

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, NEHU, SHILLONG

UGC-SAP National Seminar on

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA

Concept Paper

Elections are the lifeline of democracy. Besides providing legitimacy to the government and facilitating the winning party / parties to form governments the elections empower the citizens in representative democracies. Unless people have faith in the system of elections, the government even if elected loses its legitimacy and democracy becomes a mockery. Hence, several philosophers and political theorists have given serious thoughts over ages on various electoral systems. The objectives, forms and process of elections have been refined continuously over period of time. Although in recent years the critics started favoring substantive, participatory and deliberative democracy, the procedural democracy continues to be relevant even today. The moot point is how to make elections more representative, trustworthy, transparent, fair and popular.

Indian democracy is well entrenched since its independence with periodic elections and continuous improvisations to make it trustworthy. It is well ahead of many western democracies so far as popular participation is concerned. It is also well praised by international communities and pundits for its fairness. The percentage of participation has not only made elections popular but also have created eventful political revelries. From ballot paper to electronic voting, from violence-ridden elections to largely peaceful voting, from mostly bi-polar to multipolar contests, Indian elections have come long way to win the faith of the masses. At the time of independence many did not see any future of our parliamentary democracy and believed that the system would collapse due to electoral participation by ignorant, illiterate voters and inability to contain fissiparous tendencies emanating from the diversities. All such doomsayers are proved incorrect. Indians have not only relished the charm of the 'dance of democracy' over these years but also have thwarted any attempt to subvert it through unfair means.

India's northeast is a test case of the success story of Indian democracy. Many foreign as well as Indian scholars were pessimist about efficacy of democratic politics in the region due to decades of insurgency, ethnic conflicts, social turmoil, etc. Today, the region has the largest electoral participation in the country, most peaceful voting and transparency to the best possible extent. Further, there is misperception that the nature of electoral politics in the region is same across all the states. Each state has a narrative of its own in its experiment with the elections. The region witnesses the fusion of traditional and modern systems in the electoral process. It is interesting to examine and analyse

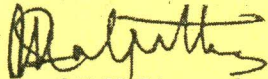
the democratic roots, regional character and specificity of the electoral politics in India's northeastern states.

In pursuit of this objective, the Department of Political Science, NEHU, Shillong proposes to organize a two-day national seminar on 19th and 20th March 2020 to discuss and deliberate on various aspects of electoral politics in the region. The sub-themes of the proposed seminar are as follows:

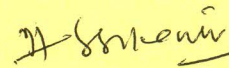
- Conceptualization and Contextualization of Representative Democracy and Electoral Politics
- Political Parties and Electoral Trends in the States.
- Regionalism, Ethnicity and Electoral Politics
- Political Economy of the Elections
- Media and Role of Civil Society in Elections
- Electoral Reforms

Abstracts are solicited from the scholars and academicians on the relevant themes. The last date of online submission of the abstracts is 5th February, 2020. The decision on the abstracts submitted will be intimated to the scholars on or before 10th February. The scholars' whose abstracts are selected are to pay a registration fee of Rs. 500 (resident scholars) and Rs. 1,000 (outstation teachers and scholars). The organizers will take care of the local hospitality of the scholars selected or invited for presentation of papers. The scholars whose abstracts are accepted should send their full papers on or before 10th March, 2020.

All abstracts should be sent to: sapseminar2020@gmail.com



Prof. R.K. Satapathy
Seminar Coordinator



Prof. H. Srikanth
Head of the Department