range through Mikir Hills, North Kachar Hills and Nagaland. Jaintia-Hills on its eastern border merges into Brail range, its central part comparatively flat and valley form. The southern part of Khasi and Jaintia Hills is mostly formed by gentle slopes. The central and northern part of Khasi and Garo Hills are hilly.

The state is watered with innumerable rivulets and streams. Besides this, there are number of lakes, ponds and rivers. The rivers are torrential and follow the directions of ranges. The Shillong peak and Nokrek peak, form the main watersheds of the rivers.

The climate of Meghalaya varies from sub-tropical in foot hills to temperate at higher elevations. In general, Khasi and Jaintia hills districts have warm summer and cold winter, while Garo-hills districts appear slightly warmer. South eastern monsoon from June to September accounts for 75% of the total rainfall. The north eastern monsoon lasting from December to January, accounts for minor percentage of rainfall.

The state shows different vegetative zones from tropical to temperate. Tropical evergreen vegetation with luxurious growth is met at lower altitudes. Topical forest is gradually replaced by subtropical forest. Trees are heavily loaded with epiphytes - mostly orchids.

Southern part of Khasi hills districts, due to heavy rainfall and soil erosion has scanty vegetation. There are number of Reserve forests in the state, specially in the southern part of Khasi and Garo Hills where artificial plantation of economically important timber producing plants are present.

For details of the topography of Meghalaya, Alfred (1995) may be referred to.

## SYSTEMATICS

The known living ants comprise of 11 living subfamilies, viz. Ponerinae, Nothomyrmecinae, Myrmecinae, Dorylinae, Ecitoninae, Leptanillinae, Pseudomyrmecinae, Myrmicinae, Dolichoderinae, Formicinae and Aneuretinae, spread over 297 genera with approximately 8,800 species from the world. (Wilson et al., 1990)

Turning to the entire fauna of ants, it is estimated and is quite possible that 20,000 or more species of ants, constituting as many as 350 genera exist in the world. (Holldobler and Wilson, 1990). A total of 163 species (including a few upto genera only) are reported in this paper.

## COLLECTION, PRESERVATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Ants can be collected by hand picking with fine forceps or with the help of an aspirator. They are also taken in an insect net by sweeping the foliage or by extraction through a Berlese funnel. Baiting is another method. Storage is possible in 70 to 80 percent alcohol. Large specimens can be pinned directly through the body and smaller ones mounted on paper-tips. Identification is mainly based on worker caste (Fig.1). In species where modified worker caste occur, characters studied are mainly that of worker major or soldier forms.