup> He generally becomes the *A’king Nokma* by being the husband of the head of the village community or the senior-most woman of the clan though other members are sometimes appointed in certain cases. As the head of the clan and the custodian of the *A’ king* land, he is entrusted with certain political and administrative powers.<sup>29</sup> He represents the village externally and internally plays the role as the central figure in the village activities.<sup>30</sup> Though the *A’king Nokma* excises political and administrative

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<sup>24</sup>H. G. Joshi, *Meghalaya Past And present* (New Delhi: A Mittal Publication, 2004), pp.129-130

<sup>25</sup> Milton S. Sangma, “The institution of Nokmaship in the Garo Hills” in S.K. Chattopadhyya, ed., *Tribal Institution of Meghalaya* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications,1985),p.257

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>The term *A’king* comes from the word “*A kinga*” which means “a claimed land” (Milton S. Sangma, *Ibid.*), p.259

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*,p.262

powers, his position cannot be compared to the position of the ‘Chief’.<sup>31</sup> Sangma pointed out that sometimes the *Nokma* can be dismissed by the villagers and the important members of the lineage group if he fails to perform his duties.<sup>32</sup> Sangma further stated, “The *Nokma* is rather social and economic representative of the village without having any advantage or authority.”<sup>33</sup> It has been argued that it is partly due to the fact that he derived his authority from his wife and partly due to the democratic and equalitarian tradition of the society.<sup>34</sup> Milton Sangma wrote “the *Nokma* including his family cannot claim any superiority of status because he is simply a selected member from both local lineage groups in which the members are of equal status in the kinship network.”<sup>35</sup> It may be mentioned that the power of the *Nokma* has been reduced substantially during the British rule. The British introduced the office of the *Laskar* to control the *A’King Nokmas*. As such the *Laskars* were empowered with the police, civil and criminal justice and revenue administration.<sup>36</sup> Though the community recognized the *Nokma* as the headman, the head of the clan, the representative of the village and their leader, but he does not wield the powers of the Chief as those in the Khasi society.

## 2.5 Industry and mining

Meghalaya is one of the industrially backward states in the North Eastern States of India. Some of the traditional industries in the state are iron – smelting, work in metals, handloom, forest based industries and lime elevations which were existed since time immemorial.<sup>37</sup> The number of large and medium scale industries in Meghalaya was only 10, accounting 5.62 percent of North

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> J. B. Bhattacharya, “Social Formation in Pre-colonial Garo Society: Problems And Processes” in S.K. Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Tribal Institution of Meghalaya* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1985), p.12

<sup>35</sup> Milton S. Sangma, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>36</sup> L. S. Gassah, “Traditional System of Governance among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya and the changes thereof” in C. Joshua Thomas, ed., *Polity and Economy: Agenda for Compulsory N.E. India* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 2005), p.86

<sup>37</sup> N. N. Bhattacharyya, *Meghalaya Land, People and economy* (New Delhi: Rajesh Publications, 2008), p.117

<sup>37</sup> *Statistical hand book, Op.Cit.*, p.112

East India.<sup>38</sup> There were 3, 270 small scale industries in the state in 1998-1999 with 18,585 of persons employed. It has increased to 6,842 in 2008-2009 with a total number of 37,656 employees. The type of registered small scale industries are wooden furniture and fixture, cement based industries, steel based industries, leather based industries, stone products, tailoring, lime making, saw mills, Betel nut preservation, motor vehicle repairing and servicing, tyre retreading and vulcanizing, bakery, food products, printing press/offsets, dry cleaning, cane and bamboo works, knitting and embroidery, weaving/handloom, black smithy, computer data processing, atta chaki, rice mill, flour mill, satellite cable T. V. network, handy craft and others.<sup>39</sup> From 2002 to 2007 the number of registered factories in the state remained 118 with 7071 employees. There was an increase in the number of the registered factories to 120 in 2008 and 2009 which also led to the increase in the number of employees to 7626 (as shown in table 2.1).

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71

**Table: 2.1 Employments in Registered Factories**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Registered Factories</b>	<b>Employees</b>
2002	118	7071
2003	118	7071
2004	118	7071
2005	118	7071
2006	118	7071
2007	118	7071
2008	120	7626
2009	120	7626

Source: *Statistical Hand Book, Meghalaya (2010-2011)*, p.79



There were 382 projects and 2,288 employments under the *Khadi* and Village Industries (KVI) Board during 2007-2008 in Meghalaya.<sup>40</sup> There are 119 Agro- based and food processing, 32 are Forest based projects, 44 are Mineral based projects and 11 are Chemical based projects, 41 are rural engineering and bio-technology projects, 151 are service/ textile projects, 3 handmade paper and fiber industries.<sup>41</sup> The production of *Khadi* and Village Industries in lacs during 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were 165.61 and the sales were 285.87 lacs.<sup>42</sup> The per capita income was Rs.8827 as compared to the national average of Rs.1876955.<sup>43</sup>

Meghalaya has mineral wealth such as coal, silliminite, limestone, dolomite, fire- clay, feldspar, quartz and glass sand.<sup>44</sup> The total reserves of coal in Khasi Hills are 164.50 million tones, Jaintia Hills 40.00 million tones and Garo Hills 359.00 million tonnes.<sup>45</sup> Limestone is another major mineral item found in close proximity to coal. The total estimate reserved of limestone in the state is in the region of 5000 million tones.<sup>46</sup> Silliminite is another important mineral which was being produced in Sonapahar area but now its production has been stopped.<sup>47</sup> In 1989 uranium has been discovered at Domiasiat in West Khasi Hills but the operation of uranium has stopped in 1992 as a result of protest from different sections of the people due to environmental reasons and health hazards.<sup>48</sup> Besides, Meghalaya is also rich in minerals like Keolin, bauxite, base metal namely lead, zinc and copper etc.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*,73-74

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, P.77

<sup>43</sup> N. N. Bhattacharyya, *Op.Cit.*, p.113

<sup>44</sup> Shyam Nath, *OP.Cit.*,123

<sup>45</sup> N. N. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*, p.105

<sup>46</sup> M.N.karna, Meghalaya, p.123

<sup>47</sup> ([http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Jrp/Pdf/133\\_7.pdf](http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Jrp/Pdf/133_7.pdf)), Accessed: 12.02.13

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> N. N. Bhattacharyya, *Op.Cit.*,p.106

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*p.107

## 2.6 Agriculture

Meghalaya is basically an agrarian economy in which about 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Despite the large percentage of population engaged in agriculture, the state is still dependent upon imports from other states for most food items such as meat, eggs, food grains etc. Infrastructural constraints have also prevented the economy of the state from growing at a pace commensurate with that of the rest of the country.<sup>50</sup> Besides, the major food crops of rice and maize, Meghalaya is also known for its oranges, pineapple, banana, jackfruits, temperate fruits like plum, pear, peaches etc. Cash crops, popularly and traditionally cultivated include potato, turmeric, ginger, black pepper, arecanut, betel vine, tapioca, short staple cotton, jute and mesta, mustard and rapeseed. Agriculture in the state is characterized by limited use of modern techniques and low productivity. As a result, despite the vast majority of the population engaged in agriculture, the contribution of agricultural production to the state's Gross Domestic Product is low and most of the population engaged in agriculture remains poor. The widely prevalent agricultural practice in the state has been the practice of *Jhum* cultivation but a marked transition from shifting cultivation is observed in the state.

## 2.7 Custom

The people of Meghalaya has rich cultural heritage. The customary practices of the people in Meghalaya are different from the rest of the society in India with regard to the inheritance pattern and the marriage practices. Both the Khasis and the Garos community followed matrilineal system. In such a matrilineal system the descent is traced from the mother side. The children get the mother's title. The ancestral property is passed down from mother to daughter and it is the women who inherit the property. The husband has to come and stay with the wife after marriage and bride price is unknown to the

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<sup>50</sup> M. N. Karna, *Op.Cit.*

society. The husband too do not require to bring anything on the wedding day. Few of the customary practices of both the communities are being discussed here in the following sections.

***Garos' custom of inheritance:*** With regard to the law of inheritance of the Garos, the sons do not receive any part of the property. They have to acquire by their own labour.<sup>51</sup> Julius L.R. Marak stated that where there is no female to inherit the property, the clans' members may appoint another woman of the clan. If the wife dies, her husband cannot inherit the property except on some grounds.<sup>52</sup> With regard to such rule, Playfair explains that "if the woman dies, the property is passed on to the daughter. If the daughter too dies without any issue, and before her husband, he cannot inherit the property. In such a case, the wife's relatives provide him with another wife of the same *machong* (motherhood) as the deceased woman. The daughter of the second wife would satisfy the rule and possess the property of the first wife."<sup>53</sup> In fact, the husband who uses and enjoys the property during his lifetime, however, "he cannot will it away, but otherwise his authority with regard to it is unquestioned."<sup>54</sup>

A woman may lose her inherited property if she is unfaithful to her husband or if he divorces her. In such a case, another wife would be chosen for the husband and through her, he would continue to use his first wife's belongings.<sup>55</sup> The Garos have the innate belief that they have come from the same motherhood or the *machongs*. As such, the inheritance of ancestral property is strictly followed through the female line. Playfair stated that once the property is in the hand of motherhood, it cannot be passed out of it. Though all the children belong to the same *machong*, but sons must marry a woman of

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<sup>51</sup> Milton Sangma, "History of the Garos" *Op.Cit.*,p.138

<sup>52</sup> Julius L. R. Marak, *Garos Customary and Practices* ( New Delhi : Akansha publishing House,2000), p.140

<sup>53</sup> Major A. Playfair, *The Garos* ( Guwahati: United Publishers,1975),p.72

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

another clan. As such, if he inherits his mother's property, it would pass out of her *machong* in the second generation.<sup>56</sup>

***Khasi custom of inheritance:*** The Khasi law of inheritance too runs through the female line. The Khasi belief of *long jait na ka kynthei* (from the woman sprang the clan), *shi kpoh* or what Gordon called it the "issue of one womb" counts the descent from the mother side that they are from the same great grandmother. Gordon wrote, "They speak of a family of brothers and sisters, who are the great grandchildren of one great grandmother, as *shi kpoh*, which being literally translated, is one womb or the issue of one womb."<sup>57</sup> The youngest daughter in the Khasi society occupies a very important position. The house of the youngest daughter is called "*ka ing seng*" or it is the house where religious and family ceremonies are performed. In the Khasi custom, it is the youngest daughter who inherits the larger share of the ancestral property as she is the one who has to take care of the aged parents and any member of the clan who faced any unfortunate situations. For instance, if any of her unmarried brothers or uncles or if they get divorce or stay separated from their wife or any unfortunate incidence, the door of the youngest daughter has to be always open to help them or they can always stay in her house. Gordon stated "Hers is therefore the largest share of the family property, because it is she whose duty is to perform the family ceremonies, and propitiate the family ancestors."<sup>58</sup> The statement clearly speaks of the heavy responsibility of the youngest daughter in the Khasi society that it justifies her position to inherit the largest share of the property. If the youngest daughter dies, the property will be inherited by her immediate elder sister. As such, men do not inherit property except in certain cases that the parents also give in share of some portion of the property to the sons in recent years.

The Khasi law of inheritance also speaks of the self-acquired property by man. The property that he acquired before marriage is called as "*kamai ing*

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71

<sup>57</sup> P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012), P.82

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, P.83

*kur*” in Khasi. Such property belongs to his mother or his clan or *kur*. After marriage, the children would inherit the property or his youngest daughter if his wife died. If there are no daughters the property will be divided amongst the sons.<sup>59</sup> The system of inheritance of the acquired property in the Khasi society does not necessarily that it should belong to one clan. If a man dies, his heir will be his mother, if alive, excluding wife sons, and daughters. If the wife undertakes not to marry again, she will get half of the property.<sup>60</sup> It may be noted that the *war* system of inheritance followed a different pattern in which the property is distributed among both men and women.<sup>61</sup> It is the eldest daughter who looks after the aged parents and takes the share of *ka khadduh* (youngest daughter) as is the khasi practice in general.

**Adoption:** Both the Khasis and the Garos practice the custom of adoption of a girl child to inherit the property. In Khasi it is known as “*raping*” or to help the house and therefore she takes the place of *Ka Khadduh* or the youngest daughter to inherit the ancestral property.<sup>62</sup> Referring to the Garos practices, Milton Sangma pointed out that adoption is practiced when there is no suitable daughter to become the heiress. Sometimes the parents adopt an orphan not necessarily for inheritance, but adopted children also enjoy the same status as the real children.<sup>63</sup>

**Marriage:** Regarding marriage, in Garo custom the initiative to propose a boy is from the girls’ side unlike the Khasis where proposals come from the boy’s side. Among the Khasis the relations may develop without the prior approval of the parents. Later on when the couple reports it to their parents and if both the families agree, then marriage solemnize is arranged in a formal way. On the other hand, the Garos practice ‘marriage by seizure’ in the traditional

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, P.84

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>61</sup> They are the Khasis who inhabited the Southern part of the Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. Their area is known as War area and the people from are called as *ki war*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>63</sup> Milton Sangma, *Op.Cit.*, p.139

societies.<sup>64</sup> By seizure marriage system, a boy may be brought or caught by the clan men, if a girl or her parents desire to give in marriage to a boy. The boy may escape and if he is still unwilling for the third time, he will be set free. This practice is not found among the Khasis. Generally, marriages in both the communities is usually performed at the bride's place for which engagements has to be made earlier before the marriage.

According to Milton Sangma, the Garo marriage is regulated by two important laws, viz., exogamy and *A' Kim*.<sup>65</sup> They cannot marry within the same clan such as M. Sangma with M. Sangma or R. Marak with R. Marak. The law of *A'kim* states that a man and woman who have once contracted marriage, they are not free to remarry the person of another clan. The Garos have the custom of substituting wife from the same clan in case if the wife dies. Similarly, if husband dies, the nephew of the deceased husband is married to her.<sup>66</sup> They also practice the custom of marrying the mother-in-law after the death of his father-in-law. This is done by the heir of the son-in-law. A Garo man is allowed to marry as many wives as he likes, with the consent of his first wife.<sup>67</sup> In the Khasi society too marriage cannot be within the same clan or *kur*. Highlighting on the kinship system of the Khasis, Helen Giri stated that the fundamental feature of the Khasis is "*tip kur tip kha*" (to know those who belong to their own *Kur* and those who belong to the father's clan or *Kur*).<sup>68</sup> This would perhaps reflect the concept of not marrying within their clan. "Polygamy and polyandry are not usually practiced among the Khasis" Says Giri.<sup>69</sup> As such marriage practices by both the communities are based on the belief that it is a taboo to marry to those who belong to the same clan. But those who have converted to Christian religion they followed Christian religious

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*,p.138

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Helen Giri "Social Institutions Among The Khasis With Special reference to Kinship, Marriage, Family Life And divorce" in S.K. Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Tribal Institution of Meghalaya*(Guwahati: Spectrum Publications,1985),p.162

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

teachings that a man and a woman should not get married to another woman when the first wife is still alive or else they have committed a sin of adultery. This rule is applied to both man and woman in Meghalaya of late.

**Divorce:** According to the Khasi and Garo customs, divorce is permitted when both husband and wife cannot live together anymore. Such divorce takes place when both the parties mutually accepted. Helen Giri pointed out that among the Khasis, divorce is quite common. “The causes for divorce may be barrenness, adultery, ill treatment, non-maintenance and such other.”<sup>70</sup> According to Milton Sangma, “the Garos custom permitted husband and wife to divorce when the two cannot live together anymore and desire separation by mutual consent; when either party is guilty of adultery and when one of them proved sterile and no substitute is provided by the clan.”<sup>71</sup>

## 2.8 Religion

Both the Khasi and the Garo community have their own traditional religious beliefs. They believed in God as the “Supreme Being”. The Garos believed in a multitude of beneficent and malevolent spirits.<sup>72</sup> They believed in *Rabuga Tatara or Ranaka Taka* as the author of creation, the dispenser of time, architect of the universe, the maker, the modeler, the source of life and strength and the disposer of human destiny.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the Khasis believed in *U Blei na jrong na tbian* (God of heaven and earth, *Nongbuh nongthaw* (God the creator) and they believed in “Cock” as the mediator between the mankind and god.<sup>74</sup> However, with the spread of Christianity, majority of people in Meghalaya have converted in to Christian religion. According to the latest record from the Department of Statistics Meghalaya, fig. 2.1 shows that

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.170

<sup>71</sup> Milton Sangma, “History of the Garos” *Op.Cit.* p.139

<sup>72</sup> Major A. Playfair, *Op.Cit.*, p.80

<sup>73</sup> See H. G. Joshi, *Meghalaya Past And present* (New Delhi: A Mittal Publication, 2004), pp.148-150

<sup>74</sup> The Khasis believed that in the beginning, there were nine clans that they used to pay visits to heaven through the golden ladder which joined heaven and earth. However, the main occupation of the seven clans (Hynniew trep) was cultivation and they returned back to heaven at sun set. But latter on they sinned, the golden ladder broke and the sun shone no more. The seven clans looked to God for mercy that the cock came forward to save mankind and became the mediator between man and God.

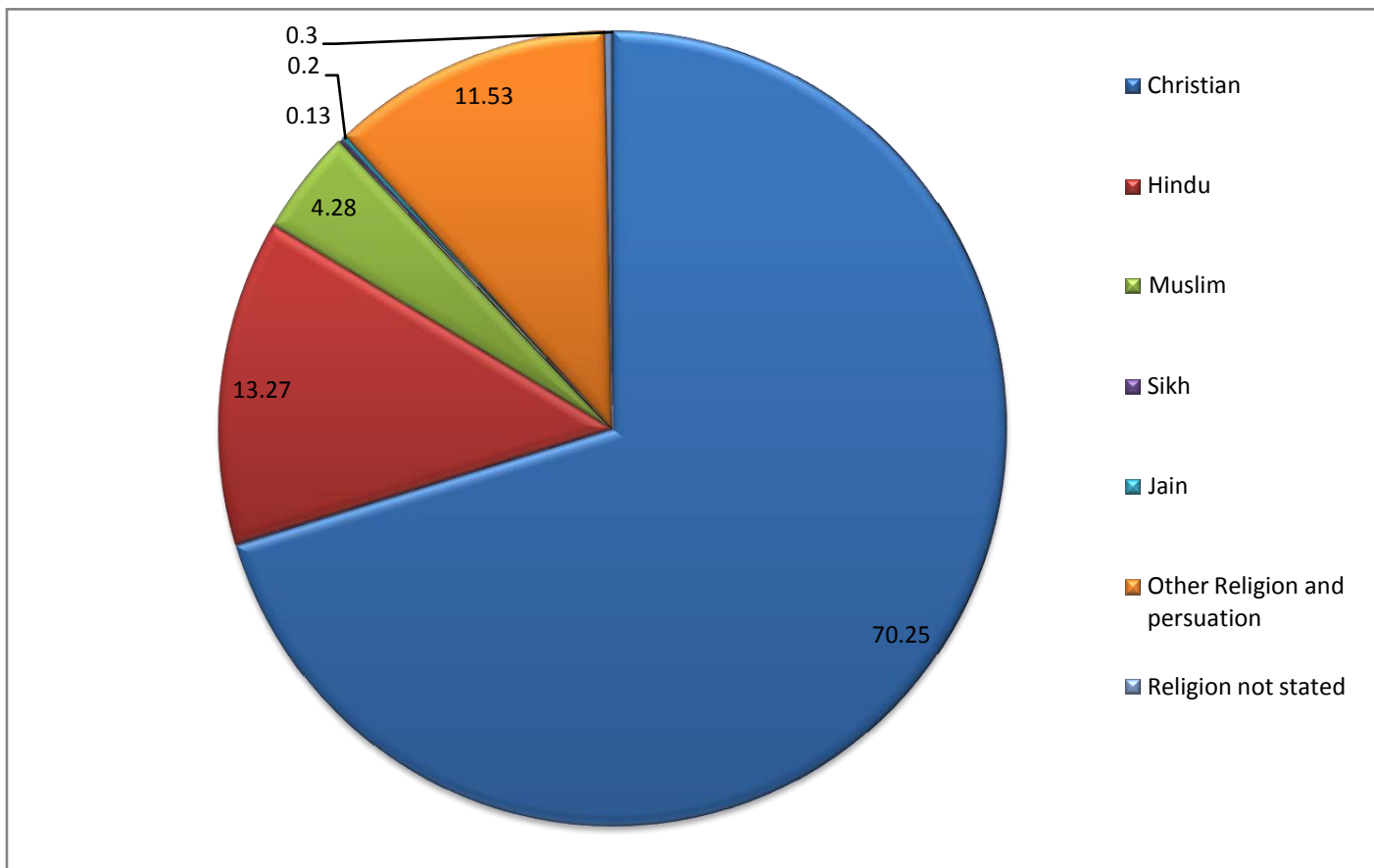
majority of the populations in Meghalaya are Christians with 70.25 percent. Among them, there are Presbyterian (Khasi hills), Roman Catholic and Baptist (Garo hills) and other charismatic (Christian) denominations.<sup>75</sup> Besides Christian religion, there are other religions in Meghalaya who are in majority next to Christian religion. The Hindus constitute 13.27 percent while 4.28 percent are Muslims. Other religions represent in minority in Meghalaya in which 0.13 percent belongs to Sikhs, 0.20 percent are Jains, 11.53 percent belongs to other religions and persuasions in which 0.30 percent are religions which is not stated.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The Presbyterian is found only in Khasi hills while Baptist is found in Garo hills as the Welsh Missionary who take over the Khasi hills and American Baptist Missionaries in Garo hills. However, the way of worship is the same.

<sup>76</sup> *Statistical Hand Book, Op.Cit.,p.3*





**Fig.2.1 Religion in Meghalaya (Source: 2011 Census)**

## 2.9 Statehood movement

Under the name of tribal development, a United Khasi - Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills was separated from the State of Assam. A demand for the Hill state was first made by Williamson Sangma the then Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Garo hills on 16th June, 1954 in the meeting of all the CEM that was held in Shillong.<sup>77</sup> Again on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1954 a Conference of the people of the Autonomous District Council was convened at Tura which resolved to submit for demanding a Hill State.<sup>78</sup> There are many reasons that the hill people raised to justify their demand for a separate statehood. Their demand was that the autonomy given to the District Council under the Sixth Scheduled was not real.<sup>79</sup> It has been also argued that though the Assamese who constituted only 50 percent of the population controlled 75 percent of the seats in legislature, monopolized 90 percent of the seats in the cabinet and 70 percent of public service.<sup>80</sup> The reasons for the demand of separate statehood was the language problem that in the Legislative Assembly and several other meetings the Assamese members spoke Assamese which was not understood to the tribal.<sup>81</sup> Again the hill people were pushed out of their ancestral land by the interior was another complains and that it mostly benefited the plains. There was also a protest against the policies adopted by the Government of Assam in 1950.<sup>82</sup> Another factor was that the hill people felt that sufficient funds were placed at the disposal of the Assam Government. The hill people were not benefit by various schemes that left the hill areas undeveloped. Further, the hill people claimed that they had their own land in which they ruled by themselves before the British rule and they were fundamentally different from the plain

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<sup>77</sup> N. K. Dev, *Tradition and Modernity in Khasi Society* ( Delhi: Spectrum Publications, 2004),p.14

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*,p.16

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*,p.15

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in N. K. Dev, *Ibid.*,p.15

<sup>82</sup> The policy was about the exclusion of Shillong town and its neighbourhood from the jurisdiction of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills District Council.

people.<sup>83</sup> Those are few factors that led to the separatist movement in Meghalaya.

In the statehood movement the All People Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) played a very important role. When the Assamese Language Bill was passed in October 1960, it paved the way for the APHLC to go ahead with its demand for a separate state out of Assam. They submitted a memorandum for a separate Statehood to the President of India and also sent a delegation to meet the Prime Minister of India. At the initial stage, the Central leadership was not receptive to the demand of the APHLC for a separate state.<sup>84</sup> The Government offered proposals one after another, which were rejected either by the State Government or the APHLC. In 1962, the APHLC contested the general election on the issue of a separate state. It won eleven out of fifteen seats from the autonomous districts to the State Assembly.<sup>85</sup>

After the death of Nehru, when Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, there was an agreement regarding the re-organization of Assam. The proposal was a federal structure where units of the plains and the hills would have equal status. This was opposed by the Congress leadership of Assam.<sup>86</sup> In 1967 general election, the APHLC won all the seats from Khasi Jaintia and Garo hills. G.G. Swell, MP of the APHLC and Williamson Sangma demanded for the immediate resolution of the problem to avoid dangerous consequences in Assam.<sup>87</sup> In 1968, the APHLC launched a non-violent direct action and held picketing before the premises of Government offices.<sup>88</sup> On 11 September, 1968 the Union Government announced its decision to create an Autonomous Hill

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<sup>83</sup> N. K. Dev, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>84</sup> Dhiren Bhagawati, *Meghalaya: Issues And Legacies of Its Early Years* (Guwahati: DVS Publishers, 2006), p.8

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

State within Assam with its own Legislative Assembly and Council of Ministers.<sup>89</sup>

In fact the APHLC was divided between the moderate and the extremists. The extremists demanded for the full-fledged state.<sup>90</sup> However, the voice of the moderates prevailed that the extremist formed a new party named as the Hill State People's Union (HPU).<sup>91</sup> The Assam Re-organisation Meghalaya Act, 1, 1969 provides for the formation within the state of Assam of an Autonomous State known as Meghalaya comprising of two districts, viz., Garo Hills and United Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Finally, the prime Minister inaugurated the new autonomous State on April, 2, 1970. The hill people were not satisfied with the Autonomous State that finally on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972 the Prime Minister inaugurated Meghalaya as a full-fledged State.

## **2.10 Autonomous District Councils**

After independence the Constitution of India attempts to ensure a strong democratic form of government. Democratic decentralization and the government at the grass root level is one agenda. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act 1992 provides a constitutional status of the Panchayati Raj Institution. It gives reservation for women and other weaker sections to ensure the power to the people at all levels. However, the Act under its article 243M states that it will not apply in its present form to the States of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and the hill areas in Manipur where the Autonomous District Councils exist.

In view of the distinct customs and traditions of the tribal communities, a special provision in the form of Sixth Schedule was incorporated in the Constitution with the recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub- Committee. It thus attempts to envisage a separate political and administrative structure in some of the tribal communities in the region. Such arrangements were made so as to ensure the autonomy in the region and their traditional political systems that

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*,p.13

have existed in their societies since time immemorial. The Autonomous District Council (ADC) were in certain hill district (except Naga Hills) of the then composite State of Assam was first introduced in 1952 except the Regional Council of Lushai hills (now Mizoram) in 1953.<sup>92</sup> The ADCs were set up in North Cachar and Mikir Hills (Karbi Anglong), Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and in the United Khasi- Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. In 1964 a United Khasi- Jaintia Hills was bifurcated into Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council.

At present Meghalaya has three ADCs, viz., Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Garo Hills Autonomous District Council and the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council. It is comprised of 29 members elected on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage and one member nominated by the Governor of Meghalaya. The District Council is administered by the Executive Council headed by the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and two Executive Members known as the EM. It also has its Chairman and the Deputy Chairman. The term of office of the members of the District Councils is normally five years.

The powers and functions of the District Council included the appointments and succession of the Chief and the headmen. The Sixth Schedule empowers the autonomous District Council to make laws and regulations relating to the customs, traditions and practices of the tribal people, land tenure system, forest, marriage, divorce, primary school, market etc.<sup>93</sup> It is, however, subjected to the approval of the Governor of the State.<sup>94</sup> In spite of the constructive motive for the setting up of the Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya, it has been argued that over the years, the ADCs have not been able to enjoy their real autonomy in relation with the State Government. Gassah argued that they have to depend on the State government in matters of

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<sup>92</sup> L.S. Gassah, "The Sixth Schedule And The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment: An Analysis" in M. N. Karna et.al., *Power To People In Meghalaya* eds. (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 1997), p.17

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> B. Datta Ray, "The Seventy Third Amendment Act, 1992 And The State of Meghalaya", in M. N. Karna et.al., eds., *Power To People In Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 1997), p.17

financial allotment.<sup>95</sup> Another area of conflict has been between the traditional institutions and the District Councils. Guru Das Das pointed out that the laws passed by the District Council resulting into subordination of the traditional institution as they were empowered to make laws regarding the appointments and Succession of the traditional Chief under Paragraph3(1)(9) of the Sixth Schedule.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> L.S. Gassah, *Op.Cit.*,p.17

<sup>96</sup> Guru Das Das, “ Social Change And Traditional Tribal Political Systems In Meghalaya” in M. N. Karna *et.al.*, eds., *Power To People In Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Regency Publications,1997),p.46

## CHAPTER - 3

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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## **CHAPTER-3 Political Participation: Theoretical Perspective**

### **3.1 Introduction**

An important aspect in the study of political participation today is the question of who participates and why it matters. Political Participation can be better understood from two theoretical perspectives i.e. the constructive approach and the critical approach.<sup>1</sup> Constructive Approach supposes that political participation affects the condition of society essentially and constructively.<sup>2</sup> The constructive approach sees political participation as an important component and a means of bringing stability between the social masses and those of the representative or the policy makers.<sup>3</sup> Through participation broad masses of people overcome their dissatisfaction and frustration and construct better situation.<sup>4</sup> Andrea Cornwall and Anne Marie Goetz (2005) in *Democratizing Democracy: Feminist perspectives* stated,

“Political participation matters a great deal for women. It does so not only because of potential gains of successful protest, mobilization and around collective interests, advocacy or engagement in policy processes. It also offers women a form of political apprenticeship and enables them to recognized and articulate interests, build alliances, broker differences and learn modes of cooperation and consensus-building to advance common projects.”<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the critical approached has an opposite view on mass participation which Marcuse called it a „democratic trick“.<sup>6</sup> They are of the opinion that mass participation is not important as this may result in chaos and

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<sup>1</sup> See R.C. Vermani, *An Introduction to Political Theory* ( New Delhi: Gitanjali Publishing House, 2000-2001), p.365

<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Eduard Kluieko, *Political participation: theory, methodology, measurement with the help of the Guttman: One Dimension Continuity Scale*. (available at <http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/files/2010/973/2004/2005>) (Accessed on the 2/6/2010), p.2

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Andrea Cornwall and Anne Marie Goetz, “Democratizing Democracy: Feminist perspectives “in *Democratization*, Vol.12, No.5 (December 2005), p.784

<sup>6</sup> Eduard Kluieko, *Op.Cit.*



disorder in the society, as through political participation citizens are allowed to express their negative emotions to flourish and such participation is not significant.

### 3.2 Concept of political participation

The concept of political participation is defined differently by different writers and the meaning varies with ones" understanding to the modes of political participation. Participation is seen as an important element for human development. Edward Kluienko in his paper, *Political Participation: theory, methodology and measurement with the help of Guttman one dimension Continuity Scale* discusses that many researchers relate the real "birth" of political participation to the transformation of traditional society, which was reflected in modernization theories.<sup>7</sup> Marilee emphasized the term „participation“ as the involvement of people in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affects their lives. The kinds of participation may be complete and direct, partial or indirect control over these processes .It has been suggested that people should have constant access to decision- making and power.<sup>8</sup> S. Huntington stated that political modernization opens up a scope to political participation of new social groups, as political consciousness rises among the broad masses of population.<sup>9</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in „Human Development Report 1993“, identify four basic forms of participation which are inter-related to one another, namely, household participation, economic participation, socio-cultural participation and political participation.<sup>10</sup> According to Ellora Puri, “Participation, irrespective of its goals is in itself a

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122

<sup>8</sup> Marilee Karl, *Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making* (London: Zed Books Ltd,1995),pp4-5

<sup>9</sup> *Op.Cit.*, p125

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), *Human Development Report 1993*(New York: UNDP, 1993),p.21

fuzzy concept having acquired varied meanings over a period of time, at one of the spectrum it could mean just a nominal membership in a group and at the other end it could imply of having an effective voice in the decision making process.”<sup>11</sup>

Thus „participation“ may be direct or indirect, fully or partial, nominal or real participation in any field and area of life which may involve both private and public domain. But such participation may affect the life of a person and the community as a whole to a large extent. Participation in the contemporary politics is seen as an important element towards the growth of individual’s intellectuality through exchange of thoughts, discussions and ideologies and actions at the practical level. But what concerns most is the values of participation, as in some cases participation may not be towards the common good but for the vested interest. This kind of participation may not be considered as healthy means of participation for the society. Hence, participation may be destructive or constructive depending largely on the purpose and nature of participation. Constructive participation would enhance the knowledge and contentment at the individual level and in bringing development for the common good of the society at large. In this sense, participation is being considered as an important component for development constructively. However, participation can be of destructive type if the purpose of participation is for the benefits of the vested interest or the means of participation may be violent in nature. Such kind of participation may lead to a chaos in the society and would be destructive for the growth of mankind.

As discussed earlier, political participation is one of the several kinds of participation. International Encyclopedia of Social Science refers the term „Political participation“ to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly, in the formation of

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<sup>11</sup> Ellora Puri, “Understanding participation and practical implications” *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. XXXIX. No.24 (June 12-18,2004), p.2511

public policies.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Norman and D. Palmer defined Political participation as the involvement of citizens in such political activities which directly or indirectly influence the behavior and actions of the decision maker.<sup>13</sup> According to the International Encyclopedia of Government and Politics, “Political participation concerns the manner in which citizens interact with the government and through active participation in government, citizens attempt to convey their needs to public officials in the hope of having these needs met.”<sup>14</sup>

The above definitions of political participation refer to the nature of participation which is voluntary in nature. The participation can be a direct or indirect involvement in choosing the representative or the ruler. Political participation in this sense is understood as a form of participation or an act of involvement with the purpose to have positive influence on the decision maker or the ruler with the intention to receive something positive in return.

### **3.3 Nature of political participation**

For understanding the meaning and nature of political participation, it is important to note that the level of participation may refer to the level of governmental institutions at different level. In a federal form of government, power is divided at the national, state, district and village level. The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences observes political participation as the involvement of individual and groups in the political process of political system at various levels.<sup>15</sup> Neera Desai highlights that the concept of political participation encompasses all voluntary actions intended to influence the making of public policies, the administration of public affairs and the choice of

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<sup>12</sup> Herbert M.C. Closky., “Political Participation” *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* vol:12 ( New York: Mac Millan ,1968), p.253

<sup>13</sup> Norman and D. Palmer, “Election and Political Development” *The South Asian Experience* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976),p.57

<sup>14</sup> N. Frank Macgill , *International Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, Volume Two (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd,2002), p.1016

<sup>15</sup> Herbert MC Closky, *Op.Cit.*,p.253

political leaders at all levels of government.<sup>16</sup> Lester Milbrath (1965) identifies the level of political participation in a hierarchical manner. Involvement in politics is conceptualized in terms of different levels allowing for a plausible more or less intensive involvement.<sup>17</sup> For Lester Milbrath, Political participation is an individual affair, individual communication with each other and also subjected to external political stimuli. People have different distinctiveness and these mean that the impact of stimuli and interaction varies from person to person. Milbrath's definition on political participation identifies two personality; individual affairs and the importance of external stimuli to such individual activity.<sup>18</sup> Marcia illustrates political participant as a person who is a member of an organized group whose primary objective is to elect people to the office or influence the policies of government in the manner it sees fit, or a person who holds public office by election or appointment.<sup>19</sup>

The concept political participation is understood as political involvement irrespective of the modes of political participation, attempts to affect decision making process directly or indirectly. Participation may vary with time, situation and persons. Such variations may not be the reason of single factors; it may involve both internal and external reasons.

### **3.4 Modes of political participation**

The concept of political participation has undergone changes over the years, as the idea of different modes of participation was increasingly used in a broader perspective. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences identify political participation as those activities that include voting, seeking information, discussing and politicizing, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with representatives. The more active forms of

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<sup>16</sup> Neera Desai and Usha Thakar, *Women In Indian Society* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2001), p.96

<sup>17</sup> See Reudin D. *Op.Cit.*,p.4

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

<sup>19</sup> Lee Marcia Manning , "Why Few Women Hold Public Office: Democracy and Sexual roles" in *Political Science Quarterly* Volume 91 Number 2 (Summer,1976)

political participation include formal enrollment in a party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speech making, working in campaigns and competing for public and party office.<sup>20</sup> Such kind of political participation may be understood as conventional political participation.

The focus is shifted from conventional participation to include unconventional participation-such as protesting and political violence.<sup>21</sup> Traditionally, political participation would refer merely to conventional participation in which voting or the act of selecting rulers has been considered as the common form of political participation. Early empirical studies, mainly by American political scientists tended to focus only on conventional political actions; voting, discussing politics with friends, party and interest group campaigning, contacting politicians or officials.<sup>22</sup> While Nie and Verba considered protest participation outside their orbit of study as they regard it, as an illegal activity. On the other hand, Ali Ashraf and L.N. Sharma argue that irrespective of its nature political participation refers to activities that are designed to affect the governmental decision making and actions<sup>23</sup> Early studies did not, however, extend their interpretation of participation to the so-called unconventional political behaviors, i.e. acts of political protest, including the illegal and violent. The first systematic comparative study of protest participation was by Barnes and Kaase.<sup>24</sup> Nie et.al have developed a political participation which may include the following activities; talking about politics, contacting local and national authorities, involvement in electoral campaigns as well as membership in political organization and political parties.<sup>25</sup> While

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<sup>20</sup> David L. Sills,ed., "Political participation" *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol.12 (London: Macmillan Company & The Free press, 1972), p.252

<sup>21</sup> Reudin D. *Op. Cit.*, p.8

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Michie "Participation Political" *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences a reader's Guide*, Vol.3, Fitzroy (London, Chicago : Dearborn Publishers), p.1248

<sup>23</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p.7

<sup>24</sup> Herbert MC Closky, *Op. Cit.*, p.1248

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in N. Hamsa, 1980, *Impact of socialization on political participation of women in Indian Urban Community*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1989), p.224

Verba, pointed out that political participation include voting, volunteering to work on a campaign, contacting a public official or organization, contributing to a campaign or cause, taking part in a protest, engaging in informal community work, serving as a member of a local board, or affiliating with a political organization. Among these activities, voting is considered to be the least intensive an individual"s demanding activity.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Lester Milbrath in his four classification of political activity, places voting in the spectator activity. He classified political activity in a hierarchical order namely, gladational activities, transitional activities, spectator activities and apathetic. Gladational activities refers to holding public and party office, being a candidate for office, soliciting political funds, attending a caucus or a strategy meeting, becoming an active member in a political party, contributing time in a political campaign.<sup>27</sup> Transitional Activity refers to attending a political meeting or rally, making a monetary contribution to a party candidate, contacting a public official or a political leader.<sup>28</sup> Spectator Activities refers to wearing button or putting a sticker on the car, attempting to talk to another about voting in a certain way, initiating a political decision, voting, exposing one-self to political stimuli and apathetic activities are those people who belong none of the above category.<sup>29</sup>

Milbrath"s hierarchical classification of political activity cannot be applied to all situations and at all time as those who are in spectator activity, at the same time, can also be performing other activity, that is of transitional or Gladiator activity. For instance, voters can also be members or office bearers of political party involving in political campaign or contact public officials and political leaders and contributing money to political parties which he classified it as the characteristics of gladational and transitional activity. Those who are

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<sup>26</sup>Sidney Verba, *Political Participation and Political Equality, A Seven Nation Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2000),p.39

<sup>27</sup> *Op.Cit.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

in the gladdational activity and transitional activity are generally expected to involve in voting activity. As such, participation in one activity may be the cause of effect of other political activity or vice versa. According to Kriesi, “Intensive campaigns contribute both to the citizen’s motivation and to their capacity to participate in the vote.”<sup>30</sup> This statement as well suggested that there is a relationship between campaigning and voting process in which one act as a dependent and the other as an independent variable which shows that measurement of political participation may not be possible in terms of hierarchical order. For the present study, voting is understood in terms of value; therefore, it is more than that of spectator activity.

The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, in their All India Survey of the 1967 Election, classified political participation as voting, canvassing for candidates, getting voters, organizing meetings and rallies, participation in procession, distributing pamphlets and campaign through association and group, attending public meetings and rallies, membership of political parties, contacting party leaders and government officials in solving problems, etc.<sup>31</sup> The study of political participation today require a broad and inclusive definition, which may embrace all political actions by individuals or groups and any actions that aim at influencing the policy makers or affect the political system. Nancy Burns et.al, discuss on why study of gender differences in participation reveal their concern about groups differences in political participation- between men and men, or between Blacks and Whites, or between lawyers and cashiers- because they represent a potential compromise in the democratic norm of equal protection of interest.<sup>32</sup> The contemporary political thinkers saw political participation as a mechanism through which needs and preferences of citizens are communicated to political decision

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<sup>30</sup> Hanspeter Kriesi, “ Political Mobilisation, Political Participation and the Power of the Vote” *West European Politics*, Vol.31, Nos.1-2 (Jan- March 2008), p.153

<sup>31</sup> M. Ramchander, *Women and Politics: A study in Political Participation*( Hyderabad : Book links Corporation,1993) , p.29

<sup>32</sup> Nancy Burns, et.al., *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* (England: Harvard University Press, 2001) , p.6

makers. As such, protest and agitations is eventually regarded as an act of political awareness and conscious understanding about the problem and outcomes of public policy with an attempt to influence the decision maker in the form of demand (Input) to decide in such a manner that they should not infringe the dictates of public opinion (output). David Easton's „systems analysis“ explains the significance of both input and output courses of action in the political system. Unconventional political participation in this manner cannot be always considered as illegal act but a positive instrument by keeping a check on the policy makers, so that they are accountable to the people. Letha Kumari, pointed out that political participation is generally, seen as a citizen's conscious understanding of political issues and feeling of personal influence over the outcomes. Such feelings can be expressed through voting on the most basic level, organized protest, campaign work, or seeking office.<sup>33</sup> Almond and Verba argue that the citizen of a modern democratic polity is expected to engage in political discussions, take interest in politics, voting, knowledge of politics, and express a general sense of competence to influence the government and participate in public affairs.<sup>34</sup> Wagle suggested that political participation encompasses a variety of activities carried out in the political process. Electoral participation can be used to gauge people's attitudes toward particular candidates, parties or government action<sup>35</sup>.

### **3.5 Political participation of women: gender-democratic perspective**

In all democratic countries, attainment of equality among the citizens is one of their aspirations for the smooth functioning of the political system. “Tackling governance, leadership and political participation from gender transforming perspective involves considering women as responsible individuals capable of taking decisions and indispensable for their societies

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<sup>33</sup> R. letha Kumari. *Op. Cit.*, p.16

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in N. Hamsa, *Op. Cit.*, p.223

<sup>35</sup> Udaya R. Waygle, „Political participation in Kathmandu: Who participates and why it matters“ in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*( Vol. 29:3,2006), p.372



democratization process”.<sup>36</sup> The concept of Political Participation and the questions of inclusion and exclusion in the present study are to be discussed both from the democratic perspective as well as the Gender Feminist perspective.

The term „political participation“, „democracy“ and „gender“ are found to be inter-related concepts in the present study. The International Research and Training Institute for advancement of Women (INSTRAW) critically observed that “women’s political participation and activism; and good governance are omnipresent concepts in the agendas for development, democracy...”<sup>37</sup>

The contemporary democratic ideal is based on the concept that political power has its roots in the sovereign people.<sup>38</sup> In other words, government’s stability or political power sustainability has its bases on the support of the people as democratic principles uphold popular sovereignty. Maturity and efficacy of democracy can be defined not only in terms of equality and freedom in which men and women share political power but also in terms of liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework.<sup>39</sup> If equality and liberty are the pillars of democracy, political participation by both the gender would ensure the reliability and effectiveness of democracy. Samuel P. Huntington correlates that political participation has positive relationship to the definition of democracy as long as freedom and equality has already contributed by determining the content of the democratic form.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Sepideh Labani, at.al., *Gender analysis of Women’s Political Participation In 7 South- East Asian Countries* (Regional Gender Programme in South- East Asia- Stage II: 2008-2009), p.11

<sup>37</sup> INSTRAW, *Gender, Governance and Women’s Political Participation* (INSTRAW, 2005), p.1. INSTRAW is the International Research and Training Institute for advancement of Women. Available at [www.un-instraw.org](http://www.un-instraw.org).

<sup>38</sup> Sepideh Labani, *Op.Cit.*, p.11

<sup>39</sup> Praveen. Rai “Electoral Participation of Women in India, key determinants barrier”. *Economic & Political Weekly* Vol. XLVI No.3( January 15,2011), p.47

<sup>40</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*(London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p.6

Therefore, the concept of political participation has been debated extensively in a democratic political system that the notion of inclusion and exclusion participation must be redefined with the goal of making visible spaces of men and women's political involvement. Effective participation of the citizens at all levels is an important element of the recognition of human rights. Having equal participation in the political process without discrimination is to be considered a part of human rights itself. Women's rights are to be considered as human rights which is one of the outcries of the feminist movement. Angela Miles strongly argues that women are to be considered as human in the society. She stated that, "Our participation must be seen to involve necessarily the transformation of both production and politics to serve the needs of people's reproduction as self actualizing human beings."

<sup>41</sup> Stivens in *Gender Politics and the remaining human rights the Asia-Pacific* pointed out that women's right and human rights has become so closely connected that the human rights project is expanded to include issues concerning gender and sexuality. He stated; "We were excited by attempts to expand the human rights project to include women rights and other issues concerning gender and sexuality which intersect with feminist politics."<sup>42</sup>

If democracy is rule by the people, the question that crops up in the mind is who participates in the decision making process which is one of the fundamental questions of democracy. Tickner critically argued that re-examining democracy through gendered lenses reveals the extent to which the definitions of democracy are constrained and limited.<sup>43</sup> The above arguments summarize the importance of gender equality in democratic processes in democratic participation.

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<sup>41</sup> Angela R. Miles, "Ideological Hegemony in political discourse: Women's Specificity and Equality" in Angela Miles, Geraldine Finn, eds. *Feminism from Pressure to Politics* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002),p.278

<sup>42</sup> Stivens Maila, "Gender Politics And The Remaining Human Rights In The Asia Pacific" in Annie Marie Hilsdon, et.al. ed., *Human Rights and Gender Politic: Asia Pacific Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge,2006), p.1

<sup>43</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World politics, Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold war Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p.104

The contemporary political thinkers have extensively examined the importance of political participation and consider that these are the basic requirements for enhancing human development and accountability of the political system towards the people. The right to participate is an essential element of democratic government, inseparable from such other attributes of democracy as consent, accountability majority rule, equality, and popular sovereignty.<sup>44</sup> The success of democracy depends on the extent of political participation of its citizens and how it is able to meet the needs of the people.<sup>45</sup> Theorists of participatory democracy feel that citizen activism is essential for the functioning democracy.<sup>46</sup> For as Rousseau and Mill argued, participatory democracy enhances human development.<sup>47</sup> Jhartha suggest that participation in politics is a pre-requisite and minimal requirement for a successful democratic political system and it is this feature that distinguishes democracy from any other form of government.<sup>48</sup>

The above arguments clearly indicate that the term political participation and gender equality is bearing its importance in a democratic form of government. Democracy without positive participation of the citizens would be a vacant democracy. As participation in the political process by its citizens is not only to have a better meaning of democracy, it is also crucial for the people and development strategy. It may be mentioned here that gender-democratic perspective conceptualized the concept of political participation as an essential element for the successful functioning democracy only when there is equal participation by both the gender. Political equality ensures effectiveness and accountability to both the rulers and the ruled. Democratizing state structures

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<sup>44</sup> David L. Sills, *Op.Cit.*, p.252

<sup>45</sup> C.J. Uhlaner, "Participation: Political" in N. Smelser and P. Baltes, eds., *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (New York: Elsevier Science: 2001), p.11078

<sup>46</sup> R. Letha Kumari. *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance* (Delhi: Author Press, 2006),p.16

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Michie, *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences a reader's Guide*, Vol.3 (London, Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers),p.1249

<sup>48</sup> Bhawana Jhartha, *Women and Politics in India* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications,1996),p.9

and strengthening citizens' participation are considered to be fundamental for the promotion of good governance.

### **3.6 Problems and prospects of women's political participation: feminist perspective**

If equal political participation by both the gender is considered to be of utmost importance for the smooth functioning of democracy, then understanding the problems and prospects of political participation of women through gender lenses is highly needed. Feminist ideology are based on the assumptions that women have lesser advantage in comparison with men, and that this disadvantage is not a natural and inevitable result of biological differences, but something that can and should be challenged for bringing a change.<sup>49</sup> Women's right to participate in power and decision-making was one of the feminist movement's first demands for women at the individual level.<sup>50</sup> Stokes stated that, "Feminist political theory criticizes women's exclusion from politics and demands for greater inclusion. Women's absence is a democratic deficit which requires action."<sup>51</sup> The eminent philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-73) introduced the question of women suffrage to the House of Commons in England in 1867 and in his book "*The Subjection of women*", first published in 1869, he provided a full scale analysis on women's situation and the advantages to society by giving them full legal and political equality with men.<sup>52</sup>

The above point of view by different writers about the position and requirement of equal participation of women in politics shows the discontentment over the subordinated positions of the women folk and they are

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<sup>49</sup>Valerie Bryson "Feminism" in Eat well Roger & Wright Anthony, eds., *Contemporary Political ideologies* (New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2003), p.207

<sup>50</sup> INSTRAW, *Gender, Governance and Women's Political Participation* (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, September 2005), p.4

<sup>51</sup> Wendy Stokes, "Women in Contemporary Politics" *Polity* ( U.K. :Polity press,2005), p.1

<sup>52</sup> Bryson Valerie, *Op.Cit.*, p208

longing for more political space and opportunity. Andrea Cornwall discusses the undesirable effects on feminizing legislatures. She pointed out that getting more women into public office has always been connected to a wider project of deepening democracy and this broader democratic project challenges feminists to develop a distinct political community of women to articulate interest in and around gender- based injustices. The recognition of equality and social justices calls not only for broad based representation in the political arena but for democratization of other domains and institutions, including the private sphere.<sup>53</sup> Bryson rightly argued feminist movement as a historically specific and culturally contextual political movement that seeks justice for women.<sup>54</sup> The problems faced by the women in 1950s, may not have the same form of discrimination that the women are facing today. Juliet Michel pointed out that, the early feminists do not consciously congregate as a political movement but they propose to establish female groups usually for educational and self – educational purposes-they want to develop „friendship“ among women.<sup>55</sup> It is also obvious that the kinds of oppression and subordination may differ from place to place, culture to culture and time to time. One thing in common, however, is that feminism critically witnesses the existence of oppression, subordination and the disadvantage positions of women, and as such, it should be challenged and changed. It is important to note that feminism represented a complex set of ideological positions and movements with no unified ideology. They are generally recognized as liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist feminism, black feminism and post modern feminism.

Liberal feminist emphasizes that women are rational beings like men, and as such, they should have the same legal and political rights, and the opportunity to compete with men in politics. Early liberal feminist idea is

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<sup>53</sup> Andrea Cornwall and Anne Marie Goetz, *Op.Cit*,p.784

<sup>54</sup> Lynda Lee Kaid, Bacha, Christina Holtz, “Feminism” in *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, Volume-1, (U.S.A: Sage Publication,2008), p.531

<sup>55</sup> Juliet Mitchel, “Women and Equality” in Anne Phillips, ed., *Feminism and Equality* ( New York : New York University Press,1987),p.33

found in the work of Wollstone Craft's *Vindication of the rights of women* written in 1792. During the early years of French Revolution women were strongly opposed to the belief that they were inferior social beings and powerfully argued that women were like men, rational individuals and as such they should have equal rights. But Wendy Stokes argues that writers like Mary Astell and Wollstone Craft claim women's right to freedom and equality, but did not spend much time in thinking about political equality.<sup>56</sup> It may be rightly argued that feminism arises only in very particular circumstances. Valerie Bryson pointed out that the central premise of modern liberal feminism is that women are individual's possessed of reasoning, that as such they are entitled to full human rights and that they should therefore be free to choose their role in life, and compete equally with men in politics and paid employment.<sup>57</sup>

The first wave of feminism in the 1950s held that women have not been treated equally with men in the society and therefore, they should work collectively to fortify their status. Barbara Burrell pointed out that the demand of the first wave of feminism centered on obtaining vote for women and it calls for a broad based agenda of changes in the fundamental arrangement of home and work and for women's participation in the public domain.<sup>58</sup> The second wave of feminism of the 1960s and 1970s demanded the expansion of women's citizenship and a redefinition of the private sphere.<sup>59</sup> The radical feminist of the second wave feminism argues that the identification of male power is itself a political act and the slogan "the Personal is the political" were popularized during this time. The slogan itself reflect the feminist claims that women issues which was considered before as private and individual issues are no more considered as personal but as political issues. They aimed at bringing a direct relationship between politics and day to day life and as such political rights

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<sup>56</sup> Wendy Stokes, *Op.Cit.*, p.2

<sup>57</sup> Valerie Bryson, *Op.Cit.*, p.207

<sup>58</sup> Barbara Burrell, *Women and Political Participation: A Reference Book*( England:ABC\_CLIO,2004),p.8

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*,p.9

were needed, because, it gave women the power to resist oppression. Feminists have emphasized how personal circumstances are structured by public factors, laws, status of wife, childcare allocation, and sexual division of labor at home and work place and arguments that suggest personal problems can therefore be solved only through political means and political action.<sup>60</sup> As they maintain that male power is not confined to public sphere, and thus it extends into such „personal“ areas of life as family and sexual relationships both of which are seen as central instruments of patriarchal domination.<sup>61</sup> Thus it is vehemently argued that the public and private domains are not separated but of equal status as long as women are subordinated and men dominate in both the sphere.<sup>62</sup> Kate Millet stated that “The sexual domination of males over females is the most pervasive ideology of our culture and constitutes the most fundamental structure of power...patriarchal penetrates in the whole process of socialization...In this process, the person fails to realize his or her total human potential.”<sup>63</sup> According to Firestone,<sup>64</sup> Women were not confined to the domestic sphere willingly but coercively.<sup>65</sup> Radical feminists saw “patriarchy” as the key problem towards women’s disadvantage position. Their arguments are that, the existing theory is both male-defined and patriarchal, as it fails to challenge the deep rooted structures of contemporary capitalist societies, particularly the sexual division of labor in the private and public sphere. As such, women have to develop a self affirming knowledge. Women need to start

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<sup>60</sup> Carole Pateman, “Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy” in Anne Phillips ed., *Feminism and Equality* (New York : New York University Press,1987),p.117

<sup>61</sup> Weedon Chris, *Feminism, Theory and Politics of Difference* (U.S.A.: Blackwell Publishers,1999),p.37

<sup>62</sup> *INSTRAW, Op.Cit.*, p.4

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in K. Bhaskaramma, “Emancipation of Women: A note on Feminist perspectives” in Palanithurai ed., *Contemporary Issues in Development Dynamics*( New Delhi :Kanishka Publishers Distributors,1999),p.196

<sup>64</sup> Shulamith Firestone is a radical feminist. She is well known for her book, *The Dialectic of Sex*.

<sup>65</sup> Lynn S. Chancer& Beverly Xavier Watkins, *Gender, Race and Class: An overview* (U.S.A.: Blackwell Publishing,2006), p.34

from their own experience, both in terms of their personal and political aspects.<sup>66</sup>

The Marxist Feminist argues that women oppression is essentially a by-product of class society, and that full equality will only be achieved when capitalism is replaced by genuine socialism. They maintain that economic problems faced by women were centrally towards maintaining their dependent and subordinate status.<sup>67</sup> Marxist asserts that women's liberation is bound up with struggle against capitalism because in the final analysis, sexual oppression serves the material interest of the ruling class.<sup>68</sup> It focuses on the dismantling of capitalism as a way of liberating women. It states that private property, which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion, and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root of women's oppression in the current social context.<sup>69</sup> Marxist feminism's foundation is laid by Engels in his analysis of gender oppression in, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The claim was that a woman's subordination is a result of social relations. "The Feminine Mystique" is a book written by Betty Friedan in 1963 defining the "Mystique" as the worthlessness women feel in the roles that require them to be financially, intellectually, and emotionally dependent on their husbands. While the philosophical aspiration of socialistic perspective envisages class society as the root cause for oppression, exploitation and dominance of one over the other. Hence the inequality between men and women is because of economic category. Gender equality and emancipation of women is possible according to this perspective as in socialistic societies there will be no private property.

The above argument on the root causes of the problems and suggestions about the way out to the problems and their style of campaign shows that they

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<sup>66</sup> Weedon Chris, *Op.Cit.*,p.37

<sup>67</sup> Lynn S. Chancer ,*Op. Cit*, p.39

<sup>69</sup> Valerie Bryson, *Op.Cit.*,p.207



do not represent a cohesive ideology. Feminists differ in their ideological perspectives although their common stand is to liberate women from any sort of oppression and subordination.

Contemporary liberal feminist seeks to reform the legal and political system so that women will have access to opportunities and should produce a state of equality between men and women. Emmanuel argues that women, the mother of mankind has become the subject of discussion and they are moving towards greater strength and freedom both in their awareness and in their socio-political position.<sup>70</sup> Philosopher Alicia Mirayes stated, “women live an incomplete, defective and inactivate citizenship because women do not satisfactorily fulfill any of the four characteristics of a full and active citizenship: the ability to elect, the ability to participate the distribution of wealth and recognition...”<sup>71</sup>

According to Miles Angela, women’s entry into politics is in fact, the emergence of the long subordinate, devalued and marginalized sphere of private life and reproduction into the public and political world.<sup>72</sup> Alexandra Kollontai(1873-1952) being the first woman to hold cabinet office in the world fought to prioritize women issues and confronted issues of personal morality avoided by many Marxists. She claimed that problem of sexuality and family organization would not automatically be resolved through economic changes but must be tackled directly.<sup>73</sup> Tickner pointed out that gendering of political concepts such as rights and equality that come out of the western liberal tradition is transposed to the international level.<sup>74</sup> Feminists saw the liberal

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<sup>70</sup> Emmanuel Anniamma, “Feminist Movements in Global Perspective United Nations & The Rights of the Women” *The Indian Journal of Political science*, Vol.LXXI, No.3, (July-Sept, 2010), pp.837-852

<sup>71</sup> INSRAW, *Op.Cit.*, p.2

<sup>72</sup> R. Angela Miles “Ideological Hegemony in Political discourse: Women’s Specificity and Equality” in Miles Angela, Geraldine Finn, eds., *Feminism from Pressure to Politics* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002)

<sup>73</sup> Valerie Bryson, *Op.Cit.*, p.207-208

<sup>74</sup> Tickner J. Ann, *Op.Cit.*, p.108

democratic state as gender biased, therefore it must be re-examined.<sup>75</sup> “...definitions of representation and citizenship in the space in which political life occur need to be rethought.”<sup>76</sup>

Stokes pointed out that feminist debates around democracy have shifted from a critique of democratic theory and practice, through an analysis of participation, to a re consideration of representation.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, participation of women in politics is a subject of debate not only at the local and national level, but it is one of the global issues. The United Nations has been actively involved in promoting, protecting and advancing human rights particularly rights of women worldwide by setting up various conferences and conventions. The general aim of International women’s year (1975)<sup>78</sup> was to raise the status of women throughout the world. Concerning political participation and decision making process, the various World Conferences on Women establishes measures to address the inequality between men and women in this matter. The First World Conference identified full gender equality and elimination of gender discrimination, (Mexico: 1975). While the Second World Conference(1980:Copenhagen) declared that equality entails not only legal recognition and elimination of discrimination, but equality and opportunities for participation of women in the development of women both as beneficiaries and active agents of change. While the Third, Fourth and Fifth world Conference on Women (1985: Nairobi, 1995: Beijing, 2010: Sydney) are about equality in political participation and decision making, women in power and decision making and inequality between men and women in sharing power and in decision making matters at all levels respectively. The concept of gender equality and human rights itself reflected in the charter of the United Nations itself; the International Bill of Rights comprising of the Universal declaration

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<sup>75</sup> Feminist have been traditionally suspicious that the Western democratic traditions are patriarchal and favored men over women’s interest

<sup>76</sup> *Op.Cit.*, p.110

<sup>77</sup> Stokes,Wendy,*Op.Cit.*,p.23

<sup>78</sup> The united Nation declared the year 1975 as the International Women’s Year, it addresses women from all countries and races should come out to strengthen their position in the society.

of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights (1966) and International Covenant on Civil and Political rights.

According to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, G.A.res.640 (VII) 1952 women shall be entitled to play a role in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination. They shall also be eligible to elections in all public bodies, functions, established by law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination. The United Nations has consistently advocated and addressed the issues of equal rights to women through global conferences on women. Although many countries adopted legislative measures to protect women's rights, it still takes a long way to achieve the desired objectives as laid down by the United Nations Charter: Emmanuel stated that, "Women were continually left out ignored or by passed in the decision -making and decision-taking processes of the complexity called political structures and global negotiation." <sup>79</sup> In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) identified women's full participation in the exercise of power as one of its critical areas of concern, recognizing that it must be incorporated at all levels of decision making as a necessary requisite for the attainment of the goals of equality, development and peace. <sup>80</sup>

The above discussion on gender and democratic approaches to the study of political participation indicates that participation of women in politics is crucial. Participation in politics by both the genders does not only define a meaningful democracy but it fill up the gap that has remained devalued for a long time. The contemporary approach towards participation in politics is more into that of representation. Therefore, studying political participation from both gender and democratic lenses is indispensable to have a clear understanding about the theoretical framework of the political participation of women.

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<sup>79</sup> Emmanuel Anniamma, *Op.Cit.*, p842

<sup>80</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*  
([http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N\(^\)/273/01/PDF/N9627301.pdf?Open element](http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N(^)/273/01/PDF/N9627301.pdf?Open+element))

### 3.7 Political participation in the present study

The above arguments on the concept and significance of „political participation“ and a discussion on its different modes clearly exemplify a shift towards the inclusion of both the conventional and unconventional political participation. The focus has been from the thought of choosing representatives at the common level, political party members and participation in electoral campaign, to that of protest and agitations which has become a part and parcel of the democratic political behavior. It is important to note that, both the modes of political participation may be successful only when the political participant has a clear understanding about its effect. The rational choice theorist like Olson (1971) and Downs (1957) believed that lack of willingness on the part of the majority to participate is because of their rationality and participation is rational because it gives them power and prestige.<sup>81</sup>

In fact, referring to the recent political development, conventional modes of political participation is sometimes considered as an unproductive tool in bringing rapid changes and development or producing an effect on the public policy. Whereas, unconventional political participation becomes more powerful in influencing the decision makers as the latter involves certain pressure in the form of agitation and protest or sending petition to the policy maker at the first instance. However, it is not to be considered voting as unsuccessful instrument. Even though voting is the least demanding form of political participation in terms of time and energy involvement but of highly important in terms of its substance. Voting itself can bring structural changes in the political system and therefore, it has to be observed carefully as one of the most important tool that keeps the government machinery to run the life and death of the country. Goran Adamson discussed on the questions of why people vote from a view of general theory of political participation pointed out that the general explanations of voting has also been the subject of slightly

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<sup>81</sup> Faulks, Keith, *Political Sociology: A critical introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p.48

altered interpretations. One central line of conceptual transformation leads briefly from psychology to structure, or in other words, from the individual to the group.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, the value of voting differs on the voter's knowledge and reason of participation.

The Indian constitution made the right to vote as a universal tool to all the adult members based on the principle of equality which is one of the widely used forms of conventional political participation. The unconventional means of political participation are to be closely scrutinized so that any kind of agitations and protests should not involve extreme form of protest activity as this act is considered as extra constitutional means of participation. These are not to be included under the ambit of successful and healthy political participation. As such, it implies that political participation involves conventional and unconventional means of political participation within a limited democratic framework.

The significance of the modes of political participation may vary with time, place and situations as far as involvement in politics is considered as an act in influencing public policy. The act of participation may be directly by contesting as candidates or indirectly by influencing the policy makers. Broadly, there are two factors influencing Political participation of an individual citizen; the external factors what Milbrath (1965) terms it as external stimuli and secondly the internal factor. The external factors may be in the form of educational, social, cultural, and economic or even the ideological factors and the internal factors are those involving the political will of an individual as well as the psychological factors that led a person to involve in political activity.

Discussions on the theories of political participation provide an inclusive idea of political participation, which is, from democratic perspective

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<sup>82</sup> Adamson, Goran *Immigrants and Political Participation-Background, Theory, and Empirical Suggestions* ( UK: London School of Economics and Political Science), p.176

and gender-feminist standpoint elucidates the importance of women's political participation. As such, the concept of political participation for the present study refers to the deliberate participation of the women as group or individual activity in political affairs; directly or indirectly. Such direct action, may involve contesting elections, political party members and voting. Indirect actions may involve diverse acts of election campaigning, communication with the political leaders and political party members, protest and demonstrations. But it may be noted here that, such protest and demonstration is considered "genuine political participation" if it extends only within the constitutional framework. Such restrictions are made so as to make a distinction from any other extreme type of protest which involves violence and blood sheds.

Political participation may be measured from two perspectives, quantitative and qualitative perspective. Quantity dimension explains the number of women who participate in different types of political activity. "There are staunch defenders of the idea that women's descriptive or numerical representation produces changes in their substantive representation...so that women are no longer a token of minority..."<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, quality dimension concerns the value-effect of participation which is measured through the motivation of participants to have an impact on the political process. The former concerns the mode of political actions in the form of external behavior and to what extent women participate in the decision making process, while the latter try to understand the behavior of such participation and its impact on the political system. Therefore, the present study attempts to explain the importance of equal participation of women not only in terms of numbers but in terms of quality. It explores both external and internal factors of political participation of the women in Meghalaya and is therefore evaluated both from qualitative and quantitative perspective. Thus, political participation is measured in terms of passive and active, purposive or non purposive actions of the respondents.

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<sup>83</sup> Andrea Cornwall and Anne Marie Goetz, *Op.Cit.*, p.784

CHAPTER-4  
WOMEN AND POLITICS IN MEGHALAYA (1937-2009)

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## CHAPTER- 4 Women and Politics in Meghalaya (1935-2009)

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### 4.1 Introduction

Women representation and good governance has emerged as an important agenda of discussion among scholars and academics and others as well. It is also incorporated in almost all democracies, political party's agenda. Feminist groups have also challenged about the lack of representation of women in legislatures and decision making bodies. Globally, women found themselves under-represented in legislatures. The world wide average percentage of women representation in legislatures is only 16percent. Of more than 190 countries of the world, the percentage of women as the head of government (President and Prime Minister) is only 7 percent; Women as ambassadors to the United Nations constitute only 9percent and women as cabinet ministers is 7percent.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the development programmes and the strategy to empower women in the decision making process, there are few countries of the world that have made a remarkable progress in their political representation. Rwanda has the highest percentage of women with 48.8percent of women in their legislature in 2003 and 56.3percent in 2008. Sweden ranks second with 45.3 percent in 2003 and 46.4percent in 2008 women legislators.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, there are 11 countries which have no women in their legislatures including four countries from Middle East, namely, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Some small Asian- Pacific island nations - the Solomon Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Paulu, Tongo, and Tuvalu also do not have women representation in legislature. Saudi Arabia has not yet guaranteed women the right to vote; women are hardly found to occupy top position as the head of the government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pamela Paxton, Melanie M. Hughes, *Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective* (London: Pine Forge press,2007),p.16

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Irin Colbert, *Women And Politics in Mizoram : An In-depth Study*, Unpublished Thesis ( Mizoram : Department of Political Science, Mizoram University: 2010), p.83

<sup>3</sup> Currently, there are seven female heads of government around the world: Helen Clark, Prime minister of New Zealand; Gloria Macapagal- Arroyo, president of the Philippines"; Khaleda Zia, prime minister



Women in India attained the right to vote after India got independence, although there was a movement demanding for the right to vote for women since the 1920s during the British rule.<sup>4</sup> The constitution of India guarantees political equality to women under Article 326 that provides the right to vote to all its citizens and Article 325, that prohibits exclusion from electoral rolls on the basis of sex, caste religion etc.,. As such, it provides women equal footing with men in terms of political rights. There are number of women who did participate in the national freedom struggle. To name a few, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Annie Besant, Mathulakshmi Reddy, Rani of Jhansi, Sarojini Naidu and others who have contributed to the country as freedom fighters. Sarojini Naidu became the first woman President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to become the Governor of a state in India.<sup>5</sup> Women representation in the Lok Sabha in the post-independence period shows that there is a slight increase in percentage from 4.4 percent of women representation in the Lok Sabha election in 1952 to 10.86percent in 2009 election. The year 1977 has the lowest percentage of women in the Lok Sabha with 3.5 percent only. The percentages of women were fluctuating from 1952-1989 and there was an increase in the percentages in the six elections from 1991 to 2009. The year 1991 has 7.2 percent, 1996 has 7.4 percent, 1998 has 8.1percent, the year 1999 has 9.02 percent, 2004 has 8.29 percent and 2009 with 10.89 respectively.<sup>6</sup> Comparatively, the number of women contestants was highest in the year 1996 with 599 woman contested. Similarly, in the 2009 Lok Sabha election there were 556 women candidates. The number of elected women in the year 1996 was only 7.4 percent while in the year 2009 it is 10.86 percent (see fig. 4.1). With regards to North Eastern States, there were 91.7percent males contested against 8.9 percent females in 2009 Lok Sabha election.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the political

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of Bangladesh; Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf, president of Liberia; Angela Merkel, chancellor of Germany; Michelle Bachellet, president of Chile; and Portia Simpson- Miller, Prime minister of Jamaica. (Pamela Praxton, *Op.Cit.*, p.18)

<sup>4</sup> R .Letha Kumari, *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance* ( Delhi : Authors Press, 2006),p.59

<sup>5</sup> Irin Colbert, *Op.Cit.*, p.42

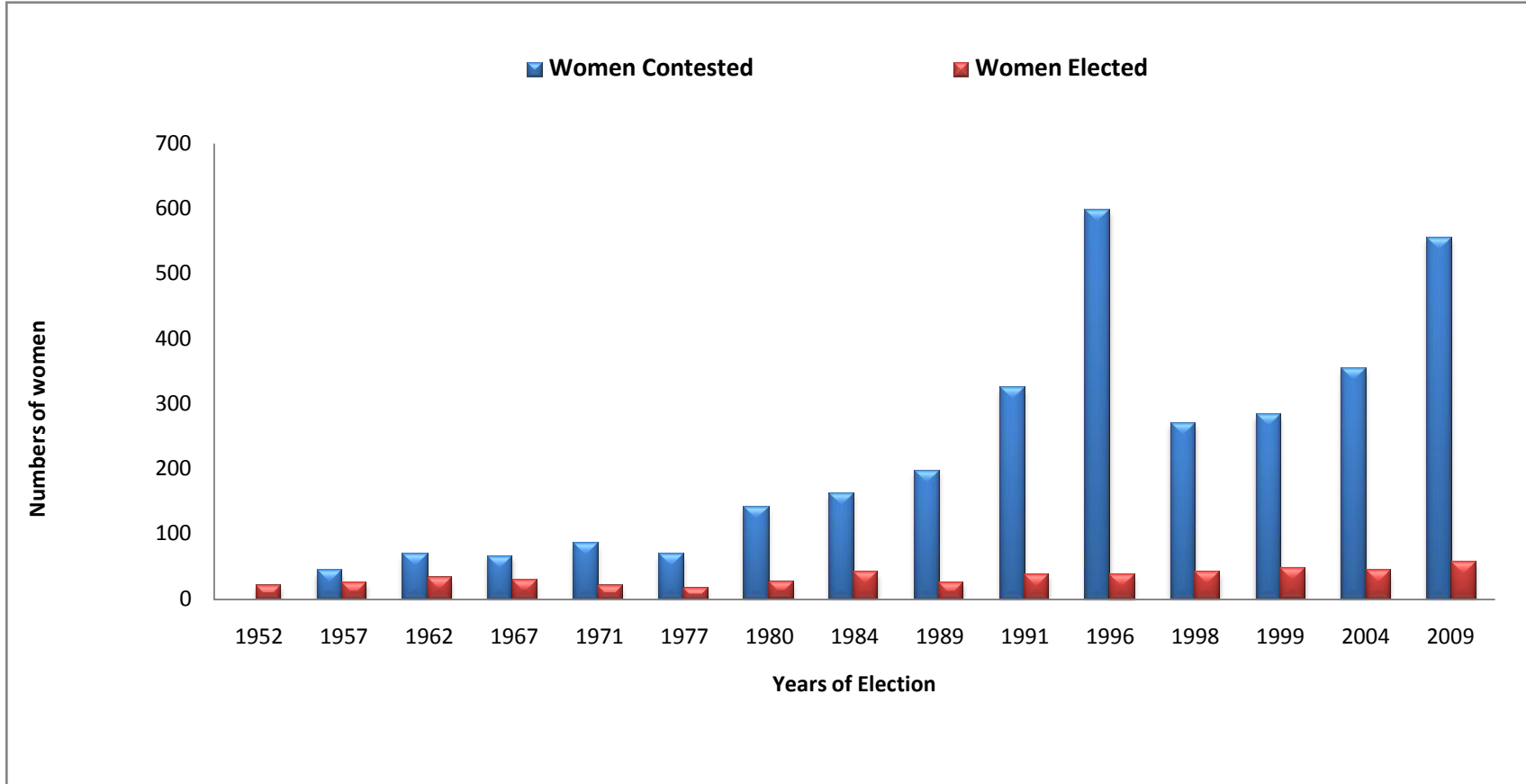
<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63

position of women in North eastern states was far from satisfactory in comparison to the number of the male counterparts.

Matrilineal status of the Women in Meghalaya has been an area of interest in the study of the status of women in North East India. It is generally assumed that there is women empowerment in Meghalaya as their socio-economic status is believed to be better than the rest of the patriarchal social order in India. The significance of historical approach to the study of women representation in politics helps to know the political status of women in Meghalaya as political leaders. This chapter attempts to study women representation at different level of decision making bodies namely, the village level (Village Council), district level (Autonomous District Council), state level (Legislative Assemblies) and at the national level (Member of Parliament). The researcher collected primary data mostly from the Meghalaya Election Department, Government records. Secondary data was also used from the published and unpublished articles and books related with the concerned area by various authors.

Equal participation in politics by both the genders is one of the indicators towards a thriving, active and successful democracy. Women as decision makers in politics are those other than who merely participate as voters, political party members and political campaigners during election. The Constitution of India passed the 73rd amendment Act that provides 33percent reservation of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) with an attempt to provide empowerment of women politically at the grass roots level. However, the Act is not applicable to the states of Meghalaya as well as Nagaland and Mizoram since they have their self - governing institutions since time immemorial.



**Fig.4.1 Representation of women in Lok Sabha (1952-2009)**

## **4.2 Traditional political institutions and women**

The three major tribal communities of Meghalaya, the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos have their own traditional institution in the form of self-governing institutions before and after India got independence. Though the management of the institution is in a democratic manner which is based on the popular will but the patterns of governance are hierarchical in structure. L. S. Gassah's work in "*Traditional System of Governance among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya and the changes thereof*" too subscribes to the nature of the traditional system of governance at the grass root level and the continuity of the hierarchical structure even today. He stated that, "In the case of the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos, though their society is by tradition a casteless one, the traditional pattern, leadership and authority structure were and still hierarchical as found elsewhere in India."<sup>8</sup> Thus, an attempt has been made to study the role of women in the traditional political institution of the Khasis and the Garos community. A brief analysis on the compositions and the law of succession has been discussed deliberately to serve the purpose of the study.

### **4.2.1 Khasi-Jaintia traditional political institutions and women's participation**

The traditional institutions among the Khasis and Jaintias are based on the traditions and usages which have been practiced since time immemorial. *Khasi-Jaintia Hills* was a single *Syiemship* (kingdom) in the Pre-British period but later it was divided into two - that is the *Khyrim Syiemship* and *Jaintia Syiemship*. It may be noted that the office of the *Jaintia Syiem* was abolished by the British in 1835. A. K. Nongkynrih pointed out that traditionally, Khasi villages have enjoyed the autonomy in the organization and management of their own affairs and have exercised collective controls over their natural and

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<sup>8</sup> L. S. Gassah, "Traditional System of Governance among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya and the changes thereof" in C. Joshua Thomas, ed., *Polity and Economy: Agenda for Compulsory N.E. India* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 2005), p.83

human resources.<sup>9</sup> Gassah stated that in the traditional institutions the leadership was vested in persons belonging to certain original clans, or the *Kurs* (clans) which was almost the same pattern as one found elsewhere in India.<sup>10</sup> With regard to the powers and functions of the traditional institutions and that of the District Council, Gassah argues elsewhere that the latter affect the powers and functions of the former drastically which has put them under its firm control.<sup>11</sup> Traditionally the *Khasis* through its *Dorbar* or the council did exercise power extensively as a crucial decision making body and was the sole administrative, legislative and a judicial body in the state at different level. In recent years however, it is no longer the same as in the earlier years.

### *Village level*

The administration at the village level are under the management of the village council (Council of elders of the village) which is known as the *Dorbar shnong* headed by the village headman called the *Rangbah Shnong or Sordar* or *Wahadadar*, comprises of all males adult members of the village.<sup>12</sup> It operates as the primary political unit at the village level, presided over the village assembly by the headman. The *Dorbar shnong* administer the village with responsibility and transparency about the overall development and welfare of the concerned village. It manages the law and order in the village and as such, the authority rests with the village headman. Therefore, the village council or the *village Dorbar* plays an important role in the traditional society as a regulatory and a supervisory body as it looks after discipline, peace and security of the village. Complicated cases are referred to the higher level (Raid level) or the state level (*Hima* level). E. Jyrwa argues that the powers of the village council exercised sovereign powers before the confederation of villages

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<sup>9</sup> A.K. Nongkynrih, *A Sociological Understanding* ( New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company,2002),p.67

<sup>10</sup> L. S. Gassah, "Effect of the District Council on Traditional Institutions", in L.S. Gassah,ed., *Autonomous District Council* ( New Delhi: Omsons Publications,1997),p.207

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.215

<sup>12</sup> A.K. Nongkynrih, *Ibid.*,p.67

or the rights.<sup>13</sup> The „village Dorbar“ or the „Dorbar Shnong“ consists of the adult male members of the village only. A brief study of the village Dorbar in Thangmaw village of West Khasi Hills will be discussed in next chapter (see chapter-5). Successions to the post of *Rangbah Shnong* or the *sordar* are by the male members only from among its members. It is an elected institution composed of the adult male members through voice vote which they generally conducted annually. Gopalakrisnan wrote that “village administration was by an assembly of all resident adult males under an informal headman elected by them from among their members”<sup>14</sup> Women have no role to play in the *village Dorbar* of the traditional society. Though in recent years women are also included in the *Dorbar* as representatives of the women organizations in few urban localities of Shillong, yet they merely present as spectators in the Dorbar (as discussed in chapter 5).

It may be noted that there is also a clan council or the *Dorbar Kur* which comprises of different families. They together form one group which is known as the clan. The clan council consists of the clans“ headman, the elders and male members of the clan. Succession to the post of the *Rangbah Kur* (headman of the clan) will be his brother or male elders of the clan.<sup>15</sup> Kynpham Singh observed that the clan council takes the form of get-together of different families inside the clan. They do discuss matters relating to the management and administration of the clan“s property, the appointment of the *Rangbah’s-Kur*, settlement of family disputes, apportionments of property and different problems faced by the clan, but such meetings are restricted to male members only.<sup>16</sup>As such, the head of the clan or the „*Rangbah Kur*’ presided over the assembly of the clan council who is known to the khasi family as *U Kni* (maternal uncle) who is the descendent from the female side. The powers and

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<sup>13</sup> E. Jyrwa, “ Changing Power Structure in the traditional Modes of Adjudication in the Khasi Land of Meghalaya”, in Asok Kumar Ray and Rajendra Prasad Athparia, eds., *Women and Changing Power Structure in North East India*(New Delhi: O.M. Publications,2006)

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p.101

<sup>15</sup> R. Gopalakrishnan, *Meghalaya Land and people*(Revised) ( New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 2001), p.121

<sup>16</sup>Kynpham Singh, Syiems and Dorbars in Khasi Polity, in S. K. Chattopadhyay, ed., *Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications,1985), p.20

functions of the clan, however, are limited within the clans' internal affairs while any other complicated cases may also be referred to the village Dorbar. The above discussion reveals that women have no role to play as decision maker even within the clan council and her decisions are not considered important even for those related to family matters. Major decisions are always in the hands of adult male members of the clan. It may be noted that the ancestral property that the youngest daughter inherits has been reduced to that of the custodian only as she has no authority to dispose of the property at her own will without the consent of the maternal uncles, brothers or the clan council. Tiplut Nongbri in *Gender and the Khasi Family Structure: The Meghalaya Succession to Self-Acquired property Act, 1984* discussed the position of the youngest daughter of the Khasi family. She writes "...she has little say in the control and management of the property that she inherits, it is the mother's brother who enjoys these privileges."<sup>17</sup> Though the youngest daughter inherits property with huge responsibility and obligations towards her family members by being the custodian of the property, but she has no voice to make decisions.

#### *Intermediary or the Raid level*

Amalgamation of number of villages is known as *Raid* and it operates as one political unit at the intermediary level which is also larger than that of the village council. M. N. Karna pointed out that, "*Raid* was a political unit comprising a number of adjacent Khasi villages organized into a political system for the purpose of social control and harmonious civil and judicial administration. In fact, this was the largest political unit under the *syiemship*."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, "Gender And The Khasi Family Structure: The Meghalaya Succession to Self-Acquired Property Act,1984", in Sharmila Rege, *Sociology of Gender: The Challenge of feminist Sociological Knowledge* ( New Delhi: Sage Publications India,2003), p. 188

<sup>18</sup> M.N. Karna, "Social Change and Traditional Tribal Political Systems" in L.S. Gassah *et.al.*, eds. *Power to People in Meghalaya* ( New Delhi: Regency Publications),p.36

The major concerns of the *Raid* Council are those of boundary disputes, village property, land and forest, customary laws, etc.<sup>19</sup> Cases outside the jurisdiction of a particular village are referred to the *Raid Council*. As such, it acts as one of the administrative organs higher than that of the village administration and looks after the interest of the *Raid* as a whole that falls within its purview. The *Dorbar Raid* at the intermediary level is generally presided by the elected headman known as *Basan* or *Lyngdoh* or *Sirdar* in which there is no particular name has been assigned to him by the *Raid*. The elected head of the *Raids* are males only and even at this level women have no role to play, as all the administrative concerns are run by the male members only.

#### *State or Hima level*

*Hima* Council is considered to be the highest administrative unit at the state level. It is also known as the state council. Sasikumar rightly pointed out that it functions as the final court of appeal.<sup>20</sup> The *Hima* council has an elective chief known as the *Syiem* and he is the one who presides over the *Dorbar Hima* or his *Syiem Dorbar*. Being the head of the state, he performs several administrative and judicial functions for the larger interest and hears appeals from the lower administrative units about cases which do not fall within their respective jurisdiction. R. Gopalakrishnan stated that the *Raid Dorbar* acts as the high court while the *Syiem Dorbar* is the Supreme Court.<sup>21</sup> In this matter it thus acts as the highest court of appeal at the apex level. Though the office of the *Syiem* occupied the top level position in the Khasi political system, but he exercises his authority only with the consent of his officials, councils of ministers or the *myntries* and it should be in the larger interest of the *Hima*. The system of election to the office of the *Syiemship* is not the same for every *syiemship*. He is elected by an electoral college consisting of *Lyngdohs*,

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<sup>19</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Meghalaya Past And present* (New Delhi: A Mittal Publication, 2004), p.262

<sup>20</sup> M. Sasikumar, "Changing Power Structure in A Matriarchal Society: A Case Study of Khasis." In ",in Asok Kumar Ray and Rajendra Prasad Athparia, eds. *Women and Changing Power Structure in North East India*(New Delhi: O.M. Publications,2006), p.59

<sup>21</sup> R. Gopalakrishnan, *Ibid.*, p.124



*Basans, Sirdars, Headman and the leading clans.* Hamlet Bareh stated that successions to the office of the *Syiemship* are males only except *Khyrim Syiemship* where the *Syiem sad* or the High priestess“ male relatives only are eligible to the office and when there is no male successor available, women are also elected to the office.<sup>22</sup> With regard to the position of the *Syiem-sad*, Bareh stated, “...*Syiem-sad*, the spiritual head or a royal priestess on whom revolves the responsibility to perform the state ceremonies.”<sup>23</sup> The powers of the *Syiem-sad* are in reality exercised by the male members and that her position is ceremonial. “The temporal head powers appear to be delegated by her to a *Syiem* which is her son or nephew or sometimes a more distant relative”<sup>24</sup> Though she occupied an important position as the religious head but she did not wield real power to make decision. “She is consulted on the question of succession to the throne but her proposal is not binding upon the state Assembly.”<sup>25</sup> On the contrary, in other *syiemship*, successions to office of the *Syiem* are always males“. Only in exceptional cases, women were allowed to succeed to the office of the *Syiem* when male members are unavailable. The office of the *Syiem* is normally passed to the eldest of the surviving brother, eldest sisters“ son; failing such, nephews by the eldest of his sister“s sons or his sister“s daughters. There was also a provision for succession of rights to go down to grand nephews, and in the absence of any male heirs the *Syiem* would be succeeded by his eldest son.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, the traditional political system of the Jaintias have three tier system of governance though the heads are known at different level such as the headman at the village level is known as the *Wahehchnong*, the *Doloi* at the intermediary level and the Raja or the *Syiem* at the top who occupied the highest position and women has no right to participate in the decision making process. Referring to the political role of the Jaintia women, Gassah argues that

<sup>22</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *History and culture of the Khasi People* ( Delhi: Spectrum Publications,1997),p.236

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p.240

<sup>26</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op.Cit.* p.102

they are devoid of any rights and position.<sup>27</sup> Their traditional political institution is hierarchical in structure and men do not share power in terms of making decision with the women. J. M. Nikhols-Roy the architect of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution observed that, “the traditional political system has completely set aside women’s participation.”<sup>28</sup>

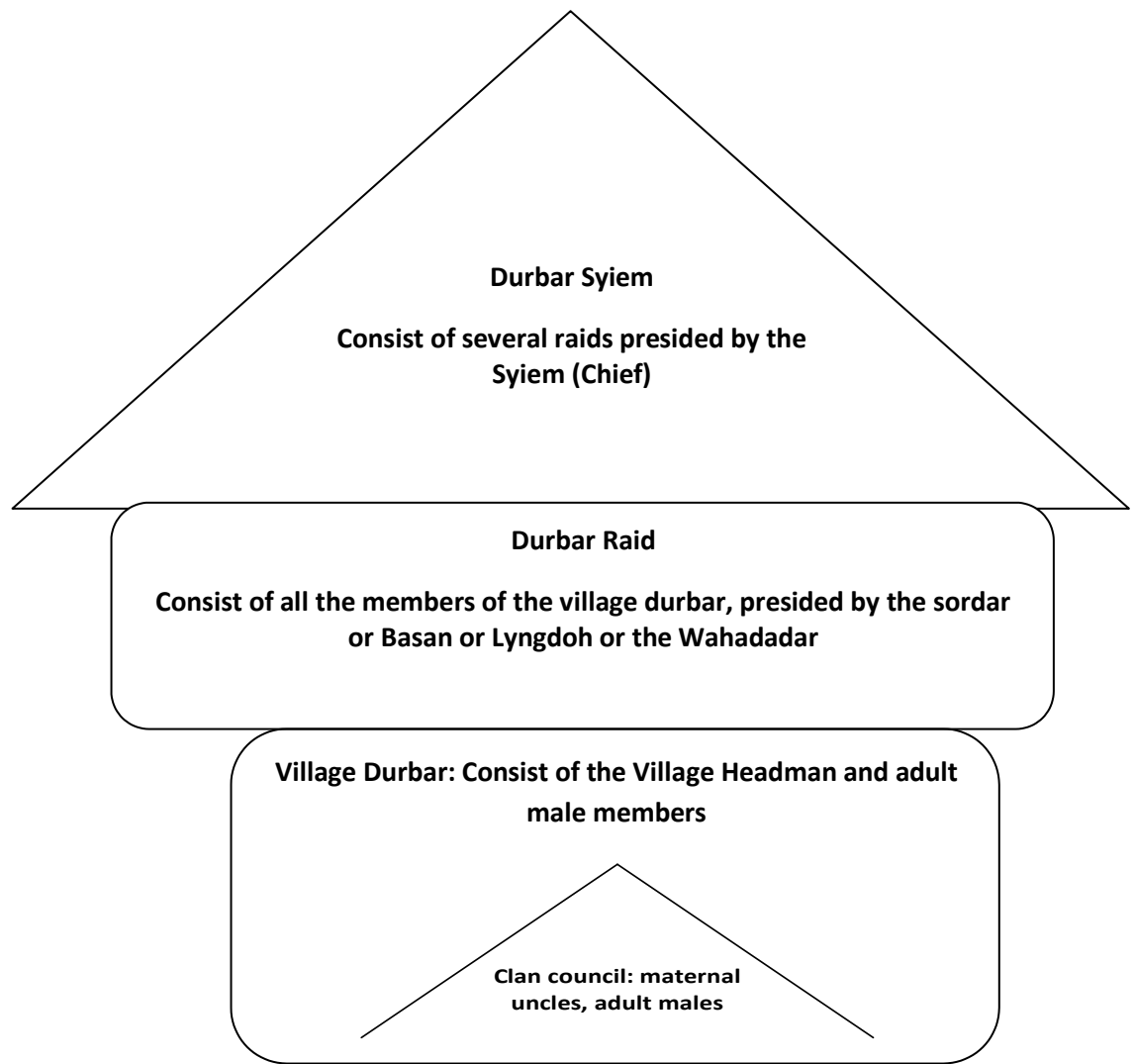
The above discussion on the various levels of the traditional set up of the Khasis from top to bottom clearly reveals that there is no room for women to be a part of the administration. Though it is known that it possesses democratic pattern of governance, it has been within the council of men. This clearly demonstrates that customs and traditions do not favour women to be a part of the decision making body. Hamlet Bareh wrote, “Village has its own Dorbar which hold’s frequent sessions in which all male adult residents ought to attend...absentee were fined or were compelled from their habitation...”<sup>29</sup> This demonstrates the compulsory participation of the adult male members in the decision making process and excluded women in it.

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<sup>27</sup> L. S. Gassah, “Status of Women in Jaintia Culture” in Saumen Sen, ed., *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 1997), p.41

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Rev. O. L. Snaitang, “Rev. J. J. M. Nikhols-Roy As A Statesman” in *Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Golden Jubilee(1952-2002)*, p.56

<sup>29</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *Meghalaya* ( Shillong: North Eastern India News and feature Service, 1974), p.110



**Fig. 4.2 Composition of the Khasi Traditional Political Institution**

*Fig.4.2* shows that at all level of governance, it is inter-related to each other and the head of the various *Dorbars* and their administration are run by the male members only. Though the Khasis' traditional institutions is said to be a self-governing institution with a democratic character; however, women are out of the scene.

#### 4.2.2 Garo traditional political institution and women

To understand the role of women in the traditional administration of the Garos, it is necessary to study from two angles. Firstly, succession to the office of the *Nokma* and secondly, the power of the *A' king Nokma* in possession of the *A' king* land. The traditional institution of the Garos was indeed not well organized as that of the Khasis and no clear cut distinction can be made between the social and political organizations. The reason was that the Garo's traditions and the political system are in the process of evolution.<sup>30</sup>

*The process of succession:*

The traditional village administration in Garo hills was found at two levels, namely, the institutions of *Nokmaship* and the Village council. The institution of the *Nokmaship* is as old as the first settlement of the Garo Hills.<sup>31</sup> *Nokma* has been recognized as the head of the clan or the headman of the village. Sangma stated that the office of the *Nokma* has been considered as the pivot of the village organization through which the basic networks of the entire Garo society is woven.<sup>32</sup> There are four kinds of *Nokma*, the *Gamni Nokma*, the *Gana Nokma*, *Kamal Nokma* and the *A' King Nokma*.<sup>33</sup> The *A' King Nokma* is the person who holds the title of the *A' King* land of the village community, the head of the clan and he has certain political and administrative power.<sup>34</sup> He no doubt has a great voice in deciding the village affairs.<sup>35</sup> The *Nokma* is assisted by the two persons who are called as *pharia* and few male elders of the village

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<sup>30</sup> Gurudas Das, "Social Change and Traditional Tribal Political System in Meghalaya, in M.N. Karna, *et.al.* eds., *Power to people in Meghalaya* ( New Delhi : Regency Publications), p.40

<sup>31</sup> L. S. Gassah, "Traditional System of Governance among the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos of Meghalaya and the changes thereof" *Op.Cit.*, p.85

<sup>32</sup> Milton S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos* ( New Delhi: Books Today,1981), p.51

<sup>33</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>34</sup> L.S.Gassah, *Traditional Self Governing Institution*, ([http://dSPACE.NEHU.AC.IN/bitstream/1/7946/1/Traditional1percent20selfpercent20governingpercent20\(LSpercent20Gassah\).pdf](http://dSPACE.NEHU.AC.IN/bitstream/1/7946/1/Traditional1percent20selfpercent20governingpercent20(LSpercent20Gassah).pdf))(Accessed: 19.10.2012), p.185

<sup>35</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *Meghalaya* , *Op.Cit.*, p.111

constitute the village council.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the office of *Nokma* holds an important position in the social, economic and political life of the Garos.

Milton S. Sangma stated that succession to the office of the *A'king Nokma* is subject to ordinary laws of inheritance through the system of *Nokma* (heiress) and *Nokkrom* (man married to the heiress).<sup>37</sup> Generally, the *Nokma* is the husband of the senior most woman of the clan (the inheritress of the oldest family in the *Machong*) or in the absence of daughter, the nearest female relative of the *Nokma* is adopted as heiress to succeed to the *A'king* land with her husband. Succession to the office of the *Nokmaship* is from father-in-law to the youngest son-in-law. The office was retained by a particular family of the *Machong*...<sup>38</sup> Sangma too stated that like any other *Nokma*, *A' King Nokma* looks for a nephew to be his son - in - law and to become the heir to the house and property and hence, he will succeed to the „headship“ when his father-in-law dies.<sup>39</sup> Further, the male preference of the law of succession to the office of *Nokma* could be seen in Sangma's statement, "Any male member of the same lineage group may become *Nokma*"<sup>40</sup>

Caroline Marak, states that the status of Garo women in the context of the law of *Akim* was that "the practice of bringing the husband's nephew to be the son-in-law which is known as the law of *Akim*, in order to continue male lineage".<sup>41</sup> The above discussion regarding the law of succession to the office of *Nokma* reflects that traditions and customs favour male headship, though few instances in recent years shows that the *Nokma's* wife succeeded to the office of the *Nokma* in supersession of all her daughters and their husbands after the death of the *Nokma*.<sup>42</sup> It may be noted that in any case, the "*Chras*" comprises

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<sup>36</sup>Shibani Roy, S.H. M. Rizri, *Tribal Customary Laws of North East India* ( Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1990),p.64

<sup>37</sup> Milton Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos, Op.Cit.*,p.62

<sup>38</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op.Cit.*, p.100

<sup>39</sup> Milton S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos, Op.Cit.*, p.61

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63

<sup>41</sup> Caroline R. marak, " Status of Women in Garo Culture" in Saumen Sen, ed., *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House,1997),p.58

<sup>42</sup> Milton Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos, Op.Cit.*,p.63

of her maternal uncles and brothers of the Nokma's wife makes a final decision regarding appointment of the *A' King Nokmas*.<sup>43</sup>

*The Power and Functions of A' King Nokmas:*

Based on customs and traditions, certain rights and privileges have been conferred to the *Nokma* with regards to the *A'king land*. It reflects the position of the heiress of the *A'king land* too. No doubt, *A' king Nokma* occupies an important position in the Garo Society as the head of the clan and as the custodian of the *A' king land*. In fact, he has certain obligations towards the society as the ceremonial head during the festival; performing sacrifices for the healthy crops and property for the village, administer the *A'king land* with the consent of the people. Indeed he plays a leading role internally within the village as the headman and externally as the representatives of his village.<sup>44</sup> Though he derived his authority by getting married to the heiress of the *A'king land* but his wife does not actually wield power. He manages the *A'king land's* affairs and his wife is merely the representative of the lands. With regard to the possession of the *A'king land*, Sangma wrote, "The possession of the *A' king* is simply represented by the Nokma's wife and managed by the Nokma"<sup>45</sup> Again, the *Nokma* is only a custodian of the lands while decisions are taken at a joint assembly of the village elders. He cannot sell or mortgage the land without the consent of his wife and her *chras*. Therefore, the *Nokma* has no domination over *A'king land* as the power rests with the people and every *Machong* function as a cohesive social and political unit under the *Nokma* and the assemblies.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Patricia Mukhim argues that the position of the *Nokna* (heiress) among the Garos as the matrilineal head only but property is administered by her husband the *Nokma* who also is recognized as the headman.<sup>47</sup> The possession of *A'king land* of the heiress is merely a matter of a

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<sup>43</sup> Milton S. Sangma, "The Institution of Nokmaship In The Garo Hills", in S. K. Chattopadhyay, ed., *Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya*, (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1985), p.260

<sup>44</sup> Milton S. Sangma, "The Institution of Nokmaship In The Garo Hills", *Ibid.*, p.262

<sup>45</sup> Milton Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos, Op.Cit.*, p.65

<sup>46</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op.Cit.*, p.101

<sup>47</sup> Patricia Mary Mukhim, *Dialogue*, Volume-5 No.4, p.99

formal institution as they are not the one who manage the affairs of the property. The *Nokma* posses the *A'king* land as a matter of formal custody. She has, however, no control to manage over it; because, the property is looked after by the husband.

With the advent of the British rule in the Garo hills, the powers and functions of the *Nokmas* were substantially reduced after the introduction of the office of *Laskar* who handle powers in matter of police, civil and criminal justice and revenue administration within the allotted area. Subsequently, in the post-independence period, with the formation of the GHADC, the Constitution passed Village Council Act 1958. Under this Act, the Village Council for each village or group of village shall consist of not less than six and not more than ten members, half of whom shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and other half, elected on the basis of adult suffrage. The *Laskar* of the area shall be ex-officio member of the Village Council. Regarding the qualification for membership, it is written, he should be a citizen of India, not less than 25 years of age, and is entitled to vote at the election of a member of any constituency.<sup>48</sup> From the composition of the Village Council and the qualification for membership, it has been always used the word „he“ which implies that, only males are the member of the village council. In fact, women do not have any role to play in the field of administration and the power to make decision rest with the male members within and outside the family. Caroline Marak rightly stated that power rests with the males and the *mahari* or the closely related members of a clan including those who married into the clan.<sup>49</sup> Thus, participation of women in the traditional institution of the Garos community seems to be nominal and not real. The eldest daughter of the *Machong* family seems to enjoy the ownership of the *A'king* land, but in practice, she has no power to manage the land or to dispose the property without the approval of her clan and the *chras* just as the khasi system of inheritance. Secondly, successions to the office of the *Nokma* are done by

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<sup>48</sup> Milton Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos*, *Op.Cit.*,p.56

<sup>49</sup> Caroline R. Marak, *Op.Cit.*, p.58

males, the system has been from husband to son-in-law or in case of unavailability of female heir and it will pass on to the male members of her relative. Thirdly, the constitution of the village council too, does not favour women's representation in the body. Even though, it has not been mentioned that women are not allowed, but the pronoun „*he*’ which has been mentioned in every case clearly indicates that women's participation as decision makers in the traditional Garo society is also negligible. Compared to this in the Khasi system, at least in recent years there are few urban localities in Shillong do entertain women representation to some extent in the *Dorbar*. They may not be active there but there is at least some visible presence of women in such bodies.

The traditional practices have great impact on the participation of women in politics. Women lack training in leadership since their participation has been ignored from time immemorial. Bareh opined that the traditional self – governing institution use to give training to the citizens in the art of governance. He further says, “It imparts some training in the art of self – government and creative citizenship and guides or directs the standard of public morality”.<sup>50</sup> By discussing women their representative roles in these traditional institutions, the Garo as well as Khasi society has ignored the need for training women in leadership. Indeed, the village *Dorbar* imparts the art of self-government and trains the ordinary citizens in the field of administration since long time back, based on long standing traditions and usages, but, women were lagging behind and were in a disadvantageous position, as the value of their participation in the traditional institution has been ignored. No doubt, women were the silent partners behind the scene like preparing tea, maintaining the household chores and their position was directed towards domestic works. This socialization process has been practiced even today, though some locality in the urban areas of Shillong (as discussed in chapter 5), allows women to be an observer or silent observer in the *Dorbar Shnong* or locality assembly as representative of women organizations. One of the *Rangbah Dong* (headman of

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<sup>50</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *Meghalaya ,Op.Cit.*, p.111



the locality) in Shillong simply comments that, women are called only when there is an issue which requires their presence. One interviewee pointed out that what they will do in the meeting of the *Rangbah* or the council of adult males.<sup>51</sup>

The socialization process about customs and practices has been passed down from generation to generations and it has an impact on the faith of both men and women about the unfit personality of women to be a decision maker. With regard to the office of the Khasi Chieftainship, only the *Syiem-sad* of *Khyrim Syiemship* is an eligible queen to be the *Syiem-sad* but, practically, she is simply the ceremonial head. “However, there is a *Syiem-sad*, a mother, aunt or sister of the *Syiem* who is regarded as the custodian of state ceremonies and title holder of the crown lands.”<sup>52</sup> Her power is not real, as long as she is not the one who exercises real power in decision making process. “*Syiem-sad is a spiritual head of the state who delegates the ruling powers to a syiem ruler either her maternal uncle, brother or son.*”<sup>53</sup> So also with the Garos, the wife of the *Nokma* in Garo hills was entrusted with the authority to own the land with no right in the administration of the land. She is the custodian of the *Machong*, while her husband is the headman, assisted by the two *pharias* comprises of the male members, the *Mela-Solbonga* (All male adults from *maharis* within the *Machong*) and *Jigma Changga* (all male members of the *A'king*). The former decides all matters relating to *Machong* (consist of several household organizations called the *maharis*) and the latter decides the questions of war and peace.<sup>54</sup> Women are the heritress but they are not entitled to succeed to the office of the headman. In the Garo family, the authority is always in the

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<sup>51</sup> An informal interview was conducted with one of the headman of the locality in Shillong on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

<sup>52</sup> Hamlet Bareh, *Meghalaya, Op. Cit.*, p.107

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op. Cit.*, p.101

hands of male.<sup>55</sup> They were entrusted with delegated authority without rightful rights for decision making.

### **4.3 Women representation in the Assam legislative assembly before 1972**

The history of women's representation in Meghalaya in the pre-independence period, can be traced back to the Government of India Act 1935. Under this Act, women were given the right to vote, though it was limited and restricted.<sup>56</sup> The reservation of seats for women in the Assam Legislative Assembly which was known as Shillong Women Seat and the General Seats made way for women's representation in the legislatures for the first time.<sup>57</sup> Subsequently, in 1937 election, two women contested from the Shillong Women Seat, namely Berlina Lyngdoh and Mavis Dunn Lyngdoh; and the latter was elected and became the first woman to be a member of the Legislative Assembly. Mavis Dunn Lyngdoh was included in the Md. Sadulla Ministry in 1939-41, and again in 1942-45 subsequently. She became the first woman in the North East to become a minister. In 1946, there were five women who contested in the election.<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Bonniely Khongmen was a Congress nominee while the other four candidates contested as independent candidates. Padma K. Gohain contested the general seat while the other four contested from the Shillong Women seat. As a result, Mrs. Bonniely Khongmen was elected.

The first Parliamentary Election to the Lok Sabha was held in the year 1952. There were two male candidates, Shri Wilson Reade and L.L.D. Basan and one woman, Mrs. B. Khongmen contested from Autonomous District Constituency of the then undivided Assam. She was nominated by the Congress for the seat reserved for the hill tribes. She was elected and became the first and only woman from Assam to represent the Lok Sabha in 1952. She

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<sup>55</sup> D. N. Majumdar, "Garo Family, Changes in its structure and Function", in S. K. Chattopadhyay, ed., *Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1985), p.262

<sup>56</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op.Cit.*, p.101

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.101

<sup>58</sup> They were Mrs. Bonniely Khongmen, T.W. shadap, Berlina Lyngdoh, Padma Kumari Gohain and Miss mavis Dunn Lyngdoh.

was a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from 1946-52 and elected as a deputy speaker in 1952. In 1957, she returned to state politics but was defeated.<sup>59</sup> And thereafter however, no woman candidate contested for the election in 1962 and 1967.

#### **4.4 Women in Autonomous District Council (1952-2009)<sup>60</sup>**

Women's representation in the government at the district level is another area of concern. The District Council in Meghalaya began at the time of undivided Assam and political leadership in all the three Autonomous District Councils was mostly dominated by the tribal community. In the year 1952 under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the Autonomous District Councils was established and was known as the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council. Later in 1966, the Jarman Commission recommended a bifurcation of Autonomous District Council of Jowai Sub-division for administrative convenience and necessity. Consequently, Meghalaya has three Autonomous District Councils: The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC), Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) and Garo Hills District Council (GHADC) respectively. In this section we have made an attempt to study the representation of women in the General Election to the three Autonomous District Council (ADC) separately from 1952 to 2009 so as to understand and analyze them from the first year of election to the latest election that was held in the year 2009.

##### **4.4.1 Khasi and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council**

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India came into effect from January 26<sup>th</sup> 1950. Shri Sri Prakasa, the former Governor of Assam, formed the Advisory Council for the Sixth Schedule which was inaugurated on the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1950 by the then Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Gopinath Bordoloi. The

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<sup>59</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op. Cit.*, p.292

<sup>60</sup> This section is drawn from the official records of the three ADC offices

Advisory Council consisted of twenty members that included two Khasi women, Mrs. Bonily Khongmen and Miss Mavis Dunn. Thereafter, the United Khasi- Jaintia Autonomous District Council was inaugurated by the new Governor of Assam, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, at Dinam Hall Jaiaw, Shillong on the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1952.

Tracing the history of women's representation in different years of election it shows that women were either nominated or elected. There were eighteen elected and six nominated members to the first United Khasi and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council in the year 1952-57 in which only one woman, that is, Smt. Lariam Shullai Khongwir was nominated as one of the members.<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Etris Syiem and Mrs Luisa Brosilla Lamin was contested and won the election to the KHADC in the year 1972-1977,<sup>62</sup> and Mrs. Brosilla Lamin got selected as one of the then Executive Member by Shri L. G. Shullai, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the KHADC.<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Maysalin War contested and won the election in the 1984-88 from the Congress-I party ticket.<sup>64</sup> Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh got elected twice in the year 2004-2009 and again in the year 2009 election. In the 2009 General Election to the KHADC, there were 11 women constants.<sup>65</sup> Among them, three got elected.<sup>66</sup> Smt. Irin Lyngdoh was again got elected and Smt. Garce Khapuri were selected as the Executive Members. Smt. Grace Kharpuri has been allotted with Taxation and Education Department and Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh has been entrusted with Land, Mines and Minerals Department. H. G. Joshi pointed out that the inclusion of a woman as an executive member is very significant, as the

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<sup>61</sup> *Souvenir of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Golden Jubilee (1952-2002)*( Shillong, KHADC)

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> They were, Elizabeth Madur contested from the Nationalist Congress party (NCP), Purinima Kharmujat from Khasi National Awakening Movement (KHNAM), Victoria Kharnaor as Independent Candidate (IND), Banalari Khongwar from United Democratic party (UDP), Grace Kharpuri (IND), Pretty Kharpyngrupe (UDP), Meristella Wahlang (NCP), Dr. Bibilynda Wahlang (NCP), Irin Lyngdoh from the Indian National Congress (INC) Amanda Pathaw (NCP), Teilini Thankhiew (NCP)

<sup>66</sup> They are, Grace Kharpuri, Irin Lyngdoh and Teilinia Thangkhiew.

KHADC was the first of all the District Councils in North East to have a lady as the executive member.<sup>67</sup>

Women's representation in the JHADC is very insignificant. It was only in the year 1973 that Dr. (Mrs.) K. Rymbai was nominated to the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council. Subsequently, no woman has been nominated again and none of them so far got elected to the JHADC till today. There were four women contestants to the JHADC in the year 2009 General Elections to the JHADC though unfortunately, none of them was elected.<sup>68</sup> From 1952 to 2009, the representation of women in the KHADC is only eight and one woman was nominated to the JHADC since 1973. There were 168 members elected and nominated in different years of elections to the KHADC from 1972-2003.<sup>69</sup> Out of these, there were only six women, one nominated and five elected members (see table 4.1)

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<sup>67</sup> H. G. Joshi, *Op. Cit.*, p.292

<sup>68</sup> They were Diolinda Dkhar, Turoilang Laloo, Daplinda Rymbai, Elgina Dkhar

<sup>69</sup> *Souvenir of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Op. Cit.*

**Table: 4.1 Number of Women Elected and Nominated in the KHADC \***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Names</b>	<b>Nominated/Elected</b>
1952-57	Mrs. Lariam Shullai	Nominated
1972-78	Mrs. Estrice Syiem	Elected
	Mrs. Luisa Brosilla Lamin	Elected
1984-88	Mrs. Maysalin war	Elected
2004-2009	Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh	Elected
2009-	Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh (EM)	Elected
	Mrs. Teilinia Thangkhiew	Elected
	Mrs. Grace Kharpuri (EM)	Elected
Total = 8 (7elected; 1 nominated )		
<b>Women Elected / Nominated to the J.H.A.D.C.</b>		
6.12.1973	Smt. Dr K. Rymbai	Nominated

Source: Compiled from official records of KHADC & JHADC

*\* The years of election mentioned in the table represents the years when women were either nominated or elected only.*

#### 4.4.2 KHADC and JHADC Election, 2009

The total number of electorates to the KHADC election 2009 were 5, 30, 599 in which, 2, 52,921 are males electorates whereas 2, 77,678 are females. The number of females" electorates surpasses the number of male electorates.<sup>70</sup> However, the number of women contestant is very low in comparison to males" contestant. The total number of contestants was 144 in which 133 were males and only 11 were females. Again, the number of women who got elected is very low with only 3 (three) females out of 30 (thirty) members. It implies that out of 26 elected and one nominated member, the total number of male MDC is 27. Mrs. Grace Kharpuri won as an independent candidate from 9- Nongshken Constituency. Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh contested from Congress party ticket won the seat from 14- Pariong Constituency who was also the MLA and MDCs in the previous term. However, Mrs. Teilinia Thagkhiew contested from NCP ticket and won against her eight rival male contestants from 14- Myllem Constituency. It may be noted that the female electorates outnumbered male electorates in the GHADC and JHADC 2009 election in the area where women contested as shown in tables 4.3 and 4.4. Even out of the total numbers of the electorates", female are more in number.

In the JHADC General Election 2009, female electorates were 85,465 as against 79,701 male electorates. With regard to the number of contestants, there were 120 contestants out of which 3 (three) were female contestants. Interestingly, none of them got elected. Looking at the number of female and male electorates in the constituency from where the women contested, it shows that the number of female electorates outnumbered male electorates except Mawlai Constituency and Mawhati constituency. In these two constituencies there is a slight difference in favour of men compared to women (see table 4.2). From this, it is clear that the number of electorates has no bearing on the general outcome of election in the KHADC and JHADC 2009 elections.

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<sup>70</sup> *Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, General Election Hand Book* ( Shillong: Issued by the District Council Affair Department, 2009)

**Table: 4.2 Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (Year 2009)**

Electorates= 5,30,599		Contestants=144		Winners=29	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2,52,921	2,77,678	133	11	26	3
Women Contestants					
Sl no.	Names	Party	Constituencies	No. of Women/Men contested	Total no. of Men/women Electorates
1.	Elizabeth Madur	NCP	3-Mawhati**	3/7	10350/10255=20605
2.	Purinima Kharmujat	KHNAM	-do-		
3.	Victoria Kharnaioir	IND	-do-		
4.	Banalari Khongwar	UDP	9-Nongskhen	2/4	<b>7808/8303 = 16111</b>
5.	<b>Grace Kharpuri(E)</b>	<b>IND</b>	<b>-do-</b>	<b>2/4</b>	
6.	Pretty Kharpyngrope	UDP	16-Nongthymmai	1/5	7128/9591 = 16719
7.	Meristella Wahlang	NCP	18- Mawkhar	1/6	5000/6802 = 11802
8.	Dr.Bibilynda Wahlang	NCP	23- Mairang	1/3	15339/15916 =31255
9.	<b>Irin Lyngdoh(E)</b>	<b>INC</b>	<b>24- Pariong</b>	<b>1/6</b>	<b>7820/8430 = 16250</b>
10.	Amanda Pathaw	NCP	20-Mawlai**	1/4	16401/13037= 29438
11.	<b>Teilini Thangkhiew(E)</b>	<b>NCP</b>	<b>14- Myllem</b>	<b>1/8</b>	<b>8708/10643 = 19351</b>

\*\* Constituencies where male electorates out numbered

*Compiled by the researcher from the KHADC Election Hand Book, 2009 issued by the District Council Affairs Department*



**Table: 4.3 Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (Year 2009)**

Electorates= 1,65,166		Contestants=120		Winners=29	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
79,701	85,465	116	4	29	0
Women Contestants					
Sl no.	Names	Party	Constituencies	No. of Women/Men Contestants	Total no. of Men/Women Electorates
1.	Diolinda Dkhar	NCP	4- Tuber	1/4	3107/3314=6421
2.	Turoilang Laloo	IND	24-Ummulong Moodymmai	1/3	2933/3132=6065
3.	Daplinda Rymbai	UDP	28- Jowai Central	1/3	1861/2367=4228
4.	Elgina Dkhar	INC	29- Jowai South	2/4	3279/3757=7036

*Compiled by the researcher from the JHADC Election Hand Book, 2009 issued by the District Council Affairs Department*

#### 4.4.3 Garo Hills Autonomous District Council

The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council came into existence as an autonomous body on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1952. It has such powers and functions as envisaged in the sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The oath-taking to the members of the first term consisted of 18 elected and 6 nominated members.<sup>71</sup> There were two women in the first term of the GHADC; Smt. Surjomoti Ch. Momin an elected member and Smt. Roneswari Marak was a nominated member for the year 1952-57. Again, Smt. Surjomoti Ch. Momin was elected again for the year 1957-64 out of 22 elected and 2 nominated members.<sup>72</sup> Smt. Basadini Sangma was nominated for the 3<sup>rd</sup> term of the year 1964-1972.<sup>73</sup> So also for the 4<sup>th</sup> term (1972-1978), Smt. Alleswary Momin and Smt. Janje Ch. Marak were the nominated members.<sup>74</sup> There was no woman in the 5<sup>th</sup> term, that is, 1978-83. In the subsequent years, Smt. Reboti Barman was elected for two consecutive terms that is, 1983-89 and 1989-1994 and Enilla D. Shira also got elected in the 6<sup>th</sup> term. Smt. Bety Davis Ch. Momin was a nominated member of the 8<sup>th</sup> term (1994-1999). Smt. Clarish K. Sangma was re-nominated to in the 9<sup>th</sup> term (1999-2004), as Shri John Manner Marak was de-nominated. In the subsequent year, Smt. Ethelwitty Ch. Marak was re-nominated as Shri. Dijon Behari Richil was de-nominated (see Table 4.4) Thereafter, no woman was elected or nominated to the GHADC till today. There was only one woman who contested in the GHADC 2009 election namely, Ironish A. Sangma as a BJP candidate from 8- Amongpara constituency but she was defeated.<sup>75</sup> In the GHADC 2009 election, males outnumbered females unlike in KHADC and JHADC elections. Out of 168 contestants, only one woman contested for the election to the GHADC 2009 election (see table 4.5). However, the important posts in GHADC were held by women. Smt. L.R. Sangma, M.C.S. (Administrator) was the Chief Executive

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<sup>71</sup> This is drawn from the official records of the GHADC office

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Election Hand Book* (Shillong: District Council Affairs Department, 2009)

Member for a short period of time, i.e., from 13.04.2000 to 03.05.2000 and Enilla D. Shira was the Deputy Chairman from 1983-89. Smt. B. N. Sangma was the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the GHADC.<sup>76</sup> This is despite the fact that the number of women contested or nominated or even who won in the elections was comparatively very low.

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<sup>76</sup> This is drawn from the official records of the GHADC office

**Table: 4.4 Number of women Elected and Nominated in the G.H.A.D.C.**

Terms	Years	Names of Women	Elected/ Nominated	Total no. of Elected and Nominated Members
1 <sup>st</sup> term	1952-57	Smt. Surjomoti Ch. Momin	Elected	Elected =18, Nominated=6
		Smt. Roneswari Marak	Nominated	
2 <sup>nd</sup> term	1957-64	Smt. Surjomoti Ch. Momin	Elected	Elected =22, Nominated=2
3 <sup>rd</sup> term	1964-1972	Smt. Basadini Sangma	Nominated	Elected =22, Nominated=2
4 <sup>th</sup> term	1972-1978	Smt. Alleswary Momin Smt. Janje Ch. Marak	Nominated Nominated	Elected =22, Nominated=2
5 <sup>th</sup> term	1978-83	No woman	-	Elected =27, Nominated=1
6 <sup>th</sup> term	1983-89	1.Smt. Reboti Barman 2.Smt. Enilla D. Shira	Elected Elected	Elected =29, Nominated=1
7 <sup>th</sup> term	1989-1994	Smt. Reboti Barman	Elected	Elected =29, Nominated=1
8 <sup>th</sup> term	1994-1999	Smt. Bety Davis Ch. Momin	Nominated	Elected =29, Nominated=1
9 <sup>th</sup> term	1999-2004	Smt. Clarish K. Sangma	Re-nominated	Elected =29, Nominated=1
10 <sup>th</sup> term	2004-2009	Smt. Ethelwitty Ch. Marak	Re-nominted	Elected =29, Nominated=1
11 <sup>th</sup> term	2009-	No woman	-	Elected =29, Nominated=1

*Compiled by the researcher from the official record of the GHADC office and the GHADC Election Hand Book, 2009 issued by the District Council Affairs Department.*

**Table: 4.5 Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (Year 2009)**

<b>Electorates= 4,74,983</b>		<b>Contestants=168</b>		<b>Winners=29</b>	
<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
2,37,923	2,37,060	167	1	29	29
<b>Women Contestants</b>					
<b>Sl no.</b>	<b>Names</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>No. of women/men contested</b>	<b>Total no. of Men/Women Electorates</b>
1.	Ironish A. Sangma	BJP	8- Amongpara	1/8	7909/7569=15,378

*Compiled by the researcher from the GHADC Election Hand Book, 2009 issued by the District Council Affairs Department*

#### 4.5 Women in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly (1972-2009)

Meghalaya legislative assembly is a unicameral legislature composed of 60 elected representatives from 60 different assembly constituencies in the state. 55 of these seats are reserved for ST candidates and the remaining 5 (five) are the general seats. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills division consists of 36 Legislative Assembly Constituencies. The Garo Hills division has 24 Legislative Assembly Constituencies. Members are directly elected by the people for a term of five years. In this section we will examine women's representation in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly after the attainment of statehood on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972 till the last election held in 2008 general election to the Legislative Assembly.

There were nine women who contested for the first General Election to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly.<sup>77</sup> Among them, only Ms. Percylina Marak from Rongram constituency Garo Hills was elected. In 1978, there were six women contestants;<sup>78</sup> and among them only Mirriam D. Shira from Songsak constituency was elected.<sup>79</sup> In 1983, there were eight women contestants,<sup>80</sup> and none of them got elected. In 1988, the women who contested were Maysalin War, Mirriam D. Shira and Fridinak. Marak; and among them, two got elected, namely Maysalin War of Mawthengkut constituency and Mirriam D. Shira of Rajabala Constituency. In 1993, Ivory Shylla, Maya Rani Kyndiah, Roshan Warjri, Maysalin War, Miriam D. Shira and Enila Shira contested, and only Roshan Warjri of Mawkhar constituency got elected. In 1998, out of 14 candidates contested,<sup>81</sup> only two candidates were successful, namely, Roshan Warjri of Mawkhar Constituency and Debora C. Marak of Rorengiri. In the

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<sup>77</sup> They were Plissibon Marbaniang, Resida Sohtun, Maysalin War, Luisa Brosilla Lamin, Mirriam D. Shira and Herilla B. Sangma, Percylina Marak, Sylverine Swer, Muriel Selma Dunn.

<sup>78</sup> They were Usha Bhattacharya, Neena Rynjah, Maysalyne War, Mirriam D. Shira, Percylina R. Marak, Fridina Marak

<sup>79</sup> Meghalaya Election Hand Book

<sup>80</sup> They were Ivoryna Shylla, Tiplut Nongbri, Evandalyne Massar, Maya Kyndiah, Naramai Langstieh, Luisa Brosilla Lamin, Maysalin War and Mirriam D. Shira contested

<sup>81</sup> They were Margeret Rose Mawlong, Naramai Langstieh, Meena Kharkongor, Maya R. Kyndiah, Roshan Warjri, Amanda Pathaw, Simil Guru Kharhujon, Jahannara B. Kharbhih, Queentina Diengdoh and Debora C. Marak, Miriam D. Shira, Bijeta Daring, Lucia Malngiang and Maysalin War

year 2003, there were 15 women contested for the election,<sup>82</sup> only Irin Lyngdoh and Debora Marak were elected.

In 2008 election, out of the 21 female candidates contested for the election,<sup>83</sup> only one i.e., Smt. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh of Laitumkhrah constituency got elected to the State Legislative Assembly. Table 4.6 and fig.4.3 below represents the number of men and women who contested and won the election in different years.

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<sup>82</sup> They were H. Marina Dkhar, Rita M.V. Lyngdoh, PhidaliaToi, Larisha Kurkalang, Maya R. Kyndiah, Amanda Pathaw, Syrpai Khonglah, Irin Lyngdoh, Maysalin War, Veronica Marbaniang, Stella Marie A. Sangma, Anilla D. Shira, Bindu Momin, Irin Lyngdoh and Debora C. Marak.

<sup>83</sup> They were Rita M.V. Lyngdoh, Dr Bibilyna Wahlang, Aidalis Rani, Pretty Kharpyngrope, M. Ampreen Lyngdoh, Meristella Wahlang, Irene Patricia Hujon, Celistina Lamin, Manocia Warjri, Christina Majaw, Irin Lyngdoh, Maysalin War, Mehalin S. Marak, Seriminda D.Marak, Florence Sangma, Gentilla R. Marak, Debora C. Marak, Lenita M.Sangma, Jahannara B. Kharbhih, Arlene N. Sangma, Sophie Bensha Marak.

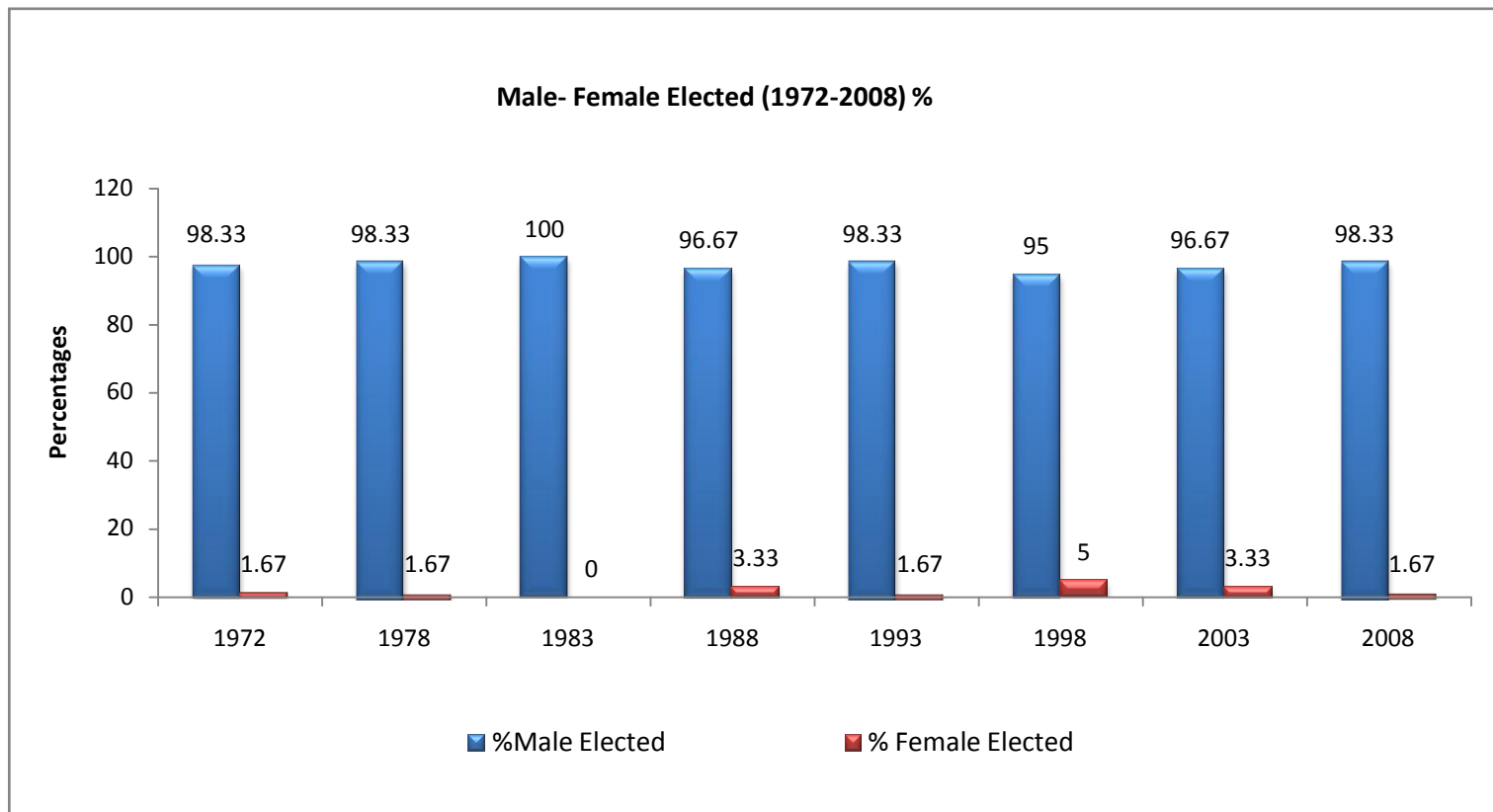
**Table: 4.6 General elections to Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Candidates- Contested, Elected 1972-2008**

<b>Sl No</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Men Contested</b>	<b>Men Elected</b>	<b>Women Contested</b>	<b>Women Elected</b>
1	1972	189	59	9	1
2	1978	255	59	6	1
3	1983	309	60	8	0
4	1988	268	58	3	2
5	1993	283	59	6	1
6	1998	294	57	14	3
7	2003	319	58	15	2
8	2008	317	59	21	1

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*

(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)





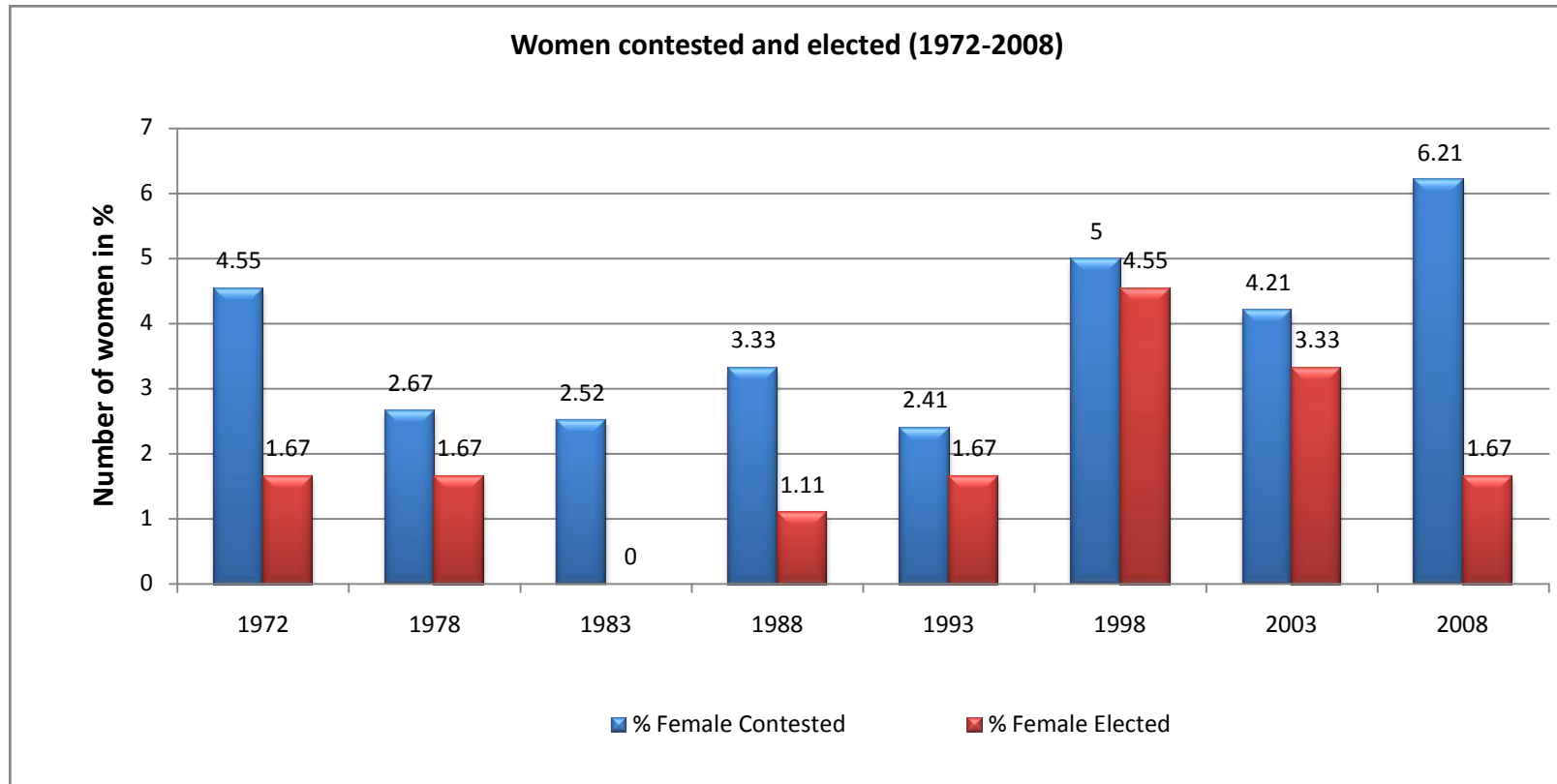
**Fig.4.3 Elected Male-Female percentages in Meghalaya Legislative Assemblies (1972-2008)**

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*

(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

To sum up, there were 189 male and 9 female contestants to the first General Election of the Meghalaya Legislative Assemblies which was held in the year 1972, but only one female got elected. Therefore, out of 60 seats, 59 seats were occupied by the male legislators and only one female legislator. Similarly, in the year 1978, there were 255 male and 7 female contestants; only one female was elected. In 1983, there were 309 male and 8 female contestants but no woman got elected. Consequently, 60 seats were fully occupied by male legislators and zero woman representation in the government. The year 1988 shows that there was a drop in number of women who contested for the election to 3(three) whereas, there were 268 males who contested for the election and two women got elected. In 1993, again there was a slight increase in the number of women contestants to 7(seven), among whom only one got elected. In 1998 and 2003, the number of women contestants was increased to 14 and 3(three) women got elected in 1998 and 2(two) were elected in 2003. In the elections the number of male contestants however, were 319 and 314 respectively. In the year 2008, the numbers of women contestants has increased to 21 as against 317 males, but only one woman was elected. Data in table 4.7 show that the number of successful women in each legislature was very insignificant. The number of the elected women to the Assembly has a positive impact on the subsequent elections as the number of women's contestants gradually increased in the following elections ( see fig.4.4). Table 4.8 shows that there was an increase in the percentage of female as electorates. In the year 2003 and 2008, female electorates outnumbered male electorates, but, it has no impact on the number of elected women (see fig.4.5). Their participation in voting as electorates does not entail their representation in the Legislature. There was an increase in the percentage of female who contested for the legislative assembly election but the percentage of female legislators from the first election, when Meghalaya attained its statehood till the last election is very low. General election to the Meghalaya Assembly shows that 2008 election has the highest percentage of women contestants (see fig.4.3). It may also be noted that in all the elections so far held, the congress party had filled the highest

number of contestants. This is in contrast to other national and regional parties who also did field women candidates occasionally.



**Fig.4.4 Number of women contested and elected in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly**

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table: 4.7 General Elections to Meghalaya, Legislative Assembly Elected candidates (%),  
(Sex wise) 1972-2008**

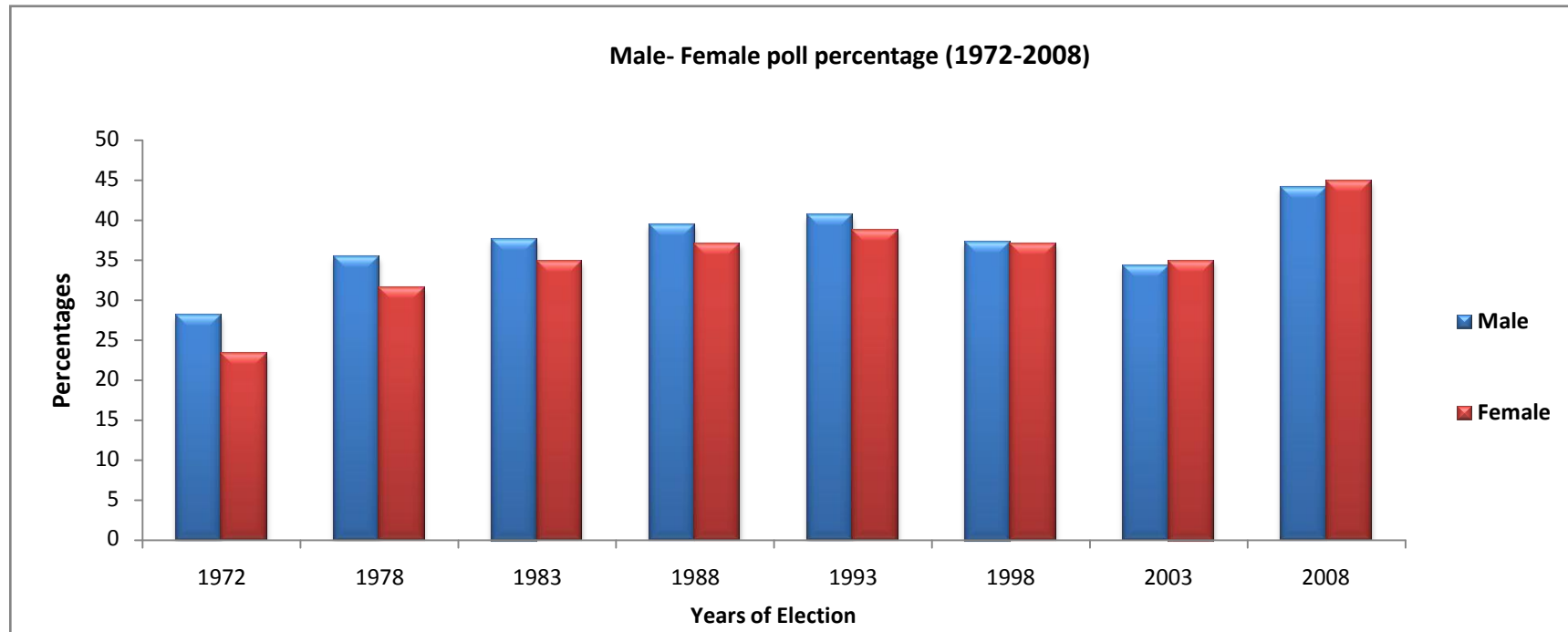
SI No	Election year	Men	Women
1	1972	98.33	1.67
2	1978	98.33	1.67
3	1983	100	0.00
4	1988	96.67	3.33
5	1993	98.33	1.67
6	1998	95.00	5.00
7	2003	96.67	3.33
8	2008	98.33	1.67

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*  
(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table: 4.8 General Elections to Meghalaya, Legislative Assembly Poll percentage (%),  
(Sex wise) 1972-2008**

<b>SI No</b>	<b>Election year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	1972	28.26	23.32	51.58
2	1978	35.55	31.63	67.18
3	1983	37.68	34.90	72.58
4	1988	39.56	37.14	76.70
5	1993	40.71	38.82	79.53
6	1998	37.37	37.14	74.51
7	2003	34.27	34.99	69.26
8	2008	44.16	44.88	89.04

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*  
(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)



**Fig. 4.5 Male-Female poll percentages in the Meghalaya legislative Assembly (1972-2008)**

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table: 4.9A General Election to the Legislative Assemblies 1972-2008**

General Election	Year	Women contestant	Results	Constituency
1 <sup>st</sup>	1972	1.Plissibon Marbaniang(K) 2.Resida Sohtun(K) 3.Maysalin War(K) 4.Luisa BrosillaLamin(G) 5.Mirriam D.Shirra(G) 6.Herilla B. Sangma(G) 7.Sylvarine Swer(K) 8.Merrel Selma Dunn(K) 9. PercylinaMarak(G)	1.Percylina Marak(G)	Rongram Constituency(G)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1978	1.Usha Bhattacharya(G) 2.Neena Rynjah(K) 3.Maysalin War(K) 4.Mirriam D.Shirra(G) 5.Percylina Marak(G) 6.Frida Marak(G)	1.Mirriam D. Shira(G)	Songsak constituency(G)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1983	1.Ivoryna Shylla (K) 2.Tiplut Nongbri(K) 3.Evandalyne Massar(K) 4. Maya Kyndiah(K) 5.Naramai Langstieh(K) 6.Luisa Brosilla Lamin(K) 7.Maysalin War (K) 8. Mirriam D. Shira(G)	None	

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)



**Table: 4.9B General Election to the Legislative Assemblies 1972-2008**

General Election	Year	Women contestant	Results	Constituency
4th	1993	1.Ivory Shylla (K) 2.Maya Rani Kyndiah(K) 3.Roshan Warjri(K) 4.Maysalin War(K) 5.Miriam D. Shira (G) 6. EnilaShira (G)	1.Roshan Warjri	Mawkhar constituency
5th	1998	1.MargeretRose Mawlong(K) 2.Naramai Langstieh(K) 3.Meena Kharkongor(K) 4.Maya R. Kyndiah(K) 5.Roshan Warjri (K) 6.Amanda Pathaw(K) 7.Simil Guru Kharhujon(K) 8.Jahannara B.Kharbhih(K) 9.Queentina Diengdoh(K) 10.Maysalin War(K) 11.Debora C. Marak(G) 12.Miriam D. Shira (G) 13.Bijeta Daring(G) 14.Lucia Malngiang(K) 15.Maysalin War(K)	1.Roshan Warjri          2. Debora C. Marak 3. Maysalyne War	Mawkhar constituency          Rorengiri Mawthengkut Constituency (K)

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table: 4.9C General Election to the Legislative Assemblies 1972-2008**

<b>General Election</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Women contestant</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
6th	2003	1.H. Marina Dkhar(K) 2 Rita M.V. Lyngdoh (K) 3.Phidalia Toi (K) 4.Larisha Kurkalang(K) 5. Maya R. Kyndiah, (K) 6.Amanda Pathaw (K) 7.Syrpai Khonglah(K) 8. Irin Lyngdoh, (K) 9.Maysalin War (K) 10.VeronicaMarbaniang(K) 11.Stella Marie A. Sangma(G) 12.Anilla D. Shira(G) 13. Bindu Momin 14.Debora C. Marak(G)	1.Irin Lyngdoh	Pariong Constituency(K)
			2.Debora C. Marak	Rorengiri (G)

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table: 4.9D General Election to the Legislative Assemblies 1972-2008**

<b>General Election</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Women contestant</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
7th	2008	1.Rita M.V. Lyngdoh(K) 2.Dr BibilynaWahlang(K) 3.Aidalis Rani(K) 4.Pretty Kharpyngrope (K) 5.M.Ampreen Lyngdoh (K) 6.Meristella Wahlang (K) 7.Irene Patricia Hujon(K) 8.Celistina Lamin (K) 9.Manocia Warjri(K) 10.Christina Majaw(K) 11.Irin Lyngdoh(K) 12.Maysalin War(K) 13.Mehalin S.Marak(G) 14.Seriminda D.Marak(G) 15.Florence Sangma(G) 16.Gentilla R. Marak(G) 17.Debora c. Marak(G) 18.Lenita M.Sangma(G) 19.Jahannara B. Kharbhih (K) 20.Arlene N. Sangma(G) 21. Sophie BenshaMarak(G)	1.Ampareen Lyngdoh(K)	Laitumkhrach(K)

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

#### **4.6 Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Bye –Elections (1972-2009)**

There were 18 bye-elections which had been held so far in the state, in different constituencies due to various reasons. There were seven women candidates so far who have contested in the Bye-Elections to the Legislative Assemblies from different constituencies. Mrs. Jopsimon Phanbuh and Ampareen Lyngdoh got elected in the year 2004 and 2008 respectively. Mrs. Phanbuh contested and won the seat for the Bye-Election as her husband, Mr.T. H. Ryngad who won the 2003 election from Laban Constituency passed away. Mrs. Ampareen Lyngdoh, who resigned from the United Democratic Party(UDP) and the legislature due to political reasons, did contest the 2008 Bye-Election under the Congress ticket. She retained her seat which she had won in 2008 under the UDP ticket. Only Smt. Mirriam D.Shira from Garo hills who contested and won the Bye-Election in 1975. There were four other contestants who did contest in the bye-elections but were not successful (see table 4.10).<sup>84</sup> Out of the 18 Bye- Elections that was held so far, four Bye-Elections are held in Garo hills while the rest are held in the constituencies of the Khasi hills.

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<sup>84</sup> The names of the contestants are Maysalyne War in 1973 from Mawthengkut Constituency, Naramai Langstieh (1996) from Laitumkhrah constituency, Irene Patricia Hujon(2003) from Laban Constituency, and Phrina Warjri in 2009 from umroi Constituency.

**Table: 4.10 Meghalaya, Legislative Assembly Bye-Elections (1972-2009)**

<b>Year of Election</b>	<b>Names of women Candidates</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Party</b>
22.05.1973	Maysalin War(K)	Mawthengkut	APHLC (NE)
1975	Miriam D. Shirra (G)	Songsak	APHLC (E)
22.1.1989		Mawkhar	
22.11.1989		Pariong	
22.11.1989		Baghmara	
27.02.1990		Laitumkhrah	
07.09.1990		Malki-Nongthymmai	
16.11.1991		Tura	
02.05.1996	Naramai Langstieh (K)	Laitumkhrah	HPU(NE)
08.02.1997		Mahendraganj(Gen)	
26.05.2005		Mairang	
26.09.2003	Jopsimon Phanbuh(K)	Laban(Gen)	BJP(E)
-do-	Irene Patricia Hujon(K)		MDP(NE)
23.02.2005		Mawprem (Gen)	
23.02.2005		Songsak	
23.02.2005		Salsella	
04.12.2006		Rongjeng	
26.02.2009	Phrina Warjri(K)	Umroi	IND(NE)
18.08.2009	M. Ampareen Lyngdoh(K)	Laitumkhrah	INC(E)
‘E’ Stands for Elected, “NE” stands for Not Elected, K-Khasi, G-Garo.			

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

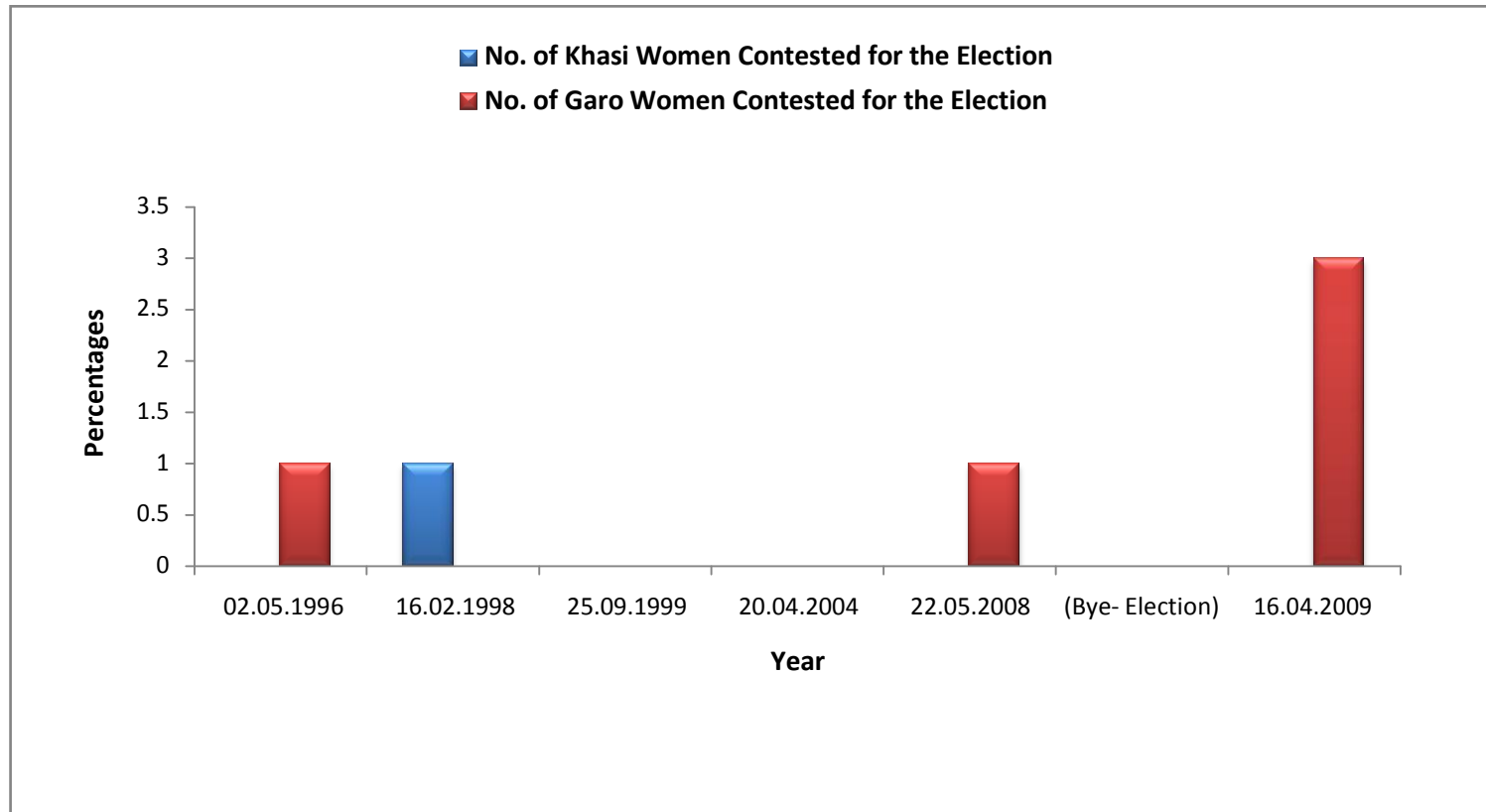
#### **4.7 Women representation to the Lok Sabha Election 1972-2009**

Enilla Shira from BJP contested the Tura seat in the 1996 Lok Sabha election and was not elected. Again, Dr Elizabeth Laitflang from BJP contested the Shillong seat in 1998, but was not successful. Miss Agatha Sangma from NCP, however, contested and won the Tura bye-election in 2008, after her father Purno Sangma vacated his parliamentary seat on being elected as a legislator to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. She became the first woman M.P. from Meghalaya. There were three women contestants for the 2009 General Election to the Lok Sabha. They were Agatha Sangma from the NCP, Deborah C. Marak from Congress and Arlene N. Sangma as an Independent candidate. Miss Agatha Sangma was again re-elected for the Lok Sabha seat from Tura-seat against her rival Congress candidate Deborah Marak, who lost by 17,945 votes. So far, from 1972- 2009 election, there was only one Khasi woman who contested for the election and there were 5(five) women from Garo Hills (see table 4.11 and fig. 4.6). Table 4.12 and fig. 4.7 show that the percentage of voters turn out by male electorates has been higher during the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election; except in the 11<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election (1998), the females voter turnout was more.

**Table: 4.11 Elections to the Lok Sabha, 1972-2009**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Khasi Women Contested for the Election</b>	<b>No. of Garo Women Contested for the Election</b>
02.05.1996		1
16.02.1998	1	
25.09.1999		
20.04.2004		
22.05.2008 (Bye- Election)		1
16.04.2009		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
Total of Women Contested 1972-2009( Deferred Election) = 6		
**No woman contested before 1996		

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*  
(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)



**Fig.4.6 Election to the Lok Sabha, 1972-2009 (Deferred Election)**

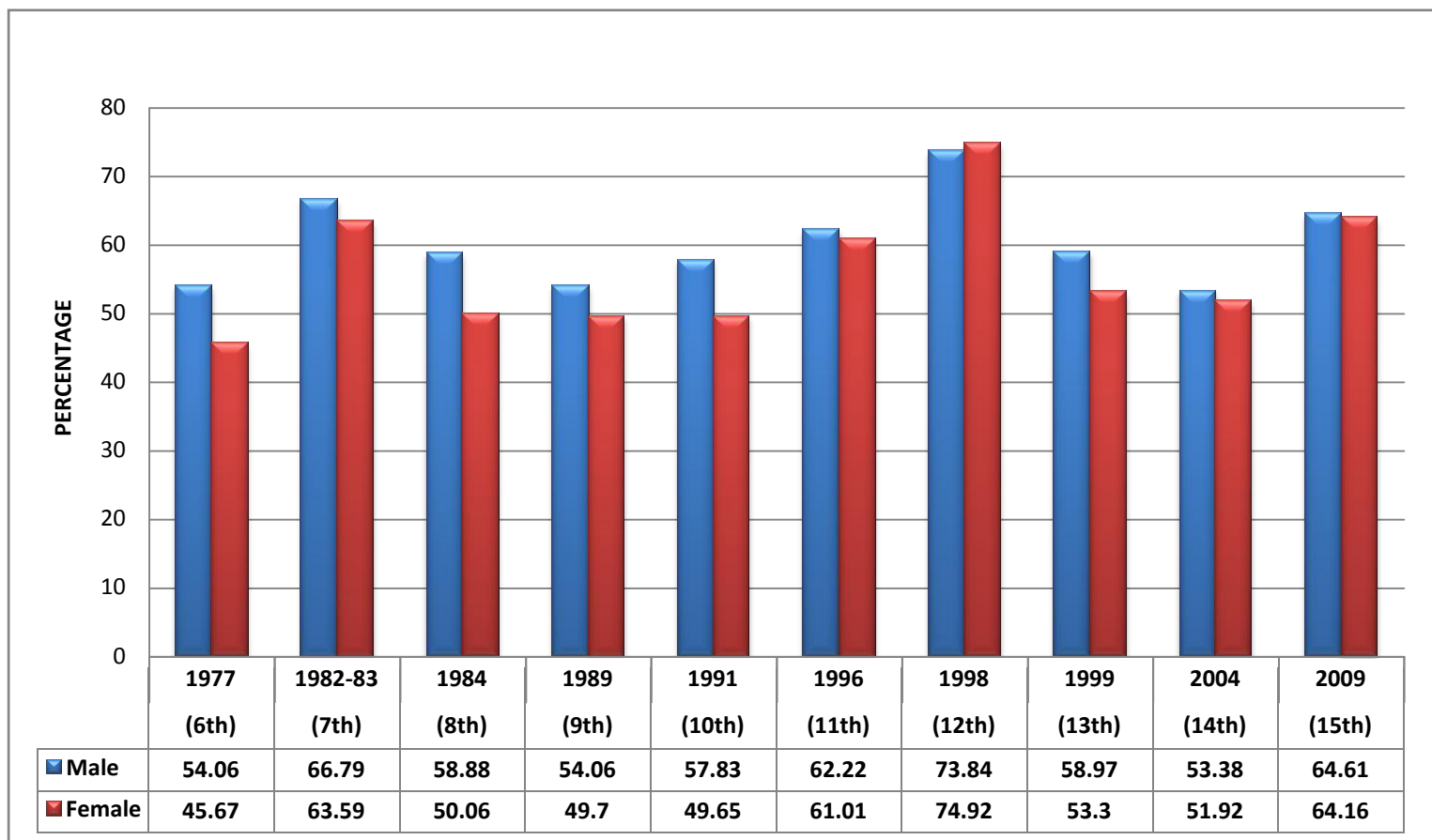
**\*25.09.1999 and 20.04.2004 – No women contested.**



**Table: 4.12 General Election to Lok Sabha, Poll percentage (%),  
(sex wise) 1977-2009**

<b>Sl no.</b>	<b>Election year</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	1977	54.06	45.67	49.88
2	1980/1983	66.79	63.59	65.19
3	1984	58.88	50.06	54.47
4	1989	54.06	49.70	51.92
5	1991	57.83	49.65	53.75
6	1996	62.22	61.01	61.62
7	1998	73.84	74.92	74.38
8	1999	58.97	53.30	56.16
9	2004	53.38	51.92	52.66
10	2009	64.61	64.16	64.38

Data Compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*  
(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)



**Fig.4.7 General Election to Lok Sabha, Poll percentage (%) Sex Wise 1977-2009**

Source: Praveen Rai. "Electoral Participation of Women in India, key determinants barrier".

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#### **4.8 A comparison of Khasi and Garo women in different elections**

Looking at the number of women contested in the Legislative Assemblies. Fig.4.10 clearly shows that the number of the Khasi women who contested for the election is more in number than the Garo women. From 1972-2008, there were 51 Khasi women and 28 Garo women who contested in 7(seven) different elections to the Legislative Assemblies (see tables 4.9A, 4.9B, 4.9C and 4.9D). Among them Garo women won 4 times and Khasi women got elected 5 times so far to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. Among them Debora Marak of Garo and Roshan Warjri of Khasi hills got elected twice.<sup>85</sup>

From 1972-2009, there were 18 bye-elections held in Meghalaya. In these elections, seven women contested only one Garo woman did contested and won the bye-elections while the six Khasi women who contested, two of them got elected (see table 4.13). There were 8 (eight) Khasi women who represented in the KHADC of which 7(seven) were elected and one was a nominated member. Similarly, there were 11 Garo women in the GHADC from 1952-2009 of which, seven were nominated and 5(five) were elected members (see table 4.14). There was no Khasi women elected to the Lok Sabha Election, nevertheless, only one contested in the year 1998 and 5(five) Garo women contested to the Lok Sabha Election so far.

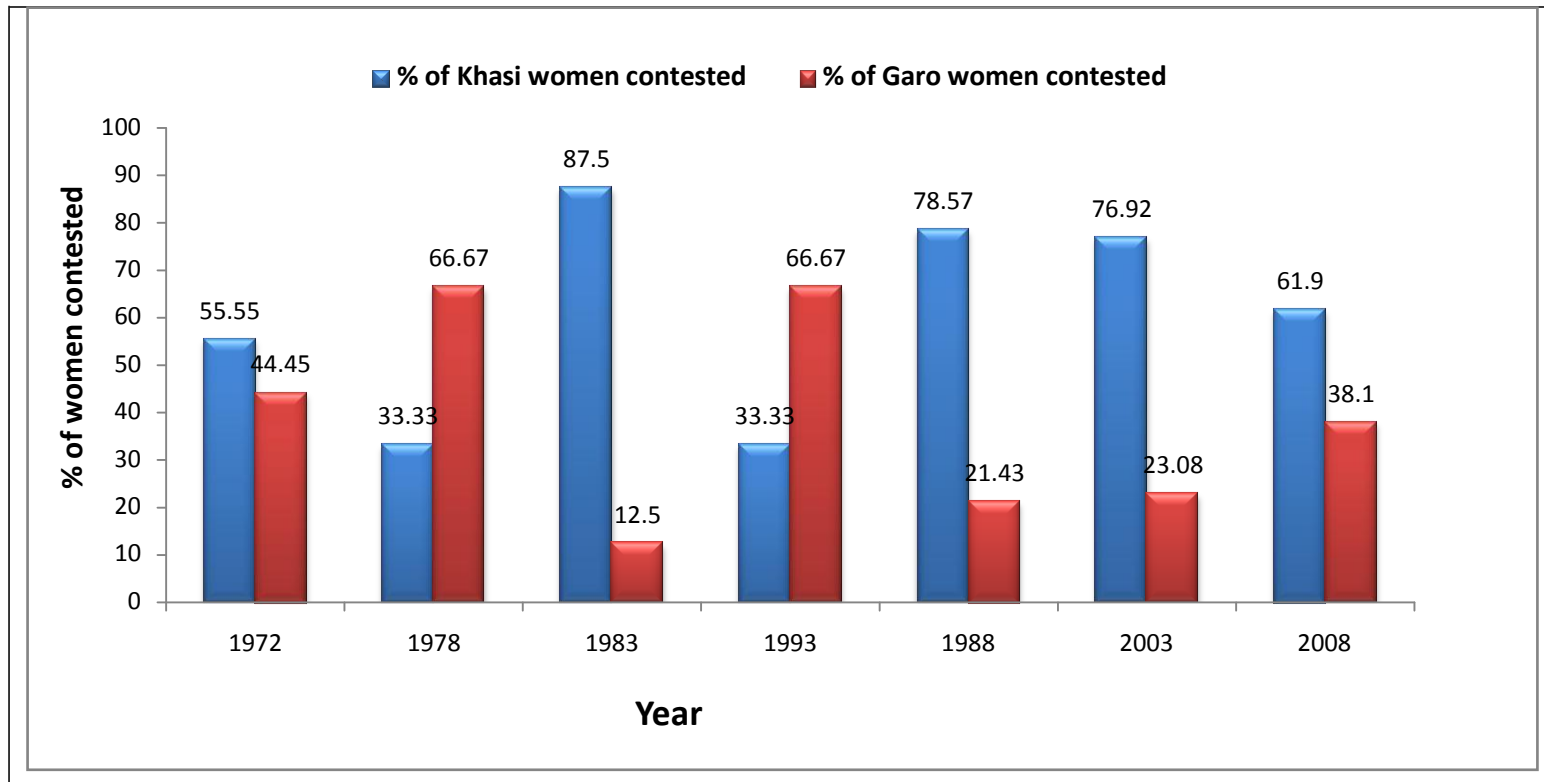
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<sup>85</sup> Debora Marak got elected in 1998 and 2003 and Roshan Warjri got elected in 1993 and 1998.

**Table: 4.13 Number of women Candidates Contested for the Bye- Election to the Legislative Assembly  
(1971-2008)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Khasi Women Contested for the Election</b>	<b>No. of Garo Women Contested for the Election</b>
22.05.1973	1	-
1975	-	1
02.05.1996	1	-
26.09.2003	2	-
26.02.2009	1	-
18.08.2009	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	-
7 Khasi women contested in different bye elections and 3 got elected and no Garo women Contested for the bye-election so far.		

Data compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)* (Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)



**Fig. 4.8 Comparison between Khasi and Garo women contested for the Election Data**

compiled by the researcher from the *Information Book on Meghalaya Elections (1972-2009)*

(Meghalaya: Office of the Electoral officer)

**Table 4.14 Autonomous District Council Elections 1972-2009**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Women in the KHADC</b>	<b>No. of Women in the GHADC</b>
1972-2009	7 (6 elected;1 nominated)	11 (5 Elected; 7 Nominated)

Data compiled by the researcher from the official record of the KHADC and GHADC offices.

## 4.9 Conclusion

The above discussions, facts and figures on women representation at various levels of decision making bodies from top to bottom show the marginal participation of women. As far as political affairs and administration are concerned, women in the traditional institutions have no role to play, although those institutions played a very significant part in imparting political skills and knowledge to both the communities. In Garo hills, the *Nokma* and *Kamal* or the priest who perform the religious ceremonies are always males. Regarding the role of *Kamal*, Milton Sangma stated that, without the *Kamal*, normal life is not possible and as such, every village has its *kamal*.<sup>86</sup> Thus, it shows that *Kamal* played an important position in the Garo traditional society as the head of the religious traditional ceremonies. On the other hand, *Nokma* derived his position from his wife the *nokna* or the heiress of the *A'king* land. However, the *nokna*, enjoys authority without power. Caroline Marak argues that, "On her behalf the land is managed solely by her husband who is known as the Nokma."<sup>87</sup> Selling and buying of the *A'king* land is not her decision alone but her maternal uncles, brothers and her clans. *A'chik* woman has no absolute power over her ancestral property and by no way that she can dispose-off property<sup>88</sup> "The chras of the nokna (heiress) can object to any misuse of power".<sup>89</sup> Women have no role to play in the village administration as the administration is in the hands of the male members. "The Nokma or the village headman, Laskar and Sordar who administer justice like magistrates in rural areas are all men."<sup>90</sup> As such, the study on the political status of women in the traditional institutions reveal that though women inherit property, but she can never succeed to the office of the administrator or as a decision maker, as she has to abide by the traditional laws and customs that favours male head. Caroline Marak pointed out that, even

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<sup>86</sup> Milton S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos, Ibid.*, p.254

<sup>87</sup> Caroline R. Marak, *Op.Cit.*, p.60

<sup>88</sup> Marlene Ch. Marak, "Matrilini And The Status of A. Chick Women in the Church and Society" in Limatula, ed., *No more Sorrow in God's garden of Justice: Tribal Women doing Theology*, Women Study Department.p.86

<sup>89</sup> Caroline R. Marak, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*p.61

regarding matters that concerned women, the opinion of the woman concerned or the opinion of the women in general of the *mahari* is not considered significant.<sup>91</sup> As such, women remain mere spectators as the administration rests in the hands of the male members.

Khasi women's role in the traditional institution is almost discriminatory in nature. Women are not allowed to attend *Dorbar* or the council at any level. Political affairs were dominated by men who are considered as male adult members of the society and women have no role to play in the decision making process. Though the traditional institutions of the Khasis are considered to be democratic in nature, it has existed without the presence of the female members. The village headman, *Sordar*, *Lyngdoh*, *Daloi* (Jaintia Hills), *Syiem* (except *Syiem-sad*), can never be a female except in certain cases where there is no male heiress. As long as administration and political affairs are concerned, customary laws and usages have reduced the position of the women to that of children as the saying goes "*ka kynthei khynnah*" ("Kynthei" means female, "Khynnah" means children), suggest women as unfit and are equivalent to that of the children who are not in a position to make decisions. Be it in the clan *Dorbar*, village *Dorbar*, commune *Dorbar* and the *Syiem Dorbar*, they have no role to play. Nongbri in her statement on women and matrilineality wrote, "In the concept of the Khasis, women are basically producers whose functions are to produce children for continuity of the family and the clan and to look after the well being of the household. In keeping with this ideology women are traditionally excluded from participation in politics..."<sup>92</sup> The above statement, clearly demonstrates that, in Khasi custom, continuity of the clans are considered from the women side. Expectation for feminine personality traits like household chores is considered to be of female domain. Traditions do not favour women to be in politics.

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* p.58

<sup>92</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, *Gender Matrilineality and Entrepreneurship* (New Delhi: Zubaan Books publisher, 2005) p.19



The representation of women in the autonomous district councils, either as elected or nominated members, is very pathetic. From 1972-2009, their representation does not cross even 1 percent in each year. Similarly, the number of women in the State Legislative Assemblies and Lok Sabha/parliament was very insignificant and it is almost non-existent in the case of the latter as the political power revolves round the male politicians only, until in the last Lok Sabha election when Agatha Sangma made a history by becoming the first woman M.P. from the state.<sup>93</sup> In the history of Meghalaya Government, no other woman than Smt. Deborah Ch. Marak was able to hold the post of Deputy Chief Minister that she held in the year 1998. It may be noted that as discussed in chapter 6, even those who were able to participate and come to power are mostly because of their family political background.

As part of the Khasi tradition, women out of respect usually remain silent whenever the adult male members (*ki Rangbah*) speak and this has been passed down from generation to generations. The political culture of today is also coloured the same way are because of the ideological and traditional consciousness that has its roots in the society. The values and training on leadership that the male members gained in the traditional political institutions left out women at a disadvantage position with regards to political affairs. Nevertheless, traditional culture and usages have been drastically affecting the number of women's representation in various decision making bodies even if they enjoy political rights equally with men in the modern governments.

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<sup>93</sup> Recently on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013, the Congress party nominated Mrs. Wansuk Syiem for the Rajya Sabha Bye-election as Shri Thomas Marak the then Member of the Rajya Sabha resigned. She won the seat unopposed and became the first woman from Meghalaya to be a member of the Rajya Sabha.

CHAPTER- 5  
WOMEN AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN MEGHALAYA

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**5.1 Introduction**

The concept of civil society has been vigorously discussed in the intellectual circles and is gaining importance in the study of power and politics even though, till today, there is no acceptable definition of civil society. According to Carolyne Elliot, “they have life in the society outside the political structure, but they are also important constituents of the political system, dispersing power and providing a basis for representation of social diversity.”<sup>1</sup> Jude Howell pointed out that in the field of political science; civil society has promoted the further study of changing forms of collective actions, the politics of the public and the process of democratization.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) on exploring the concept of civil society pointed out that civil society organizations have become increasingly a common channel through which people seek to exercise citizenship and contribute social and economic changes.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the term ‘civil society’ has been generally understood as non-state actors but no doubt it is a crucial mode of participation for democratization process. It is a part of democracy and its governance. W.H.O. confers that, civil society Organizations may reflect social, political and economic inequalities based on factors such as wealth, geography, religion and gender.<sup>4</sup> Barbara Einborn and Charlie Server opined, “A growing awareness of the gendered dimension of transformation has combined with notions of the new political “freedom” open to hitherto oppressed populations to create widespread expections for the growth of a women’s movement in

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Zomuanthanga, J.C. “The Civil Society in Mizoram: A Study of the Church And Y.M.A.” in Jagadish K. Patnaik ed., *Peace and Development in Mizoram: Role of the State and Civil Society* ed.( Aizawl : Department of Political Science, Mizoram University,2008),p.233

<sup>2</sup> Howell Jude and Diana Mulligan eds., *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending boundaries*( London and NewYork:Routledge,2005), p.20

<sup>3</sup> *Understanding Civil Society, Issues for W.H.O.* (Discussion Paper-2, CSI/2002/DP2). Feb 2002), p.5 ([http://www.who.int/civilsociety/documents/en/understanding\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/civilsociety/documents/en/understanding_en.pdf)) Accessed on 16.08.2012

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

central and Eastern Europe.”<sup>5</sup> The International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences states that “the core of civil society encompasses a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Howell pointed out that they cover a variety of organizational interest and formal organization, registered with authorities to informal social movements coming together around a common cause.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of civil society has been generally understood as a non-political sphere where individuals come together and form associations voluntarily and as such, non-governmental in character. It acts as a positive instrument for which the political community can seek political redress from the government. It signifies the willingness and the capacity of the citizens to create political consciousness amongst them and bring new issues to the policy makers as the public agenda to defend the civil rights of the citizens. Thus, civil society from the positive aspect may provide an effective collective voice in the political process through political mobilizations by directing or opposing government policies. The nature of civil society groups may differ in their ideology and scope but their major objectives is for the betterment of their community group and the society at large.

The Indian constitution guarantees the right to freedom to form association under Article 19 of the constitution and this would possibly enhance the democratization process so as to meet the diverse needs of different groups representing different cultures, professions, religions as well as gender. The present study considers the participation of women in civil society organization as a part of political participation. Protest and agitations are also

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<sup>5</sup> Barbara Einhorn and Charlie Server, “ Gender, Civil Society and women’s movements in Central and Eastern Europe” in Howell Jude and Diana Mulligan eds., *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending boundaries* ( London and NewYork:Routledge,2005),p.23

<sup>6</sup> Smelser Neil J., Paul B. Baltes eds., *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*,Vol.3,p.1901

<sup>7</sup>Howell Jude and Diana Mulligan, *Op.Cit.*, p.20

considered as an element of political involvement. Specifically this chapter deals with the role of civil society organisation in Meghalaya towards political participation of women. This chapter examines the various civil society organizations which are active locally dealing with women's issues in Meghalaya. In the course of discussion the aims, objectives and activities of the various organizations are also analyzed. An attempt is also made to probe into the role of these civil society groups in strengthening women's participation in politics besides their role in promoting women's issues in general.

For the purpose of the present study, personal interviews were conducted with the women organization leaders in Meghalaya as well as the popular youth and students organizations with an attempt to study the role of civil society in Meghalaya towards political participation of women.

Analysis has been made on the ideologies, objectives and the activities of the organizations on the information received through the personal interview with the organization leaders. Personal opinions of the leaders on the women reservation bill were also taken into consideration, so as to study the response of the civil society groups towards women representation in politics.

The dynamic nature of political participation of women in politics is manifested in the various activities of women's civil society groups. The activities of these groups go beyond the conventional understanding of the concept of political participation. It often relates to an activity which beyond the zones of conventional privilege jargons. Organising protests and agitations seem to be a normal aspect of women activism though, it does not transform in the form of political participation heading to share its power structure.

Myron Weiner defines political participation as any voluntary action successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate method need to influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs, or the choices of political

leaders at any level of government, local or national.<sup>8</sup> Most of the recent studies incorporate protest and agitation as an important part of democracy. Looking at the political scenario of North East India and particularly in Meghalaya, there are number of organizations representing community, professions, religion, and gender, have a propensity to affect public policies. The current political scenario, however, witness the rise of the militant groups, using violent and extra-constitutional means to meet their demands from the government which are not considered a part of the present study. Article 19(1c) of the Indian constitution guarantees the fundamental rights to Indian citizens and therefore, it allows the expansion of the freedom of speech and the freedom to form association. The freedom to form association, however, has been subjected to reasonable restrains which implies that it should be through peaceful means. Therefore, such actions should not involve extra-constitutional activities.

In view of the present political scenario in India, unconventional political participation seems to be an effective way of participation, as it is a continuous process and susceptible to all public issues and such actions have been made possible through the collective action in the form of civil society; whereas, conventional political participation provides only periodical participation. In Meghalaya, there is numerous interest and pressure groups representing youths, students, gender, etc. so as to protect the interest of its members and the society at large. For instance, Meghalaya Women Forum, Meghalaya Women Alliance, Khasi Students' Union (KSU), Garo Students' Union (GSU), Civil Society Women Organization(CSWO), North East Network (NEN), etc.

Women organizations exist in different localities and towns of Khasi and Garo hills districts of Meghalaya and their common interest is to unite the women folks for the betterment of women and the society as a whole. Women's organizations have increased exponentially throughout Meghalaya in

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<sup>8</sup> Raman Rinyaphi, *Women and Political participation: A case Study of Manipur*, Unpublished M. Phil Dissertation (New Delhi: Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University,2002), p.26

which women have been able to assert their varied concerns. Today, women organized themselves locally and in collaboration with other networks to meet their demands. They have been using media to demand their rights as well as issues that concerns the youths and other members of the society. They move to the government and challenge to the court to redress the multiple public grievances.

## ***5.2 Seng Kynthei Shnong Pyndemumiong***

The *Seng Kynthei Shnong Pyndemumiong* is a locality-based women organization under Mairang sub-division, West Khasi Hills District. The organization is working together with the male members of the *dorbar* shnong. They have their own President and General Secretary to look into the functioning and working of the organization. The primary concern of the organization is to maintain peace and order in the locality. The leader of the organization pointed out that since the locality is a market place, people came from different villages and towns for buying and selling goods, which in turn makes it crowded. Therefore, the organization felt that there is a need to work in close co-operation with the male members for the overall interest of the locality.

***Activities:*** Since its inception, the women organization has carried out night patrolling especially during festive seasons to prevent drunkards and street boys from creating chaos in the locality. As such, the organization is sternly against the selling of liquor. They have laid down certain rules for both the drunkards and liquor sellers. Violation of the same will be facing punishment in the form of fine with money and if the problems cannot be solved within the organization, certain cases will be taken to the meeting of the *dorbar*. Besides, the organization will be hearing appeals and take actions against any form of domestic violence, if reported to the organisation. The leader of the organization suggested that in fact, the Khasi women have no social discrimination but problems arise mostly due to drunkard husbands.

The organization also emphasized on the cleanliness in the locality. For instance, throwing and dumping of garbage haphazardly in public places is strictly prohibited, etc. Morality is another area of concern of the organization; such as using of indecent dresses and abusive languages in the streets of such will be punish as per the rules and regulation lay down by the organization.

### ***5.3 Mothers' Union (Baghmara)***

An interview was also conducted with Mrs. Pricilla Marak, the General Secretary of the Mothers' Union at Baghmara, South Garo hills. The organization has 60 members and 10 executive members. The posts of the General Secretary and the President are directly elected by the members. All the members and the executive members are women. Regarding its objectives and activities, Marak pointed out that as an organization, there is no encouragement for women to participate in politics. They participate merely because of their personal interest individually, but not as the representative of the organization. She has a negative view on politics, as it involves according to her, cheating and manipulation at the time of election and post-election. Therefore, women are unwilling to join politics and consequently, it leads to their marginal participation. However, the organization is concerned for the overall welfare of the society as a whole. The issues range from bad roads to trouble makers, and so on, in the locality. Apart from the above mentioned activities, the organization also conducted awareness programmes and campaigns against drug abuse and alcoholics in the locality and nearby area.

### ***5.4 Mothers' Union (Tura)***

Mothers' union is a socio-religious organisation and is one of the oldest and the largest organizations in Meghalaya that was founded before independence, i.e., in the year 1941 at Tura in Garo Hills. An interview was conducted with Mrs. Indira A. Sangma, the President of the Mothers' union in Tura. She stated that all the mothers are supposed to be the members of the union. They have General Meeting every three months and they also have the



Executive Meetings to run the union. They have male members as well in the managing committee. There are more than 1000 members at present. The ideology of the organization is based on Christian spiritual values as the American Baptist Mission was responsible for the spread of education in Garo hills. It has a great impact on the social life of the Garos. The main aim of the union is more of giving moral lessons to the children and women, that is, from wearing decent dresses to paying respect to elders, parents and husbands.

**Activities:** The union has taken-up various activities since its inception. They work for the socio-economic upliftment of women and the society in general. They hear appeals from the women organization outside Tura and take up actions for issues of public interest. They run a higher Secondary school in Tura; they open tailoring class to encourage women to be economically independent. Besides, they have programmes like food fest, open air theatre, competitions for children, and seminars on women related issues, AIDS and drug abuse awareness programmes etc. Besides, the union also would support protest of public interest such as anti- mining of uranium in Meghalaya with other civil society groups, member of the Peace Forum in Meghalaya. The Mothers' Union took the lead in West Garo Hills area along with the conglomeration of other NGOs including elders and citizens in the peace March rally against the 300 hours *band* called by the Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 as the *band* affected the normal life in Garo Hills.<sup>9</sup> From the inception, Mothers Union has contributed enormously in the field of education, culture and in educating Garo women and children about the important values of the society. The union expanded its activities with the new challenges faced by the society. Their contributions ranged from private life about wearing decent dresses, encouraging work in the field of education, setting up of opportunities for self employment like weaving and tailoring to public sphere participation through peace rally and agitations, susceptible to

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<sup>9</sup> Garo National Liberation Army was formed in 2009. It was formed by the Deputy Superintendent of police in fighting for a sovereign Garo land. The Outfit wants the withdrawal of Security forces Operations from the jungles of Garo Hills, where the militants groups has several camps.

governmental policies, they work together with other social and welfare organization for the overall development. Even though, the organization is a non-political organization, it is argued that reservation policy in Meghalaya is of utmost importance to provide opportunity for women to enter political arena. In an open theatre, the union has conducted “drama act” on the importance of elections with the aim to make people aware about the benefits of taking part in the elections.

### ***5.5 Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei(KLKSK)***

*Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* is the central body of the 26 women organizations in and around Shillong and it is a social based organization. It was formed on the 12 December, 1992 as the coordinating body of the twenty six organizations of the various localities of Shillong and its suburbs. The main aim and objectives of the organization is to bring women organizations closer and take up the common issues of the various women organizations. The priority of the organization is focused on the women related issues and to work for the overall economic development, health and advancement in the field of education. They are also concerned about the various problems and social evils affecting the women, the youth and the society at large. It is a non- political and non religious body.

***Activities:*** The organization conducted variety of programmes, seminars and awareness programmes such as legal awareness, environmental awareness, awareness on Domestic Violence Acts and others. They work in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department of the government, the State Women Commission of Meghalaya and the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD). Besides, the common issues taken up by the *Lympung ki Seng Kynthei* those different organizations can work out independently on their own. It works as the co-coordinating body of various women organization in the Khasi hills. Dr. (Mrs.) Mary Presilla Rina Lyngdoh, the adviser of the *Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei* stated that the concern of the organization is the plight of women and

their rights. As the apex body, they take up issues to the court in cases, when the victims are denied of justice. In the year 1996, the organization sent their members to attend the National Alliance of Women at New Delhi on the women's participation in decision making and thereafter, pamphlets were distributed before the 1996 MP election by the Alliance. The organization met the Chief Minister regarding the formation of the State Women Commission for Women in Meghalaya (MSCW) which was ultimately formed in the year 2004. They also met the Vice Chancellor of North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in 2006 in regard to the setting up of the Centre for Women Studies. They also sent memorandum to the government regarding the setting up of Fly-over Bridge in Shillong and Shillong by-pass. They do take up other issues such as concerning health, education and over all development in the state. Besides, there are several activities of the organization related with health, cleanliness and rural development.

Cerilla Khonglah who is the documentation officer in ICSSR- NERC by profession, has been the publicity Secretary since the inception of the *Lympung ki Sengkynthei* . She held the post of the General Secretary for four years from 2002-2008. Khonglah is of the opinion that women in Meghalaya are having a better status than in other parts of the country, but in politics they are silent participants. And when it comes to decision making process, men take the decision both in private and public sphere. Women are only the helpers in the *dorbar* which are male headed meetings but even in related women issues scheme, women are not in the committee. She further argues that the factor which hinders women participation in politics is because of the traditional culture and believes that women are not fit to be in the field of administration.

### ***5.6 Civil Society Women organization (CSWO)***

Civil Society Women Organization is one of the influential women organizations in Meghalaya. CSWO President, Mrs. Agnes Kharshiing is one of the influential civil society actors in the 2009 Shillong jail break case in

Meghalaya.<sup>10</sup> The objectives of the organization are to find out various problems concerning women, children, youth and other societal problem and human rights issues. As a women organization, they are concerned about crimes against women and domestic violence which are the major problems faced by women in Meghalaya. Kharshiing pointed out that the prevailing political system in Meghalaya is already a spoilt system; corrupt practices are seen at all levels and justice has been denied to the citizens.

**Activities:** One of the issues that strongly ceased by the organization vehemently is the Shillong Jail break issue of Full moon Dhar. Fullmoon Dhar, a kidnapers and rapist, involved in the crime of murdering two ladies brutally by cutting their throat, was able to flee from the Shillong District jail on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2009 and the next day, Dhar was killed in an encounter with the police. The allegation of the C.S.W.O. against the police department and the concerned authorities was that, the death of Full moon Dhar was a fake encounter where the politicians and business men were involved in financing the jail break. The C.S.W.O. (Agnes Kharshiing) works in collaboration with the Steering Committee against Murder of Democracy (SCAMoD) a conglomeration of non-governmental organizations fighting for justice in the jailbreak case. Thus, under the banner of the SCAMoD, non-governmental organizations called for a night road blockade followed by public curfew pressurizing the government to take up serious action on the matter.

Other than women issues CSWO are also concerned with issues of human rights and corrupt practices in any form or any hindrances towards progress and development. The widely read newspaper in Meghalaya, the Shillong times stated that “The Civil Society for Women Organization (CSWO) has complained to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

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<sup>10</sup> Fullmoon Dhar, the kidnapers and rapist who involved in the crime of murdering two ladies by brutally cutting their throat, able to flee from the Shillong District jail on the 31<sup>st</sup> may 2009 and the next day, Dhar was killed in an encounter with the police. The allegation of the C.S.W.O. against the government was that the death of Full moon Dhar was a fake encounter. It was the involvement of the politicians in financing the jail break.

against “gross violation” of human rights in Garo Hills and sought the commission’s intervention to free farmers from the “bondage of monopoly” in the region.”<sup>11</sup> As such, they have no specific issue but they take up issues that deprived the rights of the individual or the community including both men and women. The organization is a social welfare organization and no specific issue is taken up by the organization regarding the promotion of women to enter politics.

### ***5.7 Khasi Women Welfare and Development Association (KWWADA)***

KWWADA is formerly known as the Tribal Women Welfare and Development Association of Meghalaya (TWWADAM). The working and activities of the KWADA is almost like that of the TWWADAM. Their main concerns are the protection of the tribal lands and trade, foreigners’ issues, employment problem, social evils like drinking and many other common problems and issues. Besides the social issues, KWWADA takes up political issues like “Clean Politics Campaign”<sup>12</sup> The leader of the organization argues that such campaigns were conducted in different villages for having corruption free government; and clean politics should start within the family. They also work in collaboration with other organizations regarding common issues.

### ***5.8 The Khasi Student Union (KSU)***

The Khasi Students’ Union is one of the most influential organizations in Meghalaya. They have different units in different villages and towns. An interview was conducted with Samuel Jyrwa, the President of the Central body of the KSU. He holds the post of the President from 2002 onwards.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The *Shillong Times*, newspaper(Shillong: June.9.2012) [www.theshillongtimes.com](http://www.theshillongtimes.com)

<sup>12</sup> Clean politics campaign in Meghalaya has been inspired by Mr. .Ardent Bassaiawmoit, a civil society actor turned politician.

<sup>13</sup> His term as the General Secretary of the KSU finished in on October 2009 and at present he is the President of the North East Student Organisation.

### *Women issues taken up by the organization*

The president of the organization clearly stated that no specific issue is taken up by the organization besides the plight of the students in general and the welfare of the society. It may be noted that the students' union have their own candidates and political party named, the Khasi National and Awakening Movement (KHNAM). The constitution of the organization shows that there are no specific women issues in their objective. Though they have girls' wings, but, they work in a team with the main body. Girls' wings were appointed with the intention that they would be able to deal with women issues comfortably such as rape cases, child abuse etc. They have girls' member in all the units of the organization that covers all Khasi hills district. In his opinion, there should be proper law related to women. He argues that women are more political conscious than men in Meghalaya and there is no discrimination on the political participation of women and the society has no objection towards women participation in politics like those in the mainland India. He further stated that most of the successful women in politics face no discrimination; and they are of course encouraged to join politics not because of gender but of merit.

Regarding Women Reservation Bill, Jyrwa argues that in Khasi culture, unlike others, women have better status; and inheritance of property and lineage system favours women. It needs not to be generalized like in the mainland India; therefore reservation bill is not so important. Jyrwa is of the opinion that the khasi culture provides gender equality, culture change with the needs of time. Women were not allowed to attend *dorbar* in the traditional society, due to women's nature itself. "They have soft character by nature that women are not allowed to attend *dorbar* as they may not allow their male family members to go for a war" He further added that now a days, *dorbar* allowed women to have their opinion.

**Activities:** The KSU take up students' related issues and other issues related with progress and development. Most importantly, they have been fighting against the influx of illegal migrants into the state. They allege that the government was not seriously aware of the problem. Several times they capture the illegal migrants and take them to the police station after checking. They are concerned about preserving the rich culture of the indigenous people and land. Agitations were also held for the implementation of the Inner Line Permit in Meghalaya. The KSU is also the major constituents of the Steering Committee against Murder of Democracy in fighting for justice against the Shillong District jail break case.

Besides the governmental policy related issues, there are several other activities of the organization such as health care and socio-economic issues. They make surprise visits to check the sufficient supply of medicines and medical equipment at different Health Centers and also the attendance of staff in case of any complaint. Several other activities also are taken up by the organization for the cultural and socio-economic upliftment of the society. They called for *bands* and strikes, *Chaka band*, office picketing, hunger strikes if their demands are not addressed by the government. They also call for rally or campaign for awareness programmes on many issues and policies of the government whenever required. In main, their activities go beyond the exclusive women's issue, although they have empathy for women of the community.

### ***5.9 Civil society groups in Meghalaya: An analysis***

This chapter comprises the study of few influential civil societies in Meghalaya. Besides the above, there are other organizations such as Federation of Khasi Jaintia and Garo People (FKJGP), Hynniewtrep National Youth Federation (HNYF), Garo Students' Union (GSU) and others, who also play an important role in the society as civil society groups. From the interviews conducted with the leaders of the civil societies, an analysis has been made on

the objectives and activities of the various non-governmental organizations and the perception of the civil society actors on the issue of political participation of women in Meghalaya.

*First*, the objectives of the organizations clearly show that most of the organizations are generic in nature. They mostly represent as social-welfare organizations and generally take up common issues. For instance, *Ka Lympung ki Seng Kynthei*, K.S.U., Mothers' Union, C.S.W.O. take up common issues. Women related issues are not the lone concern of women organizations, but, other organizations such as the KSU which despite being a student organization also works together with women organizations on certain issues like domestic violence and crime against women that are generally considered as social evils in Meghalaya. Similarly, the women organizations also emphasized on the problems faced by the young educated students.

*Secondly*, the civil society groups in Meghalaya are non-political in character and do not mix politics with their activities. For instance, the main objective of women organization is to bring women closer and find out solutions to the problems faced by them and the society in general. The former president of C.S.W.O., Irene Hujon resigned from the organization and contested in the 2008 election and Agnes Kharshiing was elected as the president after Hujon's resignation. As such, practically, the civil society organizations, besides their being non-political nature, they have direct impact on the confidence of society actors to join politics.

*Thirdly*, It may be noted that there are slight difference between the women organization at the village level and those in the city. The *Pyndemumiong Women organization* is localized in character and they tended to focus mostly on the welfare of the society and domestic concerns. The women organizations in the villages are concerned about domestic problems, like family related problem such as husbands' drunkenness that often leads to wife beating and broken marriages etc. Other related issues like using abusive



languages in the street and prohibition of sitting in a group in dark places at night and so on. Their other concern is about cleanliness. They conducted cleaning drive and fixed dustbins in every corner of the locality for throwing rubbish. While those women organization in the city take up issues other than the domestic women related issues such as, issues concerning governmental policies and developmental issues. However, the village based organization or the locality based women organization are more specific in their activities.

*Fourthly*, based on the objectives and activities of the various organizations under study, it shows that the civil society groups do not directly contribute towards women participation in politics. One of the leaders of the organization at Baghmara, namely, the Mothers' Union argues that participation in politics is an individual interest and generally, they do not represent the interest of women organization. Most of the civil society actors stated that their organizations are non-political in character and they do not involve in politics. On the other hand, the KSU president stated that women are more politically conscious than men. Their participation is seen in canvassing during elections for the aspiring candidates and as voters. Cerilla Khonglah, the Public Secretary of the *Lympung ki Seng Kynthei*, the women organization, argues that women in Meghalaya play an important role in the society, but they act as silent participants at the time of election.

*Fifthly*, even though civil society has no direct impact on the political participation of women in Meghalaya, they provide a grand platform for women to have exposure in the public arena. Women gain confidence by being a member of the organization and act as agents of change in the lives of people. They attain self-confidence about their ability to be at par with men. The *dorbar* which was traditionally considered to be the sole arena of the male members now included women in their executive committees in some of the localities in Shillong. For instances, the women organization of Nongrim Hills sends two representatives to the executive committee of the *Dorbar Shnong*

and one woman is being co-opted by the *dorbar*;<sup>14</sup> two members of women organization are represented in the executive committee of the *Laithumkhrach Dorbar*<sup>15</sup>. In fact, the presence of women organizations has an indirect impact on the mentality of both men and women about the competence of women in the political arena and in decision making matters.

*Sixthly*, the participation of women in the public sphere as members of women organization as well as leaders, may seem to be less visible; but their contribution towards peace and development are enormous. Locality or village based women organization plays a very important role in maintaining peace and security in villages and towns as well. Night patrolling is one of the common activities performed by the women organization against drunkards and trouble makers especially during the festive seasons. In some locality, women organization in co-operation with the Village Defense Party of the village, comprising of the youth and male members, take up night patrolling against any kind of problems that arise in the locality. For instance, the leader of the Pyndemumiong of Mairang village said that night patrolling is usually carried out after the household chores are done. Women would come out of their house, and thereafter they are divided in groups. Each group will patrol separately in different areas to catch heavy drunkards, reckless drivers and street ruffians. Women may not take the position of the leader in the presence of the male members in any decision making process, but they are the ones who inspire and support them for their success. Besides, women organizations contributed towards peace and development by organizing seminars and public rally on important issues. For instance, The Khasi Women and Development Association (KWADA) organized “clean politics campaign.”<sup>16</sup> In this campaign, they stressed that, “clean politics should start from within the

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<sup>14</sup> Lyngdoh, M.P.R. “Women’s Movement in Meghalaya with reference to some selected women’s organizations” in M. N. Karna, ed., *Social Movements in North East India* ( New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company; 1998),pp.88-89

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87

<sup>16</sup> An interview was conducted with the President of KWADA. Clean politics is the campaign started by Bah Ardent Basaiawmoit, the FKJGP leader turn legislator.

family”); and they also emphasized about the evil effect of corruption and the need to have political awareness as voters.

*Seventhly*, women leaders require family support to perform their work efficiently. In case of the married women, supports from the side of the husbands are very important. Executive meetings are normally held after women finish the household chores. Therefore, the activities of the organisation are usually held after dinner. This kind of arrangement may limit the time devoted to engage in organizational activities. But such division of time does not deter women to remain subdued or be less active regarding socio-political issues.

*Eighthly*, All the civil society actors agree that there are no social and economic discrimination against women in Meghalaya. However, the number of women’s representation in legislature is comparatively low. None of the organizations enlightened the people about the significance of women’s representation in the decision making policy. Majority of women’s organization leaders support the need for Women Reservation Policy while the male civil society actors see that reservation policy is not relevant in Meghalaya. One of the leaders of women organization is of the opinion that women should come forward as they may have proper knowledge and understanding about the family affairs and this would perhaps help them to think about the important issues of the day.

*Ninthly*, the main problem of women leaders is that of family responsibility; they have to divide their time for the family and outside family. Most of the meetings used to be held during their free time. A unique case in West Khasi Hills at Thangmaw Village is that women organization representatives are appointed by the *dorbar* which is male dominated village council. The organization was very strong during 1981 to 1989 especially in liquor seizing and other activities. Now due to the lack of women leaders, the *Thangmaw Women organization* has stopped functioning. The ex-president of

the organization argued that women were too busy to take part in the organization. Therefore, the village *dorbar* take up any issues concerning the village security and development and women have no part to play. Further, elaboration on the impact of absence of women leaders has been studied in the composition and functioning of the *dorbar* in Thangmaw Village.

#### ***5.10 Women's participation in the dorbar (Village Council) in West Khasi Hills (Thangmaw Village)***

No doubt modernizations and education has brought radical changes in the mentality or the ideological consciousness of both the genders in the Khasi society with respect to women's participation in every aspect of the society. *Dorbar* in the traditional society were strictly considered to be male assembly and that too, men with mustaches were allowed to attend the *dorbar*. This was done deliberately to state male superiority. On the other hand, those who do not have mustaches are considered unfit to sit in the *dorbar*. Such taboos persist even today and it clearly demonstrates the secondary position of woman in the decision making.

An interview was conducted with the *sordar* or the headman of the Thangmaw village to provide information about the composition and functioning of the village *dorbar* and as such, analysis has been made based on the basis of information received from the village headman.

#### ***Composition and functions of the dorbar***

*Thangmaw Dorbar* is composed of the male members only. It has been made compulsory that all the boys who have attained the age of 18 years and above are supposed to enroll their names. Their presence in the *Dorbar* is considered important and those who do not attend the *dorbar* when they are called will be penalized by the *dorbar*. However, students are not allowed to be a part of the *dorbar*. But those who are students and working at the same time are allowed to be a member. *Dorbar* is the highest administrative body in the

village. Any issues that concern development or security in the village will be decided by the *dorbar* where the *sordar* alone cannot make decisions. The *sordar* is elected by the *dorbar* itself.

Women have no part to play in the *dorbar* meetings. It is purely male dominated administration. Considering the eligibility criteria of the member of the *dorbar*, it clearly shows that there is a discrimination against women. It indirectly suggests that school drop-out boys can make better decisions than any elder woman. Women are treated equally with those who are below the age of 18<sup>th</sup> years. The former president of the Thangmaw women organization pointed out that, “*Decision of the Sengkynthei (Women organization) is to be decided by the dorbar*” An interesting incident that I came across during my field work was that the people of that village were hesitant about my house visits for conducting interviews. After the completion of two days of the interview with the women folks, there were misunderstanding and distrust about my research activities. So I went to the *sordar* (local headman) requesting him to provide me the names of women leaders to make them understand about the objective of my research. On the basis of the information given to me, I tried to find out the President and the Secretary of the organization. Surprisingly, they were unaware of the designations given to them; as they were appointed by the *dorbar* in their absence. This kind of action taken by the *dorbar* concurs to a male dominated system in the village in spite of the matrilineal system prevalent in Meghalaya. In a discussion with the *sordar* of the village, he explained that the leaders of women organization were appointed by the *dorbar* composed by male members only; and the *dorbar* has direct supervision about its operation. Similarly, Dabram a locality in South Garo hills have no women organization. Meetings are called by the *Nokma* (headman) when ever required in which male and female are included.

In some locality of the Shillong area, women leaders are allowed to attend as representatives to the *dorbar* meetings. It may be noted that, the *Mairang Pyndemumiong Women* organization empowers the *Sordar* to appoint the

president of the organization. But women do not attend the *dorbar* meeting except at the time of felicitation of the meritorious students. *Dorbar* meeting at *Mawlai Nongpathaw* executive committee calls the women representatives to the committee only when there are any contradictory issues to be discussed. Youth representatives and women representative are also called for the meeting. However, it is not compulsory that they will be called for every meeting. In spite of the important role played by the various women organizations in the society, it is a fact that they have no part to play in the *dorbar*. The leaders of the organization clearly mentioned that they have no political affiliation as such. Politics is altogether separated from the objectives of the organization. Yet logically and practically, the presence of women organizations in villages and towns directly or indirectly advocate the importance of public participation of women. It gives them an idea about the important societal issues and the policy related to women issues. Therefore, it has a direct influence on the political consciousness among the women folks.

Rural women lack political awareness and political consciousness in comparison to those of the urban women in Meghalaya. Interpersonal communication has a positive impact on the political awareness of women than the mass media. Tables 5.1A and 5.1 B clearly show that women get information about politics through mass media is lesser than those of interpersonal media (Mean = 0.62 (Mass Media) < 1.63 (Interpersonal media)).

*Mass media:* With regard to information received from mass media Garo women are found to have slightly higher exposure to mass media than the Khasi women (Mean Score Garo = 0.36 > Khasi = 0.22). Among the kinds of mass media mentioned, public meetings are found to pass more political knowledge to the women than any other types of mass media as this may usually involve discussions among the womenfolk even after such meetings. No doubt, electronic media play a very important role in transmitting information to the voters. At the time of election campaign where manifestoes can be printed in posters, leaflets and distributed to every household,

individual, and are posted in the public places as well. Another factor that led them to have less exposure to mass media is their lack of interest in politics and time factor. Women usually considered politics as somewhat dirty and psychologically think that they should not get involved in politics. In other words, their negative attitudes towards political outcome make them to stay away from politics.

Lack of education is one of the reasons why mass media has less impact on women's political information as they neither listens to news nor read newspapers and pamphlets. Political information from internet is impossible for them. The well educated are more psychologically engaged in politics, more politically interested, knowledgeable and efficacious and expose to political stimuli (Nancy Burns, et.al., 2001; 142). Secondly, analysis of the type of the occupation of the respondents as well as their husbands' reflects the low level of family income which hinders their access through mass media. 34.84 % of the respondents depend on agriculture as their main occupation. Among the respondents, 19.62% are casual labour with Rs.150 per day for men and Rs.60-70 per day for women and only 9.09% are earning regular salary either as government employee or private school teacher. The monthly household income is comparatively very low. 28.23% earn below Rs.1000, 35.89 % of the respondent's family income is below Rs. 3000. Their main concern is food to eat rather than possessing television and any other entertainments, which implies that economic rights for them are more important than the political rights. As such, mass media has less impact as an agent of political socialisation on women especially those living in the rural areas. Karl Pearson's correlation analysis illustrates that mass media has no significant impact on political participation, but it is positively significance on the political awareness of women (as discussed in chapter-6). The analysis further suggests that the higher they are exposed to mass media, the higher is their political awareness, but it has no direct impact on their political behaviour. On the other hand, interpersonal media has positive outcome on the political efficacy,

political affiliation, electioneering and campaigning, political mobilisation and political participation of women. The study shows that interpersonal communication such as friends, neighbours and own family members provide more political information than relatives, headman, church and other social welfare organizations.

The presence of women organization provides them a platform to meet other women. It enables them to know about the problems faced by other women as well. It inculcates the spirit to work together in close cooperation with other women and to share their problems freely among themselves. It is also a fact that rural women have less participation in decision making than those in the urban area. Women in the rural area entrust their husbands whom to vote for the election without taking any interest or responsibility of the outcomes. It may be noted that, those active women organization leaders act as civil society actors. Besides other factors like illiteracy and traditional false consciousness about the participation of women in politics, women organizations played a very important role in the promotion of political participation of women in Meghalaya. These organizations may not directly promote political participation of women, but, it has a positive impact on the life of women. The presences of women organizations as civil societies make the policy makers to be conscious about the women and the problems faced by them. Further, it is seen that those areas having women organizations was easier to approach the respondents for the present study through the women organizations leaders rather than in the areas where there are no women organizations.

Sanjay Kumar rightly stated that, “civil society is the sphere of public activity of private individuals who believe them to be endowed with rights and act as autonomous subjects.”<sup>17</sup> The presence of the civil society groups in the Indian context signifies the enjoyment of the rights which has been given to them, although it is subjected to reasonable limitations. In fact, frequent

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<sup>17</sup> Kumar Sanjay, “Civil Society in Society” *Economic and Political Weekly* (July,29:2000), p.2776



interference of the civil society groups' against governmental policy sometimes resulted into the delay of policy implementation. Repeated call for *bandh* and strikes in order to meet the varied demands of the different civil society groups may hamper the development in the state as well as asset the poor people who depend on daily wages for their living. Therefore, civil society actors should be conscious about the all round development and welfare of the society.

It may be mentioned that crimes against women, domestic violence and husband's drunkenness have been the major problems that Khasi and Garo women have been facing. Rural life is marked by poverty and alcoholism deserted wives and children where women cannot claim maintenance if deserted by their husbands. They remain silent since women feel ashamed to speak out about their private life. According to the statistics available with Meghalaya police, from January to September 2011, there were a total of 189 cases of registered crimes against women. Of these, a staggering 103 were cases related to rape.<sup>18</sup> Comparatively, the study found out that deserted wives and children are higher among the Khasis than that in the Garo families in which 11.54 percent of the Khasi women remain separated from their husband against 2.53 percent of Garo women. Women need to mobilize and organize themselves to have a common platform to address their issues.

Therefore, the presence of women organizations as civil society actors in the society is of utmost importance and they have been playing important role in fighting against the social evils. The women organizations work together with the Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) for the protection of the rights and security of women. Women organizations have repeatedly asked the government to hand over all crimes related to women and children to fast-track courts for speedy disposal. They have also been demanding to upgrade the Forensic Science Laboratory.<sup>19</sup> Women organizations directly contributed towards the participation of women in the public sphere as civil

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<sup>18</sup> *Telegraph*(Shillong), 22 January 2012

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

society actors and indirectly towards the representation of women in politics. Civil society groups other than women organizations generally do not acknowledge the importance of women representation in politics as they believed that women in Meghalaya enjoyed social and economic equality.

**Table 5.1 A Source of Information on Politics**

Sl.No		DISTRICTS				Total	
		GARO		KHASI			
		n = 79		n = 130		N = 209	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
<b>I</b>	<b>Mass Media</b>						
	Public Meetings	1.01	0.87	0.78	0.91	0.87	0.90
	Radio: Local	0.94	0.98	0.42	0.75	0.62	0.88
	Newspapers: Local	0.37	0.74	0.52	0.81	0.46	0.78
	Television: Local	0.53	0.80	0.42	0.74	0.46	0.77
	Posters	0.89	0.92	0.20	0.58	0.46	0.80
	Leaflets	0.43	0.76	0.32	0.68	0.36	0.71
	Banners	0.28	0.66	0.10	0.39	0.17	0.51
	Television: English	0.13	0.52	0.09	0.40	0.11	0.45
	Newspapers: English	0.08	0.35	0.10	0.43	0.09	0.40
	Films: Hindi	0.15	0.51	0.03	0.25	0.08	0.37
	Radio: English	0.09	0.40	0.04	0.23	0.06	0.30
	Internet	0.09	0.40	0.02	0.18	0.04	0.28
	Films: Local	0.05	0.27	0.02	0.12	0.03	0.19
	Films: English	0.04	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.15
	<b>Mass Media Exposure</b>	0.36	0.31	0.22	0.23	0.27	0.27

**Table 5.1B Source of Information on Politics**

Sl.No		DISTRICTS				Total	
		GARO		KHASI			
		n = 79		n = 130		N = 209	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
<b>II</b>	<b>Interpersonal Media</b>						
	Friends	1.81	0.86	2.17	0.92	2.03	0.92
	Neighbors	1.80	0.88	2.14	0.92	2.01	0.92
	Own Family members	1.54	0.83	2.10	1.06	1.89	1.02
	Political Party Workers	1.53	0.73	2.05	0.92	1.86	0.89
	Relatives	1.52	0.73	1.77	0.98	1.67	0.90
	Headman	1.10	0.41	1.60	0.86	1.41	0.76
	Church	1.01	0.11	1.18	0.49	1.12	0.40
	Organization	1.04	0.25	1.08	0.33	1.07	0.30
	<b>Interpersonal Communication</b>	1.42	0.40	1.76	0.51	1.63	0.50

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar

CHAPTER-6  
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF KHASI AND GARO  
WOMEN: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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## **Political Participation of Khasi and Garo Women: CHAPTER -6 An Empirical Analysis**

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The present chapter attempts to focus on both conventional and unconventional political participation. Conventional political participation refers to those normal and legitimate activities of political behaviour by the citizens as voters, members of political parties, participation in electioneering and campaigning, attending political party meetings, political communication with the political leaders, giving donations to political parties and candidates and contesting elections at the most dynamic level. On the other hand, unconventional political participation refers to those unusual political activities with the intention to have an effect or influence the policy maker in the form of political mobilization like attending protest and demonstrations, rally etc. However, such activities are restrained within the constitutional framework per se; and any other extra - constitutional activities are not to be considered as legitimate form of political participation. This chapter deals mainly with the political participation of women in general and does not include those who contested for the election as this will be discussed in the next chapter. Further, the analysis is based on the empirical data collected from the field.

### **6.1 Methods of data analyses and interpretations**

Primary data were analyzed with the help of computer by using Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) compiled from the field survey conducted in the two selected districts of Meghalaya; namely, West Khasi Hills District and South Garo Hills District respectively. Mairang in the West Khasi Hills district represents the Khasi women and Baghmara in South Garo Hills represent the Garo women respectively. Simultaneously, samples are selected from both urban and rural areas so as to cover the political participation of women in Meghalaya. Pyndemumiong town of Mairang comprises of six localities - Lumiew, Dongbir, Donggate, Langstiehrim and Mawsawa represent the urban sector; and the Thangmaw Jarain Village, the rural sector. Similarly, Garo hills represent Dabram as urban sector and

Kolapara and Siju Dabakhhol as rural sector of Baghmara in South Garo hills district. These two districts are purposely selected so as to observe the disparity in political participation of women in Meghalaya.

The field work extended for about fourteen months with the help of schedule. Besides, interview method and observation technique was also used as and when required. In fact, it helped in analyzing the qualitative participation of women. It may be noted that the fieldwork was conducted by the end of the year 2009 and continued up to April 2011 which was just after the 2008 General Election. The tables below explain the political participation of women in Meghalaya with an attempt to analyze the comparative study between the Garo and Khasi women who constitutes the major population in Meghalaya. Households were the unit of analysis in which 0.05 percent was chosen from each sector (rural and urban separately) and one respondent (women only) from each household (Khasi and Garo separately) was selected in accordance to the 2001 census. Therefore, the number of samples is N=209 (Garo n=79; Khasi n=130) respectively. Data in the table.6.1 below represents the political participation of women in Meghalaya. The present research does not represent only the views and opinion of women in Meghalaya but attempts to focus on their political behaviour by taking into account the respondents as the actors in politics.



**Table: 6.1 Political participation of Women in Meghalaya: Mean Score**

Sl. no	Political Participation	District				Total N = 209	
		Garo n = 79		Khasi n = 130			
	Dimensions	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
<b>I</b>	<b><i>Political Affiliation</i></b>	0.77	0.83	1.09	0.97	0.97	0.93
<b>II</b>	<b>Voting in Elections</b>						
	MDC's Election	2.82	0.62	2.90	0.50	2.87	0.54
	Legislative Assembly Election(MLA)	2.87	0.49	2.89	0.49	2.89	0.49
	General Election(MP)	2.87	0.49	2.84	0.61	2.85	0.57
	Voting in Elections	2.86	0.51	2.88	0.50	2.87	0.50
<b>III</b>	<b>Electioneering and Campaigning</b>						
	MDC's Election	0.94	1.18	1.16	1.14	1.08	1.16
	MLA's election	0.78	1.08	1.08	1.10	0.97	1.10
	General Election(MP)	0.78	1.08	1.08	1.10	0.97	1.10
	Socio Economic and Political Issues	0.72	1.07	0.97	1.13	0.88	1.12
	<b><i>Electioneering and Campaigning</i></b>	0.81	1.07	1.07	1.05	0.97	1.06
<b>IV</b>	<b>Political Mobilization</b>						
	Attending Political Party Meetings	0.81	0.95	1.15	1.10	1.02	1.06
	Participating in Political Rallies	0.47	0.92	0.98	1.07	0.79	1.04
	Participating in Political Protests and demonstrations	0.44	0.90	0.85	1.06	0.70	1.02
	Donations to Political Parties and Candidates	0.34	0.80	0.61	1.01	0.51	0.94
	<b><i>Political Mobilization</i></b>	0.52	0.80	0.90	0.94	0.75	0.91
<b>V</b>	<b>Political Communication</b>						
	Formal communication with Political leaders	0.51	0.70	0.60	0.94	0.56	0.86
	Informal Communication with Political Leaders	0.38	0.61	0.78	0.96	0.63	0.86
	<b><i>Political Communication</i></b>	0.44	0.51	0.69	0.66	0.60	0.62

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar

## Part: A

### Political Participation: Empirical Analysis

#### 6.2 Dimensions

Political participation of women is often measured in terms of number of women found in formal politics, and holding positions in public office to which they have been elected.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, political participation is measured basically at three levels: national level; state level and district level. It deals precisely with the political participation of the common women who comprise the universe of the study. The study attempts to critically examine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of political participation by analyzing and comparing the political behaviour of the Khasi and Garo women.

Political participation of women in Meghalaya is studied in the context of their participation in MP, MLA and MDC elections. The rating scale for measurement of the political participation of women for all category has been measured by Mean score, rated as 0-3 point scale (0=Never, 1=Sometimes, 2=Mostly, 3=Always). Nevertheless, the code may suggest different meanings in accordance with the specific dimension of political activity of the respondents. Therefore, the researcher rate and code systematically in accordance with the frequency of the participation of the respondents in all the three categories of the elections mentioned above.

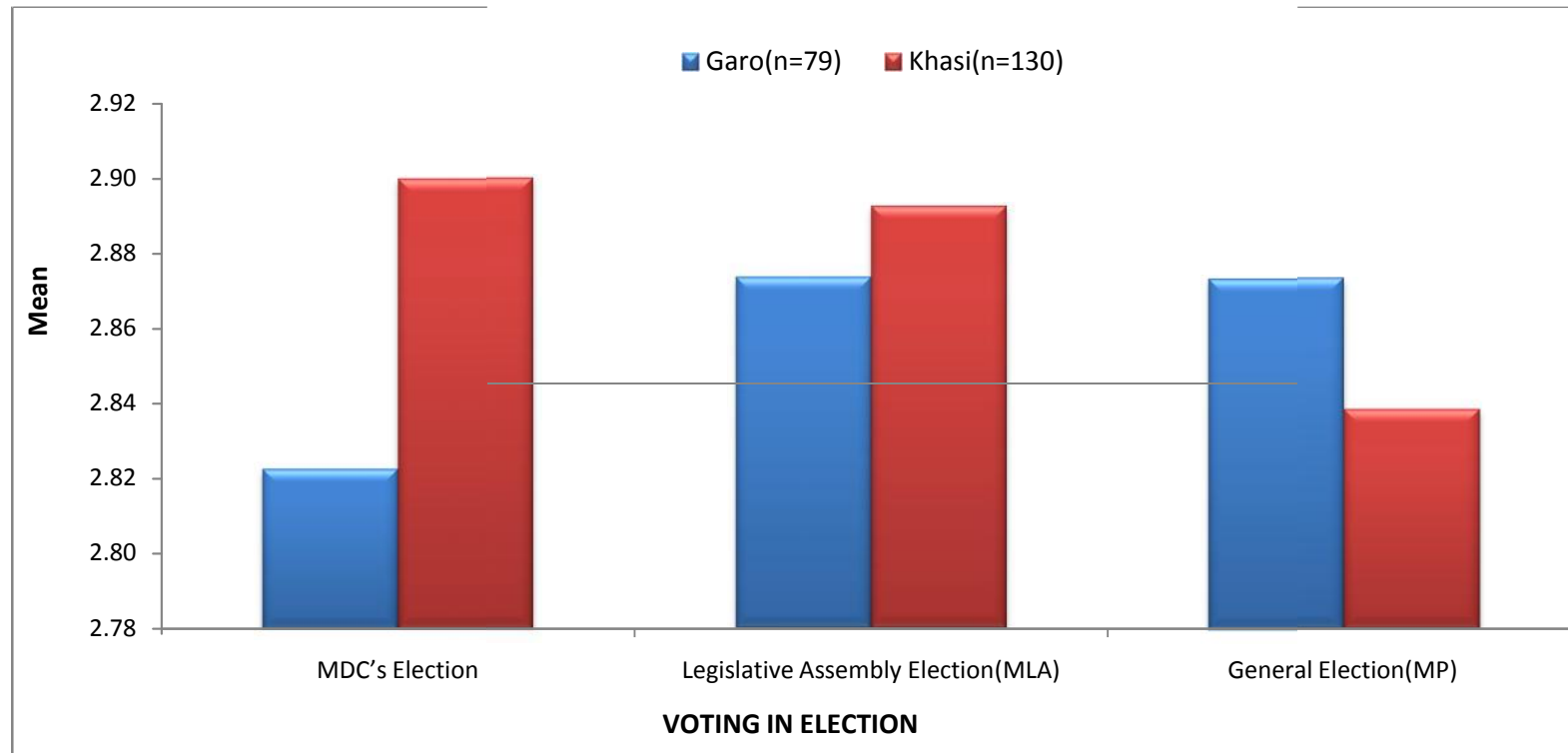
##### 6.2.1 Voting in election

The rating scale for measurement of the political participation of women voters has been rated as 0=Never voted in any elections; 1= sometimes only went to vote; 2 = mostly most of the time went for voting, except during unavoidable circumstances and 3= always the respondents attended voting. Table 6.1 depict that the total women voters of the Khasis and Garos women,

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Marie Goetz, *Women 's Education and Political participation*( EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, The Leap to Equality,2003), p.3

Mean score = 2.87 (Garo  $M = 2.86$  and Khasi  $M = 2.88$ ) and reveals that they mostly participate as voters at all levels of general elections except during unavoidable circumstances. The study found out that those who did not go for voting are due to old age or illness. As a result, it shows that there is positive involvement of women as voters in Meghalaya in terms of numbers with slight differences between the Garo and Khasi women (see fig .6.1)



**Fig. 6.1** voting behaviour of Khasi and Garo women

A study of the voting behaviour of women in Meghalaya reveals that the participation of women as voters is positive in terms of quantity. As such, it may be generally assumed that women in Meghalaya are politically active in comparison to the rest of the country in terms of participation as electorates. The percentage of women voters at all India level was lower than men voters in different years of election.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of women voter in Meghalaya in the 2009 Lok Sabha election was 64.16 percent which was even higher than female voters at all India with 55.9 percent (Lok Sabha Election 2009).<sup>3</sup> However, an illustration has also been made on the basis of the personal interview method to measure political participation of women as voters from qualitative perspective. Questions were asked on their motivation and knowledge about the candidate they voted for in the election so as to take note of the factors behind voting.

Their responses prove insignificant participation in terms of quality. Women are not generally aware about the consequences of their votes, especially those women who lived in the rural areas lack political awareness. James et al. suggested that even a very small cost to the individual outweigh the expected benefits he or she would receive from voting.<sup>4</sup> It may be noted here that according to the 2001 census, majority of the population lived in the rural areas. As such, political participation of women who lived in the rural areas cannot be ignored; as the votes of small portions of the population also counts the result in the elections. The secrecy of the ballot has enabled them to use their voting right independently. Right to vote grants the citizens to have the noble choice of choosing public personnel and is the main mechanism by which representatives are made accountable to the people. This has been fairly transmitted to the voters in Meghalaya as well.

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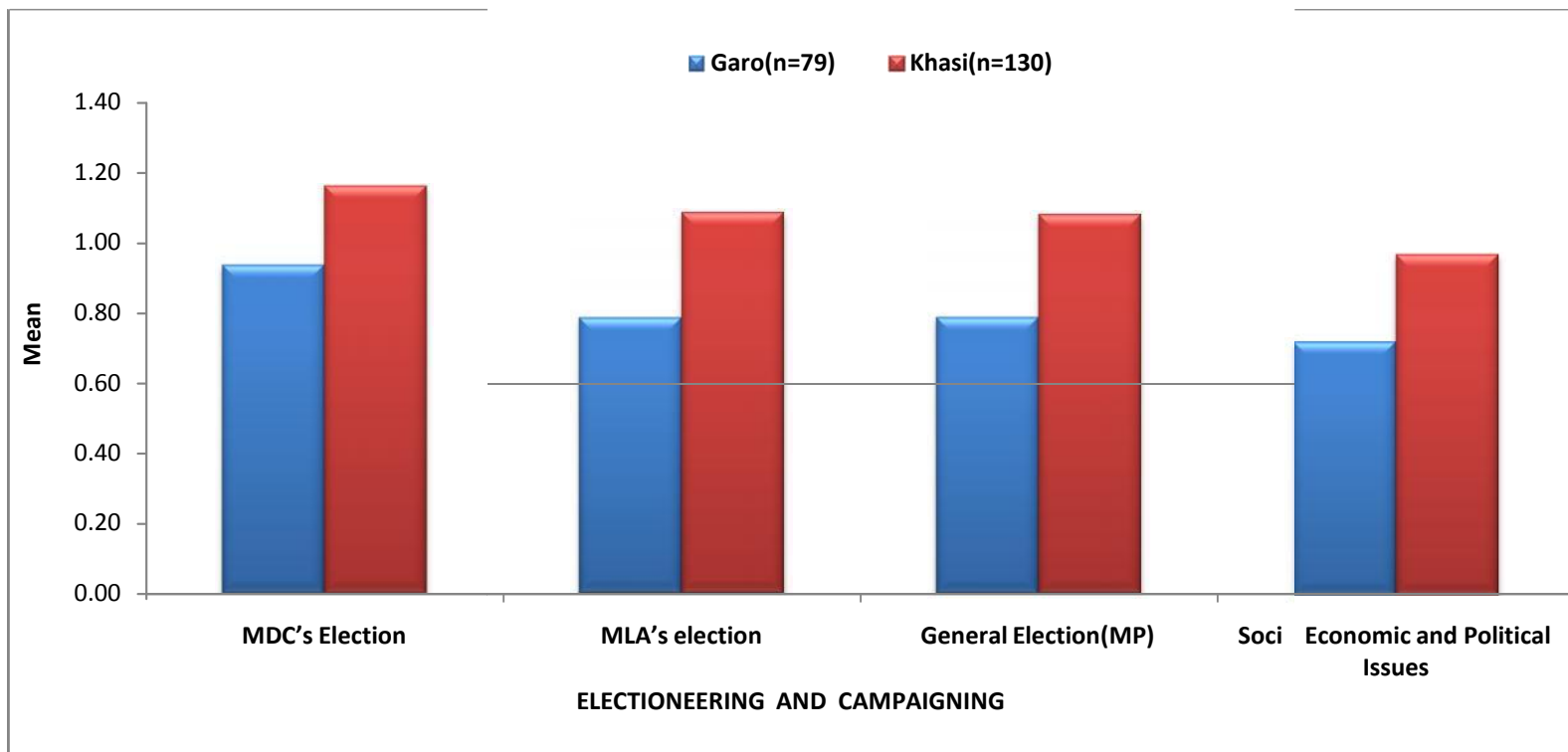
<sup>2</sup> R. Letha Kumari, *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance*(Delhi: Authorspress),p.64

<sup>3</sup> Maroju Rama Chary, Women and Political Participation in India: A Historical Perspective, in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.LXXIII, No.1, Jan- March,2012,p.124; Information Book on Meghalaya Elections(1972-2009),( Meghalaya: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer,2010),p.280

<sup>4</sup> James H. Flower *et.al.* "Genetic Variation in Political Participation", *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 102,No.2( May 2008),p.233

### ***6.2.2 Electioneering and campaigning***

Election Campaign has been analyzed in terms of their participation in the election campaign at the three levels, that is, the MPs election, MLAs election and MDCs election Electioneering and Campaigning Mean score =0.97; Khasi  $M = 1.07$  and Garo  $M=0.81$  .Socio-economic and Political issues Khasi  $M=0.97$  and Garo  $M=0.72$ . The data implies that Khasi women do participate sometimes, while the Garo women hardly participate in electioneering and campaigning and over all the participation of women in election campaign and participation in Socio-economic and political issues are comparatively low and it is rated as  $0.97 < 1$  score. Fig.6.2 shows clear picture of the nature of participation of Garo and Khasi women in electioneering and campaigning.



**Fig. 6.2** Electioneering and campaigning of Garo and Khasi Women

Electioneering is one of the forms of political participation of democratic system which engages time and energy on the part of the citizens. Electioneering refers to election campaign or it is the way to solicit votes. Guha Sampa pointed out that women's participation in campaigning in West Bengal in the earlier years were rather casual; but more recently the parties have organized regular forums, cells to mobilize and campaign among women.<sup>5</sup>

In view of the nature of election campaign in Meghalaya, it generally involves two groups of people based on the motivation; the first group of people are those who participate as mere spectator or observers; second group includes people who intend to support or oppose the competent candidates and party contested for the elections or work infavour of or against the candidates. Those who attended as spectators, they probably want to know about the manifestoes and behaviour of the contestants and compare with the other contestants or just merely attend for some other personal gains. On the other hand, those who are in the second group, they consist of friends, relatives and party members of the candidates who are real campaigners with the intention to solicit votes from the people on behalf of the candidate they supported.

The methods of campaigning may be in the form of public campaign which usually happens in the streets and localities to make the people know about the manifestoes; and it stops within 48 hours before the date of election. Election campaigning can also be in the form of door to door visits by the candidates and the party members. This is mostly practiced in the rural areas in order to persuade people to vote for the candidate. Election campaigning may be indirectly through friendly conversation and discussions, mass media through televisions and radio and most recently, internet also plays an important part in electioneering. Campaign through discussions may be intentionally or unintentionally involve issues about the qualities of the candidate and the parties contested. Conversely, it may be noted here that there are possibilities that the first group who were mere spectator can become real

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<sup>5</sup> Guha Sampa, *Op.Cit.*,p.138



campaigner through talks and conversation. Campaigning on Socio- economic issues is considered a part of the political participation when such campaign attempts to influence government policies directly or indirectly. Social issues include those campaigning for the development of the society in general for instance, crime against women, health care, security etc. and economic issues may include campaign for bringing economic development, road construction etc. The active participation of the citizen in the electioneering and campaigning reflects the political awareness of the citizens and elucidates the political involvement of the citizens which amount to political efficacy of democracy.

### **6.2.3 Political affiliation**

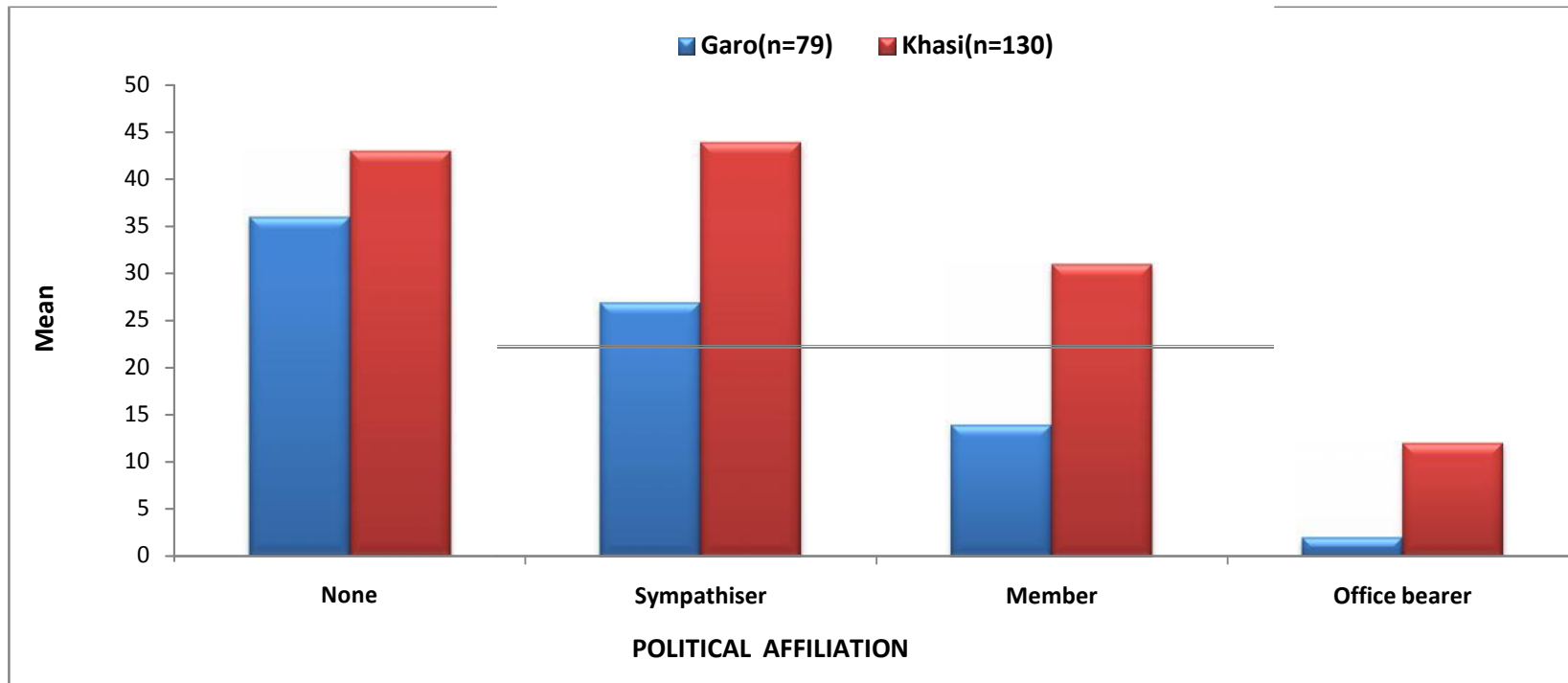
Political affiliation here refers to the political affiliation of the respondents as members or as office bearers of the political parties or simply as sympathizers of the political party or the candidates contested for the election. Political affiliation of women has been measured by Mean score and it is rated as 0-3 score (0= none, 1= Sympathizers 2= members of political parties, 3=office bearers) of the political parties. Data reveal that women have very low political affiliation Mean = 0.97 and comparatively, Garo women have less political affiliation than the Khasi women (Khasi  $M=1.09$  and Garo  $M=0.77$ )

**Table: 6.2 Political affiliations of Garo and Khasi women in Meghalaya in percentages (%)**

Sl. No	Characteristic	District		Total N = 209
		Garo n = 79	Khasi n = 130	
<b>I</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>			
	None	36 (45.57)	43 (33.08)	79 (37.80)
	Sympathizer	27 (34.18)	44 (33.85)	71 (33.97)
	Member	14 (17.72)	31 (23.85)	45 (21.53)
	Office bearer	2 (2.53)	12 (9.23)	14 (6.70)

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar (Figures in parentheses are percentages)

Fig.6.3 presented the political affiliation of the respondents in percentages so as to have a clear understanding of the dimensions of their participation. It shows that only 6.70percent of respondents participate as office bearers (Garo 2.5percent, Khasi 9.23percent); participation as member of political party is 21.53 percent (Garo= 17.72percent and Khasi =23.85percent.); participation as sympathizers is 33.97percent (Garo= 34.18percent and Khasi =33.85percent) which shows that they have no affiliation but they only have some likes and dislikes about some political parties or remain as supporters and well wishers of the political parties. The rest 37.80percent did not participate at all (Garo=45.57percent and Khasi = 33.08percent) and do not belong to any of the above category. They remain as apolitical group. Data show that there is a gap in comparison to the percentage of voter turns out during election and the political affiliation as office bearers. The study clearly shows that Khasi women have higher political affiliation than the Garo women, especially as office bearers.



**Fig.6.3 Political affiliation of Garo and Khasi women in Meghalaya**

#### **6.2.4 Political mobilization**

Political mobilization refers to the activities that people assemble together in order to raise their demands to the government for the common cause. The dimension of political mobilization is measured in terms of attending political party meetings, political rallies, participation in protest and demonstrations and giving donations to political parties. Data in fig 6.4 reveal that comparatively, Khasi women are found to have higher participation in political mobilization than the Garo women. Khasi  $M=0.90 >$  Garo  $M=0.52$ . As shown in table: 6.1 the participation, however, varies with the types of political mobilization and it is discussed as follows.

##### *6.2.4 (A) Attending political party meeting*

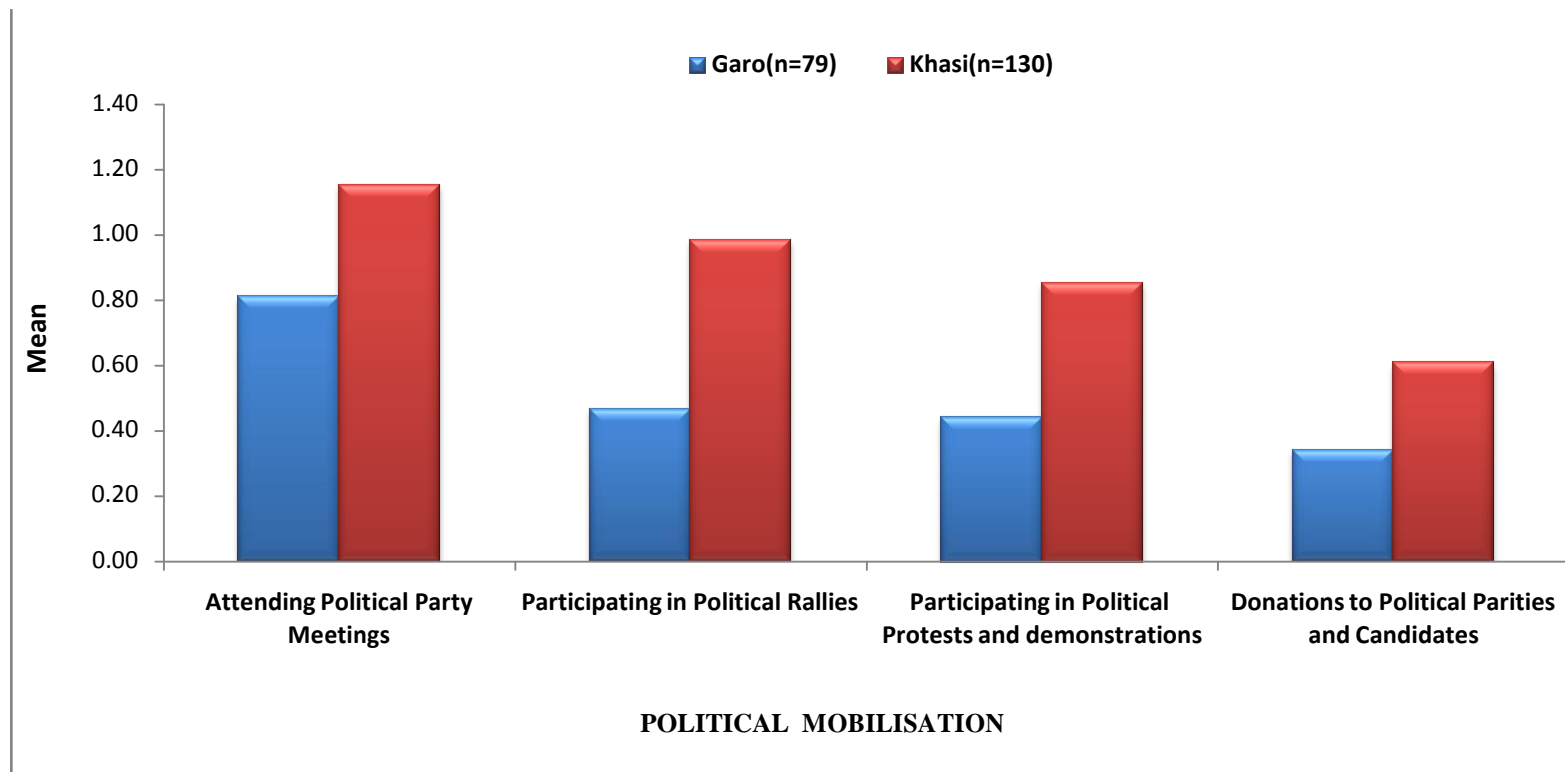
Data reveal that women sometimes only attended political party meetings with the Mean Score= 1.02 score. Comparatively, data presented in the fig. 6.4 illustrates that women in both the communities are found to participate more in attending political party meetings than any other form of political mobilization (Garo  $M=0.81 <$  Khasi  $M=1.15$ ). The scores clearly explain that Garo women hardly attended political party meetings while the Khasi women sometimes attended. Attending political party meetings is considered as one of the means of political mobilization.

##### *6.2.4(B) Political rallies*

Fig. 6.4 indicates that women's participation in political rally is very low; Mean= 0.79 (Garo  $M=0.47 <$  Khasi  $M=0.98$ ). Data clearly show the insignificant participation of women in political rally in both the communities even though the Khasi women are found to have slightly higher degree of participation.

#### *6.2.4-(C) Political protest and demonstrations*

Data illustrate that there is low participation of women in political protest and agitations as the Mean= 0.07. There is slight differences between the Garo and Khasi women in their participation at political protest and agitations (Garo  $M=0.44 <$  Khasi  $M = 0.85$ ). Political mobilization is one of the effective ways of involvement in politics by intensifying their demands. Political mobilization has been studied in terms of attending political party meetings, political rallies, protest and demonstration and donations to political parties and candidates.



**Fig.6.4 Political mobilisation of Garo and Khasi women in Meghalaya: Mean Scores**

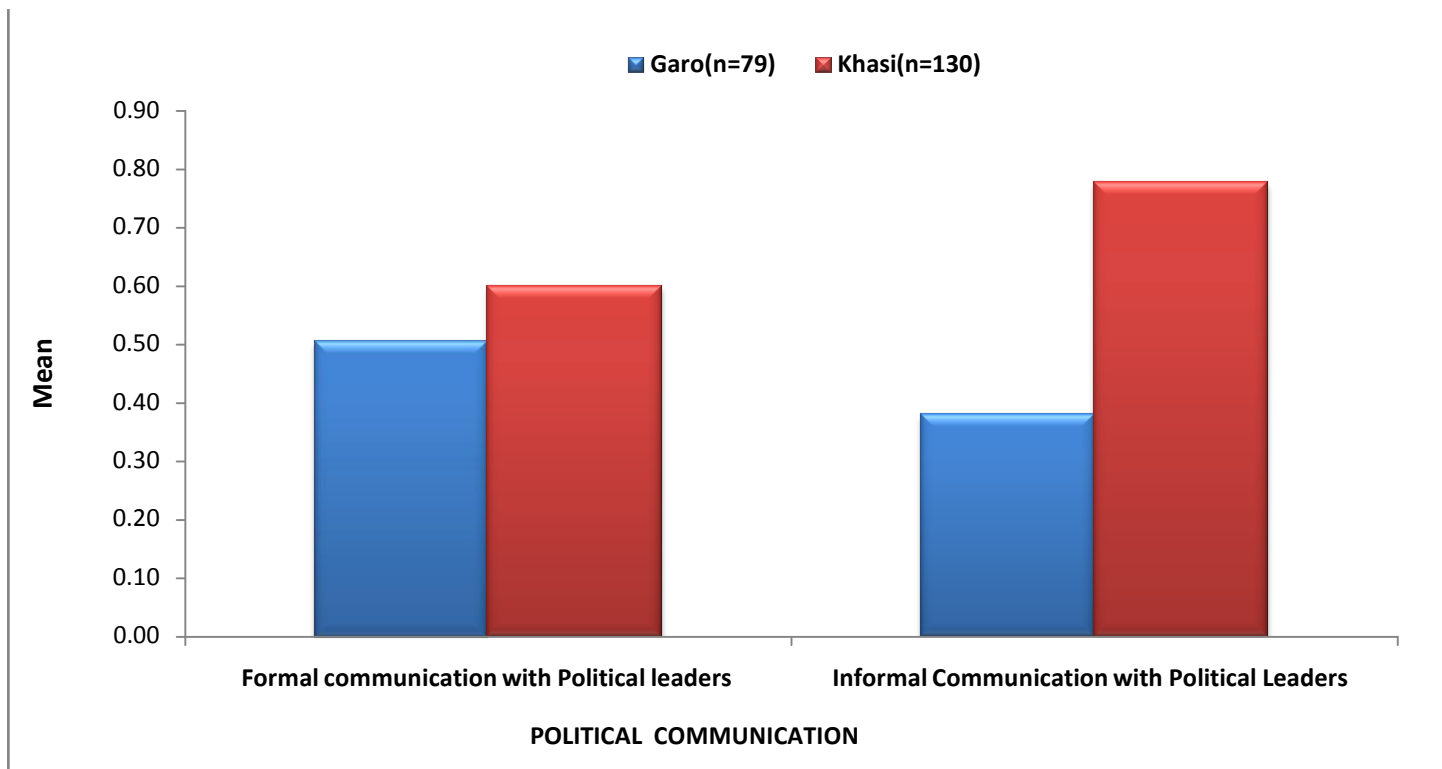
### **6.2.5 Donations to political parties or the candidates**

Donations to political parties or the candidate is another form of political participation. Donations can be in the form of money or kind. This usually occurs at the time of election. The data in table: 6.1 and fig.6.4 reveal that, women have least participation in giving donations to political parties and candidates: Mean= 0.60 (Garo  $M=0.34$  < Khasi  $M=0.61$ ). Donation to political parties and candidates is not a common form of political participation for women in Meghalaya.

### **6.2.6 Political communication**

Communication with the political leaders is another form of political participation. Political communication is understood as formal communication and informal communication with the political leaders and political party representatives. Table 6.1 reveals that hardly women communicate with the political leaders Mean=0.60 (Khasi  $M=0.69$  and Garo  $M= 0.44$ . Formal communication Mean=0.56; Informal communication Mean=0.63.





**Fig. 6.5 Political communications of the Garo and Khasi women: Mean Scores**

Fig.6.5 signifies that Informal communication is slightly higher than formal political communication. Formal communications are those that are done directly with the political leaders for a request or demand which is sent directly by the voters to the candidates without taking the help of other party members. Informal communication may refer to those activities that involve communication with the political leaders indirectly through the headman of the locality or through the party representative or indirectly through the association or any other person with whom the voter has no direct communication with the politician. The study reveals that women had no communication with the political leaders except few instances that also at the time of election. When asked about the reasons behind it, normally, men communicate with the politicians in case of any requirements, especially on issues concerning the village or locality at large. This is because the family is generally represented by the husband, father or brother; and women do not discuss with the leaders. Matters relating the village are discussed or communicated to the candidates by the headman of the village.

## PART - B

### VOICES OF WOMEN

#### 6.3 Political awareness

Political awareness and political participation are interrelated and simultaneously work hand in hand to enhance each other's value. Political participation without political awareness may diminish the value of political participation in democracy and political awareness increases when persons get involved in politics. *Base line Report* illustrated that lack of knowledge and awareness about elections and electoral processes among women are major barriers for participating in elections.<sup>6</sup> For our purpose, in this thesis political awareness has been examined in terms of their knowledge about the political leaders, political parties (national and regional) and their awareness about the fundamental rights. Popular political leaders and political parties were selected for the purpose. The technique of measurement is the mean score and it has been rated as 0-3score (0= Not at all, 1= A little, 2=Well, 3=Very well) (see table 6.3

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<sup>6</sup> Baseline Report, *Women and Political Participation of Women in India* prepared by National Institute of Advance Studies- Gender Studies Unit( NIAS) et al and co ordinate by IWRAW Asia Pacific Advance Unedited Version.p.35 (Available at [www.baselinereport.org](http://www.baselinereport.org)) (Accessed: 2/5/2010).

**Table: 6.3 Political Awareness**

Sl.No	Dimension	District				Total N = 209	
		Garo (n=79)		Khasi (n=130)		Mean	S.D
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
<b>I</b>	<b><i>Political Leaders</i></b>						
	DD Lapang	<b>1.22</b>	0.81	<b>1.84</b>	0.79	1.60	0.85
	Ampareen Lyngdoh	1.18	0.50	1.53	0.70	1.40	0.65
	Sonia Gandhi	1.13	0.77	1.48	0.73	1.35	0.76
	Indira Gandhi	1.16	0.76	1.35	0.76	1.28	0.77
	Jawaharlal Nehru	1.13	0.79	1.36	0.82	1.27	0.81
	Mahatma Gandhi	1.13	0.81	1.36	0.80	1.27	0.81
	Manmohan Singh	1.01	0.79	1.18	0.91	1.12	0.87
	Agatha Sangma	<b>1.41</b>	0.71	<b>0.65</b>	0.88	0.94	0.89
	<b><i>Political Leaders</i></b>	1.17	0.65	1.35	0.62	1.28	0.63
<b>II</b>	<b><i>Political Parties</i></b>						
	INC	1.43	0.76	1.77	0.82	1.64	0.81
	NCP	1.27	0.80	1.50	0.77	1.41	0.79
	UDP	1.08	0.83	1.53	0.88	1.36	0.89
	BJP	1.01	0.74	1.12	0.84	1.08	0.81
	APHLC	0.65	0.79	0.65	0.81	0.65	0.80
	CPI	0.62	0.77	0.47	0.81	0.53	0.80
	<b><i>Political Parties</i></b>	1.01	0.65	1.17	0.57	1.11	0.61
<b>III</b>	<b><i>Fundamental Rights</i></b>						
	Freedom of religion	0.59	0.69	1.17	0.89	0.95	0.86
	Equality before law	0.57	0.69	0.95	0.84	0.81	0.81
	Freedom of speech & expression	0.56	0.67	0.92	0.86	0.78	0.81
	Right against Exploitation	0.56	0.67	0.88	0.83	0.76	0.79
	Right to constitutional Remedies	0.56	0.67	0.87	0.84	0.75	0.79
	Educational & Cultural Rights	0.54	0.68	0.85	0.88	0.73	0.82
	<b><i>Fundamental Rights</i></b>	0.56	0.67	0.94	0.75	0.80	0.74

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar

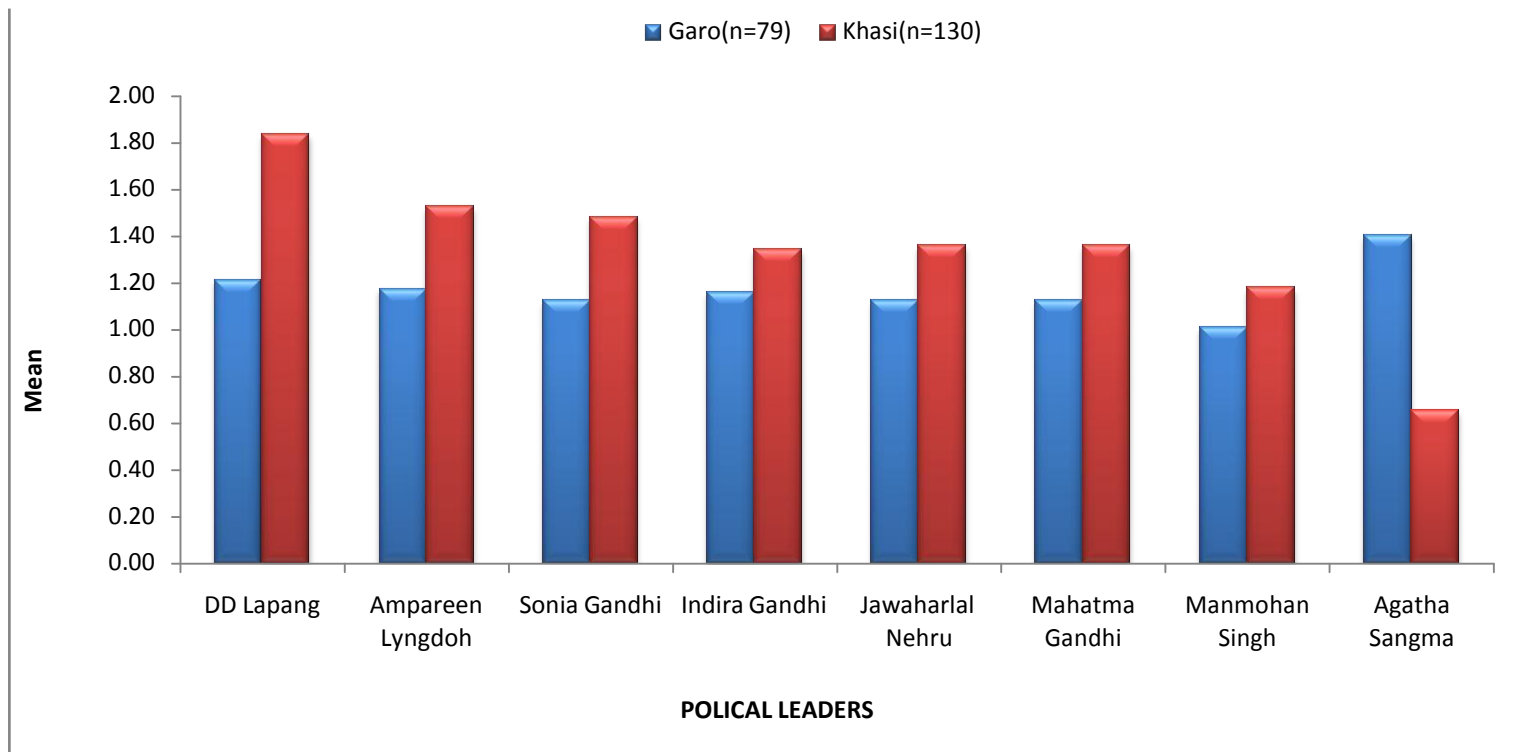
### 6.3.1 Political leaders

Data demonstrate that women have little political awareness concerning their political leaders with the Mean score of 1.28. Khasi women are found to have higher political awareness than the Garo women in this area (Khasi  $M=1.35$ >Garo  $M= 1.17$ ). A detailed analysis of the data is as follows:

- ***D.D. Lapang*** was the then Chief minister in Meghalaya when the field work was conducted (Garo  $M = 1.22$ , Khasi  $M=1.84$ ).
- ***Ampareen Lyngdoh*** was the lone women MLA and was the then education minister in the newly formed government (2008) in Meghalaya (Garo  $M=1.18$ ; Khasi  $M=1.53$ ).
- ***Sonia Gandhi*** is a well known personality and the president of the Indian National Congress Party at the centre (Garo  $M=1.13$ ; Khasi  $M= 1.48$ )
- ***Jawaharlal Nehru*** was the first prime minister of India (Garo  $M=1.13$ ; Khasi  $M=1.36$ ).
- ***Mahatma Gandhi*** is the father of the nation and the freedom fighter for independence India, Mean=1.27 score (Garo  $M=1.18 <$  Khasi  $M=1.53$ ).
- ***Manmohan Singh*** is the present Prime minister of India Mean=1.12 score (Garo  $M=1.01$ > Khasi  $M=0.91$ ).
- ***Agatha Sangma (Garo)***: the first woman MP from Meghalaya and the daughter of a veteran politician Purno A. Sangma of Meghalaya who by then newly got elected when the fieldwork was conducted. Mean=0.94 score (Garo  $M=1.41$ > Khasi  $M=1.35$ )

Fig.6.6 below illustrates that majority of the Khasi women knows D.D. Lapang and have the least knowledge about Agatha Sangma while the Garo women know Agatha Sangma more than any other political leaders. This is not a surprise as D.D. Lapang is a veteran politician of Meghalaya who held the post of chief minister of Meghalaya for several times and belongs to the Khasi

Community and Agatha Sangma is the M.P. from Tura constituency (Garo Hills) and she is the daughter of the well known politician P. A. Sangma and her family is very popular in Garo hills and she is a Garo. Data reveal that Khasi women have slightly higher political awareness than the Garo women except in the case of Agatha Sangma, as the fact remains that women in Meghalaya were basically unaware about the presence of women politicians in the government especially those in the rural areas. Over all, their political awareness is comparatively insignificant.



**Fig. 6.6 Awareness on Political Leaders**

### **6.3.2 Political Parties**

Data suggest that women have lesser awareness about the political parties than the political leaders. Political parties Mean=1.11score (Garo  $M=1.01 <$  Khasi  $M=1.17$ ).

**INC** (Indian National Congress; national political party) Mean=1.43Score (Garo  $M=1.43 >$  Khasi 0.82)

**NCP:** (Nationalist Congress Party; from which Agatha Sangma won the seat) Mean=1.41Score (Garo  $M=1.27 >$  Khasi  $M=1.50$ )

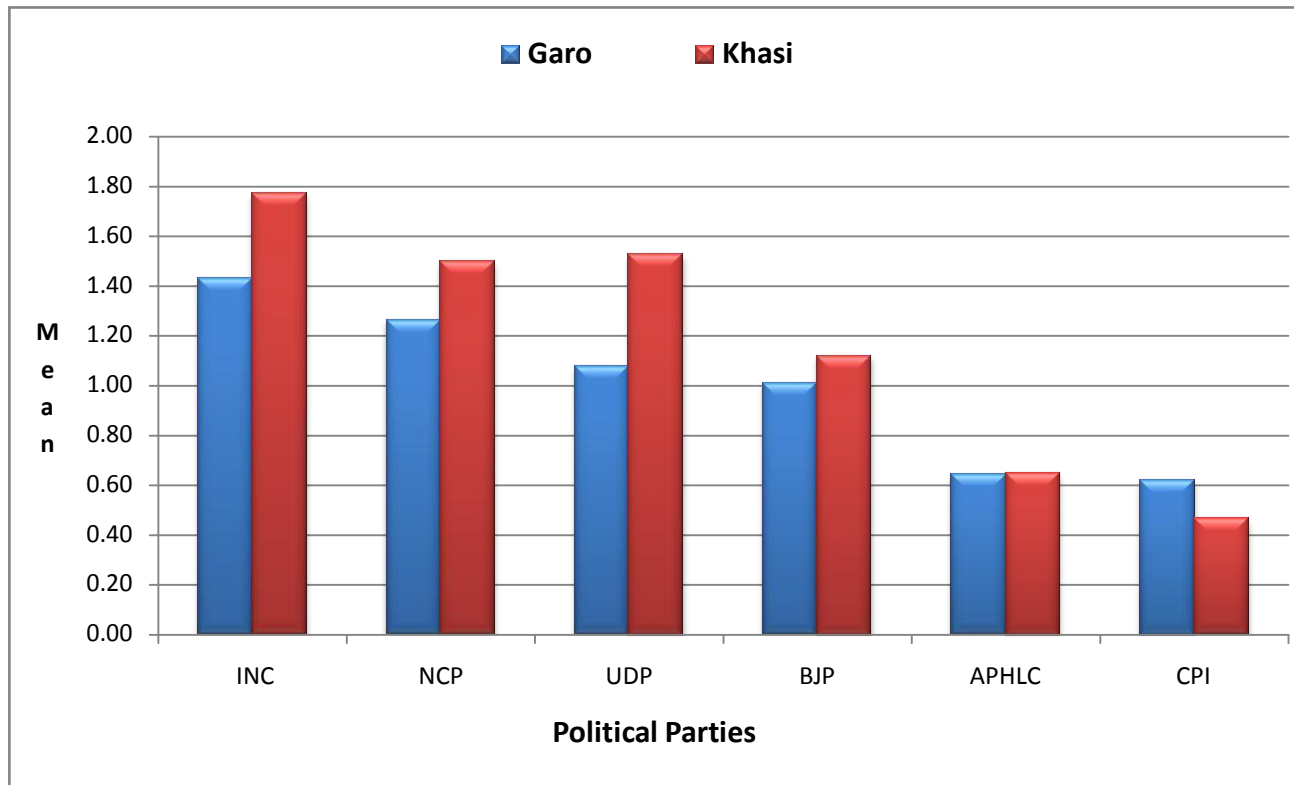
**UDP:** (United Democratic Party is the second highest party next to the Congress party in terms of the number of successful candidates in the 2008 election in Meghalaya) Mean=1.36 Score(Garo  $M=1.01 <$  Khasi  $M=1.53$ )

**BJP:** (Bharatya Janata Party; national political party) Mean=1.08score (Garo  $M=1.01 >$  Khasi  $M=0.81$ )

**APHLC:** (All Party Hills Leaders Conference). It is one of the regional parties who played an important role in the statehood movement of Meghalaya. Mean=0.65 (Garo  $M=0.65 =$  Khasi0.65)

**CPI:** (Communist Party of India; national political party) Mean=0.65(Garo  $M=0.62 >$  Khasi0.47)





**Fig. 6.7 Awareness on Political Parties**

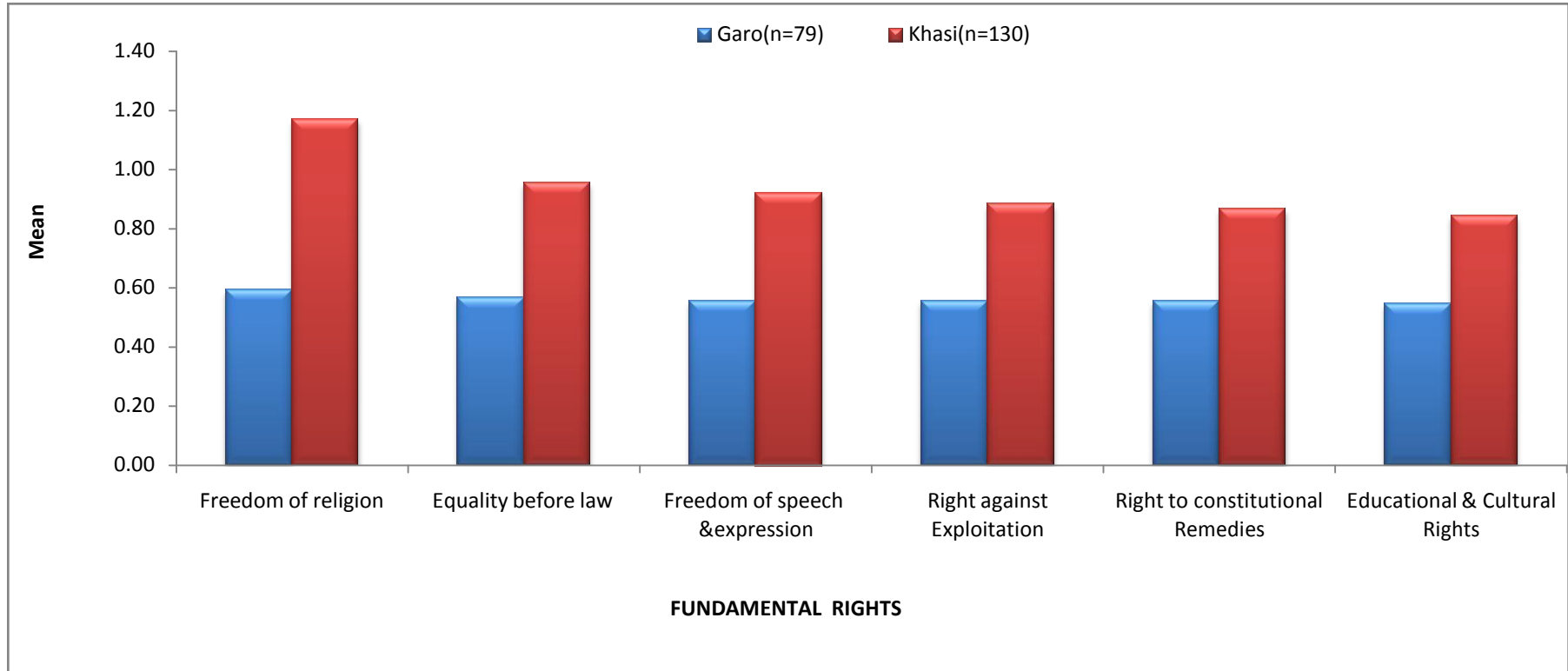
Figure: 6.7 shows picture of the knowledge and awareness of women about the political parties. This illustrates that their knowledge about the Indian National Congress Party is higher than any political parties and they have poor knowledge about Communist Party of India (CPI); but comparatively, Khasi women have higher level of awareness about the political parties than the Garo women except their knowledge about the A.P.H.L.C. is identical. A.P.H.L.C. no more does exist, as it has changed its name to Hill State People Democratic (H.S.P.D.) but it was popular in the 1970s due to its fight for separate statehood.

### ***6.3.3 Fundamental rights***

Fundamental Rights are another area of identification for the political awareness of women. Fundamental rights are the basic rights guaranteed to all citizens of India equally without discrimination between the sexes under article 14 to 32 of the Indian constitution. Therefore, awareness about fundamental rights are considered to be important for the women to enjoy their mobility.

***Fundamental Rights Mean=0.80 (Khasi M=0.94>Garo M=0.56).***

- Equality before law; Mean=0.81 (Khasi M=0.95>Garo M=0.57)
- Freedom of religion; Mean=0.89 (Khasi 1.17> Garo 0.59)
- Freedom of speech and expression (Right of freedom); Mean=0.78(Khasi 0.92> Garo 0.56)
- Right against exploitation; Mean = 0.83(Khasi M= 0.88>Garo M= 0.56)
- Educational and Cultural Rights; Mean =0.80(Khasi M=0.85>0.54)
- Right against Exploitation; Mean= 0.83(Khasi 0.88> Garo 0.56).



**Fig. 6.8 Awareness on Fundamental Rights**

Our study indicates that women's awareness concerning Fundamental Rights is very poor, though comparatively Khasi women have higher awareness than that of the Garo women. The reason for the higher awareness of the Khasi women about the fundamental rights is because Khasi women have higher percentage of literacy rate and fundamental rights are usually taught in schools whereas those who are illiterate have less chances to know about the existence of such rights and even those who have come across in their studies are not really well aware about the practical existence of the fundamental rights. Figure 6.8 shows that, their awareness on the freedom of religion is little higher than any other fundamental rights. Generally, the knowledge regarding freedom of religion has been learnt from the churches, as 99.52percent of the respondents are Christians (0.48percent are non-Christian) and 100percent of the respondents in Garo hills are Christians. Apart from church, right to freedom of religion was often discussed among friends and family members.

## 6.4 Political attitude

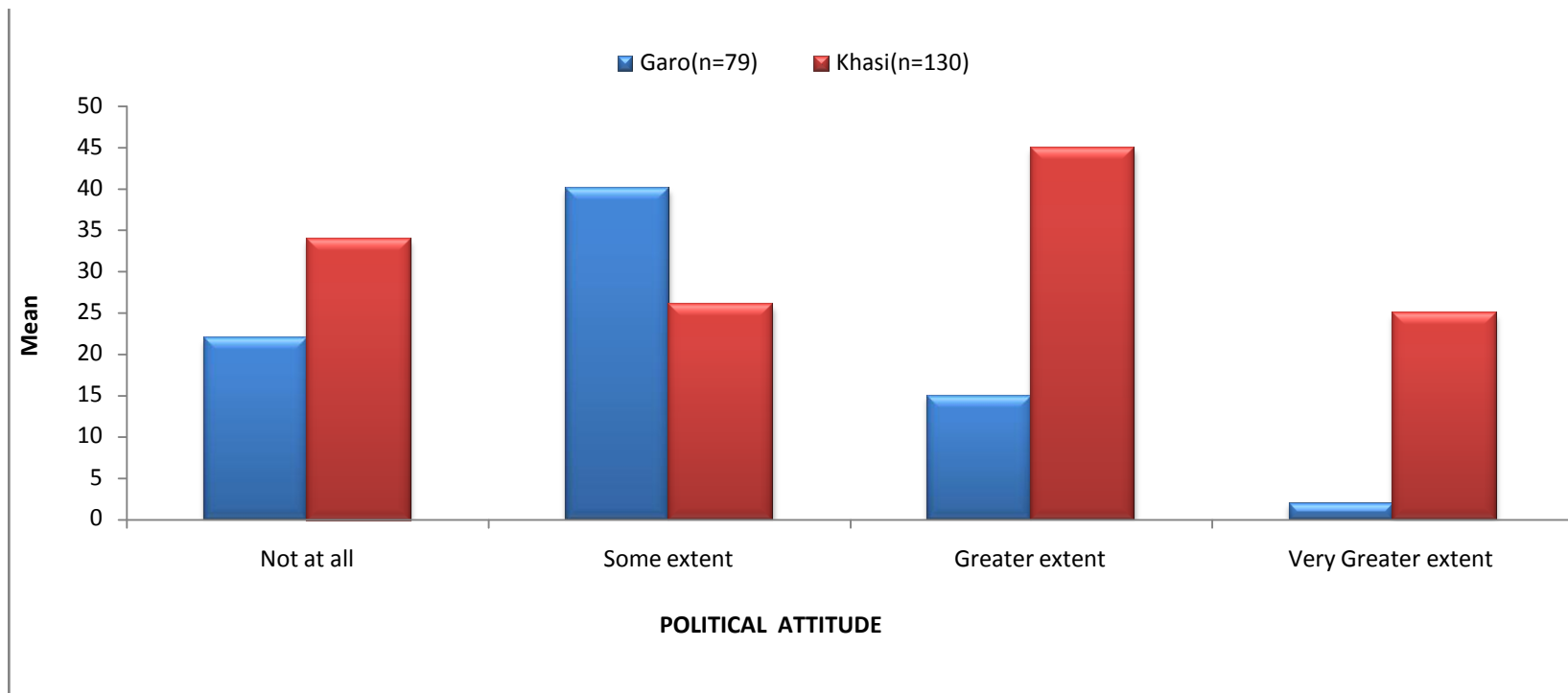
Political attitude of the respondents has been analyzed on the basis of the perceived effects of politics in the life of the respondents. Questions were asked on how they perceive politics and its effect on their life. It has been rated as 0=not at all; 1=some extent; 2= greater extent and 3= very greater extent. As such, respondents are divided into four groups in conformity with how they perceive and think about politics which ultimately reflects in their attitude toward politics and is measured in percentages. Table 6.4 illustrates that 26.79percent (Garo 27.85percent; Khasi 26.15percent) of women perceive that politics has no effect on their life at all. A total of 31.58percent (Garo 50.63percent; Khasi 20.00percent) supposed that politics to some extent has an effect on their life and 28.71 percent (Garo 18.99 percent; Khasi 34.62 percent) perceived that politics has an effect on their life to a greater extent; while 12.92percent (Garo 2.53 percent; Khasi 19.23percent) believed that politics has effect on their life to a very greater extent. Our analysis of the data reveal that 50.63percent of the Garo women believe that politics has an effect on their life to some extent only and while a majority of 34.62percent of the Khasi respondents believe that politics has an effect on their life to a greater extent (see fig. 6.9).

Political attitudes of the respondents reflect their knowledge about the political system and the outcome of the policy formulations. As such, there is a correlation between the political attitudes of the respondents and the literacy rate. The higher the educational level, the better is their level of understanding about the political process and ultimately, it has a direct effect on their perceived effects of politics.

**Table: 6.4 Political Attitudes of Khasi and Garo Women**

Sl. no.	Characteristic	District		Total
		Garo n = 79	Khasi n = 130	
<b>I</b>	<b>Perceived Effect of Politics on Life</b>			<b>N = 209</b>
	Not at all	22 (27.85)	34 (26.15)	56 (26.79)
	Some extent	40 (50.63)	26 (20.00)	66 (31.58)
	Greater extent	15 (18.99)	45 (34.62)	60 (28.71)
	Very Greater extent	2 (2.53)	25 (19.23)	27 (12.92)

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar (Figures in the parentheses is in percentages)



**Fig.6.9 Political attitudes**

## **6.5 Constraints on women's participation in politics:**

Concerning the problems of low degree of political participations of women in politics, respondents were requested to answer or discuss on the problems that are faced by them in their participation and that led to the low degree of participation of women in politics. Questions were asked to them in the form of open ended questions. Data demonstrated that 22percent (Garo16.46 percent; Khasi 26.92 percent) of women suggested that family responsibility is the main problem; while 21.53percent (Garo 6.33percent; Khasi 29.23percent) felt that the lack of education as one of the main problems 20.57percent (Garo12.66 percent; Khasi 26.92percent) assumed that women lack confidence. 14.35percent of women (Garo 2.53percent; Khasi 21.54percent) believed that women lack political awareness and political knowledge in comparison to men, while 11.96percent (Garo 1.27 percent; Khasi 18.46percent) women believed that lack of support from the family and society led to the low degree of participation of women in politics). Further, 10.05 percent (Garo 7.59percent, Khasi 11.54percent) of women says that feminine nature does not favor them to enter political arena and 7.18 percent (Garo 3.80percent; Khasi 9.23percent) women argued that lack of opportunity hinders political participation of women at the higher level while 6.22 percent women (Garo 8.86percent, Khasi 4.62percent) feel that women has no interest in politics. Further, 5.74 percent of women (Garo 3.80percent; Khasi 4.62 percent) are of the opinion that traditions and customs favor men in politics, while 3.35percent of women (Garo 7.59percent, Khasi 0.77percent) argued that politics is too expensive that it discourages women to join politics. 1.91percent of women, (Garo 1.27percent, Khasi 2.31percent) consider lack of Unity among the women is one of the causes that led to the low degree of women representation; and that women do not trust women folks to join politics, 1.91 percent women (Garo 1.27percent, Khasi 2.31percent) believe that due to the lack of will power among the women as one of the reasons for low participation in politics.1.91 percent (Garo 1.27percent, Khasi 2.31percent) are



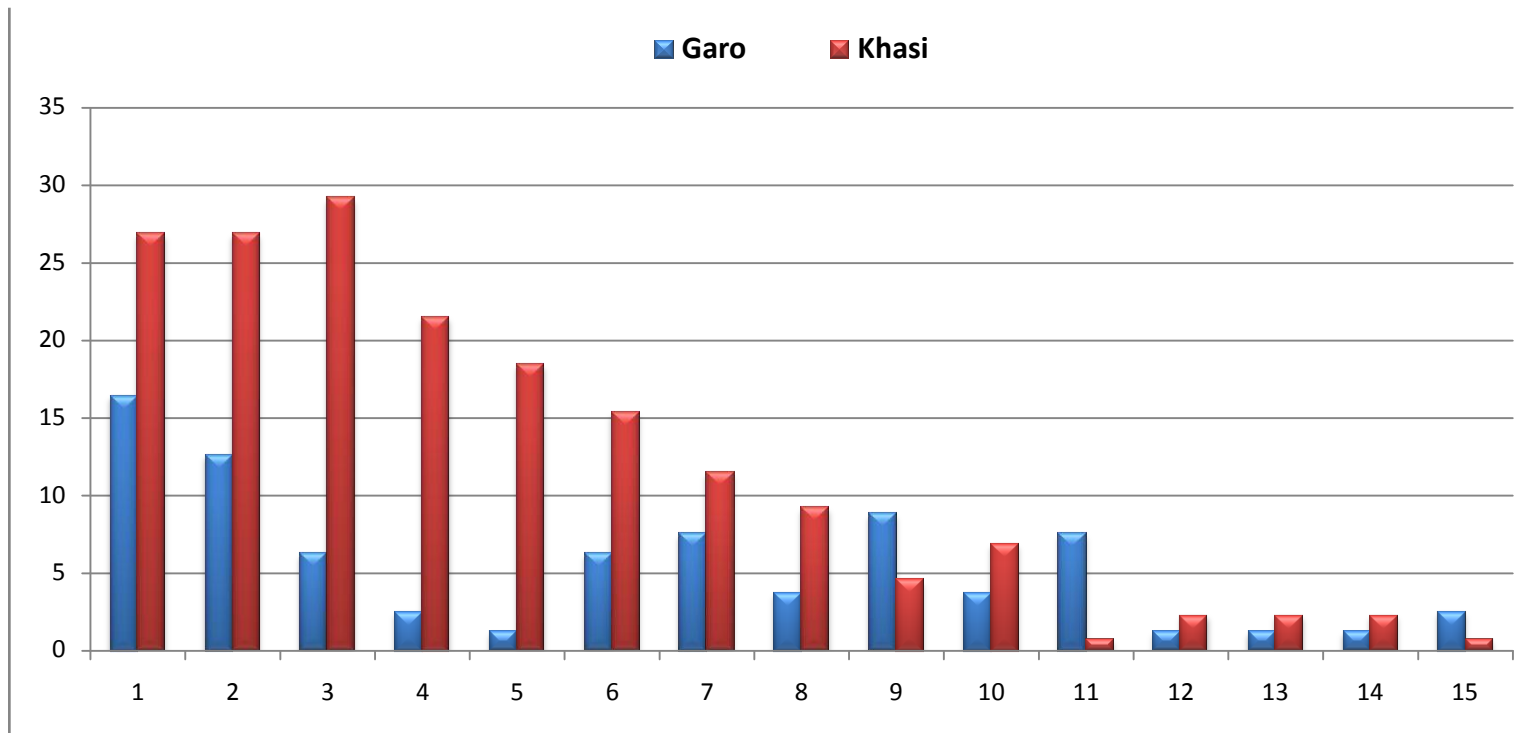
of the opinion that, political ideology of the political parties are not attractive to women. 1.44 percent (Garo 2.53 percent, Khasi 0.77 percent) believed that since men are the head of the family, therefore politics are the concerns of the male members (see table 6. 5 and fig. 6.10).

The above analysis reflects the voices of women themselves and majority of women believed that family responsibility is one of the major problems that hinder political participation of women other than voting. Women of both the communities agreed that, household chores are their first priority than politics. Second major reason for the low participation of women is the lack of education; as majority of women especially those in the rural areas believe that they have nothing to say as they are illiterate. Majority of the Khasi women believed that lack of confidence is one of the major problems that led to the low participation of women in politics, while majority of the Garo women held that lack of interest in politics as one of the major problems that result in the low participation of women in politics.

**Table: 6.5 Perceived Constraints to Political Participation of Women**

Sl. No	Characteristics	District		Total N = 209
		Garro n = 79	Khasi n = 130	
1	Family responsibility	13(16.46)	35(26.92)	48(22.97)
2	Lack of education	10(12.66)	35(26.92)	45(21.53)
3	Lack of confidence	5(6.33)	38(29.23)	43(20.57)
4	Lack of awareness/knowledge about politics	2(2.53)	28(21.54)	30(14.35)
5	Lack of support	1(1.27)	24(18.46)	25(11.96)
6	Poverty	5(6.33)	20(15.38)	25(11.96)
7	Women's nature does not favor politics	6(7.59)	15(11.54)	21(10.05)
8	Lack of opportunity	3(3.80)	12(9.23)	15(7.18)
9	Lack of interest	7(8.86)	6(4.62)	13(6.22)
10	Tradition favors men to be in politics	3(3.80)	9(6.92)	12(5.74)
11	Politics is too expensive	6(7.59)	1(0.77)	7(3.35)
12	Lack of unity amongst women	1(1.27)	3(2.31)	4(1.91)
13	Lack of will power	1(1.27)	3(2.31)	4(1.91)
14	Political ideology	1(1.27)	3(2.31)	4(1.91)
15	Men are the head of the family	2(2.53)	1(0.77)	3(1.44)

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar



**Fig.6.10 Perceived Constraints of the women**

<b>1</b>	<b>Family responsibility</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Lack of education</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Lack of confidence</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Lack of awareness /knowledge about politics</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Lack of support</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>poverty</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Women nature does not favour politics</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Lack of opportunity</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Lack of interest</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Tradition favours men to be in politics</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Politics is too expensive</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Lack of unity among women</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Lack of will power</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Lack of political ideology</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Men are the head of the family</b>

## 6.6 Suggestions for empowerment of women

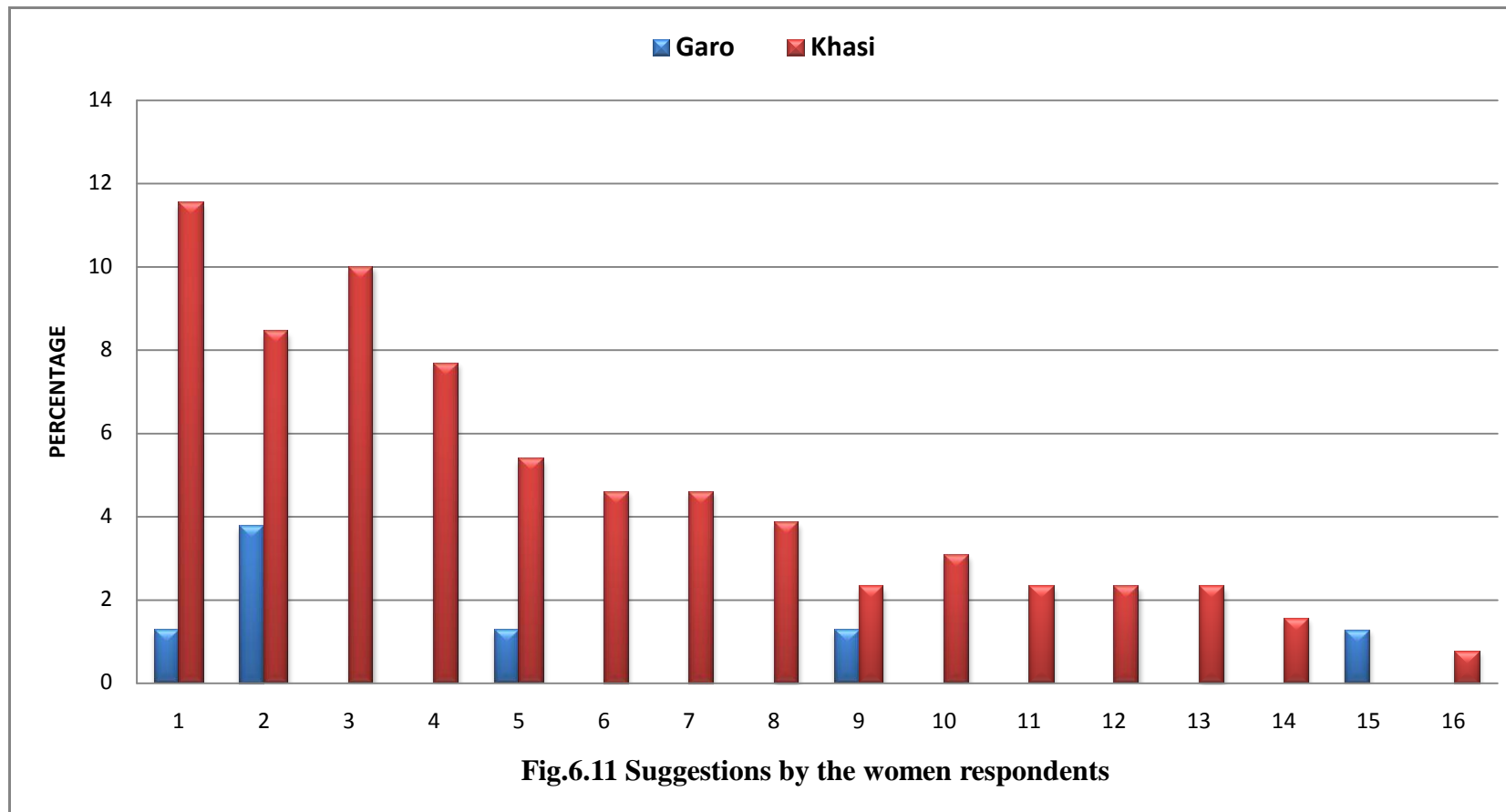
The present research also attempts to elicit the suggestions from the respondents about the need for empowering women in politics. In this section we will examine the responses by women of various sections to empower themselves. Respondents were asked to give suggestions on how to improve women's political participation in Meghalaya. It has been found that 7.66percent women (Garo 1.27percent; Khasi 11.54percent) suggested for the need to develop women leadership. For the enhancement of political representation of women in various decision making bodies, 6.70percent (Garo 3.80percent; Khasi 8.46percent) respondents believed that the initiative from the side of the government is important to have gender equality in politics. 6.22 percent respondents (Garo 0percent; Khasi 7.69percent) said that women could be empowered by mobilization and organization through awareness programmes and 3.83percent of respondents (Garo 1.27percent; Khasi 5.38percent) believed that women should be united. Further, 2.87percent respondents (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 4.62percent) were of the opinion that supports from women themselves is important. 2.87percent (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 4.62percent) suggested that women should be educated, which 2.39 percent of respondents (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 3.85percent) suggested that there should be support from society, 2.39percent respondents (Garo 1.27percent; Khasi 1.31percent) were of the opinion that political affiliation is important for women to contest election. For 1.91 percent of respondents (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 3.08percent) attitudinal change in men is important for the emancipation of women in politics. 1.44 percent respondents (Garo 3.80percent; Khasi 8.46percent) believed that empowerment within the family might enhance political participation of women, for some other respondents 1.44 percent (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 2.31percent) believed that support from family is necessary. On the other hand, strong will power is very much important as suggested by some respondents 0.96percent (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 1.54percent), 1.44 percent respondents (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi

2.31percent) consider registration of marriage is important to empower women for security, while 0.48 percent(Garo 1.77percent; Khasi 0.00percent) suggests that economic independence would also enhance political participation of women as women have to be economically strong; 0.48 percent respondents (Garo 0.00percent; Khasi 0.77percent) suggests that family responsibility should not be the sole area of women, therefore cooperation from the male members in helping domestic work would ensure the time for women to enter politics.(see table. 6.6)

**Table: 6.6 Suggestions**

Sl. No	Characteristic	DISTRICT		Total N = 209
		Garó n = 79	Khasi n = 130	
1	Development of women leadership	1(1.27)	15(11.54)	16(7.66)
2	Government initiative to empower women	3(3.80)	11(8.46)	14(6.70)
3	Mobilizations and organizations	0(0.00)	13(10.00)	13(6.22)
4	Awareness programmes	0(0.00)	10(7.69)	10(4.78)
5	Unity	1(1.27)	7(5.38)	8(3.83)
6	support from the women themselves	0(0.00)	6(4.62)	6(2.87)
7	Education	0(0.00)	6(4.62)	6(2.87)
8	Support from the society	0(0.00)	5(3.85)	5(2.39)
9	Political affiliation	1(1.27)	3(2.31)	4(1.91)
10	Attitudinal change in men.	0(0.00)	4(3.08)	4(1.91)
11	Empowerment within the family	0(0.00)	3(2.31)	3(1.44)
12	support from the family	0(0.00)	3(2.31)	3(1.44)
13	Registration of marriage Act	0(0.00)	3(2.31)	3(1.44)
14	Strong will power	0(0.00)	2(1.54)	2(0.96)
15	Economic independence	1(1.27)	0(0.00)	1(0.48)
16	Men's participation in domestic work	0(0.00)	1(0.77)	1(0.48)

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar



**Fig.6.11 Suggestions by the women respondents**

1	<b>Development of women leadership</b>	6	<b>support from the women themselves</b>	11	<b>Empowerment within the family</b>
2	<b>Government initiative to empower women</b>	7	<b>Education</b>	12	<b>support from the family</b>
3	<b>Mobilisation and organisation</b>	8	<b>Support from the society</b>	13	<b>Registration of marriage Act</b>
4	<b>Awareness programmes</b>	9	<b>Political affiliation</b>	14	<b>Strong will power</b>
5	<b>Unity</b>	10	<b>Attitudinal change in men.</b>	15	<b>Economic independence</b>
				16	<b>Men's participation in domestic work</b>

## Part: C

### Interpretations: Qualitative and Quantitative perspective

The field survey conducted shows explicitly that there is low political participation of women except in their participation as voters in terms of numbers. The question is why participation in politics matters? Contemporary writers, academics and researchers are trying to find out the causal effects and provide suggestions on the low participation of women in politics. Democratic system sees participation by all the citizens as the key apparatus to ensure popular sovereignty and government liability. Nancy Burns, Schlozman and Verba stated that political participation is the medium through which the citizens communicate information about their preferences and needs for government action and generate pressure on public officials to heed what they hear.<sup>7</sup> N. Hamsa pointed out that, the fundamental goal of political participation is to enable ordinary citizens to influence the actions of the government.<sup>8</sup> Therefore political participation of women matters in several respects and therefore gender equality in the political arena are of equal importance.

Nancy burns, Schlozman and Verba argued that the gender gap in political participation puts women in a potential disadvantageous position.<sup>9</sup> The increase in number without the substance may sometimes give a fake picture of real participation. Anne Marie Goetz suggests that number of women as political representatives is not the best indicator of the extent and intensity of women's political participation because there is no necessary relationship between the two.<sup>10</sup> Qualitative aspect in the study of political participation would perhaps try to answer the questions of why, besides the questions of how many. Carol Jean explains political participation as an instrument for achieving policy ends and attempts to understand political participation as a rational

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<sup>7</sup> Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Sidney Verba, *Op. Cit.* ,p.24

<sup>8</sup> N. Hamsa, *Op.Cit.*,p.217

<sup>9</sup> Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Sidney Verba, *Op. Cit.*, p.24

<sup>10</sup> Anne Marie Goetz, *Op.Cit.*,p.3



actor.<sup>11</sup> But the problem of democracy is that all citizens who participate in selecting political leaders or hold political office are not equally rational. The question of less representation of women in decision making has been the area of concern globally. It is generally understood that more representation and more participation of women together with men in government bodies reflect gender equality. Analysis of political participation from both perspectives is necessary to understand political behaviour of citizens and as such, it conveys conscious understanding of the value of participation in participatory democracy and in exercising rights and privileges as granted by the constitution.

## **6.7 Political participation beyond numbers: Rational Actor**

### ***Women and beyond voting rights***

Guha Sampa pointed out that, voting behaviour indicates the voters' choice, preference, alternatives agreements, concerns ideologies, programmes and so on in respect of various questions or issues on which elections are conducted and fought.<sup>12</sup> Voting behaviour generally concerns the manner of citizen's involvement in choosing their representatives and the exercise of their voting rights.<sup>13</sup> Democracy grants political rights to its citizens, by enabling them to have equal opportunity to play their role in the process of nation building and decision making. This right is generally practiced through the process of voting in the elections in India, based on the principle of one man one vote. Thus, voting becomes one of the basic units of political power in a representative democracy. In order to enhance this right the principle of secret ballot based on the principle of one man one vote has been adopted in India to elevate the prospect of self rule. The secrecy of the ballot enables them to use their voting rights independently. This unit of political power determines the

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<sup>11</sup> Carol Jean Uhlener, "Political Participation, Rational Actors, and Rationality: A New Approach" in *Political Psychology*, Vol.7. No.3 (Sept., 1986), p.553 Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3791256>

<sup>12</sup> The term 'vote' is derived from the Latin word '*votum*' which means a 'will or wish' Sampa Guha, *Political Participation of women in a changing Society* (New Delhi: Inter-India Publication, 1996), p.136

<sup>13</sup> Sampa Guha, *Ibid.*, p.51

election manifestoes and ideologies of the candidates and political parties who contested in periodical elections. On the other side, it provides the voter the noble choice, to express his will freely in choosing their representatives and participating themselves in making decision. According to Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes, “Women’s modern–day participation in politics begins with the acquisition of voting rights. By 1945, 46 percent of World Countries allowed women to vote. Today only Saudi Arabia, allows men to vote but not women.”<sup>14</sup>

Women in India gained the right to vote after India got independence, although there was a movement demanding for the right to vote for women since the 1920s during the British rule.<sup>15</sup> The constitution of India guarantees political equality to women under Article 326 that provides the right to vote to all its citizens and article 325 prohibits exclusion from electoral rolls on the basis of sex, caste religion etc., as such it provides women equal footing with men in terms of political rights. Poonam Vats stated that women in India who constitute half of the population are entitled to vote, but it is found out that women exercise this right to a lesser extent than their male counter parts.<sup>16</sup> Further, Letha Kumari pointed out that the voters turn out of women is comparatively lower than men almost in all elections with an exception of the election in 1984. On the average, in every election a total of 14, 1471,919 women electorate is increasing but the average of increase voters turn out of women in all the 12 elections from 1957 to 1999, is very insignificant- only 1.141 percent.<sup>17</sup> According to the report of the Election Commission of India, even though the gap has been drastically reducing in the 15<sup>th</sup> general election in 2009 election; male electorates still out numbered female electorates and the difference is 4.4percent.

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<sup>14</sup> Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes, *Women, Politics And power: A Global Perspective*(London: New Delhi: Pine Forge press,2007),p.16

<sup>15</sup> R .Letha Kumari, *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance* (Delhi: Authorspress,2006),p.59

<sup>16</sup> Poonam Vats ,*Political Participation and Attitudinal Transformation of Rural Women*( Delhi: Abhijeet Publications,2004),p.140

<sup>17</sup> Kumari, *Op.Cit.*,p.62

The above reports and findings show that there is a gap in male – female participation in the voting process at the all-India level. Comparatively, in Meghalaya, there is less difference in terms of male-female voters' turn out in almost every election. In 2009 General election to the Lok Sabha, female electorates' outnumbered male electorates in Meghalaya (see fig. 4.7 of chapter 4). In fact, right to vote grants the so called periodic opportunity of political participation and it is comparatively undemanding performance. It neither requires specialized skill nor education except that the citizens have to attain minimum age limit of 18 years in India. Sampa Guha pointed out that, voting requires the least initiative and internal motivation.<sup>18</sup> Participation as voters during election is perhaps the most comfortable and easiest way of political involvement. It, however, does not necessarily effect political participation to the degree of involvement at the higher level such as contesting election. Pamela Praxton and Melanie M. Huges also pointed out that, even though New Zealand was the first country to grant the women suffrage; however, it did not capture to be the firsts for women in politics. Finland became the first country to elect a female member to parliament.<sup>19</sup> Lester W. Milbrath understood political participation in hierarchical order and placed voting in the spectator activities. While Edward Kluienko discusses the characteristics of political participation positions categorized “voting consumers” as low level political participation as it is mainly limited to electoral and cognitive kind.<sup>20</sup>

Voting activity, however, for the present study is considered as one of the important forms of political participation of the citizens, more than that of spectator activities. This has been done deliberately to understand the intended effect of such participation from a qualitative perspective. The ideal of democracy is to ensure citizens participation in the sharing of political power. According to the UNDP Human Development Report women constitute one of

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<sup>18</sup> Guha, *Op.Cit.*,p.136

<sup>19</sup> Praxton, *Op.Cit.*,p.65

<sup>20</sup> Edward Kluienko , “ Political participation: theory, Methodology, and Measurement with the Help of the Guttman One –Dimension Continuity Scale” in *Ukrainian Sociological Review* (2004-2005),p.149

the major forces behind people's participation in the life of society today. Women have made great strides forward in obtaining the vote and the right to be elected to political office is nearly in every country, yet today they comprise only 10 percent of the members of the parliaments worldwide and hold fraction of other leadership positions nationally and internationally.<sup>21</sup>

Personal interview method was used in the present study to measure political participation of women as voters from qualitative perspective. Questions were asked on their motivation and knowledge about the candidates they voted for in the election so as to take note of the factors behind voting. To quote one respondent, "I have never missed voting because I am scared they may consider me as dead if I don't vote, because my name is in the register (Electoral roll) I have to vote". While another respondent said, "Because everybody is going to vote, that's why I am also going." And few others who are politically conscious, they voted for the candidate whom they think will be able to win the election so that they will not be left out from any beneficiaries. Questions of their knowledge about the candidate they have supported and on what basis they voted for the candidate were asked by the researcher. A Khasi woman from the rural area responded that she does not know the person whom she had voted; another respondent replied that, she decided whom to vote only after reaching the polling booth, she voted on whatever symbol that she liked. The responses made by the respondents clearly show the lack of political awareness of women voters in the rural areas. While most of the Garo women voted for the candidate decided by their husbands while others hesitate to give honest information.

As per the present study, data in table 6.7 show that most of the time women take their own decision in voting without being forced by any one. Similarly, the rating scale for measurement of the decisions that respondents

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<sup>21</sup> Karl, Marlie, *Women And Empowerment, Participation and Decision Making* (London: Zed Books Ltd,1995),pp.2-5

are taking in relation to voting as (0 = Never; 1= Sometimes; 2 = Mostly; 3 = Always; 4 = jointly) mean score = 3.0 (Garo = 2.8; Khasi = 3.1). It may be noted here that the areas where the field study was conducted were semi urban area and rural area. As such, the results may not be the same if the study is conducted in the urban area of Shillong or the most educated area in Meghalaya.

**Table: 6.7 Decision Making**

Sl. no.	Dimension	District				Total N = 209	
		Garo n = 79		Khasi n = 130			
	Decision making	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1.	Whom to Vote in the MDC election	2.8	1.6	3.1	1.3	3.0	1.4
2.	Whom to Vote in the MLA Election	2.8	1.6	3.1	1.3	3.0	1.4
3.	Whom to Vote in the MP Election	2.8	1.6	3.1	1.3	3.0	1.4

Source: Computed from the survey field work of the researcher

The attitude of women towards voting is not only to exercise franchise, but to elect representatives on the basis of the merits of the candidates, political party and known personality. Some women, however, suggested that they vote without any reason, just for the sake of voting<sup>22</sup>. The present study clearly demonstrates that a majority of women in the rural areas lack political awareness. They are not interested to know much about politics or talk about politics. They are the passive voters who are willing to spare their time casting their vote without taking an effort to know about the candidates or be concerned about the outcomes. One of the leaders of the civil society groups in Garo hills stated that the Garo women usually voted for the candidate whom their husbands supported.

Exercising the right to vote by both the genders is understood as an indispensable form of political participation and is considered crucial in Indian democratic system. It is one of the mechanisms by which political representatives are made accountable to the people. Women's participation as voters is regarded as an important aspect of political participation, and it is essentially one of the basic units of political power.

If the concept of democracy is understood as the rule of the majority, it implies that the more the numbers, the more would be the degree of participation. This notion explains the importance of numbers in democracy. Measuring the political participation of women in Meghalaya as voters reveal that there is positive participation of women as voters in comparison to the female national voter turns out in India. Table 6.8 and fig.6.12 show that almost in every year, over all men electorates outnumbered women electorates in the Lok Sabha Election in India. This insignificant participation of women reflects the genders inequality in politics. Political participation of both the gender is important at all levels.

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<sup>22</sup> Kezhaleno Khatso, *Khasi Women and Electoral politics: A study of the Greater Shillong*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, (Shillong: North Eastern Hills University, Department of Anthropology, 2004).

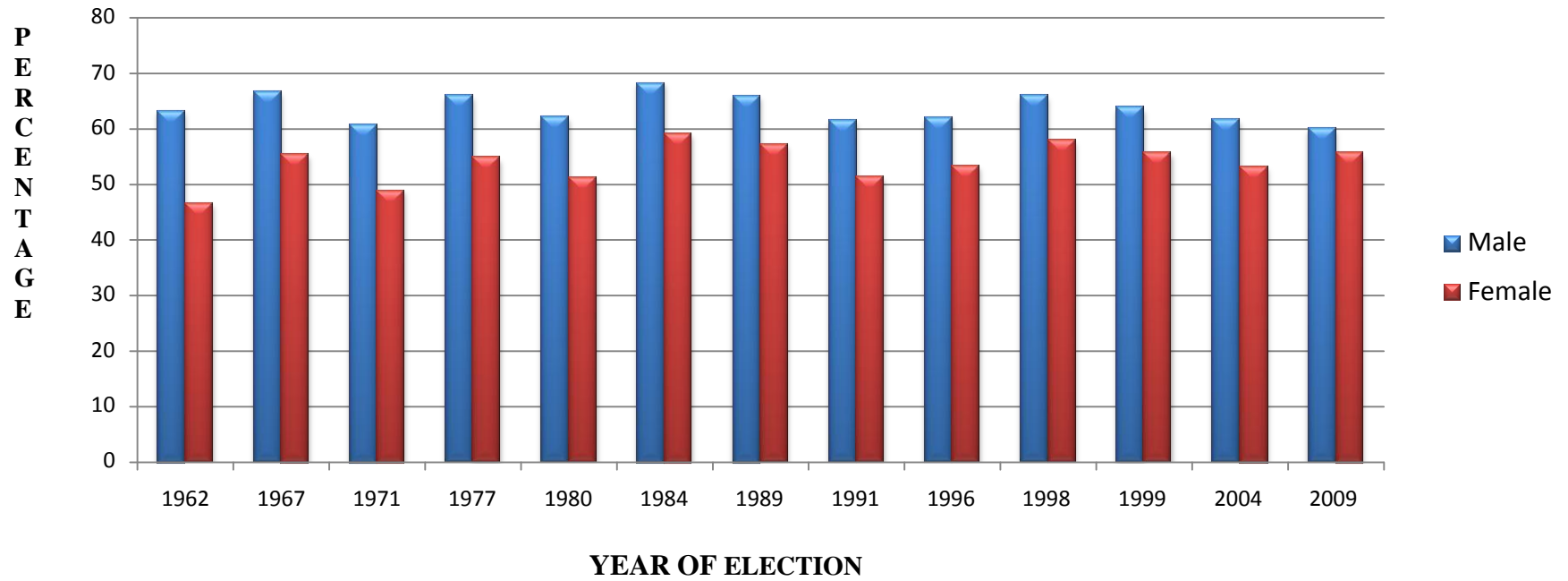
**Table: 6.8 All India Voters turns out to the Lok Sabha Election  
1952-2009 (Sex wise in %)**

<b>General Election</b>	<b>Male Electorates</b>	<b>Female Electorates</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1952	-	-	61.2	-
1957	-	-	62.2	-
1962	63.3	46.6	55.4	16.7
1967	66.7	55.5	61.3	11.2
1971	60.9	49.1	55.3	11.8
1977	66.0	54.9	60.5	11.1
1980	62.2	51.2	56.9	11.0
1984	68.4	59.2	64.0	9.2
1989	66.1	57.3	62.0	8.8
1991	61.6	51.4	57.0	10.2
1996	62.1	53.4	58.0	8.7
1998	66.0	58.0	62.0	8.0
1999	64.0	55.7	60.0	8.3
2004	61.7	53.3	58.8	8.4
2009	60.2	55.8	58.2	4.4

Source: Praveen Rai. "Electoral Participation of Women in India, key determinants barrier".  
*Economic & Political Weekly* Vol. XLVI No.3, January 15, 2011



**General Lok Sabha Election 1962-2009 (Sex-wise)**



**Fig. 6.12 All India: Male-Female electorate in percentage (%)**

## 6.8 Summary: Empirical evidences

The study suggests that the number of women voters does not necessarily reflect the level of passive/ active participation of women. Participation is also to be measured in terms of quality. In fact participation of women voters in the rural area cannot be ignored as majority of the population lived in the rural areas. Although large turn out by women voters may have effort on the electoral process, ignorant and casual of passive voting may have adverse impact on the larger body polity. The researcher tried to elicit the political efficacy of women participation in voting. Interestingly 26.9 percent of the respondents replied that it has no effect at all. This may hamper the essence of participatory democracy which has been practiced in India.

The reasons for the lack of awareness about the candidate or party they voted for the office is due to lack of education, political knowledge, lack of time to devote and lack of encouragement from the part of the society to promote women to participate in political discussions. It may be noted here that the concept of private and public dichotomy in individual's activities still prevails especially in the rural areas in spite of the modernization that has brought to light about the importance of gender equality. Knowing politics is considered to be suitable for men but not women.

Till now, in Garo hills, the head man or the *Nokma* is always male, so also, the headman in the Khasi society. Women's participation in the *durbar* or the village council is still barred especially, in those areas where the study was conducted. This perhaps led women to fully entrust the responsibility of politics in the hands of the male members without leaving it for themselves. Consequently, women do not generally feel the necessity to have political awareness or understand the value of their voting rights as their political rights. Another factor is that the political party and candidates who contested for the election lack communication with the women voters in the rural areas.

The present study reveals the fact that the mere act of voting does not essentially indicate the nature of voters' political participation. Their participation in quantity does not necessarily reflect their political awareness. Lack of political awareness about the candidate or the political party affects the quality of participation and place women in isolation from the rest of the political world. It may also hinder the fulfillment of the concept of participatory democracy and the ideal of representative democracy. Those who are politically aware are likely to participate more in political party meetings and are political party members. They can also have their own views and opinions on different aspects. Sottirovic and McLeod also argue that knowing the basic facts about politics helps individuals at least to orient themselves in the political world, to connect issues with offices and public officials with issues.<sup>23</sup> The act of voting is to be understood in a real sense as an involvement of both physical and mental as well. It involves time and energy because voting itself involves making decisions by the voters. Voters are required to having clear understanding about the ideology of the political party(s) and the person they voted for. Therefore, it has to be pre-planned and inter personal discussions and political awareness is of utmost importance. One vote is important not only for the individual alone but also for the society and the political system as a whole. If women constitute half of the population of the voters, lack of awareness among the women may affect the whole system practically. Secret ballot and the principle of one person one vote require the independent decision of the citizens. The Kriesi model of dynamic representation shows that there is relatedness between public opinion, election results and policy.<sup>24</sup> Political awareness among women is important for building up the society as they will be able to relate their social values to their political opinions. Political mobilization among women is important in this regard.

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<sup>23</sup> Mira Sottirovic and Jack M. McLeod, "Values, Communication Behaviour and Political participation," *Political Communication*, Vol.18 (2001), p.275

<sup>24</sup> Kreisi, Hanspeter, "Political Mobilisation, Political Participation and the Power of the Vote" in *West European Politics*, Vol.31, Nos.1-2, January- March, 2008), p.151

On the whole, the political participation of women in Meghalaya is insignificant except their participation as voters. In all types of political participation mentioned above, compared to Garo women, Khasi women are found to have higher political awareness and political participation (see fig. 6.1 to 6.10). But mere act of voting does not necessarily indicate the nature of voters' political awareness as the data reveal that women have low political awareness. Poonam Vats argues that voting as an indication of political participation in India has both strength and weaknesses. She further pointed out that very often women citizens treat the day of voting as a welcome break from her dull and tiring routines.<sup>25</sup> They do not seem to be concerned about the quality of the candidates whom they vote. This is exactly the scene in Meghalaya as well. Our research has indicated that women in Meghalaya were least bothered about the candidates whom they vote, or the women voters rely on the advice of their husbands.

The danger of lack of political awareness about the candidates or the political parties whom to vote during election are no less than the one who is influenced by money that often reduces the value of the right to vote. Lisa Blaydes and Safinaz El Tarouty have mentioned that in Egypt women serve as effective recruiters for Muslim brotherhood where they sell their votes to local vote brokers or offer their vote to a local patron in exchange for a future payoff. Vote brokers do purchase votes from both men and women but women are found in majority as they are more likely to suffer from extreme poverty. They further stated that such participation empowers them economically rather than politically. "For many low –income women, therefore, voting is less of political act and more of an informal economic activity".<sup>26</sup> Data in the table 6.3 reflect the low political awareness of women in Meghalaya. They have little awareness about their political leaders, very little awareness about the political parties and no awareness about the fundamental rights. Lack of political

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<sup>25</sup> Poonam Vats, *Op.Cit.*, p.8

<sup>26</sup> Lisa Blaydes and Safinaz El Tarouty, "Women's Electoral Participation in Egypt: The implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilisation" in *Middle East Journal*, Volume 63, No.3, summer 2009, p.371

awareness may degrade the value of democracy and the concept of the rule of the majority. Studying political participation from both dimensions enables us to have a clear idea about the nature of political participation. Knowing the basic facts about politics help the individuals at least to orient themselves in the political world, to connect issues with offices and public officials with issues.<sup>27</sup> It is found out from the study that respondents generally do not read newspapers nor do they listen to radio. This is more so with those who are confined themselves to the rural areas but are more affected by interpersonal media which is in the form of discussions with friends and relatives. In any case, casting vote needs a rational thinking so as to have meaningful and effectual democracy. Hamsa rightly stated that minimal degree of interest in politics coupled with possessions of political information and political awareness are the basic requirements for citizen's involvement in politics.<sup>28</sup> In the case of Meghalaya the problem with the women voters especially those living in rural areas, has been lack of proper information in terms of awareness as well education. This has been amply demonstrated in the course of field survey conducted by the researcher. Political participation of women in Meghalaya is affected more by inter-personal communication media which sometimes causes adverse impact on voting behaviour.

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<sup>27</sup> Mira Sottirovic and Jack M. McLeod, *Op.Cit.*, p.275

<sup>28</sup> Hamsa N., *Impact of socialization on political participation of women in Indian urban Community*, Unpublished PhD Theses ( New Delhi: Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University,1980), p.233

## **Part-D**

### **Political participation: Coefficient Correlation analysis**

#### **6.9. Demographic characteristics**

Demographic characteristics of the respondents have been discussed under four categories; age groups, respondents' education, husbands' education and monthly household income (see table. 6.9). The following interpretation of data analysis is made with the help of Karl Pearson's coefficient correlation (see table. 6.10)

**Table 6.9 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Sl. no.	CHARACTERISTICS	DISTRICTS		TOTAL , N=209
		Garó n = 79	Khasi n = 130	
<b>I</b>	<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
	Young (18-34)	25(31.65)	52(40.00)	77(36.84)
	Middle Age(35-59)	45(56.96)	65(50.00)	110(52.63)
	Old (60 and above)	9(11.39)	13(10.00)	22(10.53)
<b>II</b>	<b>EDUCATION STATUS</b>			
	Illiterate	32(40.51)	16(12.31)	48(22.97)
	Illeterate without schooling	3(3.80)	15(11.54)	23(11.00)
	Below Primary	7(8.86)	37(28.46)	44(21.05)
	Primary	8(10.13)	15(11.54)	23(11.00)
	Secondary	15(18.99)	17(13.08)	32(15.31)
	Higher Secondary	11(13.92)	18(13.85)	29(13.88)
	Graduate	3(3.80)	9(6.92)	12(5.74)
	Post Graduate	0(0.00)	3(3.21)	3(1.44)
<b>III</b>	<b>MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
	Below 1000	9(11.39)	50(38.46)	59(28.23)
	Below 3000	26(32.91)	49(37.69)	75(35.89)
	Below 5000	27(34.18)	7(5.38)	34(16.27)
	Below 10000	9(11.39)	11(8.46)	20(9.57)
	Below 15000	7(8.86)	9(6.92)	16(7.66)
	Above 15000	1(1.27)	4(3.08)	5(2.39)

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar  
(Figure in the parentheses is percentage)

### **6.9.1 Demographic characteristics and Political awareness**

Karl Pearson's correlation analysis shows that education is strongly and consistently related to political knowledge and political awareness of the respondents. Educations of the respondents, education of husband and monthly household income have significant positive effect on the political awareness of women. The higher the educational levels of the respondent's and husband's education the higher the political awareness. Monthly household income also contributes to the political awareness of women. The study reveals that higher the educational level and better household incomes are more likely to enhance the political awareness of women and vice versa. The lower the educational level, and household income, the lower would be the political awareness. Many of the studies in developed countries demonstrate the positive contribution of education towards citizen's involvement in politics. Russell J. Dulton stated, "Empirical research consistently shows that better educated Americans vote more, are more knowledgeable about politics and more politically tolerant"<sup>29</sup>. According to the Baseline Report, low level of literacy among majority of women prevent them from accessing information about the various political candidates, parties, party manifestoes and the debates that precede elections that are critical for making an informed choice of the most appropriate candidate.<sup>30</sup> The fact is that the general level of educational qualifications of women are low or even some of them are illiterate who finds it difficult to understand the complexity of today's politics. Apart from the above mentioned characteristics, the study reveals that mass media and interpersonal media too have significant and positive impact on the political awareness of women in Meghalaya. The higher the exposure to the mass media and interpersonal media, the more is the level of political awareness.

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<sup>29</sup> Russell J. Dalton, "Citizenship Norms and Political Participation in America: The Good News Is ...the Bad news Is Wrong" in *CDACS Occasional Paper 2006-01*(Washington: The Center for Democracy and Civil Society,2006),p.6 Available at <http://www8.georgetown.edu/centers/cdacs> (Accessed on the 20.oct.2011)

<sup>30</sup> Baseline Report, *Ibid*,p.35



The present study reveals that there is a direct inter-relationship between education, household income and exposure to mass media and their political awareness. This in turn has a bearing on the voting behaviour of women in Meghalaya. Baseline Report also pointed out that the information in print media creates a serious handicap for large majority of women, who are illiterates.<sup>31</sup> Further, low household income results in low exposure to mass media and interpersonal media as well. In other words, political equality may turn out to be less important without economic adequacy for the deprived family. Similarly, mass media may have less value for the illiterate women. Politics has become so complicated that they may lack interest to understand about the issues as well. In an interaction with the respondents, illiterate women and women with low level of education bluntly replied that it is difficult for them to understand politics and it is bothersome to think about political problems. That is the reason why they do not show interest nor they desire to know about political process. The study illustrates that education household income and mass media and interpersonal communication have a significant impact on the low political awareness of women in Meghalaya.

### **6.9.2 Demographic characteristics and Political participation**

The study further reveals that age has a significant impact on electioneering and campaigning, political mobilisation and political communication of women in Meghalaya. Generally, those who attend election campaign, political rally, protest and demonstrations, political party meetings and communication with the political leaders do not belong to the young age group. Due to the lack of time and security reasons for attending political meetings and campaigning, it is considered as extra ordinary work and also not safe for young women. It has been found that the lower the age the lower the political communication of women with political leaders. The study also reveals that age has no positive impact on political affiliation and voting behaviour of women in Meghalaya. It may be noted that Agatha Sangma

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

became the youngest MP of Meghalaya at the age of 27 and Teilinia Thangkhiew too got elected at the age of 27 in the 2009 MDCs election in Meghalaya from Myllichem Constituency, as we have discussed in chapter 5.

The analysis further shows that education has a positive impact on political affiliation and political communication of women in Meghalaya. The study demonstrates that those who have political affiliations are mostly educated women. Low level of education results in low level of political affiliation. It is also a fact that illiterate women generally considered themselves unfit to affiliate and engage in any political office and they have no interest to join politics. It is also a fact that illiterate women stay away from any direct or indirect communication with political leaders. Even when situation compels, they generally depend on some literate people to help them with the matter. Nancy Burns et al. pointed out that education is strongly related to gender disparity in political participation even though the differences between men and women's education are not so enormous.<sup>32</sup> But Russell argues that as people have become more educated, politically skilled, policies oriented, and accept engaged citizenship, they seek different means of influencing policy rather than direct means of participation in elections.<sup>33</sup> The present study further shows that demographic characteristics such as, husbands' education and monthly household income has no direct impact on any of the dimensions of political participation of women in Meghalaya.

### **6.9.3 Political socializations and political participation**

The present study identifies mass media and interpersonal media as the agents of political socialization. Mass media includes public meetings, radio (local and national, local or English channel), television local and national (local or English channel), posters, leaflets, banners, films (English and local language) and internet. Interpersonal media includes information about politics

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<sup>32</sup> Nancy Burns, et.al., *The Private Roots of Public Action: gender, Equality, and Political Participation*(England: Harvard University Press,2001),p.254

<sup>33</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Op.Cit.*,p.7

from friends, neighbors, family members, political party workers, and relatives, headman of the locality, church organizations and other organizations. Karl Pearson's correlation analysis illustrates that mass media has no significant impact on political participation whereas interpersonal media has positive effect on political participation of women in Meghalaya. The main reason was that the majority of the respondents have low educational level and low economic status. The study shows that 5.74percent of the respondents are graduates and 1.44percent only are in post graduates (see table 6.9). Data further indicate that 34.84 percent of the respondents depend on agriculture as their main occupation, 19.62percent are casual labour, 15.79percent are doing business, and only 2.87percent are getting regular salary whereas, 19.62percent are house makers without any earning. Another area of economic status was concerning the husbands occupation where 27.75percent depends on agriculture, 21.05percent as casual labour, 16.27 percent are doing business, 9.09percent are having regular salary, 5.74percent can't work either due to illness or old age and others who don't fall under the above category is only 0.96percent only. The third criterion of measuring the economic status is the family monthly income. It is seen that 28.23percent of the people are below Rs.1000, 35.89 percent of the respondents family income is below Rs.3000, 16.27percent are getting approximately Rs.5000 monthly,7.66percent are getting up to Rs15,000 per month and only 2.39percent are those who are getting Rs.15000 and above. Looking at the type of occupation of husbands and wives and the total monthly family income, it clearly shows that the large number of people have low economic status. Another factor that led them to have less exposure to mass media is their lack of interest in politics and time factor. Women usually considered politics as somewhat dirty and psychologically think that they should not get involved in politics. In other words, their negative attitudes towards political outcome make them to stay away from political issues. On the other hand, interpersonal communication has a positive impact on political affiliation, voting, election campaigning, political mobilisation and political communication of women in Meghalaya.

#### **6.9.4 Political participation and political awareness**

The political awareness in the present study is examined in the light of the awareness of the respondents about the political leaders, political parties and the awareness about the fundamental rights. The study shows that political awareness has a significant impact on political affiliation, and perceived effects on politics or political efficacy. Political awareness also impacts on electioneering and campaigning, political mobilization and political communication. It has however, no positive impact on voting. The fact was that the voters cast their votes without having any political awareness. As discussed earlier, women have no awareness even about the candidates whom they have voted. They exercised their right to vote with no valid political basis or otherwise. It may be noted that demographic characteristics that have a significant effect on political awareness are indirectly effecting the political participation of women through political awareness. Consequently, higher political awareness leads to higher political participation.

#### **6.9.5 Political efficacy and political participation**

Respondents were asked on the perceived effects of politics on their life in order to study their political attitudes. Karl Pearson's correlations analysis shows that perceived effects on politics in their life reflect the political attitudes of the respondents. It has significant effect on political affiliation, electioneering and campaigning, and political communication. However, with regard to voting it is not so. Those who believed that politics has an effect on their lives have more inclination with political parties or political leaders and their participation in election campaign is more. Those who believed that politics has nothing to do with their lives and those who have negative attitudes towards politics have no interest to participate in politics.

To sum up, Karl Pearson's Correlation analysis provides us with a clear understanding about the relationship between the various variables, such as age, education, family income and its significant impact on political awareness,

political attitudes and political affiliation of women in Meghalaya. Similarly, political awareness and political efficacy have positive impact on their political affiliation, which ultimately has an effect on the political participation of women in Meghalaya. It also signifies the existence of dependent and independent variables. Age and family income are two independent variables that have effect on the political participation, which is a dependent variable. Thus, the above analysis helps us to know about the determinants of political participation at the lower level other than those by contesting elections at the higher level.

**Table: 6.10**  
**Demographic Characteristics, Political Awareness and Political Participation: Karl Pearson's Coefficient**

Sl. No.	Demographic Characteristics	Political Awareness				Political Participation				
		Var07	Var08	Var09	Var10	Var11	Var12	Var13	Var14	Var15
<b>I</b>										
	Age Group	<b>Var01</b>	-0.08	-0.08	-0.04	0.01	0.12	0.15*	0.15*	0.16*
	Education status	<b>Var02</b>	0.57**	0.40**	0.54**	0.19**	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.13*
	Husband's Education	<b>Var03</b>	0.31**	0.16*	0.23**	0.05	-0.01	0.01	-0.08	0.04
	Monthly Household Income	<b>Var04</b>	0.28**	0.17**	0.29**	0.03	0.02	-0.02	-0.02	0.04
<b>II</b>	<b>Source of Political Information</b>									
	Mass Media Exposure	<b>Var05</b>	0.48**	0.33**	0.26**	0.07	0.07	0.05	-0.01	0.08
	Interpersonal Communication	<b>Var06</b>	0.38**	0.35**	0.38**	0.31**	0.17**	0.23**	0.23**	0.17**
<b>III</b>	<b>Political Awareness</b>									
	Political Leaders	<b>Var07</b>	1	0.80**	0.62**	0.33**	0.07	0.16*	0.17*	0.24**
	Political Parties	<b>Var08</b>	0.80**	1	0.53**	0.25**	0.05	0.18**	0.20*	0.24**
	Fundamental Rights	<b>Var09</b>	0.62	0.53	1	0.32	0.04	0.18*	0.34**	0.29**
<b>IV</b>	<b>Perceived Effect of Politics on Life</b>	<b>Var10</b>	0.45**	0.42**	0.37**	0.37**	0.09	0.23**	0.20**	0.23**
<b>V</b>	<b>Political Participation</b>									
	Political Affiliation	<b>Var11</b>	0.33**	0.25**	0.32**	1	0.11	0.27**	0.34**	0.29**
	Voting in Elections	<b>Var12</b>	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.11	1	0.20**	0.16**	0.15*
	Electioneering and Campaigning	<b>Var13</b>	0.16*	0.18**	0.18**	0.27**	0.20**	1	0.71**	0.38**
	Political Mobilisation	<b>Var14</b>	0.17**	0.20**	0.34**	0.34**	0.16*	0.71**	1	0.47**
	Political Communication	<b>Var15</b>	0.24**	0.24**	0.29**	0.29**	0.15*	0.38**	0.47**	1

**Correlation**

Source: Computed from the sample Survey by the Scholar

**\*\* P<0.01 level**

**\*P< 0.05 level**

CHAPTER-7  
POLITICAL RECRUITMENT AND ROLE PERFORMANCE

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## **CHAPTER-7 Political Recruitment and Role performance**

This chapter studies the political recruitment and role performance of the women politicians in Meghalaya. It attempts to study the factors responsible for the political participation of women at the highest level such as contesting elections. It intends to explain the problems faced by women in politics at the decision making level and how they are recruited. According to Peter M. Siarelis and Morgenstern, political recruitment can be defined as “how potential candidates are attracted to compete for political office...”<sup>1</sup> While Flamming on the other hand explains political recruitment as the process whereby citizen seeks political office.<sup>2</sup> The concept of Political recruitment for the present study is understood as the process of induction into the political office. Political office here means contesting election and taking position or occupying office. We attempt to study the activities of women who contest elections as well as the role performance made by them when they get elected in the public office alongside their role in adjusting with family responsibilities. It attempts to examine the factors responsible for the success of women or their failure to get in to the political office, as well as the problems and challenges that they personally experience in the recruitment process.

### **7.1 Political recruitment: An analysis**

There are several studies conducted on women’s representation and their participation in the decision making bodies in order to understand the obstacles faced by women in politics. Contesting in election is one of the modes of political participation and it has been understood as the highest form of political participation. Women in different countries of the world have gained

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<sup>1</sup> Peter M. Sileris and Scott Morgenstern. *Introduction: Political Recruitment and candidate selection in Latin America: A framework for Analysis*.p.5 Available at <http://www.wfu.edu/politics/conference/pub/Chapterpercent201percent20Introduction.pdf> (Accessed on 18/11/11)

<sup>2</sup> Janet A. Flamming, -----(Temple University press: Philadelphia, 1997) (Accessed: 27.2.12) Available at [links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554\(199806\)92percent3A2percent3C456percent3AWPVHWApercent3E2.0.COpercent3B2-H](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554(199806)92percent3A2percent3C456percent3AWPVHWApercent3E2.0.COpercent3B2-H)



the right to vote and their participation level is merely as voters, whereas their participation in the decision making bodies is almost unsatisfactory. The study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union shows the low percentage of women representation in world parliaments. As a whole, while there are 33,981 men parliamentarians in the world, women constitute 4,512 which are 13.28 percent. Moreover, 7.7 percent of the parliamentary group leaders and 9 percent of the party spokespersons are women.<sup>3</sup> Only 3.5 percent of the world cabinet ministers are women and they hold no ministerial positions in 93 countries.<sup>4</sup> Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes in their study show that across the globe the degree of women representation is not the same. Some countries experience steady growth in the number of women in parliaments over time while others had no growth at all. In spite of movement for political equality, countries in the Middle East have opted women out of politics. In Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, anti suffragists used the *Shari 'a*, the Islamic law or code of conduct, to combat women's agitation for political rights. Even when the right to vote is granted, these societies often resist women's election in political office.<sup>5</sup>

Recent studies show that despite constitutional promulgation, women in Indian subcontinent continue to be grossly under represented both at the national and state level. Female representation in the lower house (Lok Sabha) is less than the world's average of 20percent.<sup>6</sup> Meghalaya being a matrilineal society, yet there is no higher representation of women in political arena. Women's representation remains insignificant at the decision making level. From 1972-2008, there are only eight successful women candidates in the legislative Assembly and their representation to the government each year is not more than two except in the year 1998, where there were three women

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<sup>3</sup> R. Letha Kumari. *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance* (Delhi: Author Press, 2006), p.15

<sup>4</sup> R. Lethari. *Ibid*, p.17

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes, *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective* (Los Angeles. London: Pine Forge press, 2007), p.69

<sup>6</sup> Praveen Rai. "Electoral Participation of Women in India, key determinants barrier" *Economic & Political Weekly* Vol. XLVI No.3( January 15, 2011), p.47

candidates. As discussed in chapter 3, there was no woman candidate in the year 1983. At present, there is only one woman MP who was elected for the first time in the 2008 Bye- Election and then again got elected in the 2009 General Election from Tura constituency. In fact, she became the youngest MP in the Indian parliament. Moreover, there is only one women legislator in the Meghalaya legislative Assembly and three women MDCs in the Khasi Autonomous District Council (KHADC) and no woman MDC in Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) and Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC). There were three women contestants in the 2009 MP election, twenty one women contested in the Legislative Assembly election 2008 and eleven contested for the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, four in Jaintia Hills, and one in Garo hills. The figures presented above show a dismal picture of women representation even though Meghalaya is generally believed to have women with better social status than the rest of the country.

This chapter attempts to study the obstacles and achievements of the successful and unsuccessful candidates with the intention to have a clear understanding about the role of woman in politics in the changing scenario. Out of eleven executive members in the Khasi Autonomous District Council, there are two women whereas, out of 60 members in the Legislative Assembly, there is only one woman. “With few exceptions, such as the city-states of Ancient Greece, government has historically been the prerogative of the few. Political participation has been confined to a tiny circle of hereditary rulers, their entourage and a narrow stratum of wealthy magnates.”<sup>7</sup> The data collection for this purpose is primarily based on the semi-structured interview with the successful and unsuccessful women candidate who contested in the District Council (MDCs) Election 2009, Legislative Assembly Election (MLAs) 2008 and Parliament Election (MPs) 2009.

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<sup>7</sup> Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government: An Introduction* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.2009),p.19

### **7.1.1 Demographic profile of the respondents**

Profile of the respondents in table 7.1, clearly shows that there is no bar for women with respect to Christian religion, as all the women in power are Christians. Political participation of women in general shows that there is a positive impact of age in relation to attending campaign and political party affiliation. The lower the age, the lower is the political participation of women in Meghalaya as we have already seen in our discussion in Chapter 6 by using Karl Pearson's analysis. But, age does show a negative impact concerning contesting and winning election. Teilinia Syiem Thangkhiew is the youngest MDC in Meghalaya where she won the election at the age of 27 and similarly, Agatha Sangma became the youngest MP in India. Therefore, age shows no bar for women's participation at the highest level. Educational status seems to give them confidence to come forward and contest in election. In fact, lower educational qualification discouraged them as it is difficult to cope-up with the issues and challenges of the present scenario even though no bar for educational qualification has been put forward by the constitution for contesting election in India. Marital status reveals that two out of five women are married, while among the rest, one is widow, another a single mother and one is unmarried. The type of occupation too has no special role towards the political recruitment of women at the highest level in Meghalaya as women who have been elected are from different occupation and background.

A study on the motivations and family background of the respondents clearly illustrates that family background of the candidate determines her success. Thus, it demonstrates that the matrilineal system of Meghalaya shows no exception to the patriarchal values when it comes to political recruitment at the higher level. There is a saying; there is a woman behind every successful man. On the contrary, there are always a male behind the successful women politicians. Tracing the political history of the successful politicians in the mainland India as well pictures similar position. For instance, Babri Devi,

Sonia Gandhi, Sheila Dixit and others are largely influenced by their political background that facilitates their success in the political scenario.

Richard E. Maitland has rightly suggested that women, who get elected to political office, need to pass through three stages of political barriers. Firstly, they need to select themselves to stand for the election. Secondly, they need to get selected by the party and then by the voters. Every political system is continuously involved in recruiting individual into political roles.<sup>8</sup> A study on political recruitment of the women politician is intended to explain the reasons for the low representation of women in politics, and the obstacles faced by women in entering political office. Research has found out that one thing in common is the historical culture and tradition, which played a dominant role as a barrier towards the active participation of women in gaining political power. It is usually said that politics and administration are considered to be male arena. This rather hampers the active involvement of women in the administration.

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<sup>8</sup> N. Jayapalan, *Political Sociology* (Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors,)p.100

**Table: 7.1 Profile of the successful women politicians 2008-2009 Election**

<b>Names</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Profession before joining politics</b>	<b>Position held at present</b>
Agatha Sangma	30	M.A. LLB	Unmarried	Christian	Lawyer	MP
Ampareen Lyngdoh	44	PhD	Single mother	Christian	Lecturer	MLA
Irene Lyngdoh	55	B.A.	Widow	Christian	Business	MDC
Grace Kharpuri	40	B.A.	Married	Christian	Government Employee	MDC
Teilinia Thangkhiew	27	B.Com	Married	Christian	Business	MDC

Source: Case study of few women politicians

## Case study of few women politician

### 7.1.2 Political family background

Like other parts of India, family background played a very important role in the success of women politicians in Meghalaya too. This is evident from the interviews with the women politicians. The political backgrounds of the current successful women politicians in Meghalaya are being discussed as under.

#### *Case: 1*

Ampareen Lyngdoh the lone woman legislator was the then Education minister and currently is the minister of urban affairs<sup>9</sup> in Meghalaya legislative Assembly. During the interview, Mrs. Lyngdoh stated that she was not new in the field of politics. Her father, P.G. Marbaniang is a well known parliamentarian in Meghalaya. He was the MDC in the year (1979-83, 1984-88); MLA of Laitumkhrah constituency in 1972, 1978, 1988, and 1998. He also contested in the General Election to the Lok Sabha from Shillong Constituency in the year 1977; he was not elected but stood second in terms of votes to the elected candidate. Then he was elected as the MP to the Lok Sabha in 1989,1991,1984,1989.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs Lyngdoh disclosed honestly about her success in politics. She attributed to her political family background which facilitates her success in politics. Being the daughter of the parliamentarian and the sister of the former Home Minister R. G. Lyngdoh, it was of great help to get recruited in politics. In fact, it is just like handing over the charge of the constituency from her father, to her brother and then to her.

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<sup>9</sup> Reshuffle of portfolios on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 under the leadership(CM) of Dr Mukul Sangma

<sup>10</sup> Compiled from *Meghalaya Election Hand book*.(Meghalaya: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer 1972-2009,2010)

### ***Case: 2***

Teilinia Syiem Thangkhiew is the youngest MDC, won from Myllem Constituency, East Khasi hills. It was her first time to contest the election. Out of the 8 candidates, she is the only candidate in the district council, who won with 1800 votes and that too against the sitting MLA of the constituency. She stated that as her achievement. She further stated that it is not hard to convince people but one need to have personality and quality. Besides, she also attributed her success and motivation to join politics to her political family background. Since her father is a well known MDC and was also the former MLA of the constituency, at the very young age she got the chance to attend political party meetings and public meetings with her father. She would distribute goods and materials to the public in his constituency, communicated with the people directly in his absence, attended funeral gatherings in his constituencies and attended meetings on his behalf

Mrs. Thangkhiew too confidently stated that being the daughter of the political family, she had the political experience at her very young age. Moreover, age and gender does not matter. When she was elected as the MDC, she was only 27years old. Her experience in the field of politics gave her confidence that ultimate played a very important role toward her recruitment in the field of politics. When contested for the election, she has the advantage as she has been already recognized by the people of her constituency. Thus, this enables her to prove her quality to the people about her ability.

### ***Case: 3***

Smt. Debora C. Marak is another known woman personality in Meghalaya. She is the recipient of the „Best Citizen of India“ Award, instituted by the International Publishing House, New Delhi. The award has been bestowed upon her for her achievements in politics that she has made through her acumen and hard work which have put her on the top of the political spectrum. She was not successful when she contested the election for the first

time in 1998 Assembly Election. But then she contested again in 2003 and won the Election from Rorengiri constituency, Garo Hills. She became the first women deputy chief minister in Meghalaya and North east India. She was the former Minister of State for Mining and Geology and assisting the minister in-charge of Soil Conservation, Meghalaya, She works as the Mahila President of the State and at present she is the Working President of the MPCC and holds office for the second term. She contested in 2008 (MLA) General Election and the 2009 General Election (MP) but lost. She is known as the seasoned politician.

Before entering into politics, Mrs. Marak was the General Secretary of the National Students Union of India which was very strong in Meghalaya during the 1980s, secretary of the youth congress, General Secretary District Congress Committee (DCC). In an interview with her about her experience in the field of politics, Mrs. Marak mentioned that politics is not new to her as she was born and brought up in a political family and S.C. Marak is her uncle. It may be noted here that S.C. Marak is one of the a veteran Congress leader in Meghalaya and the only chief minister after late Captain W. A. Sangma to complete full five years term after getting separate statehood. Therefore, her uncle is one of the most influential members of the Congress Party and a renowned politician. She courageously stated that previously, she had no ambition to join politics but her political family background motivated her to be in politics. Even she mentioned that she has the vast experience of 27 years in politics.

#### ***Case: 4***

Mrs. Irin Lyngdoh is the sitting MDC from Pariong Constituency and also the executive member in the KHADC. She entered politics for the first time in 2003 and won both MLA and MDC elections from Pariong Constituency. In the 2008 election, she got defeated but again got elected in the MDC election in 2009. She was a business woman by profession before



entering politics. For her, the courage to contest elections is due to the positive approach of the people. Lyngdoh further acknowledges that her father paved her the way to entering in politics as he too once contested for the election.

### ***Case: 5***

Miss Agatha Sangma is the youngest MP and the first woman MP from Meghalaya. She passed her M.Sc. in Environmental Management from Nongttingham University in the UK and also did her Diploma in Human Rights Laws and Diploma in Securities & Investment Laws from Pune University. She entered politics for the first time in 2008 Bye-Election to Lok Sabha from Tura Constituency (Garo hills). She won the Bye-Election against three male candidates. Her father's decision to shift from national politics to the state politics facilitated her to join in politics.

Thereafter, in the year 2009 General Election to the Lok Sabha she again contested and won the election against Smt. Debora Marak (Case: 3) with 17,945 votes and two other contestants, one of them was a male and the other one a female candidate from Tura Constituency. Her father, Purno Sangma is the veteran and influential politician of Meghalaya.<sup>11</sup> Her brothers are in state politics too, Conrad Kongkal Sangma sitting MLA (Selsella Constituency) and James Pangsan Kongkal Sangma (Rongchugiri constituency) from Garo hills. They both got elected in 2008 General Election and her father is currently, the sitting MLA of the Tura constituency.

Agatha Sangma despite her lack of experience and yet because of her influential political family background, took the decision to join politics and it in fact facilitated her to political success. She was practicing law in Delhi high court after her studies and all of a sudden in just a period of one month decided to join politics. "For me joining politics is not my personal choice but a

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<sup>11</sup> He is one of the founders of the Nationalist Congress Party. Shri P. A. Sangma has been elected and re-elected for the Lok Sabha Election for 8 terms (1977-2006) except in the year 1989 that he had contested and choose the state politics. He has been elected and re-elected and was the speaker of the Lok Sabha in 2004, Chief Minister of Meghalaya (1988-1990).

collective decision” she stated.<sup>12</sup> Collective decisions here refer to her family and the political party. She has been entrusted with the responsibility to contest the election as they have enormous faith in her credibility as an individual and as a family person. It may be noted that Agatha Sangma studied in UK, then Pune University and then working at Delhi High Court, and so, she has no time for politics earlier. However, other than her political family background, her educational background and exposure to outside world gives her confidence too.

### ***Case: 6***

Grace Kharpuri who belongs to a Khasi community is currently the MDC of Nongshken Constituency (KHADC) and the wife of the sitting MLA of the same constituency. She entered politics for the first time and won the election. In a span of one month she decided to join politics. She stated that before she never dreamt to be a politician. Within three days she decided to resign from her government job in the Gauhati High Court and finally contested in the election. On the motivation to contest election, she said, “for me it is a destiny...” She contested as an independent candidate and directly or indirectly, her politician husband’s support led her into politics. It may be noted that, the success of the women politicians in Meghalaya are mostly linked with their family background in politics. The political recruitment processes of the women in the matrilineal society are not different from the successful women in other patriarchal societies of India.

The above six cases in Meghalaya clearly shows that most of the successful women candidates are highly influenced by their family experiences and success in politics. According to the Baseline Report, when family members are already involved in politics it automatically helps them to have the necessary exposure and even entry into political arena. For example, Sajabai Katkar is a GP member in Maharashtra. She is illiterate and studied up

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<sup>12</sup> Interview conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010

to third standard but her father was active in politics and so, she followed his example by standing for general seat in the GP. She won the support of both opposing panels who wanted to co-opt her as she was already actively involved in the welfare work related to the village prior to elections.<sup>13</sup> It may be noted that Rabri Devi of Bihar too who is almost illiterate but because of her politician husband Laloo Yadav, she could even be in the chief minister post.

The political background of the women politicians weighs heavily in their political recruitment, as they inherit the traits and qualities of politicians before they came into the main political process for recruitment. All the women in the 5 cases above, clearly and honestly ascribed to their political family background for their success. They have got the idea and training about politics and so are not alien to the political environment. This factor facilitated their recruitment in politics. Political family background has a positive and significant impact on women's political participation and in holding political office as well. Maitland pointed out that the first barrier is that women have to select themselves in joining politics.<sup>14</sup> It is true that without the readiness to join politics or get one self in politics, it is unfeasible to contest elections especially for women. As politics is a full time job, as such, they need stimulus to enter politics. Family background, in fact, provides the requisite stimuli to join politics.

Keeping in view that the researcher asked questions on the factor that motivates women leaders to join politics Mrs. Lyngdoh confidently stated that there were not many qualified candidates in the constituency so, she wanted to play the role of a "saviour" for the plight of the people in her constituency with a difference. Similarly, Mrs. Teilinia Thangkhiew, Agatha Sangma wanted to follow the footsteps of their fathers to work for the people. Mrs Lyngdoh, Deborah Marak and Mrs. Thankhiew stated that their experiences in politics prompted them to join politics. Such experiences and enthusiasm to work for

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<sup>13</sup> Baseline Report. *Ibid*, p.42

<sup>14</sup> N. Jayapalan *Op. Cit.*, p.100

the people had developed because of their political family background. Ampareen Lyngdoh's statement reflects her confidence as no one was qualified more than she does. In the case of Teilinia as well, has the confidence to be in politics, as through it, she can bring lot of changes for the welfare of the people. In short, their political family background provided them the opportunity to have experience in politics, gave them confidence which basically motivated them to join politics. While Debora Marak reveals that political family background has a direct impact on her political career, it facilitated her to become the president of the youth Congress; and also gave her the opportunity to be popular among the youths to prove her ability. In fact, the youth had confidence and they encouraged her to contest the election. She had no problem too in getting party tickets because all her family members are Congress party supporters right from the time of her grandfather.

On the motivation to contest election, Miss Sangma mentioned that besides her personal interest, she has a positive approach towards politics. What really encouraged her to join politics is because of her father, which revealed that her political family helped her to enter politics. This in fact reflects in her statement when she referred to her father's popularity in terms of the appreciation of his works by the people in the Garo hills. Regarding being the first women MP from Meghalaya she said: "It is definitely a beginning, I represent women, trying to voice on behalf of women."<sup>15</sup>

The above discussions on the factors that contributed towards the success of the women politicians in Meghalaya shows that family background has a very significant role for their success. To enter politics, it is important that they should have the money power as well as the moral support of the family. Behind most of the successful women in politics stand the successful male politicians. Their recruitment to politics needs to be an all round preparation. First, they need to have the motivation and willingness to join politics, confidence on themselves, family support, political party support and

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Agatha Sangma on the 23th Dec.2010

they need to gain the confidence from the community both male and female electorates and the society at large. According to the Baseline Report, when a woman comes from a family with political affiliations, she typically has more confidence and feels that she needs less training than one without any familial background.<sup>16</sup> This may be true in the case of Agatha Sangma and Grace Kharpuri that they have no political experience at all before they joined politics. Mrs. Kharpuri said that she has no problem in politics now; she enjoys working and serving the people even though in the beginning she needed some adjustment with her family. The comments of Ampareen Lyngdoh that being the daughter of the politician and the sister of the politician, clearly demonstrates that she has the confidence that no one has the qualification than herself as shown in her motivation to join election (see case: 1.1). The constituency where she represented was perhaps one of the prestigious constituencies which is considered as the posh area of Shillong. Her motivation to join politics is because of her experience in politics. It is more like a training ground for her, from her childhood, and almost a preparation for her to join politics at the right time. In all the five cases of the successful politicians, it reflects the active participation of their family members that led them to choose political career.

### **7.1.3 Family support**

Family support plays a very important role for women to get themselves recruited to the political office. Right from the time that they take decisions to contest election, during the election process and after as well, the family support is important. In this matter, an interview was conducted with unsuccessful woman candidate who contested in the elections. For example, Smt. Florence T. Sangma from Garo Hills contested in the MLAs Bye-Election, in South Garo Hills, Baghmara in 2008. She was a teacher by profession and a social worker. She was the secretary of the „Simsang Jarek Socio Cultural Association, and also was the representative from South Garo

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<sup>16</sup> Baseline Report, *Op.Cit.*,p.41

Hills in the Meghalaya State Women Commission, representative in the District Consumer Forum, DRDA, members of 2-3 Schools, Disaster management, NRHM, NREGS. Despite having a wide-ranging political exposure, she could not succeed in getting elected in the bye-election because she could not get her family support in this matter. She clearly stated that her brother too did not support her to contest for the election as she is supposed to look after her old age mother. When asked on her motivation to contest the election, she stated that, as a social worker, she had been in contact with the politicians, involved herself with the NGOs which motivated her to join politics.

Politics is more than contesting and winning election. Family support therefore is required not only at the initial stage but throughout. Domestic sphere is still considered as the arena of women in Meghalaya, no matter what the political office or high job ranking that the women hold. Baseline Report stated that women are typically forced to play a triple role when they enter politics, namely, they have to work at home, in their jobs and in the political institutions.<sup>17</sup> In an interview with one of the leaders of the women organization in Meghalaya, she stated that no matter how much she might be busy, she would never allowed any one to do the household chores especially in cooking, except in unavoidable circumstances. She would love to do it by herself and has no problem with it. Therefore, management of the private sphere and public sphere would perhaps be the biggest challenge for women to face when decision is made to join politics especially for the married women.

#### **7.1.4 Party support**

Political parties too played a very important role in the process of political recruitment. The political parties in many cases are reluctant in giving tickets to the woman candidates. The fact is that they do not have confidence on the women to win the election. As most of the members are male, therefore

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<sup>17</sup> Baseline Report, *Op.Cit.*,p.45

they still hesitate to allow women to supersede them. It may be noted here that men are of the attitude that they do not support women to hold high post in politics. For instance, even the discussion may not be a serious one but it reflects the ethics that male has it in their mind that the society in general too are having this. During the course of interview with Debora Marak who was the working president of MPCC, the MPCC president Mr. Friday Lyngdoh was also present. He insisted that women would come out of their homes when women reservation bill will be passed. The remark reflects that that men do not generally want to share power with women. Same is the case with Ampareen Lyngdoh. Her father and brother are the Congress party members but because of her gender, she was denied of Congress ticket. She contested for the 2008 General election for the first time under UDP ticket and got elected. Later on, in the bye-election,<sup>18</sup> the Congress party offered her the ticket to contest from their party. Ampareen Lyngdoh's case shows that women have to prove themselves to gain the confidence of the mainstream political party and the community by being successful through any means. They have to prove their worth to win the confidence of a mainstream political party like congress party.

We have seen the cases of the six successful women politicians where all of them had the party support for getting elected. The fact, however, remains is that they do not enlist the support of party due to any ideological reasons rather than them, links to the party due to family support. However, grace Kharpuri stated that she wanted to be independent candidate as none of the party ideologies seemed to attract her so much.

### **7.1.5 Community support**

Lack of community support is one of the factors that hinder active participation of women in politics. Even though Indian government upholds the spirit of equality, and women are having equal rights to contest with men,

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<sup>18</sup> Bye-Election happen as none of the political party has the majority to form the government which led to the declaration of Presidents rule in the State. Therefore, she resigns from the UDP and freshly contested in the by- election from the Congress Party.

women do not generally find themselves in a friendly atmosphere to contest election because of the belief that the area of women is not the political arena. It is merely a psychological factor that women are barred from entering politics. This idea has its roots in the mentality of both men and women in the community. Two factors have been identified that resulted in such mentality; firstly, except few localities in the urban area of Shillong, women are not allowed to attend *Dorbar* or village council until recently. Administration and matters of serious concerns are to be discussed by the elders, *tang ki Rangbah* (male members only) but no women and children or *ki khynthei khynnah* (women and children) are allowed to attend the meeting. The idea of *ki khynthei khynnah* generally reveals that women are treated at par with children who have less reasoning power than the elder male members of the society.

Similarly, in the case of the Garo women, the *Nokma* are always men. In an interview with one of the leaders of the civil society organization in Garo hills, it was evident from the mindset of Garo men. He states that, “women in Meghalaya are empowered enough in the social status that there is no harm if politics are male dominated”. Such is the mentality of the community that generally affects the psychology that women do not need to enter politics. Secondly, it is often felt by the community that women are weaker sex than men in thinking as well. Thirdly, women lack experience. Ampareen Lyngdoh, the lone woman legislator, when discussed on the problems and challenges that women faced in decision making, stated that, “Men do not want to share power with women and do not listen seriously to decisions made by women because they have the impression that women cannot take decisions.” Thus, it is more a psychological factor and mindset of men that women are not fit to be in politics than. Women have to prove their potentiality. Nongbri in her book, *Women and Matrilini* stated that in the concept of the Khasis, women are basically producers whose functions are to produce children for continuity of the family and the clan and to look after the well being of the household and it is this



ideology, that they are traditionally excluded from participation in politics.<sup>19</sup> Nongbri's statement clearly demonstrates the confinement role of women to household chores and that women are excluded from politics is merely the psychological factors. It is also reflected in Ampareen Lyngdoh's view that "Being a woman, I need to work hard to gain their confidence" This further clarifies that she needs to prove about their concept in the inability of women to be a decision maker is wrong. The word „they“ here refers to the community supporters. Meghalaya Human Development Report, 2008 states that in the political arena, participation of women as candidates is still receiving a luke-warm attitude of the male members in particular and the society in general.

Previous research and findings also support that culture and traditions play a very important role in creating attitudes towards participation of women in politics, which ultimately becomes a barrier towards political participation of women at the higher level as decision maker. Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes pointed out that like many societies across the world, Indian culture and tradition dictate that politics is a man's world.<sup>20</sup> Whilst Women and Development Series in *Women and Empowerment* prepared by Marlee Karl pointed out that gender discrimination often stems from tradition, conservative cultural attitudes and religion or religious interpretations.<sup>21</sup> Letha Kumari pointed out that women in India are subjected to varying degrees of social discrimination, traditional ascribed role within the four walls of the house.<sup>22</sup> Comparatively, women in Meghalaya practice matrilineal system that women are found to have no social discrimination but when it comes to participation of women as decision makers in politics, it shows no difference like in other parts of India that are patriarchal in nature. The previous books and articles on Women's participation of women in politics reflect the psychological traits that

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<sup>19</sup> Tiplut, Nongbri, *Development, Ethnicity and Gender: Select Essays on Tribes in India* (Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2005), p.19

<sup>20</sup> Pamela Paxton and Melanie M. Hughes, *Op.Cit.*, p.16

<sup>21</sup> Marlee Karl, *Op.Cit.*, p.12

<sup>22</sup> R. Lethari. *Op.Cit.*, p.19

women are considered unfit to be the administrator as „administrations are traditionally considered to be man“s domain.<sup>23</sup>

### **7.1.6 Confidence**

Confidence is another psychological factor that affects women“s participation in politics. It is a dependent variable which generally depends on the political background, education, and political experience or exposure. Women usually lack confidence about their potentiality unless they have a strong political family background, better education, having experience or receiving the moral support of the community. Money only cannot buy confidence but is derivative in nature.

The above discussion on the political recruitment of women show that low participation of women at the decision making level is largely influenced by both internal and external factors. There is no single factor responsible for the widening gap between men and women“s participation at the decision making level. The factors are in the form of gender related factors and gender neutral as well. The challenge for women starts from home, society and if elected after holding the post as well. Fig.7.1 explains the structure of political recruitment of women in Meghalaya. They have to go through different stages. First, they need to have financial resources, family support and community support. Normally when women candidates contest elections, there are tendencies that they are judged more than that of male candidates. For women to contest election is somewhat unusual, while for men to contest election is natural. This is partly due to historical evidences that there are few women who choose to join politics. Therefore, supports of the male members are very important in the recruitment process.

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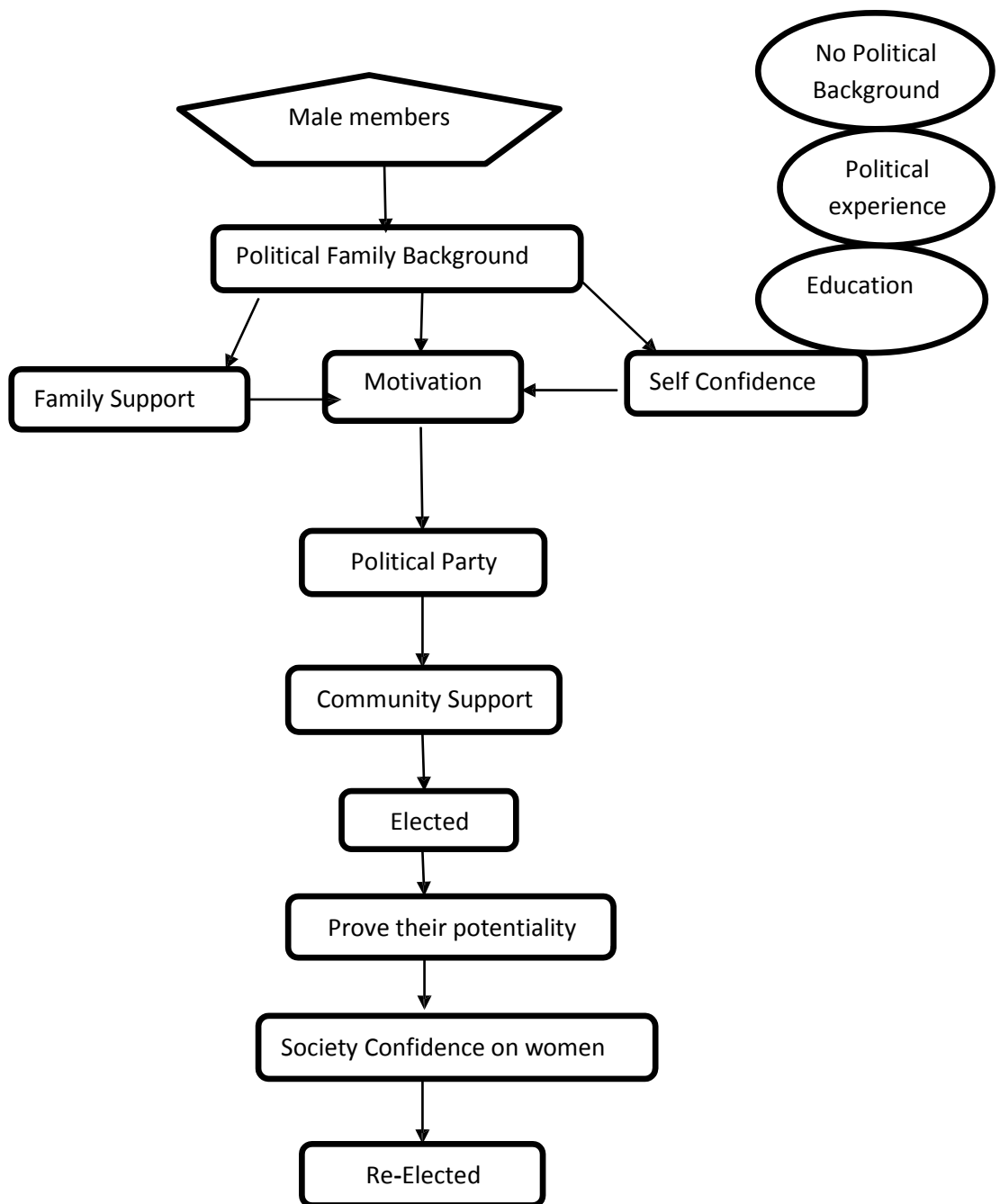
<sup>23</sup> Writers like L. S. Gassah, “Status of Women in Jaintia Culture” in Saumen Sen, ed., *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House, 1997), R.S. Lyngdoh, *Government and Politics in Meghalaya*, (New Delhi, Sanchar Publishing House, 1996), Carolyne Marak, *Status of women in Garo culture*, in Saumen Sen, *Women in Meghalaya* (ed). (New Delhi: Daya Publishing House (2002).

The present study shows that most of the successful politicians who are in power have the political background where male members facilitate their entry into politics. The first challenge that women have to face is the motivation to join politics. If there is no political background, they need to have political experience, better education so as to have self confidence. Self confidence without experience in politics can also happen if the candidate has strong political background. Women also need the support of the family, political parties and the community support. Finally, when they have all these, they will contest and win the election. After they win the election, their route to success is not yet over, which they still have to prove with their potentiality. The idea of weaker sex as decision maker should be removed and they are equal to men in mental power. After they got into power, they have to prove their potentiality so as to gain the community confidence for the second time. Ampareen Lyngdoh got elected two times in the MLAs election 2008 and again in the Bye-Election 2009. The local newspaper stated, “The lone women legislator increased her winning margin from 1,593 in the 2008 assembly elections to 2,327 this time”<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Agatha Sangma got elected in the MP Bye-election and again in the MP election 2009. Debora Marak too was holding her office for the two consecutive years as the Working President of the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee.

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<sup>24</sup> *Shillong Times*, 21/8/2009

### Women's routes to political office



**Fig. 7.1 Structure of Women's Political Recruitment in Meghalaya**

## 7.2 Role performance

Role performance illustrates the role played by the successful women politicians within the family as well as their performance in holding political office. Role performance in the present study is based on the personal interview with the same women politicians who are currently in power.

### *Case: 1*

Grace Kharpuri is the executive member in the KHADC. She is at present holding the portfolios of taxation and education department. She states that taxation department is not an easy task, as it has to deal with money. She is able to balance her role as a politicians as well as a home maker. She hardly missed shopping and kitchen duty such as washing dishes, taking care of her flowers and take tuitions for her kids. Being in politics, she never neglected her duty towards the people of her constituency as well. Mrs. Kharpuri's activities as a politician and a woman clearly demonstrate that women do not have to behave like men when they join politics and are not inferior to men on any matter.

### *Case: 2*

Ampareen Lyngdoh being the lone woman legislator does not merely remain as a spectator, but takes up actions when required. Considering her role as the single mother, she has a big responsibility at home as well. For instance, in the midst of our conversation with the visitor in her chamber in the Meghalaya secretariat, she received a phone call from her children and without any hesitation, she responded, and gave them instructions and then continued again with her conversation.<sup>25</sup> Such incidence may be too few to mention but it clearly depicts the double role that women has to perform. Both politics and family are both full time jobs for the women. Women in power maintained

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<sup>25</sup> Personal observation when waiting for my turn to have interview with her on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010

their role wonderfully in a very systematic manner. This is perhaps showing their wisdom to play a double role which men may not be able to do so.

Regarding her role in politics, Mrs. Lyngdoh took a very strong decision when there was a political instability in the state that led to the declaration of President's rule in the state in the year 2008. She resigned from UDP and contested again afresh from the Congress party. She states that since then she has been very active in taking care of several departments. She was the Parliamentary Secretary of the Education Department in the Meghalaya Progressive Alliance (MPA) Government. Subsequently, she was the Minister of Education department, Printing and stationery, Food and civil supplies. Thereafter, in the month of August 2012, there was a reshuffle in portfolios and she was allotted as the minister of urban affairs, Municipal Administration and Housing.<sup>26</sup> Before contesting election, she was the spokes person of the youth Congress Committee until the time she resigned in 2008. She is the President of the Block Congress Committee of 16-Shillong -8, Member of the AICC and Member of the Election Committee of the MPCC.

### *Case: 3*

Smt. Debora Marak is another known personality in Meghalaya. She was the first woman Deputy Chief Minister in Meghalaya and the only Women Deputy Chief Minister so far and was the lone woman in the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government during the year 1998. She was the mining and geology minister. At present, she is the Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) working president and the first woman to hold the post for two consecutive terms. She was presented the "Indira Gandhi Achievers Award" by the International Friendship Society at India Habitat Centre; Delhi. The vice chairperson of the National Minority Commission stated that the award was given to Marak for her accomplishment in diverse fields of activities. "As a woman leader from the remote place of Garo Hills, Marak has

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<sup>26</sup> She was the Education Minister when the interview was conducted.

made immense contributions towards development, particularly among the women,” and Gurpreet Singh, general secretary of the India International Friendship Society (IIFS) said. “Marak is the only woman Deputy Chief Minister in the State up to date. She is also the only woman working President of MPCC for a second consecutive term.”<sup>27</sup> The award and felicitation statement quoted above reveals that women have no dearth of experience in the field of politics and they have the potential like those of men. Further, recently in the month of December 2012, she was given charge for the post of the president of the MPCC, for a month due to Dr Friday Lyngdoh’s illness. Therefore, she became the first woman President of the MPCC.

Irin Lyngdoh and Grace Kharpuri who are the present MDCs are holding the post of the Executive member in the KHADC. It may be noted that women leaders like Agatha Sangma who was holding the portfolios of Union minister of State; Rural Development and environmental. She was successful in raising many important issues relating to environment and sustainable development. It is worth here to quote Sangma’s statement as mentioned in *The Times of India*:

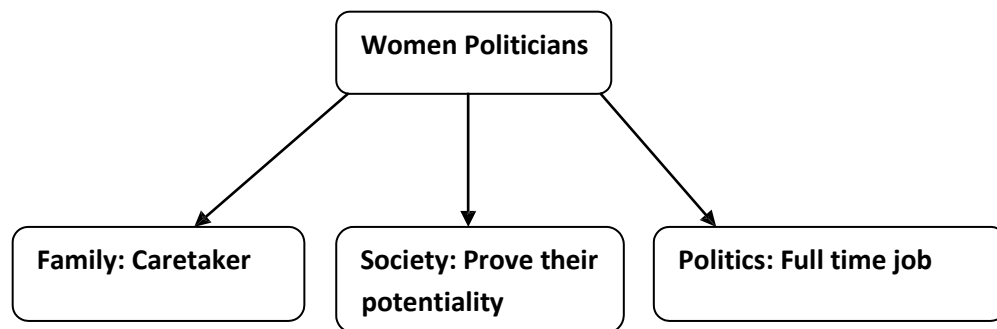
"But in the ensuing year, I believe I have been successful in pushing various issues. With my background in environmental management, from a policy point of view, I have been successful in incorporating sustainability of water as a 20 percent component in budget allocation...I am concentrating on my work as a minister. I have worked hard to shift our ministry's focus from ground water to a more sustainable use of water. I am trying my best to make a mark as a performing minister."<sup>28</sup>

Her statement clearly shows her active role in her department and enthusiasm to perform her duty well. The responses of the women politicians to the questions on their role and activities clearly demonstrate the triangular role that women have to perform. At home, they are not to miss their homework as

<sup>27</sup> *Meghalaya Times*; Daily English; Newspaper, 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011

<sup>28</sup> *The Times of India*, 27/6/2009

mother, wife and caretaker of the family. In the society their life should be different from others, they need to prove and improve their potentiality as women leaders. Besides, politics is supposed to be a full time job that one needs to pay attention to the public interest and the interest of their constituencies, their party and so on.



**Figure 7.2 Role performance model of women Leaders**

## **Conclusion**

The above structure on the role performance of the women leaders depicts the triple role that a woman has to perform (see fig.7.2). When a woman enters the political arena, it does not imply that women are free from household obligations. The study suggested that the main problem that women face in entering political realm is the time factor because politics is a full time job. It signifies that women have to be carefully managing their time to devote to politics while they cannot ignore their family responsibility especially those who are married. Hence, family support is of utmost important. Grace Kharपुरi noted that as usual, her routine for the household work is not being disturbed. This clearly demonstrates that women in the matrilineal society are not the boss in the family as has been generally assumed by the outsiders. If women have to join politics, she first needs to be clear with that of the household chores. Caroline Marak wrote on the status of the Garo women in the traditional society that “A woman’s day begins at dawn. She cooks for her family, fetches



water, washes utensils, nurses the young ones, husks paddy...”<sup>29</sup> Caroline explains the subjective position of the Garo women in the traditional society that women has a very important role to play in the private sphere as well as outside in the field with her husband and has no leisure time.

Secondly, women have to prove themselves their potentiality to the society and their colleagues in politics as well, as men generally do not care about to the decisions made by women. Ampareen Lyngdoh states that “men do not want to share power with women when it comes to making serious decisions” This may perhaps be one of the obstacles that women do not get chance in holding higher positions like that of the Chief minister or home minister. Men do not want women to supersede them. Nongbri quoted the remark of the Chief Minister while announcing the constitution of the Meghalaya State Commission for Women about the empowerment of women: “...I do not know how far we shall empower them but I believe they will not supersede men”’s power otherwise men will lose their identity in the long run”<sup>30</sup> The quotation shows the unfriendly atmosphere for women in power relation with men. Thus, women have to be extra ordinary when it comes to sharing power with men in politics. In relation to the status of Garo women in the traditional society, Caroline argued that “In the field of administration, women have no part at all...”<sup>31</sup> Dr Bibilinda Wahlang who contested in the 2008 general Assembly to the MLA election from Mairang constituency too states that the main challenges she was facing at the time of contesting election was to convince the male members or the *Rangbah* because of her gender. Women have to prove themselves that they are not lagging behind than men in thinking. To change the indifference attitude towards women”’s ability is one of the biggest challenges that women face at the time of contesting election and post-election as well.

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<sup>29</sup> Caroline Marak, “Status of Women in Garo Culture” in Saumen Sen eds. *Women in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: Omsons, Prakash House,1997),p.61

<sup>30</sup> Tiplut Nongbri, *A Situational Analysis of Women And Girls in Meghalaya* (New Delhi: National Commission for Women ), p.71

<sup>31</sup> *Op.Cit.*

Thirdly, generally there is no institutional discrimination or cultural discrimination towards the political participation of women at the decision making level. Teilinia Thangkhiew states that even though at her young age, she gained respect from her colleagues. So also, Grace Kharpuri comments that all her colleagues in the district council are very friendly and usually respect her suggestions as one of the elder or the *Longkmie*. Debora Marak, being the president of the working committee stated that so far she finds no discrimination or the problems faced by her because of her gender; even male members too may be facing the same problems. Therefore, the problems faced by the women politicians are only at the time of contesting election as well as in managing the time factor at home, in society and politics.

The challenges and prospects that women are facing in politics are not because of discrimination but generally because of the attitude and doubts about women's ability to hold political office. The patriarchal attitude acts as a barrier towards women's participation in politics as decision maker that discourage them and they tend to lose their self confidence. "Patriarchal attitudes become so embedded that they are taken as natural"<sup>32</sup> it may be noted that women faced no discrimination at the decision making level once they got elected. The study reveals that what confines women in Meghalaya to the private sphere and only few women contested the election is mainly because of lack of self confidence by women themselves and they do not generally choose politics.

The study suggested that those who are able to come to power, they experience no discrimination against them, except in few cases and that would be because of the psychological factors and inferiority complex. To be a political leader, it requires skills and experiences. However, these are also the qualities that men too are supposed to have. Unless women are able to come

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<sup>32</sup> MD. Mostafizur Rahman Khan, Fardaus Ara, "Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad perspective" *Asian Affairs*, Vol.29 No.1 73-00, (Jan- March 2006), p.87

out of their private sphere and face politics, no women would have that experience or fit to be a political leader. Among the successful women politicians, two out of six who are in power, they are of the opinion that women reservation bill in Meghalaya is not required as there is no barrier or discrimination against women's participation in politics. "My colleagues are very good, I face no discrimination" says Grace Kharpuri, the MDC of Nongshken Constituency.

Other than the patriarchal attitude, there are other factors like the attitude of "*dirty politics*". Women are more sensitive to *dirty politics*. They believed that in almost every political department, there are always issues related to corruption and unsatisfactory performance which politicians have to face open criticisms in the mass media. The nature of politics itself generally discouraged women to enter politics. They don't want themselves to get involved in all those issues. Thus, some of the factors are gender-related and others are non gender-related in character which mainly obstruct women's participation in politics, especially those at the highest level.

To sum up, the present study on the political recruitment and role performance of women in politics, demonstrates that women generally face problems at the first stage in order to get themselves into politics. Lack of experience does not seem to be the problem with women only, as men also do face such handicaps. It is a fact that women's participation in politics has been very low. Both men and women tend to believe that women are not capable of making decisions. Therefore, it is more of the psychological factors rather than other factors that obstruct women's participation in politics at the higher level as decision makers. Taking into account the low representation of women at the higher level, several researchers and academicians suggested different factors that are responsible to it. But, however, the nature of the obstacles and challenges that women have in the traditional societies like Meghalaya may not hold the same picture in the present situation. Thus, the types of problems may differ from time to time and place to place or from one state to the other. In

respect of Meghalaya, matrilineality has no bearing on the overall participation of women in politics.

CHAPTER- 8  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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**8.1 Introduction**

The thesis was set out to study and analyze the political participation of women in Meghalaya. The research sought to understand the extent of participation of women as voters, political party members, election campaigners etc. (conventional participation) and their participation in agitation and protest (unconventional participation). The significance of the study is based on the constructive approach that envisaged political stability between the government in power and the masses (citizens). It thus sought out to bridge the gap between theory and practice of democracy by ensuring gender equality in sharing political power. Generally, women in Meghalaya have been making wonderful contribution to family as passionate mothers and to the society as equal partners with men. Their contribution in diverse fields has been enormous as they have come up as rational actor in every possible opportunity that they get. On the contrary, their participation in politics especially as political representatives is almost invisible.

The previous studies and research conducted on women do not deal extensively on a comparative study of the two communities (Khasi and Garo women), especially with regard to their participation in politics. The significance of the research is the inclusive study of the urban and rural areas of both the communities. It thus gives a broader understanding on the political participation of women in Meghalaya.

The following sections attempt to summarise the empirical research conducted with the help of survey method and SPSS analysis as well as the outcome of the interviews conducted with a few women leaders. It also contains discussion on the relationship between the various variables, facts and data available through the various records available in various department and government official records. The results obtained from the work done thus

provide us with an important understanding of the whole phenomenon. It also attempts to conclude the chapter by making necessary suggestions for the future research. In this chapter we also highlight suggestions to address the problems faced by women in general and Meghalaya in particular which may be helpful for the policy makers, social workers, civil society actors and researchers who are interested in the field.

## **8.2 Summary and findings**

The socio- economic status of the women in Meghalaya is seen as the role model for women in other parts of India due to its matrilineal society. However, the percentage of women as political leaders is comparatively very low in the state. The research question arises as to why participation of women in politics is low and why it matters? Like other patriarchal society, women in Meghalaya have been in a position of a secondary status in terms of representation in decision making bodies.

The customary practices of the Khasi and Garo communities endorse males as their traditional chief since time immemorial. Women were nonetheless holding secondary position. They were given the chance only if there is no male heir. The Khasi traditional chief who is known as the *Syiem* has certain rule of succession to the female, but in reality the case is rare. Though there is a female Priestess known as the *Syiem-Sad*, her power is that of the religious ceremonial head. Similarly, in Garo hills the wife of the *Nokma* was entrusted with the authority to own the land but administration and management of the land belongs to her husband and her male relatives (*maharis* within the *machong* and members of the *A'king* land). The husband of the *Nokma* who inherits the *A'king* land became the *Nokma* or the chief. The clan and other members of the community recognize him to be the rightful head to manage the administrative affairs. Succession to such post by the female is rare.

The thesis studies the history of women's representation in Meghalaya in the pre-independence period till the last 2009 Lok Sabha Election. It also touches upon the latest election to the State Legislative Assembly in 2013. Under the Government of India Act 1935 women were given the right to vote, though it was limited and restricted. Few women politicians were seen in the Assam Legislative Assembly since 1937. Interestingly, the existence of the reservation of seats for women in Assam Legislative Assembly which is known as the Shillong Women Seat and the General Seat provide an opportunity for women representation in the legislative assembly. There were few women who contested for the elections in 1937, 1939 and 1946. There were, however, only two women who were able to come to power of the then undivided Assam.<sup>1</sup> Ms. Mavis Dunn Lyngdoh became the first woman from North East to become a minister; and she was inducted in the Md. Sadulla Ministry in 1939-41 and again 1942-45. Mrs. B. Khongmen contested from Autonomous District Constituency of the then undivided Assam against two male candidates, Shri Wilson Reade and L.L.D. Basan. She was nominated by the Congress against the seat reserved for the hill tribes. She was elected and became the first and only woman from Assam to represent the Lok Sabha in 1952. She was a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from 1946-52 and elected as a deputy speaker in 1952. In 1957, she returned to state politics but was defeated. And thereafter, no woman candidate contested for the election in 1962 and 1967.

Women's representation as decision maker at the district level is another area of concern. The existence of the Autonomous District Council is to empower the people at the lower level and to ensure decentralization of power. However, the number of women politicians in the three Autonomous District Council from 1952-2009 shows gender disparity at the district level. There were eighteen elected and six nominated members to the first United Khasi and Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council in the year 1952-57 in which only

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Mavis Dunn Lyngdoh and Mrs. B. Khongmen who are Khasis were elected from the Shillong women Seats which later became the Capital of Meghalaya.



one woman, that is, Smt. Lariam Shullai Khongwir was nominated as one of the members. There were eight women in the KHADC (1952-2009) in which seven were elected and one nominated (1952-57). There is only one woman in the JHADC till today and that too she was a nominated member in the year 1973. There were five women who got elected and seven nominated (and re-nominated) members to the GHADC (1952-2009) in which Smt Clarish K. Sangma was re-nominated, as Shri John Manner Marak was de-nominated (1999-2004), Smt. Ethelwitty Ch. Marak was also re-nominated as Shri. Dijon Behari Richil was de-nominated in the 10<sup>th</sup> term of the year 2004-2009. Out of the six terms that women candidate got elected to the GHADC, Smt Surjomoti (1952-57, 1957-64), Smt. Ch. Momin and Smt Reboti Barman (1983-89, 1989-1994) were elected for two consecutive terms.

The total number of electorates to the KHADC election 2009 were 5, 30,599 in which, 2, 52,921 are males electorates whereas 2, 77,678 are females. The number of females' electorates surpasses the number of male electorates. However, the number of women contestants is very low in comparison to men contestants. The total number of contestants was 144 in which 133 were males and only 11 were female contestants. In the JHADC General Election 2009, female electorates were 85,465 as against 79,701 male electorates. With regard to the number of contestants, there were 120 contestants out of which 3(three) were female contestants. Interestingly, none of them got elected. The study reveals that the increase in the number of female electorates has no bearing on results for women who won the election in the KHADC and JHADC 2009 elections. In the GHADC 2009 election, males outnumbered females unlike in KHADC and JHADC elections. Out of 168 contestants, only one woman contested for the election to the GHADC 2009 election.

The thesis has also examined women representation in the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly from 1972-2008. There were 189 male and 9 female contestants to the first General Election of the Meghalaya Legislative Assemblies which was held in the year 1972, but only one woman got elected.

Therefore, out of 60 seats, 59 seats were occupied by the male legislators and only one female legislator. Similarly, in the year 1978, there were 255 men and 7(seven) women contestants; only one female was elected. In 1983, there were 309 men and 8 women contestants but no woman got elected. Consequently, 60 seats were fully occupied by male legislators and zero woman representation in the government. The year 1988 shows that there was a drop in number of women who contested for the election to 3(three) whereas, there were 268 males who contested for the election and two women got elected. In 1993, again there was a slight increase in the number of women contestants to 7(seven), among whom only one got elected. In 1998 and 2003, the number of women contestants was increased to 14 and 3(three) women got elected in 1998 and 2(two) were elected in 2003. In the year 2008, the number of women contestants has increased to 21 as against 317 males, but only one woman was elected. The number of the elected women to the Assembly had a positive impact on the subsequent elections as the number of women contestants gradually increased in the following elections. In the years 2003 and 2008, female electorates outnumbered male electorates, but, it has no impact on the number of elected women. Their participation in voting as electorates does not entail their representation in the Legislature. There was an increase in the percentage of female contestants who contested for the legislative assembly election; but the percentage of female legislators from the first election, when Meghalaya attained its statehood till the last election is very low. It may also be noted that in all the elections so far held the Congress Party had field the highest number of contestants. This is in contrast to other national and regional parties who only field women candidates occasionally.

The research reveals that highest percentage of women who contested in the Legislative Assembly Election after Meghalaya attained its full statehood (1972-2008) is the year 2008 with 6.2 percent. The highest percentage of elected women in the Legislative Assembly (1972-2008) is 5(five) percent which is in the year 1998. Next to that were the years 1988 and 2008 with 3.3

percent. The percentage of the elected women in other years of elections is always less than two percent and no woman in the Legislative Assembly of the year 1983. Further, the election to the recent Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, 2013 shows a marked increase in the percentage of women legislators. So far this is the highest percentage in women representation in the Legislative Assembly. It is 6.6 percent. As such, the political power has been dominated by males only.

Interestingly, there were 18 bye-elections which were held so far in the state, in different constituencies due to various reasons. There were six women candidates so far who have contested in the bye-elections to the Legislative Assemblies from different constituencies. However, only two got elected. They were Jopsimon Phanbuh and Ampareen Lyngdoh, who got elected in the year 2004 and 2008 respectively. Mrs. Phanbuh contested and won the seat for the bye-election as her husband, Mr.T. H. Ryngad who won the 2003 election from Laban Constituency passed away. Smt Ampareen Lyngdoh, who resigned from the UDP and the legislature due to political reasons, did contest the 2008 bye-election under the Congress ticket. She retained her seat which she had won in 2008 under the UDP ticket.

The number of women who contested for the Lok Sabha elections after Meghalaya attained its statehood was comparatively very insignificant. Enilla Shira from BJP contested the Tura seat in the 1996; and Dr Elizabeth Laitflang from BJP contested the Shillong seat in 1998; they were not successful. Interestingly, Miss Agatha Sangma from NCP, however, contested and won the Tura bye-election in 2008, after her father Purno Sangma vacated his parliamentary seat on being elected as a legislator to the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. She became the first woman M.P. from Meghalaya. There were three women contestants for the 2009 General Election to the Lok Sabha. They were Agatha Sangma from the NCP, Deborah C. Marak from Congress and Arlene N. Sangma as an Independent candidate. Miss Agatha Sangma was again re- elected for the Lok Sabha seat from Tura-seat against her rival

Congress candidate Deborah Marak, who lost by 17,945 votes. So far, from 1972- 2009, there was only one Khasi woman who contested for the election and there were 5(five) women from Garo Hills till today. Until recently, Mrs. Wasnsuk Syiem (Khasi) won the Rajya Sabha seat unopposed in the bye-election which was held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013. She became the first woman from Meghalaya to be a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Comparatively, the number of Khasi is more in number than the Garo women who contested in different Legislative Assembly elections. Out of the 79 women who have contested in seven Legislative Assembly General Elections (1972-2009), there were 51 Khasi women and 28 Garo women. So far Garo women have won four times and Khasi women have got elected five times to the legislative assembly elections. Among them Debora Marak of Garos and Roshan Warjri of Khasis got elected twice. In 1978 and 1993 elections, however, the number of Garo women was higher than the Khasi women. From 1972-2009, there were 18 bye-elections held in Meghalaya. In these elections, seven women contested only one Garo woman did contest and won the bye-elections while there were six Khasi women contested and two of them got elected. There were 8(eight) Khasi women who represented in the KHADC of which 7(Seven) were elected and one was a nominated member. Similarly, there were 12 Garo women in the GHADC from 1952-2009 of which, 7(seven) were nominated and 5(five) were elected members. There was no Khasi women elected to the Lok Sabha Election, nevertheless, only one Khasi contested in the year 1998 and 5(five) Garo women contested to the Lok Sabha Election.

Keeping in view the low representation of women in politics, the thesis has further explores the political recruitment and role performance of women who were able to come to power as well as those who did not win the elections. The study reveals that there is no bar for women with respect to Christian religion, as all the women in power are Christians. The essence of Christianity itself is that both men and women are equal in the eyes of God. Although

Meghalaya is predominantly a Christian state, the political participation of women has no direct link with religious precepts.

Age has no bearing on contesting and winning election. Teilinia Syiem Thangkhiew is the youngest MDC in Meghalaya where she won the election at the age of 27 and similarly, Agatha Sangma became the youngest MP in India. Therefore age shows no bar for women's participation at the highest level. Educational status seems to give them confidence to come forward and contest in election. In fact, lower educational qualification discouraged them as it is difficult to cope-up with the issues and challenges of the present scenario, even though no restrictions on educational qualification has been put forward by the constitution of India for contesting election. The type of occupation too has no special role towards the political recruitment of women at the highest level in Meghalaya as women who have been elected are from different occupation and background. A study on the motivations and family background of the respondents clearly illustrates that family background of the candidate determines her success. Thus, it demonstrates that the matrilineal system of Meghalaya shows no exception to the patriarchal values when it comes to political recruitment at the higher level. A study on political recruitment of the women politicians is intended to explain the reasons for the low representation of women in politics, and the obstacles faced by women in entering political office. Research has found out that one thing in common is the history, culture and tradition, which played a dominant role as barrier towards the active participation of women in gaining political power.

Interestingly, it has been found out that political background of the women candidates is one of the important factors to win the election. Family plays a very important role in motivating to contest the elections, and support from the family is important throughout the political journey of the candidate. Political arena is a new environment which requires confidence as well as moral and physical support for women from every sphere. In their journey as political leaders women have to play triple role performance i.e. at home

(family matters especially married women), in the society (prove their leadership capability that they can perform their duty well like males) and in their political office as peoples' representatives. The political background of the women politicians weighs heavily in their political recruitment, as they inherit the traits and qualities of politicians before they came into the main political process for recruitment. They received training about politics and so are not alien to the political environment. This factor facilitated their recruitment in politics. Political family background has a positive and significant impact on women's political participation and in holding political office as well. It is true that without the readiness to join politics or get one self acclimatize in politics, it is unfeasible to contest elections especially for women. As politics is a full time job; as such, they need stimulus to enter politics. Family background, in fact, provides the requisite stimuli to join politics.

This study reveals that to enter politics it is important that women candidate should have the money power as well as the moral support of the family. Behind most of the successful women in politics stand the successful male politicians. Their recruitment to politics needs to be an all round preparation. First, they need to have the motivation and willingness to join politics, confidence on themselves, family support, political party support and they need to gain the confidence from the community both male and female electorates and the society at large. Politics is more than contesting and winning election. Family support therefore required not only at the initial stage but throughout. Domestic sphere is still considered as the arena of women in Meghalaya, no matter what the political office or high job ranking that the women hold. Management of the private sphere and public sphere would perhaps be the biggest challenge for women to face when decision is made to join politics especially for the married women.

Even though Indian government upholds the spirit of equality, and women are having equal rights to contest with men, women do not generally

find themselves in a friendly atmosphere to contest election because of the belief that the area of women is not the political arena. It is merely a psychological factor that women are barred from entering politics. This idea has its roots in the mentality of both men and women in the community. Two factors have been identified that resulted in such mentality; firstly, except few localities in the urban area of Shillong, women are not allowed to attend *Dorbar* or village council until recently. Similarly, in the case of the Garo women, the *Nokma* are always men. The mentality of the community is that women in Meghalaya do not need to enter politics as they are socially and economically empowered. Secondly, it is often felt by the community that women are weaker than men in thinking as well and they generally lack experience. Confidence is another psychological factor that affects women's participation in politics. It is a dependent variable which generally depends on the political background, education, and political experience or exposure. Women usually lack confidence about their potentiality unless they have a strong political family background, better education, having experience or receiving the moral support of the community. Money alone cannot buy confidence but is derivative in nature.

Political recruitment of women show that low participation of women at the decision making level is largely influenced by both internal and external factors. There is no single factor responsible for the widening gap between men and women's participation at the decision making level. The factors are gender related and gender neutral as well. The challenge for women starts from home, society and if elected after holding the post as well. They have to go through different stages. First, they need to have financial resources, family support and community support. Normally when women candidates contest elections, there are tendencies that they are judged more than that of male candidates. For women to contest election is somewhat unusual, while for men to contest election is natural. This is partly due to historical evidences that there are few women who choose to join politics. Therefore, support of the male members is

very important in the recruitment process. The present study shows that most of the successful politicians who are in power have the political background where male members facilitate their entry into politics.

The first challenge that women have to face is the motivation to join politics. If there is no political background, they need to have political experience, better education so as to have self confidence. Self confidence without experience in politics can also help if the candidate has strong political background. Women also need the support of the family, political parties and the community. Only when they possessed these qualities, they will contest and win the elections. After they win the election, their route to success is not yet over, which they still have to prove their potentiality.

The idea of weaker sex as decision maker should be removed and they are equal to men in mental power. After they got into power, they have to prove their potentiality so as to gain the community confidence to continue their political career. The challenges and prospects that women are facing in politics are not because of discrimination but generally because of the attitude and doubts about women's ability to hold political office. The patriarchal attitude acts as a barrier towards women's participation in politics as decision maker that discourage them and they tend to lose their self confidence.

To sum up, the present study on the political recruitment and role performance of women in politics demonstrates that women generally face problems at the first stage in order to get themselves into politics. Lack of experience does not seem to be the problem with women only, as men also do face such handicaps. It is a fact that women's participation in politics has been very low. Both men and women tend to believe that women are not capable of making decisions. Therefore, it is more of psychological factors rather than other factors that obstruct women's participation in politics at the higher level as decision makers. Taking into account the low representation of women at the higher level, several researchers and academicians suggested different factors



that are responsible to it. However, the nature of the obstacles and challenges that women have in traditional societies like Meghalaya may not hold the same picture in the present situation. Thus, the types of problems differs from time to time and place to place or from one state to the other. In respect of Meghalaya, matrilineality has no bearing on the overall participation of women in politics.

In view of the rise of the civil society groups in Meghalaya, an attempt has also been made to study the activities and the views of the civil society actors with regard to participation of women in politics. The activities of the various civil society groups in Meghalaya have been focused on the public issues and government policies. Though most of the objectives and activities of the various women organizations under study are basically concerned the plight of women in the society, however, they do not directly contribute towards political participation of women. The civil society actors clearly stated in their interviews that their organisation has no political motive and are non-political in character. Yet, it provides a grand platform for the women members to have exposure in the public arena. Majority of the women organizations favour reservation of seats for women in the Legislature while the civil society led by male leaders like the Khasi Student Union and the Federation of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo People (Tura), feels that reservation policy is not relevant in Meghalaya. They were of the opinion that women in Meghalaya face no discrimination and merit should be the point of consideration than reservation for women.

There is a slight difference in the activities of the civil society groups in the village or the locality based organisation and women organisation in the urban areas; as those in the rural areas are narrow in scope than those in the urban areas. The women organizations in the villages are concerned about domestic problems, like family related problem such as husbands' drunkenness that often leads to domestic violence and broken marriages etc. Other related issues include checking abusive languages in the street and prohibition of group gathering in dark places at night and so on. Their other concern is about

cleanliness. On the other hand, urban based women organization take up issues other than the domestic women related issues such as, issues concerning governmental policies and developmental issues. However, the village based organizations or the locality based women organizations are more specific in their activities and they do not like to involve in any controversial issues. The common problem that women organisation leaders face as leaders of the organisation is that of family responsibility and time management.

Women organizations directly contribute towards the participation of women in the public sphere as civil society actors and indirectly towards the representation of women in politics. Civil society groups other than women organizations generally do not acknowledge the importance of women representation in politics as they believed that women in Meghalaya enjoyed social and economic equality. No doubt modernization and education have brought radical changes in the mentality or the ideological consciousness of both the genders in the Khasi society with respect to women's participation in every aspect of the society. However, participation of women in the traditional institutions is still considered unfit for the women. An interview with the headman in one of the villages where the study was conducted reveals the dominant role of the male members in all matters of decision making. Women have no part to play in the *dorbar* meetings. It is purely male dominated administration. Considering the eligibility criteria of the member of the *dorbar*, it *clearly* shows that there is a discrimination against women. Interestingly, the former president of the *Thangmaw village women organization* stated that even the decision of the Sengkynthei (Women organization) is to be decided by the *dorbar*. This shows that the women organisations in the urban areas are more vocal than those in the village. In some locality of the Shillong area, women leaders are allowed to attend as representatives to the *dorbar* meetings.

It may be mentioned that crimes against women, domestic violence and husband drunkenness have been the major problems that Khasi and Garo women have been facing. Rural life is marked by poverty and alcoholism,

deserted wives and children where women cannot claim maintenance if deserted by their husbands. They remain silent since women feel ashamed to speak out about their private life. Therefore, the presence of the women organizations as civil society actors in the society is of utmost importance and they have been playing important role in fighting against the social evils. The women organizations work together with the Meghalaya State Commission for Women (MSCW) for the protection of the rights and security of women.

Most importantly, the present research explores the political activity of women in Meghalaya other than those who contested for the political office. In view of the significance of participation of women at different levels, an empirical analysis has been made on the voting behaviour, political party members, their participation in electioneering and campaigning, attending political party meetings, political communication with political leaders, giving donations to candidates or party. The study reveals that the total women in Meghalaya mostly participate as voters at all levels of general elections except during unavoidable circumstances. The study found out that those who did not go for voting are due to old age or illness. As a result, it shows that there is positive involvement of women as voters in Meghalaya in terms of number with slight difference between the Garo and Khasi women. The percentage of women voters in Meghalaya in the 2009 Lok Sabha election was 64.16 percent which was even higher than female voters at all India level with 55.9 percent (Lok Sabha Election 2009). However, an illustration has also been made on the basis of the personal interview method to measure political participation of women as voters from qualitative perspective. Questions were asked on their motivation and knowledge about the candidate they voted for in the election so as to take note of the factors behind voting. Their responses prove insignificant participation in terms of quality. Women are not generally aware about the consequences of their votes, especially those women living in the rural areas lack political awareness.

With regards to the participation of women in electioneering and campaigning, the data implies that Khasi women do participate sometimes, while the Garo women hardly participate in electioneering and campaigning and over all the participation of women in election campaign and participation in Socio-economic and political issues are comparatively low and it is rated as  $0.97 < 1$  score. Further, the study reveal that women have very low political affiliation, Mean = 0.97 and comparatively, Garo women have less political affiliation than the Khasi women (Khasi  $M=1.09$  and Garo  $M=0.77$ ). Interestingly, only 6.70 percent of women participate as office bearer, 21.53 percent participates as party members, while 33.08 percent remains as apolitical groups. Data show that there is a gap in comparison to percentage of voter turns out during election and the political affiliation as office bearers. In all the above mentioned areas of political activity the Khasi women are found to participate slightly higher than the Garo women. With regard to political mobilisation, Khasi women are found to have higher participation in political mobilization than the Garo women. Khasi  $M=0.90 >$  Garo  $M=0.52$ . Their participation however varies with the types of political mobilization. Women's participation in political rally is very low; Mean= 0.79 (Garo  $M=0.47 <$  Khasi  $M=0.98$ ). Data clearly show the insignificant participation of women in political rally in both the communities even though the Khasi women are found to have slightly higher degree of participation. Women have least participation in giving donations to political parties and candidates: Mean= 0.60 (Garo  $M=0.34 <$  Khasi  $M=0.61$ ). Donation to political parties and candidates is not a common form of political participation for women in Meghalaya.

Political communication is understood as formal communication and informal communication with the political leaders and political party representatives. Data reveal that hardly women communicate with the political leaders, Mean=0.60 (Khasi  $M=0.69$  and Garo  $M= 0.44$ . Formal communication, Mean=0.56; Informal communication, Mean=0.63. When asked about the reasons behind it, normally, men communicate with the politicians in case of

any requirements, especially on issues concerning the village or locality at large. This is because the family is generally represented by the husband, father or brother; and women do not discuss with the political leaders. Matters relating the village are discussed or communicated to the candidates by the headman of the village.

In view of the above analysis on the participation of women in the various modes of political participation, the data reveal the insignificant participation of women. On the other hand, corresponding to the reports of the Meghalaya Election Commissioner Department, there is a positive participation of women as voters in the study area. Generally women do not miss voting. The research study found out that mere act of voting does not imply the active participation of women as voters. The reasons that they gave for their act of voting clearly determine their political behaviour and the lack of political awareness among the women folks.

Majority of the women in rural areas has no political reasons and they have no awareness about the leaders or political party that they voted in different elections. Their political awareness has been less than 2(score) which implies that they know very little (0=not at all, 1= little, 2 = well, 3= very well). They know very little about their political leaders, Mean=1.28 score (Khasi  $M=1.35 >$  Garo  $M= 1.17$ ), political parties, Mean=1.11score (Garo  $M=1.01 <$  Khasi  $M=1.17$ ) and their fundamental rights, Mean=0.80 (Khasi  $M=0.94 >$  Garo  $M=0.56$ ). In fact, political awareness is one of the important criteria that the electorates need to have when they exercise their voting rights. The reason that Khasi women have more political awareness than the Garo women is mostly because of the educational factor. In fact the literacy rate of the Khasi women is higher than the Garo women. According to the 2001 Census the percentage of Khasi women literacy rate is 67 percent and the Garo women is 47 percent only.

Karl Pearson's Coefficient Correlation analysis further elucidates the inter-relatedness between the various variables and the various modes of political participation under the present study. There is a direct relationship between education, household income and exposure to mass media on the political awareness of the respondents. The study depicts that higher the education, higher family income and higher exposure to mass media lead to higher political awareness of the respondents. On the contrary, family income has no direct impact on the political participation of women. Some of the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age and family income are the two independent variables that have effect on the political participation, which is a dependent variable. Age has direct impact on some aspects of political participation of women, that is, on election campaign, political rally and protest, demonstrations, political party meetings and communication with political leaders. The study reveals that the lower the age the lower is the participation of women in those aspects and vice versa. However, it has no positive impact on the political affiliation of women. On the other hand education has a significant impact on political affiliation and political communication of women in Meghalaya. The study demonstrates that those who have political affiliations are mostly educated women. Low level of education results in low level of political affiliation. It is also a fact that illiterate women generally considered themselves unfit to affiliate and engage in any political office and they have no interest to join politics. It is also a fact that illiterate women stay away from any direct or indirect communication with political leaders. Even when situation compels, they generally depend on some literate people to help them with the matter.

The study broadly classified two agents of political socialization namely, mass media and interpersonal communication and their impact on the political attitudes and political behaviour of the women in joining politics. Mass media includes public meetings, radio (local and national, local or English channel) television local and national (local or English channel),

posters, leaflets, banners, films (English and local language) and internet. Interpersonal media includes information about politics from friends, neighbors, family members, political party workers, and relatives, headman of the locality, church organizations and other organizations. The study found out that women are more exposed to inter personal-media than mass media. Women received more information from interpersonal communication than mass media with the mean score of  $1.63 > 0.27$ . Comparatively, Khasi women are more exposed to interpersonal media than the Garo women with the Total Mean Score of the Khasi =  $1.76 > \text{Garo} = 1.42$ . Thus, the findings of the research suggest that women are more exposed to interpersonal media mainly due to two factors besides other personal factors i.e., education and economic factor. Literacy is considered as the important criterion for selection of the field work area in the present study, with the intention to avoid bias in representing the most literate or most illiterate area. The data reveal that 22.97 percent of the respondents are illiterate. 8.61percent are literate without schooling which means that they only know how to read but without formal schooling, 21.05percent are below primary level, 15.31percent studied up to secondary school, 13.88percent up to higher secondary school and graduate 5.74percent, post graduate 1.44percent only.

Comparatively, Khasi women are more educated than the Garo Women as 40.51 percent of the Garo respondents are illiterate while 12.31 percent of Khasi are illiterate. This shows the lack of education of the respondents. Secondly, economic status of the respondents is considered as another factor. First, respondents' occupation is considered essential for the measurement of economic status. Data indicate that 34.84 percent of the respondents depend on agriculture as their main occupation, 19.62percent are casual labour, 15.79percent are doing business, only 2.87percent are getting regular salaries whereas 19.62percent remains at home as housewife without any earning. Another area of economic status concerned the husbands' occupation. 27.75percent depends on agriculture, 21.05percent as casual labour, 16.27 percent are doing business, 9.09 percent are having regular salary, 5.74percent

can't work either due to illness or old age and others who don't fall under the above category is only 0.96 percent only. The third criteria of measuring the economic status is the family monthly income with 28.23 percent are below Rs. 1000, 35.89 percent of the respondents family income is below Rs. 3000, 16.27 percent are getting approximately Rs. 5000 monthly, 7.66 percent are getting up to Rs. 15,000 per month and only 2.39 percent are those who are getting Rs. 15000 and above. Looking at the type of occupation of husbands and wives, the total monthly family income, clearly shows the low economic status of the family. No doubt, mass media is one of the important channels for political awareness of women but they are largely influenced by interpersonal communication due to lack of educational level and poor family background. In fact, food for sustenance is their main concern than any other entertainments and politics. Inter-personal communication has a positive impact on the political participation of women in Meghalaya as information about politics is obtained through communication with other people only

Lastly, an important finding of the study was the direct relationship between political awareness and political participation except voting. In fact, the higher the political awareness the higher is the political participation of women. The low participation of women in Meghalaya is because of their low political awareness. The reason that political awareness has no bearing on the voting behaviour of women in Meghalaya is due to the fact that generally women involved in voting activity have by and large, no political awareness or knowledge about the candidate that they vote. Karl Pearson's correlations analysis shows that perceived effects on politics on their life which reflect the political attitudes of the respondents have significant effect on political affiliation, electioneering and campaigning, and political communication. However, with regard to voting it is not so. Those who believed that politics has an effect on their lives have more inclination with political parties or political leaders and their participation in election campaign is more. Those who believed that politics has nothing to do with their lives and those who have negative attitudes towards politics have no interest to participate in politics.



Overall correlation analysis provides us with a clear understanding about the relationship between the various variables, such as age, education, family income and its significant impact on political awareness, political attitudes and political affiliation of the women in Meghalaya. Similarly, political awareness and political efficacy have positive impact on their political affiliation, which ultimately has an effect on the political participation of women in Meghalaya. It also signifies the existence of dependent and independent variables. Age and family income are two independent variables that have effect on the political participation, which is a dependent variable. Thus, the above analysis helps us to know about the determinants of political participation at the lower level other than those by contesting elections at the higher level.

The theoretical implication of the present study on political participation of women in Meghalaya provides us a clear understanding about why political participation of women matters and to what extent. Liberal democratic perspective is based on the concept of gender equality. Contemporary government and politics attempt to achieve economic and political stability, reliability and continuity. The effectiveness and continuity of any democratic government largely deepens the above goals. Political participation by both the genders is seen as an important element towards the growth of an individual intellectuality. The constitutions of India recognized the significance of the freedom of thoughts and expression and the absence of discrimination based on sex, caste creed etc. as such, it guarantee individual freedom through exchange of thoughts and ideologies, discussions and actions at the practical level. It is thus more than fulfilling the basic standards of democracy by enhancement of human development constructively. On the other hand, participation without being aware about the outcome is destructive in nature. It thus largely reflects the significance to participate and the reason to participate.

Further, the theoretical implication of the present research is to examine an inclusive form of political participation. It laid emphasis on the participation of women more than representation. The study on the political participation of

women from quantitative and qualitative perspectives provides a clear picture of women's participation other than those of representation. Representation of quantity explain the extent of participation of women in terms of numbers and the qualitative participation concerns the value effect of such participation which are of equal importance. It requires both participation and political knowledge in order to have a better form of political system and better standards of living. Participation of the citizen is thus important at different stages from the thought of choosing the representatives at the common level (as voters), political party members, participation in electoral campaign, participation in protest and agitations and as well as participation in decision making bodies.

### **8.3 Factors that hinder political participation of women**

In view of the above, the study sought to understand the factors that contribute towards low participation of women in politics. Some of those factors are discussed here below.

First, customs and traditions played a very important role in the political culture of women in Meghalaya. The practice of not allowing women to participate in the traditional political institutions since time immemorial greatly contributes to the manner of participation of women in political activity. Comparatively, men have more knowledge about the political affairs and administration as they were trained by being member of such political institutions. For them, it is made compulsory to attend such assembly.

Though the traditional political institutions of the Khasis and the Garos were having a kind of self governing institutions, women were excluded from such institutions. Women therefore have least knowledge about the political affairs and it is a new environment for them to be in political activity of the modern political institutions. Politics and administration were better known as the assembly of the adult males. The values and leadership training that the male members gained in the traditional political institutions left out women at a

disadvantage position with regard to political activity. The exclusion of women from participation in such traditional institutions makes them to lag behind in political experiences and knowledge than their male counter parts.

Secondly, the psychological factor that has its roots in the cultural beliefs that is reflected in the tenets such as “when a hen crows the world will come to an end”. The phrase refers to women who take the position of a decision maker or in a position to speak or control and she is compared to a hen that crows. Another saying like “The world will come to an end” means their belief that the world one day will come to an end and that would be when women take up the political position like men. The saying further reveals that it is not normal for a woman to take up the role of men in politics. The analogy of “*ka kynthei ka khynnah*” in Khasi language refers to the inferior attitude about the position of women as that of the infants. In both the Khasi and Garo communities’ women were considered as secondary in taking major decisions. The political culture of today has its roots in the traditional culture of the society as a result of longstanding usages and practices. Such beliefs have thus adverse effect on the political attitudes of both men and women that discourages women to come forward as political leaders.

Thirdly, the modern political institutions such as political parties and government in Meghalaya do not seriously recognize the need for women representation in decision making bodies. Though 33 percent reservation of seats in various Panchayats has greatly increased women representation in such bodies, but no alternative so far has been made under the Six Scheduled areas to increase women’s participation in such bodies through reservation. There is a sense of indifference among the civil society groups in Meghalaya to transmit awareness in this matter. The modern society too is not yet ready to endorse active participation of women in politics in Meghalaya.

Fourthly, education has a direct and positive impact on the political awareness and political participation of women; it is thus one of the important

factors that hinder the political participation of women. Women in the rural areas are mostly illiterate which makes them to have less exposure to the outside world and the political environment. It thus enables them to be content with their role in the family and left the political affairs to their male members only. Further, the study also reveals that lack of political awareness and political efficacy has a negative impact on the political affiliation of women in Meghalaya. It generally discouraged them to join politics and they have no confidence on themselves.

Fifthly, lack of political will on the part of the women themselves is another factor. They are pre-occupied with the household chores and family responsibility, and considered politics to be the area of men and people who have free time. This is also partly because of the game of power that wipes out the trust and confidence of the political community on any of the political leaders. It often resulted in political instability and corrupt practices that have become a part of the Indian modern political institutions in general and in Meghalaya in particular. Women generally are not willing to join politics as they considered it dirty.

To sum up, the matrilineal system that is followed by the Khasi and Garo communities creates a different outlook about the status of the women in Meghalaya. The laws of inheritance of property, and the lineage system favour women and that make them to have better positions than women in a patriarchal society. Undoubtedly such practices enable them to be free from dowry system or any form of bride price, *pardah* system and *sati* system which are found to be common in other parts of India. However, the social evil that greatly affects women has been in a different form in Meghalaya. The women today especially those who live in the rural areas suffer from broken marriages due to drunkard husbands that generally lead to domestic violence. Meghalaya stood second in North East with regard to rape cases, and these are some of the social issues that greatly impinge on the women in Meghalaya. In fact, the ground reality is that like women in other parts of the country women in

Meghalaya are powerless and men are the heads of the family as well as administrative set up.

The findings of the study provide us some implications for the reforms of the democratic institutions in order to make it more democratic. Women in Meghalaya do not need liberation but there is a need of humanizing the existing system. The concept of women empowerment should not be confused with the idea of empowering women over men but adopting the concept of gender equality in a better way. Through the research study it is noted that women in the traditional society did not receive any political training as they were not allowed even to be an observer in the meetings of men. They had to confine themselves to the household chores besides helping their husbands in the field. Further, until recently women are still guided by the traditional mindset against women that also discouraged women to be politically active. Though developmental opportunities have helped the educated women to have exposure to the outside world and politics, but their degree of participation in politics is very insignificant.

In fact the significance of the present study identifies the relatedness between different variables that added up to the low participation of women in politics not only in terms of quantity but it adversely affect the quality of participation as well. The reluctance of women to come forward and join politics is not the problem of discrimination today but rather lack of political awareness, lack of confidence and lack of support from the social and political community which include both the genders. A changed political culture that may include equal participation of both men and women as rational actors is the need of the hour. Modern political institutions should provide ample opportunity to bridge the widening gap between men and women for political participation. In turn, it would link the gap between the theory and practice of the democratic ideals.

## **8.4 Suggestions**

As a result of the research conducted the researcher offers a few suggestions for the future research in the field, for the policy makers, the civil society groups and the social workers that may help to address some of the women issues.

### **Suggestions for the future research on women in Meghalaya**

- ✚ Future research on women in Meghalaya should focus on the different sub-tribes and Garos. Empirical research should be conducted on the qualitative political behaviour of both women and men in rural and urban areas. This will give a better understanding about the political participation and role performance of Khasis and Garos in Meghalaya.
  
- ✚ As crime against women and domestic violence is rising at an alarming rate in Meghalaya, a research may be conducted about the cause of problems in both rural and urban areas.
  
- ✚ A research may be conducted on the laws of inheritance and its impact on the economic life of women in Meghalaya and to what extent it empowers the one who inherits the property. A study may also be included regarding the role of the male members in managing such affairs today.

### **Suggestions for the policy makers regarding the problem faced by the women in Meghalaya**

- ✚ Through the research conducted, the study has identified lack of education as one of the important factors that led to the low participation of women in Meghalaya. Therefore setting up of good government schools in the rural areas with qualified teachers and affordable fees for quality education for women in Meghalaya is important.

- ✚ The research also identifies lack of political awareness among the women as one of the factors that led to low political participation of women. The policy makers should take up seriously about bringing development in the rural areas. Awareness about politics and women issues has to be included in the syllabus and curriculum of the lower primary and upper primary school to sensitize children about women issues. Further, awareness through attractive posters, banners in the language which could be understood by the people of particular area is needed.
- ✚ The mass media which is widely used by the people of any particular area has to be regularly utilised to take up women issues in a greater way. It may be through radio talks or movies or television programme or drama that may enhance the political awareness. It should be in the language understood by the people.
- ✚ The setting up of Centre for women studies in the North Eastern Hills University which is the only central university in the state is necessary to address the complicated problems faced by the women
- ✚ The Meghalaya State Women Commission should be an independent agency without any political interference so as to ensure transparency and efficiency.

**Suggestions to the Social workers, civil society groups and the community in general**

- ✚ In view of the social evil that strongly affects the life of women in such a matrilineal society, the social workers, civil society groups should be proactive to address the problems faced by women.
- ✚ There should be a counseling centre for the women who faced domestic violence and any other problems. Such centre should be run by women

themselves. The problems with those who have problems with their husbands are that these women usually do not want to take up to the police, as they considered it to be private matters. The cases that the State Women Commission records are generally those which they had registered with the police. Therefore family counseling would be more effective in this matter.

- ✘ Broken marriages are one of the problems that women face today in Meghalaya. Compulsory registration of marriage has to be enforced to combat such social evils.
- ✘ The traditional political institutions which continue to exist till today should include women as executive members in their meetings. Though few localities in Shillong allowed women representatives to attend the khasi *dorbar* but majority of the *dorbar* still excludes women. This may enhance the participation of women in the decision making bodies.
- ✘ The setting up of the women organizations in different locality should be encouraged to mobilize the women folk.
- ✘ The civil society organisation should have awareness programmes about the low participation of women in politics and its impact.
- ✘ National and regional political parties should activate the women wings sincerely to encourage political participation of women and to give them training to be political leaders.
- ✘ Inheritance of ancestral property has to be cautiously given to any daughter who is capable to look after parents rather than imposing on the youngest daughter.



## Appendix 1

### Political Participation of Women in Meghalaya: A Comparative Study of Khasi and Garo Women

**Research Scholar**  
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Ph.D. Scholar in Political Science  
Department of Political Science  
**Mizoram University**

**Research Supervisor**  
**Jagadish Kumar Patnaik**  
Professor and Head  
Department of Political Science  
**Mizoram University**

#### Interview Schedule (For women only) (Confidential)

**I. Identification Information**

- 1 Schedule No.
- 2 Investigator:
- 3 District and Block:

Date :

Village/Locality:

**Block -1**

Profile of the Respondent				
Sl. No.	Details			
1	<b>Name:</b>			
2	<b>Age (in completed years) :</b>			
3	<b>Religion (Specify):</b>			
4	<b>Caste:</b>	1 - SC	3 – Backward Communities	5 - Others
		2 - ST	4 - General	
5	<b>General education status:</b>	1 - Illiterate	5 - Upper primary completed	9 - Post graduation completed
		2 - Literate without school education	6 - Secondary completed	10 - Others (Specify)
		3 - Below primary	7 - Higher secondary /below graduation-completed	
		4 - Primary completed	8 - Graduation completed	
6	<b>Skills if any (specify) :</b>			
7	<b>Marital status:</b>	1 - Unmarried	3 - Divorced	5 - Separated
		2 - Married	4 - Widowed	
8	<b>Number of children (Male and Female separately):</b>	M=		F=
9	<b>Household size :</b>			
10	<b>Family type:</b>	1 - nuclear	2 - Joint family	

## Block 2: Household information

Sl.No.	Name	Relations to head of the household	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Educational status	Employment status	Primary Income	Secondary income
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

<b>Column 3</b>				
1 - Head	5 - Daughter-in-Law	9 - Father	13 - Brother	17 - Uncle
2 - Partner/Spouse	6 - Son-in-Law	10 - Mother-in-Law	14 - Sister	18 - Other Relatives
3 - Daughter	7 - Grandchild	11 - Father-in-Law	15 - Nephew	19 - Adopted / Foster / Step Child
4 - Son	8 - Mother	20 - Non relatives (Include domestic, servant, lodger and non Relatives only if they are normal resident members of the household.)		
12 - Grandparent	16 - Niece			
<b>Column 5</b>	1 - Male	2 - Female		
<b>Column 6</b>	1 - Unmarried	3 - Widowed	4 - Divorced	5 - Separated
	2 - Married	5 - Widower		
<b>Column 7</b>				
1 - Illiterate	3 - Lower primary school	5 - Secondary School	7 - Graduate degree completed	9 - Others (specify).
2 - Literate without school education	4 - Upper Primary School	6 - Higher secondary /Under graduate	8 - Postgraduate Degree	
<b>Column 8</b>				
1 - Self employed	2. Contractor			6 - unemployed
1.1 - agriculture			5 - regular salary	6.1 - can't work
1.2 - poultry	3 - Casual wage labourer			6.2 - House wife
1.3 - farm			6 - retired government servant	
1.4 - factory				
1.5 - trader				
<b>Column 9</b>				
1 - Below 1000	2 - Below 3000	3 - Below 5000	4 - Below 10000	5 - Below 15000
				6 - Above 15000

**III. Please furnish the details of the occupation details of your family members**

Sl. No.	Name of member	Primary Occupation (specify)	Secondary Occupation (specify)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

**IV. Is any of your family members or relatives hold political office?**

Relative	None	Village	District	State	National
Husband	0	1	2	3	4
Mother	0	1	2	3	4
Father	0	1	2	3	4
Uncle(s)	0	1	2	3	4
Aunt(s)	0	1	2	3	4
Brother(s)	0	1	2	3	4
Sister(s)	0	1	2	3	4
Other(specify)					

**V. Please tell me which of the following mass media contributed your knowledge on politics? (√)**

Mass Media	Fully	Mostly	Somehow	Not at all
Radio: Local	3	2	1	0
Radio: English	3	2	1	0
Newspapers: Local	3	2	1	0
Newspapers: English	3	2	1	0
Internet	3	2	1	0
Television: Local	3	2	1	0
Television: English	3	2	1	0
Films: Local	3	2	1	0
Films: English	3	2	1	0
Films: Hindi	3	2	1	0
Public Meetings	3	2	1	0
Posters	3	2	1	0
Leaflets	3	2	1	0
Banners	3	2	1	0
Other(Specify)	3	2	1	0

**VI. Please tell me how far you use the following interpersonal sources to know about politics? (√)**

Source	Fully	Mostly	Somehow	Not at all
Family members (Specify)	4	3	2	1
Relatives(Specify)	4	3	2	1
Friends	4	3	2	1
Neighbors	4	3	2	1
Political Party Workers(Specify)	4	3	2	1
Headman	4	3	2	1
Organization(specify)	4	3	2	1
Church(Specify)	4	3	2	1

**VII. Political Awareness:** How far you know the following leaders, parties and rights?

<b>Political Leaders</b>	<b>Very Well</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Mahatma Gandhi	3	2	1	0
Jawaharlal Nehru	3	2	1	0
Indira Gandhi	3	2	1	0
Agatha Sangma	3	2	1	0
DD Lapang	3	2	1	0
Sonia Gandhi	3	2	1	0
Manmohan Singh	3	2	1	0
Ampareen Lyngdoh	3	2	1	0
<b>Political Parties</b>				
INC	3	2	1	0
BJP	3	2	1	0
CPI	3	2	1	0
UDP	3	2	1	0
APHLC	3	2	1	0
NCP	3	2	1	0
<b>Fundamental Rights</b>				
Equality before law	3	2	1	0
Freedom of speech & expression	3	2	1	0
Freedom of religion	3	2	1	0
Educational & Cultural Rights	3	2	1	0
Right against Exploitation	3	2	1	0
Right to constitutional Remedies	3	2	1	0

**VIII. Kindly furnish details of your participation in Social activities (Civil Society) (√)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>No Participation</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Active Member</b>	<b>Office Bearer</b>
Social Welfare Organization(Specify)	0	1	2	3
Culture based organization(Specify)	0	1	2	3
Church Based Organizations(Specify)	0	1	2	3
Faith Based Organizations (Specify)	0	1	2	3
Others (specify)	0	1	2	3

**IX. How far do you believe that politics, political events, governance affect your life?**

Very Greater Extent 3	Greater Extent 2	Some Extent 1	Not at all 0
--------------------------	---------------------	------------------	-----------------

**X. Political Affiliation**

Please tick the appropriate box indicating your political affiliation?

Membership in Political Parties	Office Bearer 3	Member 2	Sympathizer 1	None 0
---------------------------------	--------------------	-------------	------------------	-----------

**XI. Please tell us how frequently are you involved in making the following decisions in your family (√)**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Jointly</b>
Choice of Bridegroom	3	2	1	0	4
Choice of Dress & Clothing for children	3	2	1	0	4
Choice of Occupation & Employment for Women	3	2	1	0	4
Medical Care and treatment for children	3	2	1	0	4
Choice of Household Articles	3	2	1	0	4
Choice of Food/Dishes	3	2	1	0	4
No. Of Children	3	2	1	0	4
Names of Children	3	2	1	0	4
Choice of Education, type of institution, course etc. for Children	3	2	1	0	4
Construction of House	3	2	1	0	4
House repair/ Decoration	3	2	1	0	4
Borrowing Loans	3	2	1	0	4
Lending Loans	3	2	1	0	4
Selling of Ancestral Property	3	2	1	0	4
Selling of your Own Property	3	2	1	0	4
Selling of the property which belong to you and other members	3	2	1	0	4
Manner of Saving or Investment	3	2	1	0	4
Crop Variety	3	2	1	0	4
Manure use in Agriculture	3	2	1	0	4
Attending religious Ceremony/Programmed	3	2	1	0	4
Attending Social Gathering/function	3	2	1	0	4
Attending Political campaign/rally/meeting	3	2	1	0	4
Attending Women Organization programmed	3	2	1	0	4
Whom to Vote in the MDC election	3	2	1	0	4
Whom to Vote in the MLA Election	3	2	1	0	4
Whom to Vote in the MP Election	3	2	1	0	4

**XII. How far do you participate in political processes?**

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Voting in Elections</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Voting: MDC's Election	3	2	1	0
Voting in Legislative Assembly Election(MLA)	3	2	1	0
Voting: General Election(MP)	3	2	1	0
<b>Electioneering and Campaigning</b>				
MDC's Election	3	2	1	0
MLA's election	3	2	1	0
General Election(MP)	3	2	1	0
Socio Economic and Political Issues	3	2	1	0
<b>Political Mobilization</b>				
Attending Political Party Meetings	3	2	1	0
Participating in Political Rallies	3	2	1	0
Participating in Political Protests and demonstrations	3	2	1	0
Donations to Political Parties and Candidates	3	2	1	0
<b>Political Communication</b>				
Direct communication with Political leaders	3	2	1	0
Informal Communication with Political Leaders	3	2	1	0

**XIII. Please tell me the constraining women participation in politics among Khasi / Garo Society.**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Problems/Constrains</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**XIV. Please suggest measures for development and empowerment of women in Khasi /Garo society.**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

<b>Other Information from the Respondent/Remark</b>

## Appendix 2

### CHAIRMAN OF THE KHASI HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Sl no.	Name	Year
1.	Shri. F.War	1952-1957
2.	Shri. R.Nongrem	1957
3.	Shri. W. Reade	1958-1966
4.	Shri. G.S.Giri	1966-1967
5.	Shri. R. Dkhar	1967-1972
6.	Shri. B. Wanniang	1972-1974 & 1988-1989
7.	Shri. J. Khongjoh	1974-1978
8.	Shri. L.M. Syiem	1979
9.	Shri. D. Lyndoh	1979-1984
10.	Shri. P.G. Marbaniang	1984-1988
11.	Shri. R.R. Makdoh	1989-1994&1994-1996
12.	Shri. Y.K.Lyndoh	1996-1998
13.	Shri .B.M.Lanong	1998-1999
14.	Shri. H.Marwein	1999-2004
15.	Shri. M.Pyrbot	2004

### DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE KHASI HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Sl. no.	Name	Year
1.	H. Hadem	1952-1954
2.	R.K.Tariang	1954-1957
3.	O. Lyndoh	1958-1965
4.	W. Blah	1966-1967
5.	S.H. Shagdiar	1967-1971
6.	K. M. Roy	1971-1972
7.	M. Lyndoh	1972-1974
8.	L. Sangriang	1974-1979
9.	S.M.Jyrwa	1979-1985
10.	R.R. Makdoh	1986-1989
11.	D. Khyriemujat	1989-1994
12.	Y.K.Lyndoh	1994-1996
13.	F.S.Lapang	1996-1998
14.	D.T. Marbaniang	1998
15.	W.L. Mynsong	1998-1999
16.	P.S.Warjri	1999
17.	M. Pyrbot	1999

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE KHASI HILLS AUTONOMOUS  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Sl no.	Name	Year
1.	Shri.J. Rynjah	1952-1953 & 1956 -1957
2.	Shri.Hobel Rynjah	1953 -1954
3.	Shri.B.M.Roy	1954-1956
4.	Shri.B.M.Pugh	1958-1960
5.	Shri.T.Cajee	1960-1963
6.	Shri.E. Bareh	1963-1965
7.	Shri.W. Reade	1966-1967
8.	Shri.J. Swer	1967-1972
9.	Shri.L.G. Shullai	1972-1974
10.	Shri.B.Wanniang	1974, 1977.1979-1984
11.	Shri.R. Dkhar	Aug-Nov, 1977
12.	Shri.H.S.Lyndoh	1984-1989
13.	Shri.G.S Massar	1989-1992
14.	Shri.R.Lyndoh	1992-1993
15.	Shri.D.R. Nongkynrih	1993-1994,1994-1996,1998
16.	Shri.R.R. Makoh	1996-1998
17.	Shri.W.D.Lyngwi	1998-1999,2000-2002,2003
18.	Shri.B.M. Lanong	1999-2000
19.	Shri.P.K.Raswai	2002-2003



## MEMBERS OF KHASI HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Term (1952-57)</b>	
<b>Sl. no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Lowis Bareh
2.	Shri. H. Enowell Pohshna
3.	Shri. Robert Kin Tariang
4.	Shri. Humphrey Hadem
5.	Shri. Herison Sariang
6.	Shri. Hobell Rynjah
7.	Shri. Rostanwell War
8.	Shri. Lasto Sing Diengdoh
9.	Shri. Brojo Roy
10.	Shri. Rosaiah Nongrem
11.	Shri. Neander Syiem
12.	Shri. Atiar Singh Syiem
13.	Shri. Albert Lyngdoh
14.	Shri. Fredishon War
15.	Shri. Bormanik Syiem
16.	Shri. B. M. Roy
17.	Shri. J. E. Tariang
18.	Shri. Henry Cotton
19.	Shri. Harry Prasad Barua (Nominated)
20.	Shri.P.K. Chaudhury (Nominated)
21.	Shri. Lok Nath Joshi (Nominated)
22.	Shri. Kistobin Rymbai (Nominated)
23.	Shri. Hemanta Kumar Gupta (Nominated)
24.	Shri.Josingh Rynjah (Nominated)
25.	<b>Smt. Lariam Shullai (Nominated) (W)</b>

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Term (1958-1967)</b>	
<b>Sl. no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Bowen Rose Syiem
2.	Shri. Bhatiar Singh Syiem
3.	Shri. Amerson Thangkhiew
4.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh
5.	Shri. Wordingson Blah
6.	Shri. Theodore Cajee
7.	Shri. J. J. M. Nichols Roy
8.	Shri. Rokendro Dkhar
9.	Shri. Gilfred S. Giri
10.	Shri. Jostly Rynshon
11.	Shri. Singh Shullai
12.	Shri. B. M. Pugh
13.	Shri. Wilson Reade
14.	Shri. Oswald Lyngdoh
15.	Shri. Edwingson Bareh
16.	Shri. Oc. S. Syiemlieh
17.	Shri. Raiseng Mawsor
18.	Shri. Lowis Bareh
19.	Shri. H. Enowell Pohshna
20.	Shri. Humphrey Hadem
21.	Shri. Brojo Roy
22.	Shri. Rosaiah Nongrem
23.	Shri. Neander Syiem
24.	Shri. Rosaiah Nongrem
25.	Shri. Neander Syiem
26.	Shri. B. M. Roy
27.	Shri. Henry Cotton
28.	Shri. Kistobin Rymbai (Nominated)

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Term (1967-72)</b>	
<b>Sl. no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. S. Heslingwell Shangdiar
2.	Shri. Humphrey Nongrum
3.	Shri. S. Parshari Roy Iawphniaw
4.	Shri.. E. Iawphniaw
5.	Shri. K. M. Roy Marbaniang
6.	Shri. H. Hynniewta
7.	Shri. Darwin D. Pugh
8.	Shri. S. D. D. Nichols Roy
9.	Shri. S. P. Swer
10.	Shri. Besterson Kharkongor
11.	Shri. Iowelton Suting
12.	Shri. Karlingstone Laloo
13.	Shri. Smomik Kalwing
14.	Shri. Sendwell Moksha
15.	Shri. Linshon Roy Lapang
16.	Shri. B. B. Lyngdoh
17.	Shri. Justman Swer
18.	Shri. Molendro Swer
19.	Shri. Bowen Rose Syiem
20.	Shri. Amerson Thangkhiew
21.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh
22.	Shri. Rokendro Dkhar
23.	Shri. Jostly Rynshon
24.	Shri. Amerson Thangkhiew
25.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh
26.	Shri. Rokendro Dkhar
27.	Shri. Jostly Rynshon

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Term (1972-78)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. E. Bremly Lyngdoh
2.	Shri. L. Gilbert Shullai
3.	Shri. Sain Manik Jyrwa
4.	Shri. Alwot B. Diengdoh
5.	Shri. Bhaskar Chaudary
6.	Shri. Bindo M.
7.	Shri. Kishore Kr. Deb
8.	Shri. Charles Thaomas
9.	Shri. Kamon Mawiong
10.	Shri. Markus Lyngdoh
11.	<b>Mrs. Estrice Syiem (W)</b>
12.	Shri. Sindrowell Thangkhiew
13.	Shri. Hickswell Lyngdoh
14.	Shri. Jungai Khongjoh
15.	Shri. E. K. Mawlong
16.	Shri. A. Blingstodar Diengdoh
17.	Shri. Syrtok Singh Nongrum
18.	Shri. Irad M. Syiem
19.	Shri. Dwesland Myrthong
20.	Shri. Tomroy Lyngdoh
21.	Shri. Lowingwell Sangriang
22.	Shri. Bakstarwell Wanniang
23.	Shri. Bokstar Malgniang
24.	Shri. B. Werson Giri
25.	Shri. S. Galmendar Lyngdoh
26.	Shri. Micheal Giri
27.	<b>Mrs. Luisa Brosilla Lamin (W)</b>
28.	Shri. Tarson Rynjah
29.	Shri. Aron Alley
30.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Term(1979-1983)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Gerson Lyngdoh
2.	Shri. Rangkynsai R. Makdoh
3.	Shri. Dlosingh Lyngdoh
4.	Shri. Latho Manik Syiem
5.	Shri. Ganold S. Massar
6.	Shri. Mathiw Mawdkhap
7.	Shri. S. A. Nongrum
8.	Shri. D. M. Roy Kharkongor
9.	Shri. Rayland Singh Lyngdoh
11.	Shri. Peter G. Marbaniang
10.	Shri. Clement Shadap
11.	Shri. Linus Shadap
12.	Shri. Phorkin Lyngdoh
13.	Shri. Skendrowell Syiem
14.	Shri. Bomber Kharnaioir
15.	Shri. I. G. Lyngkhoi
16.	Shri. Bowen Rose Syiem
17.	Shri. Sain Manik Jyrwa
18.	Shri. Alwot B. Diengdoh
19.	Shri. Bindo M.
20.	Shri. Sindrowell Thangkhiew
21.	Shri. Jungai Khongjoh
22.	Shri. Dwesland Myrthong
23.	Shri. Tomroy Lyngdoh
24.	Shri. Bakstarwell Wanniang
25.	Shri. B. Werson Giri
26.	Shri. S. Galmendar Lyngdoh
27.	Shri. Tarson Rynjah

	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Term(1984-1988)</b>
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. B. P. Marngar
2.	Shri. M. D. Shadap
3.	Shri. S. Swell
4.	Shri. M. Warbah
5.	Shri. F. A. Khonglam
6.	Shri. K. S. Dohling
7.	Shri. H. S. Sawian
8.	Shri. E. D. Thomas
9.	Shri. M. Myllem
10.	Shri. W. Syiemiong
11.	Shri. Kitdor Syiem
12.	Shri. B. Nongsiej
13.	<b>Mrs. M. War (W)</b>
14.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh
15.	Shri. Smomik Kalwing
16.	Shri. Sain Manik Jyrwa
17.	Shri. Alwot B. Diengdoh
18.	Shri. Tomroy Lyngdoh
19.	Shri. S. Galmendar Lyngdoh
20.	Shri. Tarson Rynjah
21.	Mr Rangkynsai R. Makdoh
22.	Shri. Ganold S. Massar
23.	Shri. D. M. Roy Kharkongor
24.	Shri. Peter G. Marbaniang
25.	Shri. Clement Shadap
26.	Shri. Linus Shadap
27.	Shri. I. G. Lyngkhoi

<b>7<sup>th</sup> Term (1989-94)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Names</b>
1.	Shri. R. T. Rymbai
2.	Shri. Phingwell Muktieh
3.	Shri. Dapmain Khyriemujat
4.	Shri. D. R. Nongkynrih
5.	Shri. J. S. Khongmalai
6.	Shri. G. G. Syiemlieh
7.	Shri. J. Kharchandy
8.	Shri. P. M. Syiem
9.	Shri. Wanphrang Hujon
10.	Shri. A. H. Scott Lyngdoh
11.	Shri. J. A. Lyngdoh
12.	Shri. S. S. Ryntathiang
13.	Shri. Rowell Lyngdoh
14.	Shri. E. K. Raswai
15.	Shri. H. N. Diengngan
16.	Shri. Y. K. Lyngdoh
17.	Shri. Hopingstone Lyngdoh
18.	Shri. S. D. D. Nichols Roy
19.	Shri. Bindo M.
20.	Shri. E. K. Mawlong
21.	Shri. Rangkynsai R. Makdoh
22.	Shri. Ganold S. Massar
23.	Shri. I. G. Lyngkhoi
24.	Shri. F. A. Khonglam
25.	Shri. K. S. Dohling
26.	Shri. Kitdor Syiem

<b>8<sup>th</sup> Term(1994-1999)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. F. S. Lapang
2.	Shri. E. L. Nongbri
3.	Shri. K. K. Dkhar
4.	Shri. W. D. Lyngwi
5.	Shri. S. M. Kharkongor
6.	Shri. R. A. Lyngdoh
7.	Shri. H. F. Marngar
8.	Shri. B. E. Wanniang
9.	Shri. D. T. Marbaniang
10.	Shri. R. D. Warjri
11.	Shri. R. Khongshah
12.	Shri. B. K. Lyngdoh
13.	Shri. Bindo M.
14.	Shri. Rangkynsai R. Makdoh
15.	Shri. I. G. Lyngkhoi
16.	Shri. Kitdor Syiem
17.	Shri. Phingwell Muktieh
18.	Shri. Dapmain Khyriemmujaat
19.	Shri. D. R. Nongkynrih
20.	Shri. J. S. Khongmalai
21.	Shri. G. G. Syiemlieh
22.	Shri. J. Kharchandy
23.	Shri. P. M. Syiem
24.	Shri. A. H. Scott Lyngdoh
25.	Shri. J. A. Lyngdoh
26.	Shri. E. K. Raswai
27.	Shri. Y. K. Lyngdoh



<b>9<sup>th</sup> Term(1999-2003)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Hector Marwein
2.	Shri. Handle Mukhim
3.	Shri. S. S. Cajee
4.	Shri. P. S. Warjri
5.	Shri. S. R. Ryntathiang
6.	Shri. Brestarwell Nongsiej
7.	Shri. P. K. Raswai
8.	Shri. J. G. Rynniaw
9.	Shri. Phongjong Mawkhiew
10.	Shri. Diverland Lyngdoh
11.	Shri. Bindo M.
12.	Shri. Rangkynsai R. Makdoh
13.	Shri. I. G. Lyngkhoi
14.	Shri. Kitdor Syiem
15.	Shri. J. S. Khongmalai
16.	Shri. G. G. Syiemlieh
17.	Shri. J. A. Lyngdoh
18.	Shri. H. N. Diengngan
19.	Shri. E. L. Nongbri
20.	Shri. K. K. Dkhar
21.	Shri. W. D. Lyngwi
22.	Shri. H. F. Marngar

<b>10<sup>th</sup> Term(2004-2009)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri William Mynsong
2.	Shri Pleohaf B. Syiem
3.	Shri Donbok Khyndeit
4.	Shri Field Marshal Mawphniang
5.	Shri David Kharsati
6.	Shri Marple N. Mukhim
7.	Shri Lambor Malniang
8.	Shri Prestone Tyngsong
9.	Shri Khan Khongbkhar
10.	Shri Teinwell Dkhar
11.	Shri Plaslanding D. Iangjuh
12.	Shri P.W.Khongjee
13.	Shri H.F.Shylla
14.	Shri Ronnie V. Lyngdoh
15.	Shri Sanbor Shullai
16.	Shri Latitlang Kharkongor
17.	Shri Bindo M. Lanong
18.	Shri Harding L. Massar
19.	Shri Martamlin Tyrbot
20.	Shri Founder S. Cajee
21.	Shri Lamphrang Blah
22.	Shri H. Donkupar
23.	Shri R. Lyndoh
24.	Shri Boldness L. Nongum
25.	<b>Smt. Irin Lyngdoh (W)</b>
26.	Shri B. Dires Nongsiej
27.	Shri Manstudy Nongrem
28.	Shri Nestingdar Nongdhar
29.	Shri Stormding Tongni
30.	Shri Sraly Rashir

<b>11<sup>th</sup> Term(2009-)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri Artist Ranee
2.	Dr. Telestine Lyngdoh
3.	Shri Otril Pamshong
4.	Shri Fabian Lyngdoh
5.	Shri Marbok Khartran
6.	Shri Remington Tyngrope
7.	Shri Lambor Malmiang
8.	Shri Jansing M. Tyngsong
9.	<b>Smt. Grace Mary Kharkuri (W)</b>
10.	Shri Teinwell Dkhar
11.	Shri Pynshngainlang Syiem
12.	Shri Titosstarwell Khyne
13.	Shri Parmulspone Sohpun
14.	<b>Smt. Teilinia Thangkhiew(W)</b>
15.	Shri Sanbor Shullai
16.	Shri Latitlang Kharkongor
17.	Shri Neil Antonio War
18.	Shri Jamesban Bassawiamoit
19.	Shri Adelbert Nongrum
20.	Shri Embhahlang Syiemlieh
21.	Shri Lamphrang Blah
22.	Shri H. Donkupar R. Lyngdoh
23.	<b>Smt. Irin Lyngdoh (W)</b>
24.	Shri Endin K. Raswai
25.	Shri Manstudy Nongrem
26.	Shri Goodleaderson Nongsiej
27.	Shri K. Thlastingwell Pangniang
28.	Shri Fanpinkitbok Ryntathiang

### **Appendix- 3**

#### Chronology of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Garo Hills Autonomous District Council Since 1952

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	<b>Period</b>
1.	Shri. Rangam G. Momin	Shri. Mohan Ch.Sangma	1952 to 1957
2.	Shri .Rangam G.Momin	Shri .Robert Ch.Momin	1958 to1964
3.	Shri.Mody K. Marak	Shri .Bronson W. Momin	1964 to1970
4.	Shri .Broson W.Momin	Shri. Marson T.Sangma	1970 to1972
5.	Shri .Lohindro N.Sangma	Shri .Pipinson B. Momin	1972 to 1977
6.	Shri .Pipinson G. Momin	Shri .Dhabal Ch.Barman	1977 to1978
7.	Shri .Noha B. Sangma	Shri. .Samsul Huda	1978 to1981
8.	Shri .Roelson R. Marak	Shri. Winkle G.Momin	1981 to1983
9.	Shri .Projecktion K. Sangma	<b>Smt. Enilla D. Shira(W)</b>	1983 to1989
10.	Shri .V.Cecil R. Marak	Shri .Heringstone R.Marak	1983 to1994
11.	Shri .Robinson C. Marak	Shri. Cary C.Marak	1994 to1996
12.	Shri .Cary C. Marak	Shri. Ebelson A.Sangma	1996 to 1999
13.	Shri .Edmund K.Sangma	Shri. Timothy D. Shira	1999 to2000
14.	Shri .Thimothy D. Shira	Shri. Winkle G. Momin	200125.10.01
15.	Shri .Riksing A.Sangma	Shri. Gamindro R. Manal	20.204.22904 to29.3.04-5-5-05
16.	Shri .Gamind Roy	Shri. Milan M. Sangma	11-05-05 to28-07-05

LIST OF SECRETARIES, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, GHADC 1952

Sl. No	Names
1.	Shri. Dingron K. Marak
2.	Shri . Kandura W.Momin
3.	Shri . G.S Massar
4.	Shri . F.B Lyngdoh
5.	Shri. J.M Thankheiw
6.	Shri . G.N Bhattacharjee
7.	Shri . R.T Rymbat
8.	Shri . Samarendra Dam
9.	Shri. Kshirode Marak
10.	Shri.C.Changsan
11.	<b>Smt. B. N Sangma(W)</b>
12.	Shri. N.S Chisim
13.	Shri. C.B Chetry
14.	Shri. B.D Sangma
15.	Shri. T.K.S.Marak
16	Shri. Dingron K. Marak
18	Shri. Sotden P. Marak
19	Shri. Enothsing Ch.Sangma
21	Shri. Hitterson N. Marak

## MEMBERS OF THE GARO HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>1st Term</b>	
<b>Sl. no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Mohon Sangma
2.	Shri. Lohindro N. Sangma
3.	Shri. Jojendra Sangma
4.	Shri. Phukan Sangma
5.	Shri. Namjam Marak
6.	Shri. Williamson Sangma
7.	Shri. Rangam G. Momin
8.	Shri. Korner Marak
9.	Shri. Sadhuram Girikorchi
10.	Shri. Levison K. Marak
11.	Shri. Harrison W. Momin
12.	<b>Smt. Surjomoti O. Momin (W)</b>
13.	Shri. Jotindra Momin
14.	Shri. Witherson Momin
15.	Shri. Jojendra Nath Bantha
16.	Shri. Mody K. Marak
17.	Md. Akramoz Zamman
18.	Shri. Harabhandu Mukharjee
<b>Nominated</b>	
19.	Shri. Dingron Marak
20.	Shri. Singdon K. Sangma
21.	Shri. Mohen Sangma Lasker
22.	Shri. Robilal Joist
23.	Shri. Khelaram Barman Hajong
24.	<b>Smt. Roneswari Marak (W)</b>

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Term</b>	
<b>Sl.no</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Md. Akkramoz Laman
2.	Shri Emonsing Sangma
3.	Shri. Robert Momin
4.	Shri. Binsing Marak
5.	Shri. Jotindra Sangma
6.	Shri. Jakabandu Barman
7.	Shri. Harission W. Momin
8.	Shri. Jaden CH. Marak
9.	Shri. Jogendra Sangma
10.	Shri. RangamG. Momin
11.	Shri. Jepperson Areng
12.	Shri. Dingmin S. Nengmiza
13.	<b>Smt. Shurjomoti Ch .Momin(W)</b>
14.	Shri. Williamson Sangma
15.	Shri. Witherson Momin
16.	Shri.Mody K. Marak
17.	Shri. Emberson Momin
18.	Shri. Smison R.Sangma
19.	Shri. Mohan CH.Sangma
20.	Shri. Lohindro N.sangma
21.	Shri. Jogendra Nath Bantha
22.	Shri. Khe Laram Barman
<b>Nominated</b>	
23.	Shri. Dalbir Lohar
24.	Shri. Mohen Sangma

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Term</b>	
<b>Sl no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Md.Akkramoz Zaman
2.	Shri. Albinstone M.Sangma
3.	Shri. Binsing Marak
4.	Shri. Bronson Momin
5.	Shri. Choronsing Sangma
6.	Shri. Emongsing Sangma
7.	Shri. Grohonsing Marak
8.	Shri. Jotindra Momin
9.	Shri. Jagabandhu Barma
10.	Shri. Jackman Marak
11.	Shri. Karnesh R. Marak
12.	Shri. Khelaram Barman
13.	Shri. Lohindra N. Sangma
14.	Shri. Levison Marak
15.	Shri. Mody K. Marak
16.	Shri. Mohon Sangma
17.	Shri. Moniram Marak
18.	Shri. Marson T. Sangma
19.	Shri. Nimai Chandra Rabha
20.	Shri. Samarendra Sangma
21.	Shri. Simison Sangma
22.	Shri. Williamson Sangma
<b>Nominated</b>	
23.	Shri Dalbir Lohar
24.	<b>Smt. Bisadini Sangma (W)</b>



<b>4<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
<b>Sl no</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Albinstone Sangma
2.	Shri. Roelson Marak
3.	Shri. Lohindro Sangma
4.	Shri. Aransing Sangma
5.	Shri. Dingmin S. Nengmiza
6.	Shri. Dhabal Ch. Barman
7.	Shri. Binsing Marak
8.	Shri. Wilgan Momin
9.	Shri. Ranjit S. Marak
10.	Shri. Marson T. Sangma
11.	Shri. Levison Marak
12.	Shri. Pipinson G . Momin
13.	Shri. Binode Ch. Kouch
14.	Shri. Robert Clive Marak
15.	Shri. Henison Momin
16.	Shri. Samsul Huda
17.	Shri. Osol Sangma
18.	Shri. Serendra Marak
19.	Shri. Starlin Marak
20.	Shri. Sujend Momin
21.	Shri. Nimai Ch. Rabha
22.	Shri. Jonjonesh Momin
23.	Shri. Arshit P. Marak
24.	Shri. Nillathhon Momin
25.	Shri. Gothickson Momin
26.	Shri. Mody K. Marak
27.	Shri. Willipson Marak
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	<b>Smt. Alleswary Momin (W)</b>
2.	<b>Smt. Janje Ch. Marak (W)</b>
3.	Shri. Mon Bhadur Newar

<b>5<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Roelson Marak
2.	Shri. Projection Sangma
3.	Shri. Floyed Holden Momin
4.	Shri. Clifford Marak
5.	Shri. Parkeen Marak
6.	Shri. Chamber Marak
7.	Shri. Binsing Marak
8.	Shri. Debonsing Marak
9.	Shri. Sandford K. Marak
10.	Shri Romesh Marak
11.	Shri. Pipinson G. Momin
12.	Shri. Noho B. Sangma
13.	Shri. Dhabal Ch. Barman
14.	Shri. Binode Couch
15.	Shri. Robert Clive
16.	Shri. Entyson Sangma
17.	Shri. Samarendra Sangma
18.	Shri. Bropathason Daring
19.	Shri. Samsul Huda
20.	Shri. Denison Sangma
21.	Shri. Bipin Dasring
22.	Shri. Probit Marak
23.	Shri. Jonjonesh Momin
24.	Shri. Serendra Marak
25.	Shri. Arshit P. Marak
26.	Shri. Winkle Momin
27.	Shri. Nillathon Momin
28.	Shri. Gothick Momin
29.	Shri. Projengton Momin
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	Shri. Mody K. Marak

<b>6<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
<b>Sl.no.</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Alphonse Sangma
2.	Shri. Projection Sangma
3.	Shri. Clifford Marak
4.	Shri. Greeson Sangma
5.	Shri. Chamber Marak
6.	Shri. Anthony Marak
7.	Shri. Admiral Sangma
8.	Shri. Debonsing Marak
9.	Shri. Barthiar Marak
10.	Shri. Robinson Marak
11.	Shri. Monindra A'gitok
12.	Shri. Nimarson Momin
13.	Shri. Dhabal Ch. Barman
14.	<b>Smt. Reboti Barman(W)</b>
15.	Shri. Ebelson Sangma
16.	Shri. Wilnan Sangma
17.	Shri. Nalini Ranjan Hajong
18.	Shri. Sherjee Sangma
19.	Shri. Safiar Bahman Hazarika
20.	Shri. Denison Sangma
21.	Shri. Ramesh Rava
22.	Shri. Greendas Marak
23.	Shri. Timothy D. Shira
24.	Shri. Wittington Momin
25.	<b>Smt. Enilla D. Shira (W)</b>
26.	Shri. kurendra D. Shira
27.	Shri. Leninson Sangma
28.	Shri. Evindra Sangma
29.	Shri. Choronsing Sangma
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	Shri. Eropathson Daring

<b>7<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
Sl. No	Name of Member District Council
1.	Shri. Alphonse Sangma
2.	Shri. Sengran Sangma
3.	Shri. Freedarson Sangma
4.	Shri Heringstone Marak
5.	Shri. National Marak
6.	Shri. Nirmal Momin
7.	Shri. Admiral Momin
8.	Shri. Oliver Momin
9.	Shri. Joylance Momin
10.	Shri. Glopsing Marak
11.	Shri. John Benard Sangma
12.	Shri. Gopinath Sangma
13.	Shri. Gulam Mahedi
14.	<b>Smt. Reboti Barman(W)</b>
15.	Shri. Belson Sangma
16.	Shri Cary Marak
17.	Shri. Binode Koch
18.	Shri. William Cecil Marak
19.	Shri. Safiar Rahman Hazarika
20.	Shri. Jenith Sangma
21.	Shri Ramesh Rava
22.	Shri. Ronald Momin
23.	Shri. Polycrap Marak
24.	Shri Wittington Momin
25.	Shri. Dencield Marak
26.	Shri. Rockefeller Momin
27.	Shri. Kurendra D. Shira
28.	Shri. Evindra Sangma.
29.	Shri. Choronsing Sangma
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	Shri. Charles G. Momin.

<b>8<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
Sl. no	Name of Member District Council
1.	Shri. Alphonse Sangma
2.	Shri. Sengran Sangma
3.	Shri. Freedarson Sangma
4.	Shri Greenson Sangma
5.	Shri. National Marak
6.	Shri. Tapseng Sangma
7.	Shri.Semford B. Sangma
8.	Shri. Kenethson Sangma
9.	Shri. Fersen Ch. Momin
10.	Shri. Robinson Marak
11.	Shri. Dewan Sangma
12.	Shri. Mettalsan Sangma
13.	Shri. P. Homendra Sing Marak
14.	Shri. Nripendra Koch
15.	Shri. Ebelson Sangma
16.	Shri Cary Marak
17.	Shri. Lalthanthuanga D. Shira
18.	Shri. Roynath Sangma
19.	Shri. Aperson Momin
20.	Shri. Jenith Sangma
21.	Shri. Widnald Marak
22.	Shri. Innocent Marak
23.	Shri. Polycrap Marak
24.	Shri Wittington Momin
25.	Shri. Dencield Marak
26.	Shri. Omillo Sangma
27.	Shri. Hayward Sangma
28.	Shri. Obish Sangma
29.	Shri. Truman Marak
<b>Nominated</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Smt. Bety Davis Ch. Momin (W)</b>

<b>9<sup>th</sup> Term</b>	
Sl. no	Name of Member District Council
1.	Shri. Hedrick A. Sangma
2.	Shri. Projeckson K. Sangma
3.	Shri. Larsen R. Sangma
4.	Shri. Banal M. Sangma
5.	Shri. Samuel Sangma
6.	Shri. Canon Marak
7.	Shri. Marcell Marak (Expired on 14.05.02) Shri. Augustine M. Marak (Elected and allotted to 7-GDC constituency on 28.10.02)
8.	Shri. Kenethson Sangma
9.	Shri. Billykid Sangma
10.	Shri. Nanggin Marak
11.	Shri. Jamesnewbirth Sangma
12.	Shri. Sleevein Sangma
13.	Shri. Raghunandan Marak
14.	Shri. Bipramonan Koch
15.	Shri. Ebelson Sangma
16.	Shri. Crinathson A. Sangma
17.	Shri. Mosidur Rahman
18.	Shri. Roynath Sangma
19.	Shri. Wahedur Rahman
20.	Shri. Anukul Marak
21.	Shri. LitindraSangma
22.	Shri. Edmund K. Sangma
23.	Shri. Timothy D. Shira
24.	Shri. Winsang Sangma
25.	Shri. Dolly K. Sangma
26.	Shri. Winkle Momin (Expired on 26.10.01) Shri. Mody Sangma (Elected and allotted to 26-GDC constituency on 30.04.02)
27.	Shri. Brilliant Sangma
28.	Shri. Ashutosh Marak
29.	Shri. Mahamsing Sangma.
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	Shri. John Manner Marak - De – nominated
2.	<b>Smti. Clarish K. Sangma- Re – nominated (W)</b>

<b>10<sup>th</sup> term</b>	
Sl. no	Name of Member District Council
1.	Shri. Alphonse Sangma
2.	Shri. Milan N. Sangma
3.	Shri. Larsen R. Sangma
4.	Shri. Wenison Ch. Marak
5.	Shri. Panseng R. Marak
6.	Shri. Apurba K. Marak
7.	Shri. Salseng A. Sangma
8.	Shri. Kenethson Sangma
9.	Shri. Rikseng A. Sangma – (Expired on 22.09.04) Shri. John Leslee K. Sangma – (Elected and allotted to 9- Tura GDC Constituency on 11.05.05)
10.	Shri. Roster Sangma
11.	Shri. Binvichand Sangma
12.	Shri. Metalson D. Sangma
13.	Shri. Ranjit Nodok
14.	Shri. Nripendra Koch
15.	Shri. Ebelson Sangma
16.	Shri. Jamindro R. Marak
17.	Shri. Clement Marak
18.	Shri. Roynath Sangma
19.	Shri. Aperson Momin
20.	Shri. Joshburdin A. Sangma
21.	Shri. Mrinal Marak
22.	Shri. Purno K. Sangma
23.	Shri. Silman K. Sangma
24.	Shri. Brigady N. Marak
25.	Shri. Dolly K. Sangma
26.	Shri. Rakesh R. Marak
27.	Shri. Hayward N. Sangma
28.	Shri. Ashutosh B. Marak
29.	Shri. Denang T. Sangma
<b>Nominated</b>	
1.	Shri. Dijon Behari Richil - De – nominated
2.	<b>Smt. Ethelwitty Ch. Marak - Re – nominated (W)</b>

<b>11<sup>th</sup> Term (2009-)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri Alphonse A. Sangma
2.	Shri Freedarson N. Sangma
3.	Shri. Sengbath Marak
4.	Shri. Willy D. Shira
5.	Shri. Olendro R. Marak
6.	Shri. Silgra R. Marak
7.	Shri. Besterfield Sangma
8.	Shri. Widnal Marak
9.	Shri. Locksley R. Ch. Momin
10.	Shri. Chonjing Marak
11.	Shri. Larson Sangma
12.	Shri. Boston Marak
13.	Shri. Premanda Koch
14.	Shri. Mritendra Koch
15.	Shri. Dipul R. Marak
16.	Shri. Kredithson Marak
17.	Shri. Lalthantluanga D. Shira
18.	Shri. Roynath D. Sangma
19.	Shri. Fozidor Rahman
20.	Shri. Rongban D. Marak
21.	Shri. Ranjit Rabha
22.	Shri. Purno K. Sangma
23.	Shri. Sukharam Sanngma
24.	Shri. Brigady Marak
25.	Shri. Detarson D. Shira
26.	Shri. Cherak W. Momin
27.	Shri. Lahitson M. Sangma
28.	Shri. Thadious N .Sangma
29.	Shri. Denang T. Sangma



## Appendix 4

### LIST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF JAINTIA HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL 1967- 2009

Sl. No	Name of Chief Executive Member	Term
1 <sup>st</sup> Term ( 8.4.1967 to 6.3.1972)		
1.	Shri. E. Bareh	14.4.1967 – 1.4.1970
2.	Shri. J. D. Pohrmen	30.4.1970 – 6.3.1973
2 <sup>nd</sup> Term From – 7.3.1973 to 26.6.1975		
1.	Shri. J. D. Pohrmen	31.3.1973 – 10.3.1978
3 <sup>rd</sup> Term From – 24.6.1978 – 8.11.1983		
1.	Shri. H. B. Dan	27.6.1978 – 18.11.1978
2.	Shri. G. D. Pde	28.11.1978 – 4.5.1983
3.	Shri. H. B. Dan	5.5.1983 – 8.11.1983
4 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 9.11.1983 – 23.3.1989		
1.	Shri. E. Bareh	29.11.1983 – 23.12.1986
2.	Shri. J.D. Pohrmen	31.12.1986 – 23.3.1988
3.	Shri. H. B. Dan	2.4.1988 – 20.2.1989
5 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 24.2.1989 – 23.2.1994		
1.	Shri. G. Passah	4.3.1989 – 31.7.1992
2.	Shri. S. Mulieh	31.7.1992 – 24.2.1994
6 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 25.2.1994 – 20.3.1999		
1.	Shri. E. C. B. Bamon	25.2.1994 – 5.12.1995
2.	Shri. O. Kyndait	6.12.1995 – 21.3.1999
7 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 17.3.1999 – 12.2.2004		
1.	Shri. H. Suchiang	22.3.1999 – 27.7.1999
2.	Shri. O. Kyndait	28.7.1999 – 22.3.2000
3.	Shri. Q. Suiam	27.6.2000 – 12.2.2004
8 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 19.2.2004 – 16.2.2009		
1.	Shri. Moonlight Pariat	24.2.2004 – 4.4.2007
2.	Shri. Hambertus Nongtdu	9.4.2007 – 23.7.2007
3.	Shri. Hambertus Nongtdu	25.9.2007 – 6.11.2008
4.	Shri. Qually Suiam	7.11.2008 – 16.2.2009
9 <sup>th</sup> Term From – 17.2.2009		
1.	Shri. Hambertus Nongtdu	20.2.2009 -

MEMBERS OF JAINTIA HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCIL 1967 up  
to 2009

Sl. No	Name of Member District Council	Term
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Term From – 8.4.1967 to 6.3.1972</b>		
1.	Shri. Shawaless Shylla	8.4.1967 – 6.3.1973
2.	Shri. Edwinson Bareh	
3.	Shri. Blooming Challam	
4.	Shri. Ohiwat Khonglah	
5.	Shri. Johndeng Pohrmen	
6.	Shri. Oswald Lyngdoh	
7.	Shri. Nihon Ksih	
8.	Shri. Corinth Swer	
9.	Shri. C. K. Nampui	
10.	Shri. Beryl Sutnga	
11.	Shri. Humphrey Hadem	
12.	Shri. Norendro Sungoh	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b>	
	1. Shri. B. M. Shullai	
	2. Shri. I. G. Lytan	
	3. Shri. Tamon Roy Passah	
	4. Shri. L. Gatphoh.	

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Term From – 7.3.1973 to 26.6.1975</b>		
1.	Shri. Tylli Kyndiah	7.3.1973 to 26.6.1975
2.	Shri. Dising Challam	
3.	Shri. Blooming Challam	
4.	Shri. Albin Lamare	
5.	Shri. Johndeng Pohrmen	
6.	Shri. Ohiwat Khonglah	
7.	Shri. Shawas Sna	
8.	Shri. Edwinson Bareh	
9.	Shri. M. Jerliwin Garod	
10.	Shri. Mihsalan Suchiang	
11.	Shri. Norendo Sungoh	
12.	Shri. Obil Kyndait	
13.	Shri. Beryl Sutnga	
14.	Shri. C. K. Nampui	
15.	Shri. Nihon Ksih	
16.	Shri. Corinth Swer	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b>	
	1. Shri. Webster Laloo	13.8.1973
	2. Shri. L. William Laloo	6.12.1973
	3. <b>Smt. Dr. K. Rymbai (W)</b>	6.12.1973

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Term From – 24.6.1978 – 8.11.1983</b>		
1.	Shri. S. Mulieh	24.6.1978 – 8.11.1983
2.	Shri. G. Pde	
3.	Shri. Blooming Challam	
4.	Shri. H. Britain Dan	
5.	Shri. H. Enowell Pohsna	
6.	Shri. Webster Laloo	
7.	Shri. Donsing Challam	
8.	Shri. Quin Rabon	
9.	Shri. Hamdon Lamare	
10.	Shri. Mihsalan Suchiang	
11.	Shri. Dwil Sungoh	
12.	Shri. Saron Ksoo	
13.	Shri. Nihon Ksih	
14.	Shri. Sihon Roy Dkhar	
15.	Shri. H. Comfort Nongtdu	
16.	Shri. Thangkupa Darnei.	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b>	
	1. Shri. H. Braveman Mukhim	16.11.1978
	2. Shri. K. Sahneh Rymbai	16.11.1978

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Term From – 9.11.1983 – 23.3.1989</b>		
1.	Shri. S. Mulieh	9.11.1983 – 23.3.1989
2.	Shri. Thyndajai Shylla	
3.	Shri. N. Yooshida Shylla	
4.	Shri. Dewalin Talang	
5.	Shri. H. Britain Dan	
6.	Shri. Mihsalan Suchiang	
7.	Shri. Hamdon Lamare	
8.	Shri. Norendo Sungoh	
9.	Shri. Bison Roy Laloo	
10.	Shri. Kyrmen Susngi	
11.	Shri. Webster Laloo	
12.	Shri. Johndeng Pohrmen	
13.	Shri. Stanly Phawa	
14.	Shri. Edwinson Bareh	
15.	Shri. Obil Kyndait	
16.	Shri. Beryl Sutnga	
17.	Shri. H. Braveman Mukhim	
18.	Shri. Corinth Swer	
19.	Shri. Simon Siangshai	
20.	Shri. Sihon R. Dkhar	
21.	Shri. Thangkupa Darnei	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b>	
	1. Shri. Larsing Khyriem	

Sl. No	Name of Member District Council	Term
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Term From – 24.2.1989 – 23.2.1994</b>		
1.	Shri. S. Mulieh	24.2.1989 – 23.2.1994
2.	Shri. Thyndajai Shylla	
3.	Shri. Quinton Passah	
4.	Shri. Laitsingh Shylla	
5.	Shri. Moina Singh Phyllut	
6.	Shri. Camilus A. Lamin	
7.	Shri. Johndeng Pohrmen	
8.	Shri. Primus Susngi	
9.	Shri. Edmund S. Lyngdoh	
10.	Shri. Draison Kharshiing	
11.	Shri. Mihsalan Suchiang	
12.	Shri. Wanbait Chullet	
13.	Shri. Willy B. Suchiang	
14.	Shri. Bison Roy Iano	
15.	Shri. Oliver Chyrmang	
16.	Shri. E. C. B. Bamon	
17.	Shri. Thangkupa Darnei	
18.	Shri. H. Altea Singh Syih	
19.	Shri. Corinth Swer	
20.	Shri. Simon Siangshai	
21.	Shri. Sihon Roy Dkhar	
22.	Shri. Obil Kyndait	
23.	Shri. Hilarius Dkhar	
24.	Shri. Hamdon Lamare	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b> 1. Shri. Edwinson Bareh 2. Shri. Thomas Khonglah 3. Shri. Q. Rabon	

Sl. No	Name of Member District Council	Term
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Term From – 25.2.1994 – 20.3.1999</b>		
1.	Shri. Singh Mulieh	25.2.1994 – 20.3.1999
2.	Shri. Moonlight Parait	
3.	Shri. Gordon Parait	
4.	Shri. Carmilus Pde	
5.	Shri. Stephanmin Pohrmen	
6.	Shri. Lamdibok Sumer	
7.	Shri. Kyrmen Susngi	
8.	Shri. Emphristing Phawa	
9.	Shri. Hari R. Sari	
10.	Shri. Primus Susngi	
11.	Shri. K. Sahneh Rymbai	
12.	Shri. Kiton Samati	
13.	Shri. Bison Roy Iano	
14.	Shri. Qually Suiam	
15.	Shri. Gilbert Sten	
16.	Shri. Wanbait Chullet	
17.	Shri. Willy B. Suchiang	
18.	Shri. Obil Kyndait	
19.	Shri. Phrang Rymbai	
20.	Shri. Sawang Lamurong	
21.	Shri. Planning Rymbai	
22.	Shri. H. Braveman Mukhim	
23.	Shri. Halelstar Lyngdoh	
24.	Shri. Hilarius Dkhar	
25.	Shri. Beryl Sutnga	
26.	Shri. E. C. B. Bamon	
27.	Shri. Tobias Manner	
28.	Shri. Thangkupa Darnei	
29.	Shri. Draison Kharshiing	
	<b><u>Nominated Members</u></b>	
	1. Shri. Hed Dhar	

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Term (17.3.1999-12.2.2004)</b>		
1	Shri Badon S. Pohlong	
2	Shri. Romeo L. Bhem	
3	Shri Carmilus A. Lamin	
4	Shri. Obil Kyndait	
5	Shri. Speinlang Rymbai	
6	Shri. Kor Sympli	
7	Shri. Diwon Shadong	
8	Shri. Arwot Lamare	
9	Shri. Hambertus Nongtdu	
10	Shri. Erudit Sutnga	
11	Shri. Lalthanmoia Darnei	
12	Shri. Philip Tangliang	
13	Shri. Niwanly Lamare	
14	Shri. Qually Suiam	
15	Shri. Gilbert Sten	
16	Shri. Herbert Suchiang	
17	Shri. Willy B. Suchiang	
18	Shri. Hilarius Dkhar	
19	Shri. Brington Shylla	
20	Shri. Draison Kharshiing	
21	Shri. Kiton Samati	
22	Shri. G. Moris Lamare	
23	Shri. Shembok Garod	
24	Shri. Tarling Tariang	
25	Shri. K. Sahneh Rymbai	
26	Shri. Skit Sari	
27	Shri. J.U. Nongrum	
28	Shri. Moonlight Pariat	
29.	Shri. Philemon Lyngdoh	
	<b><u>Nominated Member</u></b>	
	1. Cherish Field Pariat	



<b>8<sup>th</sup> Term 2004-</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Badonsingh Pohlong
2.	Shri. Holandolamin
3.	Shri. Camillus Albert Lamin
4.	Shri. Helping Pawa
5.	Shri. Amos Dkhar
6.	Shri. Phrang Rymbai
7.	Shri. Joinriwell pyrpuh
8.	Shri. Mongolsing Tyngkra
9.	Shri. Hambertus Lamare
10.	Shri. Richard Singh Lyngdoh
11.	Shri. Thianga Ngamlai
12.	Shri. Philip Tangliang
13.	Shri. Mikhael Saioo
14.	Shri. Qually Suiam
15.	Shri. Dhawan Shyrmang
16.	Shri. Wanbait Chulet
17.	Shri. Sevenborn Tang
18.	Shri. Sorsing Shadap
19.	Shri. Brington Shylla
20.	Shri. Return Sma
21.	Shri. Edmund Speakerson Lyngdoh
22.	Shri. Donsing Laloo
23.	Shri. Shemhok Garod
24.	Shri. Tarling Tariang
25.	Shri. Madondai Rymbai
26.	Shri. Skitsari
27.	Shri. J. Ulysses Nongrum
28.	Shri. Moonlight Pariat
29.	Shri. Philemon Lyngdoh

<b>9<sup>th</sup> Term (2009-)</b>	
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name of Member District Council</b>
1.	Shri. Lamdibok Sumer
2.	Shri. Holando Lamin
3.	Shri. Stephanson Mukhim
4.	Shri. Obil Kyndait
5.	Shri. Amos Dhkar
6.	Shri. Welcome Dkahr
7.	Shri. Joinriwell Tyrtuh
8.	Shri. Mongolsingh Tyngkra
9.	Shri. Hamburtus Nongtdu
10.	Shri. Seiborlang Shadap
11.	Shri. Arbor
12.	Shri. Hima Darnei
13.	Shri. Richard Singh Lyngdoh
14.	Shri. Newanly Lamare
15.	Shri. Qually Suiam
16.	Shri. Dhawan Shyrmang
17.	Shri. Kilometer Lytan
18.	Shri. Wanbiang Shadap
19.	Shri. Ri-oo Sten
20.	Shri. Brington Shylla
21.	Shri. Hillarius Dkhar
22.	Shri. Edmund Speakerson Lyngdoh
23.	Shri. Thombor Shiwat
24.	Shri. Celius Biam
25.	Shri. Lightsing Shylla
26.	Shri. Madonbai Rymbai
27.	Shri. Sunday Morning Suma
28.	Shri. J. Ulysses Nongrum
29.	Shri. Moonlight Pariat
30.	Shri. Dunno Nongkluh

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2. Smt. Ampareen Lyngdoh, Member of Legislative Assembly, Shillong Meghalaya, 13th December 2010.
3. Smt. Florence Nightingale, MDC Candidate 2009 Election, Baghmara, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010.
4. Smt. Teilinia Thankhiew, Member of Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Shillong Meghalaya, on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
5. Smt. Irin Lyngdoh, Member of Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Shillong Meghalaya, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2011.
6. Smt. Grace Kharpuri, Member of Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, phoning interview, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011.
7. Dr (Mrs.) Bibilinia Lyngdoh, MLA Candidate 2008 Election, Mairang West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2010.
8. Smt. Agnes Kharshiing, President of the *Civil Society Women Organisation* (CSWO-Agnes), Shillong, Meghalaya. Interview on 22 February 2012
9. President and Secretary of the *Khasi Women and Development Association*, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2012

10. President of Mothers Union (Tura) Mothers Union, West Garo Hills Tura, Meghalaya, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010
11. President of the *Federation of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo People*, phoning interview on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2010.
12. Secretary of *Mothers Union* (Baghmara), 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010.
13. Ex- president *Thangmaw Village Women Organisation*, Thangmaw, West Khasi Hills.
14. Dr (Mrs.) M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Adviser of *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei*, Shillong. 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.
15. Cerila Khonglah, Public Secretary of *Ka Lympung Ki Seng Kynthei*, Shillong, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012.
16. Sordar of Thangmaw Village, West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya,
17. Mr. Samuel Jyrwa, General Secretary of the *Khasi Students' Union*, Shillong, Meghalaya, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012.
18. Smt. Sabrina Lyngdoh, President of the *Pyndemumiong Women Organisation* (Mairang), West Khasi Hills. Meghalaya.
19. Nokma of Siju village, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya
20. Nokma of Kolapara Village, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya
21. Nokma of Dabram village, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya.
22. Executive Member of the Durbar of the Mawlai Mawdatbaki, Nongpathaw, Shillong.

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# Fieldwork in Khasi and Garo Hills



## Photos capture during the course of field work

Women at Work in Garo Hills



Women at Work in West Khasi Hills



Passionate mother can't be alone for the interview:  
Khasi hills



Passionate mother in Garo Hills



Future passionate mothers



## Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Election, 2013



*Proud to be a voter: Women in Khasi Hills*



*Don't want to miss voting rights: Women in Garo Hills*

## Women able to climb political ladder



*Mrs. WanSuk Syiem*

*Meghalaya First Woman MP to the Rajya Sabha, elected on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013*



*Photo with Miss Agatha Sangma*

*Meghalaya First Woman MP to the Lok Sabha, 2009*



# Role performance



*Mrs. Roshan Warjri*  
*Meghalaya First Woman Home Minister, 2013*



*Mrs. Deborah Marak*  
*Meghalaya First Woman Deputy Chief Minister, 1998*