

**WORKING OF THE BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL
(2003 - 2008)**

An Abstract

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Master of Philosophy in the Political Science*

BY
JUNMANI BASUMATARY



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
NORTH - EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG - 793022

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Abstract

1.1 Background

The study on “Working of the Bodoland Territorial Council (2003-08)” assumes importance because of its recent formation in the state of Assam in North-East India. This district Council was mainly formed to preserve the identity, socio-economy, language, culture and education of the Bodos of Assam.

The transfer of power to the people of India in 1947 asserted a new era of autonomous administration for the hill areas of the then composite Assam. After India's independence, the emerging educated section of the tribal society demanded adequate provision for the protection of their political, social, and economic rights. All these demands, in fact, emerged out of the desire for preserving and protecting the tribal identity.

Meanwhile, the Constituent Assembly of India deliberated upon the problems of the hill districts of Assam which resulted in the setting up of Bordoloi Sub-Committee to assess the opinion of the people over the constitutional status of their areas in India. On the commendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee, the Constitution of India provided for a Sixth Schedule under which a District Council for each hill districts of Assam should be created to safeguard the interest of the hill people and their customary way of life.

Accordingly, the Sixth Schedule under articles 244 (2) and 275 (1) to the Constitution of India contains with regard to the administration of the Tribal Areas in the

States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.¹ These provisions led to the formation of Autonomous District Councils or Regional Councils in certain hill districts of Assam. Under the Sixth Schedule, the District Councils or Regional Councils are provided with powers and functions as autonomous administrative bodies to manage all affairs pertaining to the welfare of the tribal people.

At present, in the entire North Eastern region, there are 10 District Councils functioning. The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is one of the three District Councils of Assam, the other two being the North Cachar Hill District and the Karbi Anglong Hill District.² The BTC was the result of the vigorous Bodoland movement launched by the Bodo people since 1986. The prolonged Bodoland movement came to an end after 30 rounds of tripartite talks held from March 2000 to February 2003 between the representatives of the Government of India, Government of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT).³ Consequently, a Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the BLT on 10th February, 2003,⁴ which established the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

The BTC has been vested with powers for self-rule of the Bodos under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The Administrative unit has been created with the objectives of accomplishing development in the fields of economy,

¹ B. L. Hansaria, *Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India*, (Ashok Publishing House, Guwahati, 1983), p. A- 331.

² D. D. Basu, *Introduction to the Constitution of India*, (Law Publishers, New Delhi, 2001), p. 286.

³ *Profile on Forest and Wildlife*, BTC, (Published by Forest Department, BTC, 2006), p. 1.

⁴ *Memorandum of Settlement*, BTC, 2003, (a Memorandum signed between the State and Central Government and BLT on 10th February, 2003, for the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council).

education, preservation of land rights, linguistic aspirations, socio-cultural and also to preserve the ethnic identity of the Bodos. To foster the said objectives, the BTC has been vested with autonomous administrative, legislative, executive, and financial powers over the 40 subjects. As per the agreement of Memorandum of Settlement (MoS), a major trust has been given to socio-economic development in order to speed up infrastructural development of all communities in the BTC areas and to take forward the Central Government's agenda for peace and development in the region.⁵ Thus, the BTC was created to bring about all round development, equality, security, growth and stability for all ethnic groups within the BTC areas.

1.1 Survey of Literature

Some selected studies have been reviewed as follows:

Creation of Sixth Schedule carries its own history. Several studies have been carried out by many scholars on the issues of administrative development in the North East India. These studies were basically the evolution of modern administrative system in the region during the colonial period, their changes that occurred after independence and the creation of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India. One of the important works on the administrative development and the creation of Sixth Schedule is, B. L. Hansaria's, the *Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India: A Study*.⁶ This book discussed about the historical setting to the administration of tribal areas. Here the pre and post Constitutional development have been analyzed in different provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Other

⁵ *Memorandum of Settlement*, BTC, 2003, *op.cit.*

⁶ B.L. Hansaria, *Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India*, (Ashok Publishing House, Gauhati, 1983).

existing works on administrative development of the region include K. K. Bhattacharjee's *North East India- Political and Administrative History*,⁷ V. V. Roa's *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India*⁸, P. R. Kyndiah's *Architect of District Council Autonomy*,⁹ M. Hidayatullah's *Fifth and Sixth Schedules to the Constitution*¹⁰ and S. K. Chaube's *Hills Politics in North East India*¹¹. K.K. Bhattacharjee in his study have attempted to present the political and administrative developments leading to the establishment of chief commissionership in Assam in 1874 and the constitution of the Province of Eastern Assam and Bengal in 1905. While V.V. Rao's study mostly based on the narratives of administrative developments and changes, P.R. Kyndiah discussed about the background and evolution of the Sixth Schedule and Rev.J.J.M. Nichols Roy's struggle for the tribals' cause in the hill areas of the North Eastern Region culminating in the creation of autonomous District Council as incorporated in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution. M. Hidayatullah has made thorough discussion about the provisions of both the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules to the Constitution of India. S.K. Chaube gave a brief account of the political evolution of the hills of North East India highlighting the emergence of autonomies and modern administrative system in the region.

Some studies have also been carried out on the functioning of Autonomous District Councils in North East India. Sujit Kumar Dutta's book, *Functions of*

⁷ K. K. Bhattacharjee, *North East India- Political and Administrative History*, (Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1983)

⁸ V. V. Roa, *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India*, (S. Chand & Co. New Delhi, 1976)

⁹ P. R. Kyndiah, *Architect of District Council Autonomy*, (Sanchar Publishing House, New Delhi, 1993)

¹⁰ M. Hidayatullah, *Fifth and Sixth Schedules to the Constitution*, (Ashok Publications, Guwahati, 1979)

¹¹ S. K. Chaube, *Hills Politics in North East India*, (Orient Longman, Patna, 1999)

*Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya*¹² (2002) analyzed the existing district councils and their factional conflicts and cleavages within the society. The study also presented a number of recommendations and suggestions to make District Council a true representative local government. *Autonomous District Council*¹³ edited by L.S. Gassah is a compilation of various issues concerning the working of the Autonomous District Councils (ADC). The structure, contents, other legal and constitutional aspects as they appear in the Schedule have been thoroughly discussed and critically examined. The problems of ADCs, the question of their autonomy and contribution towards the developments of the areas under the jurisdiction of the ADCs were discussed in this book. Besides these issues and problems, the constitutional aspect and development leading to the creation of the ADCs were also discussed.

Phanindra Jidung's work on *A study of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous District Council 1973 to 1980*,¹⁴ gave a detailed analysis of the legislative, executive, financial aspects of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous District Council and its relation with the state government. T. Shekngir Koireng in his M. Phil dissertation, *A study on the Organisation, Role and Functions of the Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council of Manipur*,¹⁵ studied about the establishment and working of Sadar Hills Autonomous

¹² Sujit Kumar Datta, *Functions of Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya*, (Akangsha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2002)

¹³ L.S. Gassah, *Autonomous District Council*, (Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1997).

¹⁴ Phanindra Jidung *A study of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous District Council 1973 to 1980* (M. Phil Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1991),

¹⁵ T. Shekngir Koireng, *A Study on the Organisation, Role and Functions of the Sadar Hills Autonomous District Council of Manipur*, (M. Phil Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1988)

District Council in Manipur. Like wise the Robert Romawia Royte's, *Lakher Autonomous District Council (1972-1982): A study*¹⁶ is an analysis of the formation and working of the Autonomous District Council of Lakher.

As far as the works on Bodos are concerned, the initial studies were undertaken mainly by the British Administrators, Surveyors, Defence Personal, and Christian missionaries based on their personal visit to the area, their notes on specific points, dairy and acquaintance with the people. Binai Daimary, in his M.Phil, Dissertation, *Boro Politics in Assam since Independence*,¹⁷ intensively analyzed about the Bodo political movement in Assam. Here, he attempted to examine the actual causes behind the Bodoland Movement and the consequent result of the movement since the period of independence. While studying Bodo political movement he dealt with the emergence and the role of the middle class during the movement. However, Daimary confined his study mainly on the Bodoland movement and not much attention has been paid to the activities and role of the political parties.

In his Ph. D. Thesis, *Social History of the Boros of Assam: Study of the Oral History*, Rabindra Nath Mushahary,¹⁸ has studied on oral histories that existed in the socio-cultural life of the Bodos. He has attempted to describe the Tradition and Culture of this people, which reflects in their social life. Similarly, Premalata Devi, in her book,

¹⁶ Robert Romawia Royte, *Lakher Autonomous District Council, (1972-1982): A Study*, (M. Phil Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Political Science, NEHU, 1992)

¹⁷ Binai Daimary, *Boro Politics in Assam since Independence*, (M. Phil Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of History, NEHU, 1986)

¹⁸ Rabindra Nath Mushahary, *Social History of the Boros of Assam: Study of the Oral History*, (Ph. D. Thesis, Submitted to the Department of History, NEHU, 1986).

Social and Religious Institutions of Bodos,¹⁹ has explained the traditional, socio-religious institutions of the Bodo people in Brahmaputra valley from philosophical point of view. Man, Society, Ethics and God as believed by the Bodos have been discussed in her book. Though these studies are indeed very helpful in understanding the social background of the Bodos, they have not mentioned about the political activities in Bodo society.

Chandan Sarma, in his article, “**The Bodo Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the role of the Middle Class**”, in Girin Phukan (ed.), *Political Dynamics of North East India*,²⁰ attempted to highlight the emerging role of Bodo elite groups in the Bodoland movement. While analyzing the consciousness of the middle class about their identity and political rights that led to the Bodoland movement, he has also attempted to examine the factors responsible for the Bodoland movement.

Ajanta Brahma, in her M. Phil. Dissertation, *The Emerging Role of the All Bodo Students’ Union in Assam Politics: A Historical Analysis (1919-1990)*,²¹ has examined and discussed the role of All Bodo Students’ Union in Assam Politics since 1919 to 1990. Her study was mainly focused on Bodoland movement launched by All Bodo Students’ Union and analysed about the movement in phase wise. Similarly, Sheena Rana Marak,

¹⁹ Premalata Devi, *Social and Religious Institutions of Bodos*, (Geophil Publishing House, Guwahati, 2004).

²⁰ Chandan Sarma, “The Bodo Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the role of the Middle Class”, in Girin Phukan (ed.), *Political Dynamics of North East India*, (South Asian Publications, New Delhi, 2000).

²¹ Ajanta Brahma, *The Emerging Role of the All Bodo Students’ Union in Assam Politics: A Historical Analysis (1919-1990)*, (M. Phil. Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of History, NEHU, 1990)

in her M. Phil. Dissertation, *All Bodo Students' Union Movement: A Study*²² focused her study on Bodo student movement in Assam. She has attempted to examine the factors that led to the alienation of the Bodos from the Assamese mainstream. She also assessed the reactions of the State and Central Governments and political parties to the movement. However, these studies gave some detailed information about the Bodo students' movement in Assam, but have failed to analyse about the involvement of different political parties in the movement.

In her book, *Ethnicity and Autonomy Movement: Case of Bodo-Kacharis of Assam*, Chandana Bhattacharya²³ has attempted to trace the autonomy movement of the Bodos which according to her was ethno-centric movement. She has examined the development of the demand for the ethnic consciousness and ethnic self-determination in the minds of Bodos as genesis of the movement.

Suchitra Sen Choudhury, in her book, *Women Participation in Bodoland movement*,²⁴ gave a descriptive account of the participation of various women organizations in social and political movements of Bodos. Choudhury has systematically analyzed the participation of Bodo women in the Bodoland Movement and tripartite talk in Bodo Accord (1993) particularly under the banner of All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation (ABWWF).

²² Seena Rana Marak, *All Bodo Students' Union Movement: A study*, (M. Phil. Dissertation, Submitted to the Department of Political Science, NEHU,1990),

²³ Chandana Bhattacharya, *Ethnicity and Autonomy Movement: Case of Bodo- Kacharies of Assam*, (Vikash Publishing House, Delhi, 1996).

²⁴ Suchitra Sen Chaudhury, *Women Participation in the Bodoland Movement*, (Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004).

Binai K. Basumatary, in his article, “**Political Aspiration of the Aboriginal Primitive Tribe vis-à-vis the United Tribal Nationalist Front**” in L.S.Gassah (ed.), *Regional Political Parties in North East India*,²⁵ discussed about problems confronting the different primitive tribes of the North East in general and the Bodos of Assam in particular. He also discussed about the Bodo as a primitive tribe, their problems, prospects and their struggle for political aspirations. He has made an account of the working of regional political party namely the United Tribal Nationalists Liberation Front (UTNLF, 1984) for the Bodos.

The above studies however, mainly concentrated on the Bodoland movement. No study so far has been carried out on the formation and the working of the Bodoland Territorial Council. Therefore, this work has attempted to study the working of the Bodoland Territorial Council in bringing about the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the Bodos.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule are looked upon as instruments for welfare of the tribal people and to preserve their own tradition and culture.²⁶ Contribution to social, political, economic and cultural development is regarded to be the core strategy of the District Councils in the North East. Although these Councils have been conceived as instruments of change and development, they seemed to have

²⁵ Binai K. Basumatary, in his article “Political Aspiration of the Aboriginal Primitive Tribe vis-à-vis the United Tribal Nationalist Front” in L.S.Gassah (ed.), *Regional Political Parties in North East India*, (Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1992)

²⁶ Sujit Kumar Datta, *op.cit.* p.10

failed in fulfilling the objectives for which they have been created.²⁷ As such, it becomes relevant to evaluate the working of the BTC as a newly established District Council.

As per the Memorandum of Settlement, to accelerate the overall development of the BTC areas, the Government of India was supposed to have provided financial assistance of Rs. 100 crores per annum for 5 years (2003-2008), over and above the normal plan assistance of State Government.²⁸ But so far only an amount of Rs. 250 crores was received by the Council.²⁹ In the light of the above backdrops, the present study attempted to examine the administrative powers, functions and achievements of the BTC.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study analysed the following objectives which are:

1. The Administrative Structure, Powers and Functions of the BTC,
2. The working of the BTC in Socio-Economic and Infrastructural Development.

Thus, the study investigated the administrative structure, powers and functions as specified to the Bodoland Territorial Council, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Secondly, it made an intensive analysis of socio-economic and infrastructural development undertaken by the Council particularly during the period under study, thereby to find out the responsibility of the Council in total development of the BTC

²⁷ R.N. Prasad, "Sixth Schedule and Working of the District Council in North Eastern State", *Dialogue Quarterly*, Vol.6, No.2, (New Delhi, 2004).pp.155-163

²⁸ *Memorandum of Settlement*, BTC, 2003, *op.cit.*

²⁹ Manifesto of BPF for 15th General Lok Sabha Election, 2009, (Kokrajhar, 2009)

areas. Accordingly, the study has analysed the administrative structure, the executive body and the portfolios of the Council, and has examined the Powers and Functions that are vested with the BTC under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. The study has also analysed the plans and policies of the Council and their execution in bringing about Socio-Economic and Infrastructural development in the BTC areas, particularly during the period (2003-08) under study.

1.5 Methodology

As per the approved Synopsis, the methodology used for this study is analytical. The collection of data for the study has been drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The Primary sources are drawn from the Memorandum of Settlement of the BTC, BTC Achievement Reports (Annual), Profile and Proceedings of the BTC, the BTC Legislative Assembly debates, the Assam Legislative Assembly debates, Election Manifesto of BPF and Pamphlets. The Secondary sources of information include books, journals, magazines, newspapers and souvenirs of All Bodo Students' Union and *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*.

Data collected from both the sources were examined using analytical method. The first objective has been analysed in Chapter II. In Chapter II, the analysis for the administrative powers and functions of BTC has been done based on the Memorandum of Settlement of BTC, 2003 and the Sixth Schedule Amendment Act, 2003 concerning BTC. The analysis has also been carried out based on laws passed by the Government of Assam and BTC, pertaining to the day to day administration of BTC.

The second objective has been examined in Chapters III and Chapter IV. In these Chapters, the working of the BTC in infrastructure and socio-economic development have been examined on the basis of Annual Achievement Reports of BTC, relevant articles reviewed on BTC, news paper articles, etc.

1.6 Organisation of the Chapters

The dissertation has been organised into Five Chapters.

Chapter I: Bodoland Movement and Formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

Chapter II: Administrative Structure, Powers and Functions of the BTC.

Chapter III: BTC and Infrastructural Development.

Chapter IV: BTC and Socio-Economic Development.

Chapter V: Conclusion.

Chapter I give a brief account of the historical development and the creation of the District Councils under the Sixth Schedule in general. Further this chapter analysed the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council in the light of Bodoland Movement with a view of preserving the social, political, economic, language and cultural determinants of the Bodo Society.

Chapter II has portrayed the profile of the Bodoland Territorial Council that is the physical area, population, district and subdivision, etc., and dealt with the administrative structure, its portfolio and Executive Council of the Bodoland Territorial Council. It also

made a brief analysis on the legislative, executive and financial powers and functions that are vested with the Bodoland Territorial Council.

Chapter III has examined the main objective of the present study that is the growth and development that have taken place during the period under study in the infrastructure sector in the BTC areas. The analysis is based on the various sectors of infrastructure like; transport, irrigation, health and family welfare, education, public works department and other subjects as entrusted to the Council.

Chapter IV has examined the working of the BTC in the Socio-Economic sectors and their achievement in these sectors during the period under study. This Chapter analyzed the functioning of various departments like; Agriculture Department, Fisheries Department, Sericulture Department, Tourism Department, Small, Cottage and Rural Industry, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Social Welfare Department, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, Market and Fair Department, Welfare Department on Plain Tribes and Backward Class and Cultural Affairs Department.

Chapter V is the summary of the study. This Chapter presents a brief summary of all the preceding chapters along with the identification of main findings of the study. It also proposes some suggestions and measures that can be adopted for further development of the BTC areas.

1.7 Findings of the Study

The study examined the administrative powers and functions of the BTC and infrastructure and socio-economic development in the BTC areas after its formation. This study is the first of its kind because it was recently formed (2003). This study, attempted to examine the working of the BTC to arrive at wider understanding of the Council.

The main findings of the study are summarised and highlighted chapter-wise. The findings of Chapters I and II are as follows:

1. The factors behind the launching of the Bodoland Movement were the consciousness of the Bodos to preserve their identity, socio-economy, language, tribal land, culture and education. This movement led to the creation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) on 10th February, 2003.
2. The BTC has been vested with certain powers and functions, Legislative, Executive and Financial, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. As per the Memorandum of Settlement, the powers and functions of the BTC spread over 40 subjects, out of which 39 subjects have been fully implemented and only one subject, that is, 'Relief & Rehabilitation', has not been implemented so far.
3. It is found that the civil administration of the Autonomous Territorial Council is placed with the two authorities, that is, the Deputy Commissioner, who represents the state government, and the Executive Council of the BTC. The Council enjoys autonomy and control over the departments specified in the MoS, but it does not

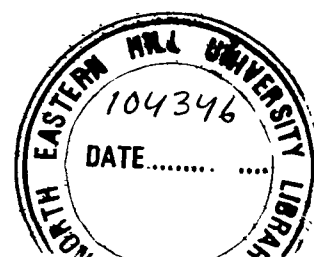
control the district administration. The Sixth Schedule has, thus, created two sets of authorities leading to consequent anomalies that overlap and create confusion over the jurisdiction in execution of their authorities.

4. In terms of the size or total number of seats in the Council, there is no uniformity in all the District Councils of the North East India. In the BTC, the total strength of the ruling body is 46 and this is the highest size in all the District Councils in North East India.
5. The BTC has been successful in changing the scenario of the Assam state politics. The regional party of the BTC known as Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF), under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary, has 11 MLAs in the Assam Legislative Assembly, out of which 3 are holding office as Cabinet Rank Ministers and 2 candidates have also been elected as Members of Parliament from the same party. The present Government of Assam is a Coalition of the BPF and the National Congress Party, which is a big achievement in the history of Bodo politics and this development took place only after the attainment of the BTC.

After the establishment of the BTC, there are some developments that have taken place in the BTC areas, particularly infrastructural and socio-economic developments.

The major findings of Chapters III and IV of the study are:

1. The departments' achievement reports of socio-economic and infrastructural sectors of the Council show that during the five years period (2003-2008) the Council has initiated various developmental measures. The most significant



achievements of the Council since its creation can be seen in the development of Infrastructures. The main sector in which this development has taken place is the administrative sector. The development of administrative infrastructure can be substantiated with the construction of the BTC Assembly and Secretariat Complex at Kokrajhar, the construction of District Head Quarters in all the four districts of the Council, the construction of Sub-divisional Centres at Kajalgaon, Salbari, Tamulpur and Bhergaon and the office building of the various departments of the BTC.

2. The Public Works Department has also taken up many projects for the development of road communication. Some of the important works of the development include the Dhamdhama-Tupalia-Subankhata Road in Baksa District, the Kaurbaha-Nagrihuli Road in Baksa District, the Narabari-Daokibari Road in Kokrajhar District, the North Kajalgaon-Bangtol Road in Chirang District, the Bhaoraguri-Kachugaon Road, the Kashikotra-Basugaon Road, the Sundari-Vidyapour via Kakragaon Road, the Fakiragram-Serfanguri Road, and the Bamungaon-Bengtol Road. Besides, the construction of roads from NH-31 Barama to Mushalpur, improvement of the Jalah-Rupahi-Saudarvita- Gobordhana Road, the Udalguri- Bhakatpara via Bhairaguri Road, the Banargaon-Pakribari Road, and the Kalaigaon-Kundarbil Road were also undertaken by the Council.
3. The socio-economic condition of the Bodo society is seemingly improving as they are moving forward from agriculture based economy to a semi-commercial based economy.

4. The agricultural sector has been given more emphasis and has been provided with more facilities including scientific ways of cultivation to increase the production of crops as well as to accelerate agricultural development. Major and minor irrigational projects have been constructed, namely the Champabati Irrigation Project, the Suklai Irrigation Project and the Bhwirabkunda Irrigation Project.
5. Fishery, weaving and handloom and animal husbandry sectors are developing with the help of better facilities, and this has helped to boost the economy of the people.
6. As per the provision of the BTC, the Panchayati Raj Institution is put under the Council for better development of the region at the grass root level. Hence, the BTC is the only District Council in North East India that enjoys this power. Accordingly, the BTC has taken up various schemes to implement in rural areas of the region. To execute the plans and policies of the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, 14 full and 26 partial Development Blocks have been created in the areas. Again there are 4 reorganized District Rural Development Agencies has placed to monitor the activities of Rural Development programmes.
7. Relating to the development of human resource, the Council has initiated measures to improve health care facilities, education, sports and culture. Many new Primary Health Centres and hospitals have been established by the BTC. Sport grounds, playgrounds and stadium are also seen to have been either constructed or renovated within the BTC areas.
8. The various construction and implementation of tourist infrastructures like, eco-tourism guest houses, forest lodges at various tourist spot, centenary, children park

etc., have been completed under the Council. The infrastructural development in this sector has brought an increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists.

9. With regards to cultural and literary development, the inclusion of the Bodo language in the Eight Schedule to the Constitution of India is yet another significant achievement of the BTC. Besides, to improve and preserve the rich culture and heritage of different communities in the BTC areas, the construction of a Cultural Complex at Kokrajhar is also an achievement of the Council.
10. In the field of educational infrastructure, establishment of institutes like the ITI Training Centre, various schools and colleges, the campus of the Guwahati University in the Kokrajhar District of the BTC are considered a major development. Another major achievement of the Council is the setting up of a centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) with the objectives of imparting technical education like Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food Processing, Rural Industry, Business Administration, etc.
11. Another developmental project of the Council is the inauguration of the Knowledge City in Chirang District. This Knowledge City comprises of an Engineering College with eight streams, a school of management offering BBA and MBA courses, a Law College and a Bio-Technology College. The four districts of the BTC have very few institutes for higher learning and this initiative is definitely going to fulfil a long-standing need of the areas. Apart from catering to a vast number of students, the Knowledge City would serve the purpose of

uplifting the overall educational environment of the area. Thus, particularly the educational department has brought noticeable changes in the BTC areas.

Having observed the above findings of this study, it is seen that with the completion of 5 years of its formation (2003-08), the Council, under the leadership of its Chief, Hagrama Mohilary and his team of Executive Members, has made an overall progress in subjects entrusted to it, and has been successful in integrating the region into one unit and thereby giving pride and hope to the people of the region. According to the development reports of various departments of the Council, it is seen that the Council has been able to take up a number of working areas for development and these are in progress. The Council has made considerable progress and improvement in the field of infrastructure and thus many developments could be seen in the socio-economy of the region which is helping the common people to transit from agricultural society to semi-commercial society. In spite of the above mentioned developmental functions in the area, some problems continued to exist since the commencement of the BTC. Now the question arises as to whether the BTC has actually been able to fully fulfil the aspirations of the people, and as to whether it has been able to outline the future of the Bodo people and the BTC itself. Some of the continuing problems in relation to operation of the BTC are outlined as follows:

The **first** problem is in relation to the BTC with other communities in the area. As the middle class continues to grow in size, the demand of the middle class for an

extension of autonomy is also growing. But extension of autonomy means extension of power. When the founding fathers of the Constitution of India provided for the creation of Autonomous District Councils with a considerable amount of autonomy in the administration of tribal districts in Assam, they never thought that the tribals would ever ask for more power and autonomy. Today most of these Autonomous District Councils have been upgraded into State administrations. Newspaper reports show that the non-Bodo communities of the BTC area are showing dissatisfaction with the functioning of BTC and this has been demonstrated very often through their calling of *bandhs* and road blockades in pursuit of various demands like Scheduled Tribe (ST) status by the Adivasis and the Raj Bongshis and the Autonomous State demand by the Rabhas and the Raj Bongshis and vice-versa. However, unlike the various hill tribes in and around Assam, the Bodos may face one formidable difficulty in attaining additional and exclusive autonomy, while they had already experienced during the previous Bodoland movement. In addition, the present BTC areas include a very substantial number of non-tribal populations with particular concentration in urban and semi-urban localities. There is also a very substantial Bodo population outside the BTC areas both in the plains as well as in the hills of Assam. While the permanent non-tribal residents in the BTC territory may oppose tooth and nail any move for granting more autonomy to the BTC, it may lead to violence by the non-tribals in the BTC areas.

In course of time, such demands may also be raised by the Bodo leaders not as a bargaining plank (as they had already done during the so called Bodoland movement) but as a real objective. The BTC already has now control over Land and Revenue and the

Bodo leaders will no doubt utilise this power to make it impossible for the non-tribals to own and occupy land in the BTC areas. Even trade permits and other sanctions in connection with business and commerce will not be made easily available to the non-tribals. Such things have already been happening in other tribal areas enjoying autonomy at District level or State level. There is no reason to suppose that the Bodo leaders will always behave differently than the tribal leaders elsewhere in the North East. Assam with its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population is extremely fragile in this respect. Already the Memorandum of Settlement of the BTC, signed at New Delhi, has reportedly created some tension between the Bodos in Karbi-Anglong and the Karbis there. The creation of the BTC has soured the relation between the Bodos and the Koch-Rajbongshis, both having the same ethnic origin. All these developments should be taken note of by the tribal as well as non-tribal leaders and a serious consideration should be made to find out a lasting solution to the endemic intra-ethnic and tribal unrest in the Council areas.

The **second** problem is regarding the relation of the BTC to other Bodo groups. Even after the formation of the BTC, the extremist group, namely, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) rejected the agreement and has continued unabated and several incidents of raid, kidnapping, extraction of ransom and wanton killing have taken place in the BTC areas. The insurgent group (presently at ceasefire) has been a big rival against present ruling party (Ex-BLT). Each group has its own demands and requirements for its movement. Thus, even after the formation of the BTC, the NDFB group is not supporting the Council, rather their demand is for a sovereign state. *So the ruling party (Ex-BLT) of the BTC is facing problems that pose against the*

smooth functioning of the Council. The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) initiated and took very active role in leading the Bodoland movement till the attainment of the BTC and supported the Ex-BLT party to run the Council by forming a political party, namely the Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF). However, just before the BTC Legislative Assembly re-elections held on 13th May, 2005, the ABSU withdrew its support to the BTC Chief, Hagrama Mahilary, and his ruling body. They formed a new political party regaining former party's name the Bodoland People's Progressive Front (BPPF) under the leadership of Rabiram Narzary. On the other hand, Hagrama Mahilary also reconstituted a new political party named, the Bodoland Progressive Front (BPF). The Rabiram party, the BPPF, contested the Council Elections held on 13th May, 2005 against the Hagrama party, the BPF, where the later emerged victorious. It is interesting to note here that the ABSU that had led the Bodoland movement and supported the Hagrama led BLT Party to run the Council also got divided. The main reason behind the faction of these two groups was because the ABSU led by Rabiram did not make any agreement with the BPF in running the Council jointly. Thus, it shows that the clashes for political power started among the same community itself.

However, despite the weakness mentioned above, the District Council is not without opportunities for improvement in its overall operation. It depends on the people of the BTC area to elect responsible leaders who in turn are responsible and accountable in implementing policies of development and in recruiting qualified staff workers in the Council. Thus, in the light of the discussion, the following suggestions may be made to improve the functioning of the Council:

Policy Implications and Suggestions

It deserves to be acknowledged that after the formation of the Council, to articulate its objectives, the BTC is executing various developmental measures. It is important to note that the Council may be able to achieve greater success if the following positive strides towards development are undertaken:

a) **Operation of Autonomy:** On the day of Inauguration of the BTC, the honourable Deputy Prime Minister of India, Shri Lal Krishna Advani emphatically said, “Now the ball is in your court, strike it properly and push into the goal” it is a big task for the entire Bodo people. If BTC is the outcome of a long cherished demand for Bodo homeland, starting from the PTCA demand for ‘Udayachal’ to this end, now it is a high time for the ‘Bodoland helmsman’ to give a concrete design to their own state with satisfaction in different fields like political, economic, social and cultural and so on and so forth. The main idea of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule are looked upon as instruments for welfare of the people and to preserve their own tradition and culture with maximum autonomy in the management of their own affairs. Contributing to social, political, economic and cultural development is the core strategy of the Councils. Likewise, the main thrust of BTC agreement was to raise the Bodos with basic all round development of the areas in respects of infrastructure and socio-economic change and enhancement of the Bodo Society as a whole. Thus, it is the responsibility of the Council

to bring progress to integrate the region into one unit and thereby fulfilling the aspirations of the people in the region.

b) **Development of Economy:** The region is primarily dominated by rural people and their occupation is mostly agricultural in nature. Firstly, it is very important that the BTC has to rightly initiate the scheme for mechanized and modern cultivation and provide assistance in all aspects of agricultural growth. These sectors should be the priority of the BTC to boost the economy of the region. Secondly, the BTC is apparently not much of a resourceful area if considered from the natural resource point of view except the two prominent and renewable natural resources namely forest and water resources. But having bountiful natural resources is not a guarantee for economic development according to modern economists. In the present day economy, built-up human resource has been counted as the most important factor. In the present day world it is very difficult to thrive either as a society without industrialisation and commercial advancement. An all round development is foreseeable, in one way, only if the personalities at the helm of the administration can sort out the men of quality and fit them into the different branches of development without prejudice. Thirdly, timely utilization of government funds is most important. Sometimes, the failure in timely utilization of funds ensures failure of developmental projects. Given the nature of underdevelopment in the region, the Council ought to have exhibited with greater dynamism and sincerity in implementing developmental projects, more so when the Centre is providing the necessary financial assistance. Therefore, timely execution of the plans and policies for the welfare of the people is the most important issue.

c) **Need for the BTC to define its goals with the other communities:** The formal launching of the BTC and the assumption of office by the Council has generated fears and anxieties among a considerable non-Bodo population (some non-Bodo organizations are the All Assam Koch-Khystria and Raj Bongshi Students' Union, the Adivashi Students' Union of Assam, the Birsa Commando Force and the Sanmilitiya Janagostiya Sangram Sammittee).³⁰ Perhaps, if the Council shares its autonomy with other minority non-Bodo communities and prevents the ideas and practices of political domination and subordination, it may pave the way for peace and harmony. Further, by fulfilling the urges and aspirations of all other communities in political, economic, social and other spheres like education and culture, it could bring understanding and cooperation between the Bodos and the non-Bodos, to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony and development. Moreover, a people-oriented development free from all traces of corruption is the need of the hour.

Hence, the formation of the BTC in Assam is one of the major steps towards development of the Bodo tribal community. This Council has contributed immensely, as per provisions laid down in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, towards overall progress in the region. In the few years since its commencement, the Bodo people have witnessed positive change in the area. However, the area that falls within the BTC is also home to many non-tribal people of Assam. The Council is yet to define its goals in ways that do not clash with the interest of these communities. This can be achieved is

³⁰ Parmeswar Brahma, "Ethnocentric Movement and its Manifold Aspects in Politics and Social Life of Assam", in *Mugani Sahki*, (Published by ABSU, Korajhar, 2004), p.16.

only through active rethinking of leaders. The powers and functions of the BTC inspire other tribal communities to emulate its operations in many areas. It still stands out as one of the biggest autonomous councils in the north-eastern region of India, whose sole purpose is in integrating the tribal society into a modern and developed society. As such, the BTC, with its effective functioning and achievements can set a good example for the rest of the Councils in the North East India to follow.

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***Working of the Bodoland Territorial Council
(2003-2008)***

***By
Junmani Basumatary***



A Dissertation

***Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in the Political Science***

***Department of Political Science
North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong – 793022***

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DECLARATION


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September, 2009

I, Junmani Basumatary, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this dissertation 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 dissertation has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to North-Eastern Hill University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science.

Junmani Basumatary
02/09/09
(Junmani Basumatary)


(Head)


(Supervisor)

Department of Political Science
North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong-793022

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*NEHU Shillong,
2nd September, 2009*

Junmani Basumatary,
02/09/09
Junmani Basumatary

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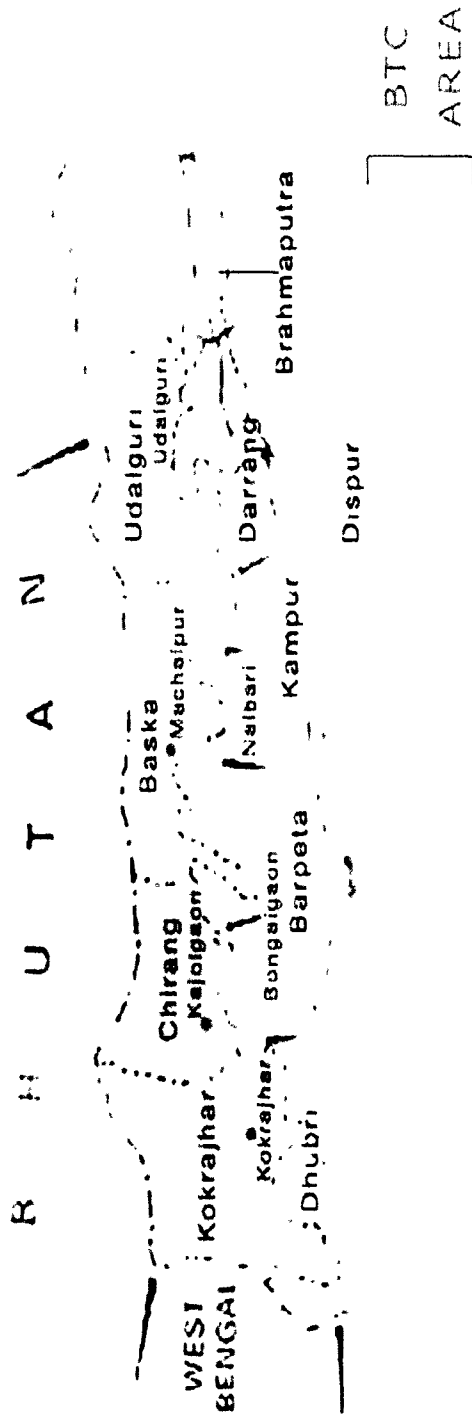
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MAP OF BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL



POPULATION PATTERN OF BTAD

SLNO	NAME OF THE DISTRICT	S1	SC	GENERAL	TOTAL
1.	BAKSHA	338,630	45,967	333,045	717,642
2.	KOKRAJHAR	528,774	32,609	337,608	898,991
3.	CHIRANG	169,811	30,035	143,780	343,626
4.	UDALGURI	317,412	28,933	324,685	671,030
	TOTAL	1,354,627	1,37,544	1,139,118	2,631,289

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List of Abbreviations

ABSU –	All Bodo Student Union
AOP –	Annual Operation Plan
APSC –	Assam Public Service Commission
ACR -	Annual Carrier Record
AH & V-	Animal Husbandry and Veterinary
APL –	Above Poverty Line
AWC –	Anganwadi Workers Centre
ASEB –	Assam State Electricity Board
BTC –	Bodoland Territorial Council
BTAD –	Bodoland Territorial Areas District
BLT –	Bodo Liberation Tigers
BAC –	Bodoland Autonomous Council
BPAC –	Bodo People’s Action Committee
BPPF –	Bodoland People Progressive Front
BPF –	Bodoland Progressive Front
BPL –	Below Poverty Line
CEM-	Chief Executive Member
CHC –	Community Health Centre
CHoD –	Council Head of Department
CRSP-	Central Rural Sanitation Programme
CIT-	Central Institute of Technology
CSD-	Central Silk Board
CHD-	Child Health Development
CD-	Community Development
DRD	A- District Rural Development Agency
DIG-	Deputy Inspector General
DONER-	Development of North Eastern Region
EC-	Executive Council
EM-	Executive Member
FIS-	Flow Irrigation Scheme
FAC-	First Aid Centre
GIA-	Grant-in-Aid
HYV-	High Yielding Varieties
HQ-	Head Quarter
IGP-	Inspector General of Police
IEC-	Information Education and Communication
IIHR-	Indian Institute of Horticulture Research
IPM-	Integrated Pest Management
IIDC-	Industrial Infrastructure Development Centre
IID-	Industrial Infrastructure Development
IAY-	Indira Awas Yojana

ICDS-	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ITDP-	Integrated Tribal Development Programme
IBS-	Individual Beneficiary Society
LT-	Low Tension
LB-	Lower Bank
MoS-	Memorandum of Settlement
MLA-	Member of Legislative Assembly
MT-	Metric Tone
NLCPR-	Non-Lapsable Centre Pool of Resources
NRHM-	National Rural Health Mission
NC & PC-	Not Covered and Partially Covered
NGO-	Non Government Organisation
NEDFI-	North Eastern Development and Financial Institute
NEC-	North Eastern Council
NREGA-	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NC/UG-	Newly Construction/Up-Gradation
NFFWP-	National Food for Work Programme
NDFB-	National Democratic Force of Bodoland
PTCA-	Plain Tribe Council of Assam
PTCA (P) -	Plain Tribe Council of Assam (Progressive)
PWD –	Public Work Department
P & RD-	Panchayat and Rural Development
PHE –	Public Health Engineering
PHC-	Public Health Centre
PHED-	Public Health Engineering Department
PMGY-	Prime Minister Grameen Yojana
PPP-	Public Private Partnership
RCC-	Reinforce Concrete Cement
RD/CD-	Rural Development/Community Development
ST-	Schedule Tribe
SAGC-	Special Area Games Centre
SDM-	Sub-Divisional Magistrate
SD-	State Dispensary
SHG-	Self Help Group
SCA-	Special Central Assistance
SGSY-	Swarnajayanti Grameen Swa-Rojgar Yojana
SGRY-	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
TSC-	Total Sanitation Campaign
UTNLF-	United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front
UNDP-	United National Development Programme
WR-	West Range
WPT &BC-	Welfare of Plain Tribe and Backward Class
VC/DC-	Village Council/ District Council

Chapter – I

Bodoland Movement and the Formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council

Background and Creation of the District Council under the Sixth Schedule

Assam, as a political entity within the province of colonial India, emerged during the period 1826 to 1947 and its territory has changed several times during the post-colonial period in the wake of the creation of several smaller states for the hill tribes of North East India. In 1874, Assam was carved out of the then Bengal of India by the Scheduled District Act of 1874 and its administration was put under the control of the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In 1905, when Bengal was partitioned, a new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam came into being. Again in 1912, Bengal became a separate province and, since then, Assam has remained a separate entity. From the time the province first appeared in 1874, certain parts of it were administered under the Scheduled District Act and these were the 'Backward Tracts' which included the Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills, the Garo Hills, the North-Cachar Hills, the British portion of Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Eastern Frontier Tracts of Lakhimpur, Balipara and Sadia.¹ Later, under the Government of India Act, the Hill Areas of Assam were divided into two categories - Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas. The Lushai Hills, the Naga Hills and the North- Cachar Hills were under the Excluded Areas and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Garo Hills, and the Mikir Hills were under the Partially Excluded Areas.²

After India's independence, there were demands for better political status within the Constitutional framework from the tribes of the Hill Areas of Assam. In order to ensure their demands, the Constituent Assembly constituted a Sub-

¹ K. K. Bhattacharjee, *North East India- Political and Administrative History*, (Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1983), pp. 85-86.

² R. N. Prasad, "Sixth Schedule and Working of the District Council in North Eastern State", *The Dialogue Quarterly*, Volume. 6, No. 2, (New Delhi, 2004), p. 149.

Committee-the North East Frontier Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee (known as the Bordoloi Sub-Committee) under the Chairmanship of then Chief Minister of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi. After the study of the hill tribes of Assam, the Bordoloi Sub-Committee submitted its recommendation for setting-up District Councils in the Tribal Areas of Assam, which were later accepted and incorporated under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. This scheme sought to build up, within the areas, a simple and autonomous administration of their own, so that the tribal people could preserve their own tradition and cultures, and to provide them with maximum autonomy pertaining to their own affairs.³ This provided for the constitution of the Autonomous District Councils in certain Hill Districts of Assam.

Consequently, in 1952 and 1953 under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Autonomous District Councils were constituted in all the Hill Districts of Assam excepting in the Naga Hills where the Naga National Council demanded for complete independence. Thus, in 1952 and 1953, there were only five (5) Autonomous Councils, that is in the Garo Hills, in the united Khasi - Jaintia Hills (later separated in 1964),⁴ in the Mikir Hills, in the North Cachar Hills and in the Lushai Hills. With the exception of the Districts of Mikir Hills (Karbi Anglong) and North Cachar Hills, all other Hill Districts were separated one after another from Assam when they had attained statehood. In the process, the Naga Hills became Nagaland in 1963, the Khasi Hills, the Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills together became Meghalaya in 1972 and the Mizo Hills became Mizoram in 1972.

³ L. S. Gassah, "Sixth Schedule: It's Relevance with Special Reference to Meghalaya", *Proceedings of the North East India Political Science Association*, (Shillong, 1993), p. 29.

⁴ P. M. Passah, "The working of the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council" in M. N. Karma, L.S. Gassah and C. J. Thomas (eds.), *Powers to the People of Meghalaya*, (Regency Publications, New Delhi, 1998), p. 109.

According to the Sixth Schedule, the Tribal Areas are divided into Part A and Part B. However, since the creation of the state of Nagaland, the Tribal Areas as amended in 1972, 1984 and 1988 whereby nine areas are included in four Parts.⁵ Presently, the entire North- East India has ten (10) District Councils including the newly formed Bodoland Territorial Council under the provision of Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. These are three in Assam, three in Meghalaya, one in Tripura and three in Mizoram. The Autonomous Districts or Regions under the Sixth Schedule (Para - 20) include:

Part-I

1. The North Cachar Hills District
2. The Mikir Hills District (Karbi Anglong)
3. The Bodoland Territorial Areas District

Part-II

1. The Garo Hills District
2. The Khasi Hills District
3. The Jaintia Hills District

Part-II (A)

1. The Tripura Tribal Areas District

Part-III

1. The Chakma District

⁵ D. D. Basu, *Introduction to the Constitution of India*, (Law Publishers, New Delhi, 2001), p. 286.

2. The Lakher District

3. The Pawi District⁶

As incorporated in the Sixth Schedule, the Indian Constitution contains certain provisions with reference to the administration of the Tribal Areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, besides the right as common citizens. The provisions of the Fifth Schedule do not include the Scheduled Areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The former only include the Scheduled Areas of the states of India other than the states mentioned above. Those Tribal Areas inhabited substantially by the tribals are denoted as Scheduled Areas or Tribal Areas and, for convenience of the administration; the Constitution has demarcated these areas as Autonomous Districts or Autonomous Regions.

These Tribal Areas are to be administered as autonomous districts. These autonomous districts are not outside the executive authorities of the State concerned but provision is made for the creation of District Councils and Regional Councils for the exercise of certain legislative and judicial functions. These Councils have the power to make laws in certain specified fields such as management of a forest other than a reserved forest, inheritance of property, marriage and social customs⁷ and the Governor may also confer upon these Councils the power to try certain suits or offences.⁸ These District Councils also have the power to levy and collect land revenue and to impose certain specified taxes.⁹ The laws, rules and regulations made by the Councils, however, will have no effect unless assented to by the Governor.

⁶ D. D. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁷ Para-3 Sixth Schedule.

⁸ Para-4 Sixth Schedule.

⁹ Para-5 Sixth Schedule.

These Councils shall also possess judicial power, civil and criminal subjects to the jurisdiction of the High Court as the Governor may from time to time, by order, specify. But these powers and functions as incorporated under the Sixth Schedule are not the same in all District Councils and differ from that of one District Council to another.

Among all the ten District Councils in North East India, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is the most recent one. The BTC, which enjoys the status of District Council, has come into being with effect from 10th February 2003, under the Sixth Schedule Amendment Act, 2003.¹⁰

1.2 The Bodoland Movement and the Formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council

Before acquiring the present socio-political identity through the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council, the Bodo people had passed through different stages of stress and strain. The Bodos, also known as the Bodo people, are believed to be one of the indigenous tribes of Assam. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman speaking Indo-Mongoloid tribes of North East India. Linguistically, the Garos, the Rabhas, the Tiwas, the Dimasas, the Hajongs, the Sonowals, the Deuris, the Boroks of Tripura and many other cognate tribes are part of this Bodo race.¹¹ The Bodos are believed to be the earliest settlers of Assam, though the date of migration from their original abode, namely, Northwestern China, to this part of present India, is debated. However,

¹⁰ Memorandum of Settlement, of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), (A tripartite agreement signed by the Government of India, Government of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 10th February, 2003, to form BTC), also see in Appendix-A

¹¹ . G. Grierson, *The Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, Part.II, (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1903), p. 1.

scholars agree that the Bodo people settled in this region much before the Aryans.¹² The Bodo people form the largest primitive tribe of the present demography of Assam. Though they are spread out into different parts of this region, as well as into neighbouring Bangladesh and Nepal, the majority are found in Assam. In Assam, or Brahmaputra valley, this tribe is concentrated in the present districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri, Dhubri, Goalpara, Darrang, Nowgaon and Morigaon, and despite scattered, the Bodos maintain separate identity from others by virtue of their distinct language and culture.

The state of Assam is situated in the extreme corner of North-Eastern Himalayan sub-region of India. It lies between 24°3'N and 28°N latitudes and between 89°5'E and 95°1'E longitudes. It forms the core of the North-Eastern region of India comprising the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. The entire region is connected with the rest of India by a narrow corridor of Dhubri and Kokrajhar districts of Assam. Historically, the province of Assam continues to be a shared homeland of various racial, religious, linguistic and cultural groups. It has been inhabited by three major groups: the hill tribes, the plain tribes and the non-tribals, and within each group, there is tremendous variety in terms of race, language, religion and culture. Hence, we find that demographically Assam is a highly plural geographic entity. It has a geographical area of 78,438 square kilometre representing 2.4 percent of the total geographical area

¹² Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, (Lowers Book Stall, Guwahati, 1981), p. 247.

of the country. The state has a population of 26,655,528 according to the 2001 Census Report of India.¹³

As said earlier, historically, there are numerically small tribes in Assam having their own distinct culture and religion. It is believed that the tribals are the first natives of the region. It has been a shared homeland of distinct smaller ethnic tribal groups like the Bodos, the Mishings, the Tiwas, the Rabhas, the Sonowals, etc., wherein the Assamese are numerically major and form a dominant nationality. As per, 1991 Census, the scheduled tribes constituted more than 10 percent of the total population in the valley. Numerically, the Bodos are the largest, followed by the Mishings, the Sonowals, the Rabhas and the Tiwas respectively.¹⁴ Admittedly, this shared homeland has shrunk substantially in the distorted process of the socio-economic transformation of Assam during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The various tribes in Assam have been over-reacting against the Assamese high caste hegemony. This has contributed towards the sharpening of competition and conflict for 'space'.¹⁵

It will be worthwhile to state that the tribals of Assam are perpetually experiencing the problems of land alienation, poverty, indebtedness, severe unemployment, economic exploitation and political oppression. Besides, the tribal languages remained neglected till the attainment of Indian independence. The reorganization of the states primarily on a linguistic basis in North East India such as Nagaland for the Nagas, Manipur for the Manipuris (Meiteis), Meghalaya for the

¹³ The Census of India, 2001.

¹⁴ The Census of India, 1991.

¹⁵ M. Hussain, "Society in the Brahmaputra Valley", in *Souvenir of 44th Annual Conference of Boso Sahitya Sabha*, 2005. P.23

Khasis, Jaintias and Garos and Mizoram for the Mizos also helped to strengthen other distinct tribals to set up political recognition on the basis of a particular language and culture in other states. At the same time, the growing consciousness of their identity and right to manage their own affairs has led the tribals to the creation of new administrative units with varying degrees of autonomy. Thus, at this background, the Bodos started their movement in quest for political power towards the end of the 20th century.

It is assumed that it was in the late 20th century, the social movement of the Bodos exerted its greatest force. In the wake of the socio-educational reforms movement launched by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma in the first decade of the 20th century, the Bodo students, then mostly studying in the secondary level, felt the whiff of modern age for the first time. The new light of Western education and the social awakening brought by the Brahma movement engendered a spirit of renaissance amongst the few educated Bodos. Imbided with such a spirit of renaissance, the Bodo students formed the *Bodo Chatra Sanmilian*¹⁶ in 1919 at Dhubri, the then headquarters of the undivided Goalpara district.¹⁷ It was considered to be a seed time for the new and conscious generation and remedy for the degenerated social condition. The effort made by the *Bodo Chatra Sanmilian* to build a Bodo nationality was a unique contribution in the history of Bodo society. This student body took up issues concerning the Bodo society in the context of their cultural and educational environment.

¹⁶ *Bodo Chatra Sanmilian* was an organization/convention of all Bodo students of then undivided Goalpara district.

¹⁷ Ajoy Roy, *Boro Imbroglio*, (Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2005), p. 56.

Bodo literature, in the real sense of the term, began after the great effort made by the *Chatra Sanmilan* to bring out creative writings in Bodo language which encouraged the Bodo people to create literature in Bodo language in order to preserve and develop their distinct culture and tradition. The members of the organization felt that this was their inherent duty, as at that time, the Bodo culture and language was beginning to disappear with the influence of dominant Aryan language and culture. One of the great efforts made by the student organization to save their language was to adhere to their project of publishing all sorts of creative writings in Bodo language. Consequently, the first issue of a periodical magazine, '*Bibar*', was brought out in 1924.¹⁸ Thus, the efforts of the students of that period laid the solid foundation for the preservation of language, literature and culture of the Bodos.

The activities of the *Chatra Sanmilan* as an organisation, succeeded in revolutionizing the mindset of the Bodo society as a whole and had encouraged some educated Bodo youths to organize themselves to work for the uplift of their own Bodo Community. This organization gave an impetus to reform and a spirit to move towards social development among the educated Bodo people. Furthermore, it paved the way for future development, and, as a result, many other organizations came into existence. They were the *Kachari Chatra Sanmilan*, the *Kachari Yuva Sanmilan*, the *Bodo Chatra Sanmilan*, the *Bodo Maha Sanmilan*,¹⁹ etc. In course of time, these organizations played a very important role in the awakening and laying down the foundation of the Bodo nationality.

¹⁸ Shekhar Brahma, "The Chatra Sanmilan as an Architech of the Boro Nationality," in *Mugani Sakhi*, (Published by ABSU, 2004), p. 246.

¹⁹ The *Kachari Chatra Sanmilan*, the *Kachari Yuva Sanmilan*, the *Bodo Chatra Sanmilan* and the *Bodo Maha Sanmilan* were an organizations/conventions of the Bodo Students which were formed in different places of Assam before the formation of All Bodo Students Union (1967).

In the meantime, Bodo youths actively took part in the elections of the Provincial Legislative Council held in 1928, and for the first time they had the taste of politics. Thus, when the Simon Commission visited Shillong in 1928,²⁰ the *Kachari Yuva Sanmilan* and the Goalpara District Bodo Students' Association, led by Kalicharan Brahma, Modaram and Rupnath Brahma, submitted a memorandum in which they had sought liberal aids from the British Administration for the uplift of the Bodo community and demanded a proportionate electorate status in the Local Province and Central Legislature for the Bodos on the basis of population.²¹ It was at this time, under the banner of *Bodo Maha Sanmilan*, the Bodos, dispersed in different places, had assembled themselves. Gradually, the various socio-economic and political problems were elaborately discussed. In course of time, the Bodos demanded solution to their socio-economic, language, cultural and political problems.

With the passage of time, the educated plain tribal youths realised the need for a common political platform to project their problems and grievances to the government for solution. As a result, the next step in their quest for political power was the formation of a political organization, the "All Assam Plains Tribals League" at Roha in 1933, under the initiative of Rupnath Brahma and Bhimbora Deuri and a few other educated Bodo leaders. Perhaps, this was the first attempt to form a purely political front covering all sections of the plain tribals of Assam under the umbrella of an organization.²² Though the Tribal League was a platform for all the tribal groups of Assam, the idea for such a platform was first articulated by the then elite Bodo groups, who were educationally advanced and conscious of their identity, and

²⁰ Ajoy Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

²² U. G. Brahma, "Bodo Politics, Trends and Future" in *Dumuni* (Published by ABSU, 2006), p. 89.

political and civil rights. The formation of this political party crystallized the political aspirations and endeavours of the plain tribals of Assam. Being formed as a political organization, the Tribal League launched a movement demanding separate electorate status of the Bodos and other plain tribals of Assam which was eventually granted. For the first time, the Bodos cast their votes as a separate electorate in the first general election held under the Government of India Act, 1935. But the League failed to achieve its many other objectives and gradually the organization dwindled.

Meanwhile, the land problem became the most crucial for the tribals of Assam in general and particularly the Bodo people who have however been facing the problem of land alienation at an alarming magnitude. Large-scale migration of people from East Bengal, Nepal as well as from mainland India and their settlement in Bodo areas has adversely affected the economy of the Bodo people. The migration of the outsiders has changed not only the demography of the Bodo areas but also dislocated their socio-economic and political scenario. In addition, the non-tribal traders, businessmen and moneylenders grabbed large areas of land of the Bodo people exploiting their honesty and simplicity.

The problem of land alienation assumed an alarming proportion within a few years. Soon, protection of tribal land from the outsiders became an important matter for the Bodo and plains tribals of Assam. The Tribal League, the lone political party of the Plains Tribal of Assam, took the matter to the floor of the State Assembly in the then province of Assam. In its attempt to protect tribal land, the Tribal League had an agreement with the Muslim League in 1939 wherein the latter agreed to accept the

tribal demand for the 'Line System'²³ in return to their support to Muslim League in formation of a coalition government of Assam.²⁴ The Muslim League leader Md. Saadullah not only miserably failed to fulfil his commitment but also brought large number of Muslim migrants. Taking advantage of the direction the Saadullah Government of Assam arranged massive immigration of Muslim peasants from East Bengal to Assam and settled them mainly in the Bodo inhabited areas on the pretext of increasing the agricultural production of Assam.²⁵ The real motive of the Assam Government headed by Md. Saadullah of the Muslim League became so obvious that Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy of India, made a caustic comment that Saadullah's 'Grow more food' campaign was really a 'Grow more Muslims' campaign.²⁶ The problem of land alienation of the Assam became acute and 'Line System' became ineffective. The Tribal League had to change side and made another breakthrough in 1946 when it concluded an agreement with the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and succeeded in getting certain provisions of Chapter-X of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act 1886 amended. The amended Act was passed by the Assam Assembly in 1947 and it received the assent of the Governor in the same year.²⁷ According to the provisions of this Act as many as 33 Tribal Belts and Blocks covering 5,704

²³ By the middle of the second decade the flow of the immigrants assumed a menacing problem and both the public opinion as well as the other nationalist legislators raised a strong voice against the Government policy of waste-land settlement and immigration of Muslim peasants from east Bengal. The Assam Government then introduced what was popularly known as the 'Line System'. Under this dispensation the Government drew imaginary lines in the districts under immigration pressure to segregate the settlements of the indigenous population and that of the immigrant population and the new arrivals of immigrants were thereafter allowed to be settled only outside this line.

²⁴ Text of Agreement between the Assam Tribal League and Assam Muslim League, at Shillong, 16th March, 1940.

²⁵ Ajoy Roy, *op.cit.*, pp. 32-33

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 32

²⁷ Assam Gazette, 22nd October, 1947.

square miles were created.²⁸ The Act prohibited possession and transfer of lands within Tribal Belts and Blocks by the outsiders including the non-tribals.

It was accused by Bodo leaders that the idea of protecting the tribal lands by creating Tribal Belts and Blocks was good, but that the state government did not enforce the act in letter and spirit. As a result, large-scale land alienation continued unabated under the successive state governments. Most of the tribal lands have gone into the hands of the non-tribal. The government itself from time to time de-constituted many of the Tribal Belts and Blocks for different purposes. According to record collected by ABSU, till the year 1986-87, as much as 80 square kilometres areas of Tribal Belts and Blocks have been de-constituted by the Assam Government.²⁹

Besides allowing the illegal migrants, the government has also given large area of tribal land for the purpose of industrial establishments, military cantonments, and government offices and to the non-tribal bonafide for settlement. De-constitution of Tribal Belts and Blocks, encroached by the illegal migrants and non-tribals deprived the tribals of their land, which was their only means of subsistence. The settlement of the outsiders within the Belts and Blocks has been a fatal blow to the economy of the Bodo people. The encroachment not only devastatingly affected the socio-political life of the Bodo people but it brought a sudden change in the demography. In many places the immigrants outnumbered the Bodo population. Thus, the Bodo people have turned into ineffective minority.

²⁸ Figure Supplied by Plain Tribal Council of Assam in the Memorandum to the President of India, 20th May, 1967.

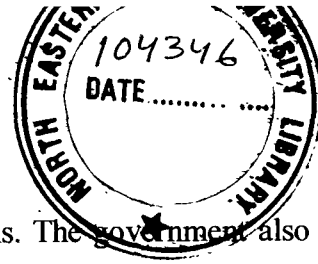
²⁹ Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by ABSU, July, 1996.

Instantly, after independence in December 1947, the Gopinath Bordoloi Government took a historic step in safeguarding the agricultural tribes by forming Tribal Belts and Blocks in the state. The Plain Tribals League lost its leadership in 1954. From that time onwards the 'Tribal Sangha' played an important role in expanding the Tribal Belts and Blocks in almost all the districts of Assam. This liberal policy of the state administration has been the principal source of political ambition to Bodos for creating future autonomous tribal territorial lands in the state.³⁰

The Bodo intellectuals started thinking seriously about the community in terms of preserving their separate identity in the state as well as in the country. To establish their distinct entity, they felt that the community needed development of its language and culture. To fulfil this aim, the Bodos held a two days' literary conference at Basugaon on 15th and 16th November 1952. As a result, the first landmark literacy organization, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* was formed which, struggled for identity to safeguard the language and culture of the Bodos. Though the main activities of the *Sabha* were to develop and promote the Bodo language and literature, later, it participated in agitational politics.³¹ The first major step that the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* took was its movement demanding introduction of the Bodo language as medium of instruction in schools in the Bodo majority areas of Assam. To achieve its goal, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, for the first time, submitted a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi, for the introduction of the Bodo medium for Bodo students in 1953. As a result, the Assam Government decided to introduce

³⁰ T. P. Upadhyay, "Development of Political Consciousness in Bodos and its effect" in *Airakhi, Souvenir of 1st Conference of BPPF, 2006*, p. 121.

³¹ Anil Boro, "Literature of the Bodos of Assam: Tradition and Identity" in *The Bodo*, (Annual issue of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 2005, p. 134.



the Bodo medium and brought out text books. The government also decided to start the implementation of the plan in the Bodo dominated areas from 1956 itself. Unfortunately, however, the books published were found with full of mistakes. So the Bodo Sahitya Sabha opposed the text books and demanded new error-free text books for Bodo students. But, till 1961, the state government did not take any action for the introduction of Bodo medium of instruction in primary schools. For this reason, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* initiated a protest rally at Kokrajhar on 16th November, 1962. Thereafter, the Bodo language was introduced at the primary level in 1963 and at the secondary level in 1968 as the medium of instruction.³²

With the growing political awakening, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) was formed on 15th February, 1967 at Kokrajhar Tribal Rest House. Before the formation of the ABSU, many separate organizations like the Bodo Students' Club, *Sonmilons* or Conference and Unions existed in different places. Among such student unions the undivided Goalpara District Bodo Students' Union formed in 1965 was one of the strongest Student Unions. It was only in 1967 that the District and *Anchalik* Bodo Students' Unions came under the same banner of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). Presently, the All Bodo Students' Union is the organization of all Bodo students and youths covering jurisdiction wherever Bodos are living, and, as such, it has been nomenclated as the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU).³³

At the same time, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, announced the policy of reorganization of Assam on federal basis before the delegation team of Mizo Union in New Delhi on 13th January, 1967. The All Bodo

³² Monoranjan Lahiri, *Bodo Thunlaini Jarimin*, (Ansumui Publishers, Kokrajhar, 1991), p. 25.

³³ Why Separate State, (Published by ABSU, 1987), p. 1.

Students' Union warmly welcomed the policy and, since then, a political renaissance arose among the Bodos and the Bodo Students took the initiative to form a political party. Thus, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) was born on 27th February, 1967 at Kokrajhar. Soon after its formation, the PTCA, with the support of the ABSU, raised a demand for a separate Union Territory to be named as 'Udayachal'. Since then, the ABSU supported the PTCA in demanding for a separate state.³⁴ On 20th May, 1967, the PTCA submitted a memorandum to the then President, Dr. Zakir Hussain, demanding an autonomous region for the tribals of Assam on the northern banks of Brahmaputra extending from the western border of Kokrajhar sub-division (now district) right up to the eastern border of North Lakhimpur sub-division (now district).³⁵

As no action was taken by the Assam state government, the demand for creation of a separate homeland for the plains tribal communities (mainly Bodos and Mishings) in the shape of Udayachal, became a major plank of political movement by the Bodos during the entire decade of the seventies, and the movement, from time to time, became rather violent in nature and, therefore invited police action. The Government could not readily concede this demand in view of the fact that the proposed territory was not a very well defined compact area with contiguous Bodo or plain tribals habitation and the non-tribals living in Bodo areas vehemently opposed the creation of any separate tribal area for fear of discrimination by the tribal administrators. The Government also cleverly utilized this apprehension of the non-

³⁴ Why Separate State, *op. cit.* pp. 2-3.

³⁵ Bidyasagar Narzary, *Upendra Nath Brahma: Life and Philosophy*, (Chirang Publication Board, BTC, 2007), p. 27.

tribals to justify their refusal to concede the Udayachal demand of the PTCA and the ABSU.

In June 1972, the Government of Assam introduced Assamese as the sole medium of instruction in the Guwahati and Dibrugarh Universities. This angered the Bodo people and they refused to accept Assamese as medium of instruction in Colleges and Universities. So the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, with the strong support of the ABSU, launched a movement against this decision of the state government.³⁶

In the meantime, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* had brought out a book named “*Bithorai*” in Roman script in the early part of 1974 and introduced it in Class I without the permission of the state government. At This, Assam government was very much annoyed and stopped grants in aid to Bodo medium schools. This forced the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* to observe a protest day on 12th September and the Sabha organized mass picketing from 18th to 21st September, 1974 for introduction of Roman script in Bodo language.³⁷ The ABSU and the PTCA also joined the mass picketing which took the form of a mass movement later. But the state government suppressed the movement with force. As a result, the script movement ultimately turned violent amongst the Bodo people against the state government and invited Police action against the agitators. Nevertheless, the Assam Government refused to concede the demand of the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* for Roman script.

When the movement went beyond control, the state government decided to hand over the matter to the Central Government. Ultimately when the emergency was proclaimed throughout the country by the Indira Gandhi Government in 1975, the

³⁶ Bidyasagar Narzary *op.cit*, p. 29.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 30.

Government utilized the threat of Emergency provisions to arrest and detain, and forced the Bodo leaders to accept Devanagiri scripts instead of Roman script for the Bodo language. During that time Bodo leaders were arrested and jailed. Finding no other alternative, the Bodos had to accept the Devanagiri script. In a meeting held on 12th April 1975 at Barama, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, the All Bodo Student's Union, the All Assam Bodo Teachers' Association and other organizations accepted Devanagiri script for the Bodo language.³⁸

As the National Emergency was proclaimed throughout the country, the PTCA stopped its political activities during 1975-76. After the Emergency, in 1977, the PTCA gave up the demand for Udayachal.³⁹ At this, the people became angry and criticized the PTCA and the ABSU withdrew its support to the PTCA while its leaders belied the tribal people for their opportunistic interest.⁴⁰ Frustration amongst the PTCA leaders and clash of self-interests among them aided by Government mechanisations brought in ultimately some dissension amongst the PTCA leaders and the associations got divided into two factions in 1979. Few leaders who left the original organization formed a splinter organization named Plain Tribe Council of Assam (Progressive) or PTCA (P). This splinter group reflected its more progressive views by demanding creation of a separate state to be named 'Mishing- Bodoland', as homeland of two plains tribes, and on 8th July 1980 and 22nd April 1983 the PTCA (P) submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.⁴¹ This new Bodo party could manage to send one or two MLAs under its own banner in the

³⁸ Bidyasagar Narzary *op.cit.*, p. 30.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30

⁴⁰ Why Separate State. *op.cit.*, p. 3.

⁴¹ Bidyasagar Narzary, *loc.cit.*, p. 31.

Assam Legislative Assembly and hence could raise some minor ripples on the surface of Bodo politics for a brief period which however did not last long.

Meanwhile, the ABSU was taking keen interest for unification of the PTCA and the PTCA (P) and, as such, it organized a convention for all tribal organisations from the 17th to 19th April, 1984, wherein the PTCA (P) was dissolved and a new political party known as the 'United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front' (UTNLF) was formed on 19th April, 1984. This front envisaged bringing into its fold all categories of scheduled tribes residing in Assam. Soon after its formation, the UTNLF submitted a memorandum several times for a separate homeland under the nomenclature of 'Tribal Land' for plain tribals of Assam. But the party could not sustain itself to fulfil its objectives.⁴²

After the frustration and failure of the PTCA, the PTCA (P), and the UTNLF for demanding a separate territory for the plain tribals of Assam, the ABSU took up the issue of statehood demand and spearheaded a series of movements. In the history of the ABSU, it was another chapter of the Bodo movement.

Meanwhile, Upendra Nath Brahma, a young and dedicated Bodo, became the President of the ABSU in 1986 and he steered the organization towards the most decisive phase of the Bodo political movement.⁴³ An umbrella organization named the "Bodo People Action Committee" was formed to bring a mass movement for redress of the Bodo grievances. The ABSU, under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, submitted a 92 points Charter of Demands to the State Government of Assam and to

⁴² Why Separate State, *op.cit.*, pp. 24-25.

⁴³ Bidyasagar Narzary, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

the Central Government of India on 1st January, 1987⁴⁴ and on 22nd January, 1987 respectively.⁴⁵ In the 18th Annual Conference of the ABSU, a significant decision was taken to suspend all 89 points relating to non-political demands from its Charter of Demand and only three major demands were raised before the governments of India and Assam. Among these three points of demands, the major one was the creation of a separate state for the Bodos and other plains tribals of Assam. In that historic conference itself the decision to name the proposed separate state as “Bodoland” was accepted unanimously by the ABSU and the entire Bodo community. In that very conference the ABSU launched a people’s organization, namely, the Bodo Peoples Action Committee (BPAC) with a view to initiate a mass movement to achieve their desired goal for a separate state of Bodoland and to get conceded the other two political demands as well.⁴⁶ As a result, the ABSU and the BPAC became successful in making the Bodoland movement a mass movement. During that period the movement happened as a huge mass movement in the entire Assam. All Bodo people including college and school students took part in that movement.

Subsequently, the movement led by the ABSU and the BPAC, which was started in 1987, came to an end with the signing of the Bodoland Accord on 20th February, 1993 for the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council. It was the first Bodoland Accord signed between representatives of the State and the Central Government and leaders of the ABSU and the BPAC in the presence of Hiteswar Saikia and Rajesh Pilot in the Kokrajhar Circuit House, Kokrajhar. This was no doubt a major gesture of magnanimity shown by the Central Government as well as by the

⁴⁴ Why Separate State, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Bidyasagar Narzary, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁴⁶ Why Separate State, *loc. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

State Government to the leaders of the Bodoland movement. But the Accord provided for the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) especially, the proposed area of BAC to be demarcated became an extremely contentious issue between the ABSU and the BPAC leaders and the Government of Assam. The real difficulty about the demarcation of the boundary of the Bodoland Autonomous Council area arose out of the vehement opposition by the non-tribal population of the proposed Bodoland Council Territory. Even during the period of dialogue between the ABSU and the BPAC leaders and the governments of India and Assam, several non-tribal groups from the proposed Bodoland Territory submitted several memoranda to the Government of Assam opposing formation of the Bodoland Territory or to exclude non-tribals areas from the proposed Bodoland Territory. The ABSU and the BPAC leaders demanded that all villages and localities having 50 percent or more plains tribals population should be included in the proposed Bodoland Territory and in some cases even those villages having less than 50 percent to be included in order to maintain contiguity in the whole area. This was more or less agreed upon by the Government.

Ultimately, a settlement was achieved and the Government of Assam issued a Notification on 10th December, 1993 (vide Notification No. TAD/BAC/26/93/18)⁴⁷ demarcating the boundary of the said Council area and published the list of the villages constituency-wise, included in the Bodoland Autonomous Council area. The 2570 villages situated in a vast and contiguous area extending from the western border of Kokrajhar right up to the western border of Majbat constituency of Darrang district were included in the Council area. An interim Council was nominated with the

⁴⁷ Ajoy Roy, *op.cit*, p. 71.

ABSU and the BPAC leaders and as many as thirty eight different departments were transferred to the Council for administration within the BTC area. Sansuma Khungur Biswmuthiary, the then President of the ABSU, was appointed the Chief Executive of the Council.

But the contentious issue of inclusion of more villages within the BAC area remained simmering and subsequently soured the relation between the ABSU and the BPAC leaders. As a result, this brought in a rift between the ABSU and the BPAC leaders. Sansuma Khungur Biswmuthiary, the then Chief of the BAC and a group led by him resigned from the Executive Council and started a protest against the alleged inaction on the part of the Government for inclusion of the additional five hundred more villages in the BAC area. This led to the reconstitution of the Executive Council afresh and Premshing Brahma, the erstwhile Chief of the ABSU Volunteer Force, an armed wing of the then ABSU, was nominated as the new Chief of the Council.

Though the BAC started functioning with entrusted powers and functions, it could not fulfil the aspirations of the Bodo people. The answer was negative. While the ABSU and the BPAC leadership have already faced serious dissention on the entire arrangement, the Bodo Security Force (later known as National Democratic Front of Bodos), an extremist organization, out rightly rejected the solution, as their demand was for independent Bodoland. Moreover the election to the BAC Executive Council was pending and it was alleged that both the Centre and State governments were delaying the implementation of the Accord in letter and spirit.⁴⁸ Thus, the ABSU renewed the same demand with added points.

⁴⁸ Memorandum Submitted to the Central Government by the ABSU, (July,1996), p. 5.

In the meantime, frustrated Bodo youths formed an armed outfit named Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLT) in 1996. The BLT joined hands with the ABSU and revived the movement for separate which was started from the year 1996.⁴⁹ The Bodoland movement entered into a new phase with the BLT holding the flagship of the movement. It was against this backdrop that the Government of India initiated a fresh process of dialogue with the Bodos in September 1997. In response to the initiative of the Central Government, the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) unilaterally suspended its operations with effect from 14th July 1999. This was followed by a series of tripartite talks between the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the BLT. After 30 rounds of tripartite talks, held from March 2000 to February 2003, between the representatives of the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT),⁵⁰ a Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the BLT on 10th February, 2003.⁵¹ This settlement was welcomed by all other Bodo organisations like the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha*, the All Bodo Women Welfare Forum, and the All Bodo Student's Union, etc. This was a path-breaking event which sought to ensure all round development, security, growth and stability for all ethnic groups within the BTC area.

In pursuance of the Memorandum of Settlement, an Autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was constituted under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. This newly created District Council was inserted in paragraph 20, in Part I of the table of the Sixth Schedule as one of the District Councils among

⁴⁹Banabina Brahma, "Outline Trends of Bodo Politics (1987-2005)", in *Dumuni*, (Published by ABSU, Kokrajhar, 2006), p. 86.

⁵⁰ Profile on Forest and Wildlife of BTC, (Published by Forest Department of BTC, 2006), p. 1.

⁵¹ Memorandum of Settlement, *op. cit.*

other two District Councils already existing in the state of Assam, that is, The North Cachar District Council and The Karbi Anglong District Council. After which the third entry was added, namely, “3.The Bodoland Territorial Areas District.”⁵²

In the above discussion, it shows that, the main factors behind the Bodoland Movement were the growing consciousness of the people about their identity, the socio-economic problems, the issue of tribal land rights, language and culture, education, unemployment, and the political aspirations of the Bodos. As stated earlier, Assam is a shared homeland of various ethnic groups, with Assamese people as the majority. In comparison to other hill tribals residing in the then composite Assam, Assamese were more advanced than other tribes in aspects of social-economic life. At this backdrop, there was been a growing consciousness leading to the emergence of middle class among the Bodos, which initiated a movement for a separate homeland for the Bodos.

Consequently, the long-standing agitation of the Bodo people in different phases for issues like culture, education, literacy, prevention of tribal blocks and belts and their distinct identity was concluded by the formation of the BTC on 10th February, 2003. Accordingly, the Council has been entrusted with powers and functions as incorporated under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to administer the areas with autonomy like other District Councils of North East India. Thus, the administrative structure, powers, functions and working of the Council along with its area and profile have been discussed in the following chapter.

⁵² Sixth Schedule Amendment Act, 2003.

Chapter – II

Administrative Structure, Powers and Functions of the BTC

As stated in the previous chapter, after a rigorous agitation programme, the Bodo movement was brought under agreement by signing the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) between the ABSU and Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) leaders and the Central and the State Governments on 10th February, 2003. It has been agreed to create Bodoland Territorial Council within the framework of amended Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. After signing the MoS, it took almost a year to amend the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to facilitate the establishment of the BTC. Subsequently, the Government of Assam, by vide notification No. TAD/BTC/161/2003/6, on 31st October, 2003, adopted and approved the aforesaid MoS and resolved to extend executive powers to the 40 subjects.¹ The BLT, which accepted the BTC agreement, and its chief, Hagrama Mohilary, was sworn in as the Chief Executive Member of the interim BTC on 7th December, 2003. The BTC was made operational from 7th December, 2003 consisting of 12 Executive Members provisionally.

Thus, the Bodoland Territorial Council was added to the list of District Councils of the North East India as one of the autonomous administrative set-up to administer their own affairs. The BTC has been empowered with legislative, executive and financial powers and functions over 40 subjects. As in the title cited above, this chapter has examined the administrative structure, that is, the executive body, different portfolios of the Council and the powers and functions of the BTC under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Before going into the main discussion of this chapter, a glimpse of BTC Profile has been also presented.

¹ Some Importance Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning BTC, (Department of Printing and Stationaries, BTC, 2005),

2.1 Profile of the BTC and its Physical Area

Location: The area under the Bodoland Territorial Council's jurisdiction is called the Bodo Territorial Areas District (BTAD). The geographical boundary of the BTC lies between 26°7'12"N to 26°47'50"N latitude and 89°47'40"E to 92°18'30"E longitude and it is situated in the North Western part of Assam. Bodoland is an area located in the northern banks of the river Brahmaputra along the southern foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. Currently the Bodoland map includes the Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) administered by an autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The Bodoland area overlaps with that of the districts of Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri in the state of Assam. At present, Kokrajhar town serves as the headquarters (capital) of Bodoland. Kokrajhar town lies roughly between 26°25'N longitude and 99°16'38"E latitude.²

Boundary: The boundary of the BTC in the north is shared by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh and these boundary lines are called Indo-Bhutan International Boundary and Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Inter State Boundary respectively; in the east are the Panchnoi River and the Sonitpur district of Assam; in the south is an artificial zig-zag boundary line that is shared with parts of Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam; and in the West is the Sankoch River. The area is outlined by the Assam-West Bengal Inter State boundary in the northern portion and down below by an artificial boundary line shared with the remaining portions of Kokrajhar and Dhubri districts.

² *Profile on Public Health Engineering Department, BTC, (Published by PHE Department, Kokrajhar, 2007).*

Area Covered: The BTC comprises of four new contiguous districts under its jurisdiction, namely, Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang – which are located on the northern banks of the Brahmaputra Valley. These are being carved out of eight districts of Assam, namely, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur. The total area of these eight districts is about 27,100 square kilometres which is around 35 percent of the total area of Assam. The area of the BTC comprises about 40 per cent of the total area of these eight districts. Thus, the jurisdiction of the BTC covering the newly re-organised four districts extends over 8970.00 square kilometres.³The district wise area covered has been shown in Table 2.1:

Table : 2.1 Name of the Districts with Area

Sl. No	Name of the Districts	Area in Square Kilometre (Sq. Km.)
1	Kokrajhar	3169.22
2	Chirang	1069.96
3	Baksa	3056.89
4	Udalguri	1673.93
Total	Area under BTC	8970 Sq. Km.

Source: Bodoland District Council, Council Dairy, 2008

Population: The total population in the BTC area as per 2001 Census report is 29.21 lakhs, out of which, the ST population is around 52 percent, and out of which only 3 percent lives in urban areas. The average density of the population in the BTC is 326 per square kilometres as compared to 340 per square kilometres of Assam.⁴ In the BTC area, majority among the the tribal communities inhabiting it are Bodos, followed by the Rabhas, the Garos, the Mishinnings, etc. The other general communities are the Adivasis, the Santals, the Uraos, the Kochs, the Rajbongshis, the

³ *Profile on Forest and Wildlife of BTC*, (Published by Forest Department, BTC, Kokrajhar).

⁴ *Profile on Public Health Engineering Department*, BTC, *op. cit.*

Bengalis, the Assamese, the Muslims, the Biharis, the Nepalis and the Scheduled Caste people are also found in certain percentage in the areas.

According to the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS), the BTC is comprised of 3,082 villages. But the BLT leaders signed the MoS even though they had reservations over this number and demanded that an additional 95 villages be included in the BTC territory. In the negotiations that followed the signing of the MoS, it was agreed that another 13 villages (or a 25 villages, according to other reports) would be included in the BTC area, thus bringing the total number of villages under the BTC area, as of now, to 3,095. Further, discussions over the inclusion of the remaining 82 (or 70) villages in the BTC are to be held after the formation of the Interim Territorial Council. Such vagueness and imprecision is hardly surprising given the general imprecision in land revenue records, or even on the ground, regarding the classification, location identification, or even in relation to the names of the villages in Assam, and, indeed, in much of rural India. However, there is less ambiguity about the major towns (though some of these are at present little more than villages) that fall within the BTC territory. The most important of these are Kokrajhar, (the Bodo heartland as it were and the home of the earliest Bodo autonomist/nationalistic assertion), the major part of Bongaigaon, including the refinery and petrochemical complex, Bijni, Sidli, Tamalpur and Udalguri (the last another historical seat of Bodo autonomist/nationalistic assertion).

The question is about the population of the BTC area and, even more important is about its 'mixed ethnicity'. The MoS wisely, and perhaps unavoidably, remained silent on this crucial question. At the height of the Bodoland agitation in the

late 1980s when only the 1971 Census was available (there was no Census in Assam in 1981) the Bodo leaders claimed that in Assam alone, the Bodo population was forty lakhs. According to the 1991 Census, the total Bodo population in the entire State, which would include areas outside the BTC area, including cities like Guwahati, was 12,67,015.⁵ Further, the total population of the BTC area was an addition of the total Scheduled Tribe population and the total Bodo population of the eight districts from which the BTC area is being carved out (1991 Census). These figures show that the Bodo population in these eight districts amounts to a little over 11 per cent of the total population. What is less clear is whether all the 11, 39,194 Bodo people enumerated in these districts in 1991 live in the areas that have been (or are being) demarcated as BTC territory, the 4,000 villages and the half a dozen cities and towns; and whether this population clearly constitutes more than 50 per cent of the total population of this BTC territory. Indeed, the Central government has yet to resolve dispute over the inclusion of the contested 95 villages in the BTC territory. It is a crucial criterion that the 'tribal' (not specifically Bodo) population of these villages should be not less than 50 per cent of total population of the BTC area. Thus, the present population in the four districts, including the Bodos and non-Bodos, in the BTC area is 2,632,289.⁶ The population pattern of BTC is shown in Table 2.2:

Table: 2.2 Population pattern of Bodoland Territorial Council

SL. No.	Name of the District	Schedule Tribe	Schedule Caste	General Category	Total
1	Baksa	338,630	45,967	333,045	717,642
2	Kokrajhar	528,774	32,609	337,608	898,991
3	Chirang	169,811	30,035	143,780	343,626
4	Udalguri	317,412	28,933	324,685	671,030
	Total	1,354,627	1,37,544	1,139,118	2,631,289

Source: Census of India, Report of 2001 Census

⁵ Census of India, 1991.

⁶ *Profile on Forest and Wildlife, BTC, op.cit.*

2.2 Districts and Sub-divisions of the BTC

In pursuance of the Government Notification No.GAG (B) 137/2002/Pt/117/ dated 30th October, 2003, the Governor of Assam was assented to reconstitute/set up the new sub-division and districts with the reorganized villages and reorganized existing sub-divisions and districts. Accordingly, four districts with nine sub-divisions have been constituted under the BTC.⁷ Each of the districts will be under the charge of one Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police. The number of the districts and sub-divisions are shown in the following Table 2.3:

Table: 2.3 Districts and Sub-divisions with district Headquarters of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

SL. No	Districts under BTC	Sub-divisions with Head-quarter (H.Q).
1	A) Kokrajhar	a) Kokrajhar, H.Q (a)Kokrajhar b) Gossaigaon, H.Q- (b) Gossaigaon c) Parbatjhora, H.Q (c) Parbatjhora
2	B) Chirang	a)Chirang, H.Q (a) Kajalgaon b) Bijni, H.Q. (b) Bijni
3	C) Baksa	a) Salbari, H.Q. (a) Salbari b) Tamulpur, H.Q. (b) Tamulpur
4	D) Udalguri	a) Udalguri, H.Q. (a) Udalguri b) Bhergaon, H.Q. (b) Bhergaon

Source: Bodoland District Council, Council Dairy, 2008

2.3 Composition of the Bodoland Territorial Council

The BTC is a corporate body having perpetual succession and a common seal with the right to sue and be sued. The provision of the Sixth Schedule and other relevant Articles of the Constitution of India is applied to the BTC, mutatis mutandis in terms of this agreement. A provision is made in para 2 (1) of the Sixth Schedule for increase in number of members for the BTC up to 46, whereas normally the members of the District Councils are up to 30 only. Accordingly, the BTC consisted of 46

⁷ Assam Gazette No. 228, 30th October, 2003.

members, 40 members are elected out of which 30 members are reserved for the Scheduled Tribe, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open to all communities and 6 to be nominated by the Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities from the BTC area of which at least two should be women. The nominated members will have the same right and privileges as other members, including voting rights. The members, both elected and nominated, are known as Members of the BTC Legislative Assembly.

The number of constituencies in each District Council depends on the number of elective seats provided for each Council. In case of the BTC, there are 40 elective seats. Accordingly, the BTC has divided into 40 constituencies to elect the Members of the BTC Legislative Assembly. The election shall be on the basis of adult franchise. The term of elected members of the Legislative Assembly shall be for 5 years⁸ unless the Council is sooner dissolved and the nominated member shall hold office at the pleasure of the Governor. The period of five years may, with the proclamation of national emergency or if circumstances exist, which in the opinion of the Governor, be extended by the Governor for a period of not exceeding one year at a time and in any case where a proclamation of emergency is in operation, not extending beyond a period of six months after the proclamation has ceased to operate.

There is a provision of Speaker and Deputy Speaker in the BTC Legislative Assembly, who normally preside over the Council sessions. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker are elected by the elected members of the Council Assembly. The election is by a simple majority. Those members, who are elected as Speaker and Deputy

⁸ Sixth Schedule, para-2.1

Speaker need stay in the office at the pleasure and confidence of the Council Assembly. But the rules provide that they may, at any time resign in writing. They can be removed at any time by a resolution of the Council as provided in the rules.

Functionally, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker act like the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of a legislature. The Speaker calls for the session of the Council Assembly, presides over the Council in session and regulates the proceedings of the Council. His decision to the conduct of a session is final. He also admits questions and motions and allows time for the discussion of business. He has a casting vote in case of a tie. In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker performs duties. The Speaker is assisted by the three Secretaries to the session, who are normally deputed from the state government.

2.4 Election to the Bodoland Territorial Council:

After the provisional functioning of the Council, the Council election was declared by the State Election Commission to be held on the 13th May, 2004. Following the declaration of the election to the BTC, the Bodo leaders, under the All Bodo Students Union and the Ex-BLT Welfare Association, formed a 16 member Convenors' Committee on 12th April, 2004 to form a political party, namely, the Bodoland People's Progressive Front (BPPF). The Bodo leaders had decided that the party would be formed on 20th April, 2004. But at the first sitting of the Convenors' committee, the leaders decided to have a delegate session-cum-public meeting at Kokrajhar, to declare the formation of the party.

However, with the elections close at hand, and with the nominations to be held on 19th April 2004, the BPPF could not be formed on the date as planned, that is, on

20th April 2004. The members of both the associations decided to allow members to contest as independent candidates in the BTC election. The election was held on 13th May 2004. Consequently, only the candidates who belonged to the BLT won, including the provisional Council Chief, Hagrama Mahilary who won again as Chief of the BTC with majority number of votes. Soon after the Council elections, there was a rift in the relationship of the two associations who earlier had decided for the formation of the BPPF. The Chief Convenor, Rabiram Narzary, expelled top leaders, including the Deputy Chief and Executive Members of the BTC from the party post in a hurriedly called general meeting at Dotma on November 23rd, 2004. As a result, a new Bodoland Progressive Front (BPF) faction thus came up under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary, formed on 4th and 5th December, 2004 at Deborgaon in order to strengthen the party and the Council as well. At present, in the BTC, there are two parties in existence, that is, the BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary led party, the BPF, which is now ruling the BTC, and the Rabiram Narzary led party, the BPPF, as an opposition party of the BTC. ⁹

After the BTC elections, Hagrama Mohilary with his elected members consolidated his powers. The second success of his factional party came in the 2006 Assam Assembly election. In this election, the BPF party has created a situation in which they formed an alliance partner with 11 MLAs of the Congress led Government of Assam. It was a landmark achievement in the history of Bodo politics.

⁹ Report of Bodo Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF), (BPPF Party Office, BTC, Kokrajhar)

2.5 Executive Council

The overall administration of the BTC is vested in the Executive Council headed by the Chief Executive Member whose term is for a period of 5 years. The Executive Committee exercises similar powers and functions to that of the Cabinet at the State or at the Centre level within the jurisdiction of its own. The size of the Executive Committee may, however, vary from time to time. The Executive Committee is to carry on the day to day administration of the District in accordance with the laws framed by the Legislative body.

The rules enacted under the Sixth Schedule provide for an Executive Council (EC) to the BTC Legislative Assembly, to carry on its executive functions. Thus, there is an Executive Council comprising of 14 Executive Members, one of whom is the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and another one the Deputy Chief Executive Member of the said Executive Council. The 12 members of the Executive Council are from among the 40 elected members of the BTC Legislative Assembly. They are appointed by the Governor on recommendation of the Chief Executive Member. There shall be adequate representation for the non-tribal members in the Executive Council, according to that, in the present Executive Council, there are two Executive Members represented from the non-tribal members. The Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Council shall have the status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the other Executive Members equivalent to the Ministers of State of Assam for protocol purposes in the BTC area. The Council is headed by one Chief and he is assisted by one Deputy Chief. Besides the Chief and the Deputy Chief they are helped by a team of 12 Executive members allocated in different portfolios.

The Executive Council performs all executive functions of the Council. The Members of the Executive Council are known as the Executive Members (EM) and the head is known as the Chief Executive Member (CEM). It is just on the lines of a cabinet system in parliamentary democracy.

The Council is like a miniature government at the district level comprising allocated areas. There is also a Secretary to the EC appointed by the CEM who is not a member of the Legislative Assembly. The CEM must be elected by the Members of Council Legislative Assembly within 48 hours from the date of the removal of the existing committee. If the Members of the Council Legislative Assembly fail to elect the CEM within the fixed period, the Governor may appoint any member of the Council Legislative Assembly to be the CEM.

As regards the functions of the Executive Council, it is disposed of all matters falling within its purview. The CEM allocates certain subjects to each executive Member to look after. The Executive Council is, thus, collectively responsible for all executive orders and policies issued in the name of the BTC as well as for the implementation of all developments schemes in the areas. This also implies that when the CEM resigns, the Executive Council stands dissolved automatically. The interim Council of the BTC and their portfolios are shown below in Table 2.4:

Table 2.4 Members of the Interim Council of BTC and their Portfolios for the period of 2005-2010

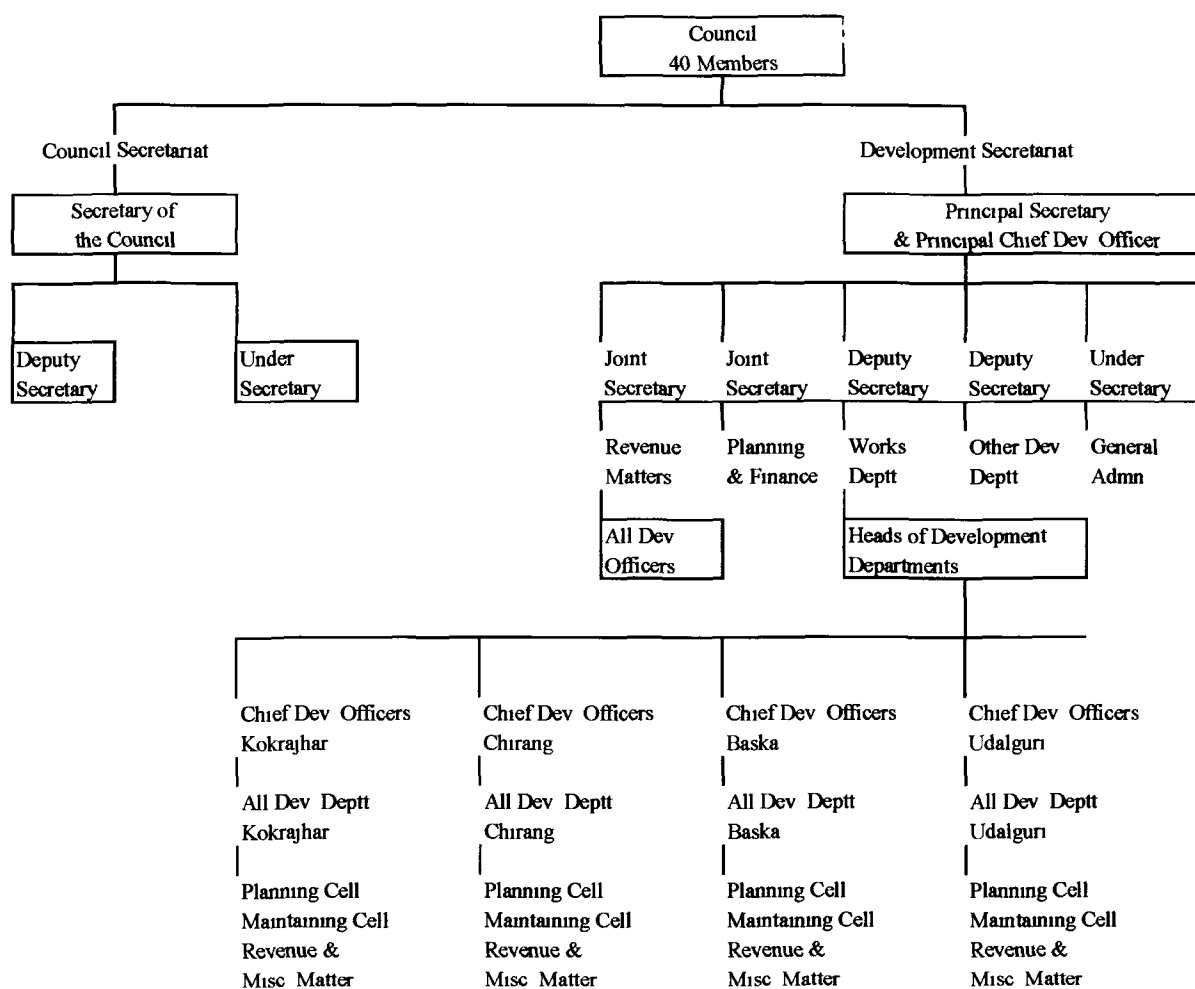
SL. No. /Designation	Name of the Member	Department & Portfolios allocated.
1.Chief of BTC	Hagrama Mahilary	Public Work Department(PWD), Panchayat & Rural Development(P& RD), Welfare of Plain Tribals & Backward Class(WPT&BC) and Departments not allotted to other Executive Members.
2. Deputy Chief of BTC	Kampha Borgoyari	Planning & Development, Forest, Tourism, Sericulture, Land & Land Revenue
3.Executive member	Derhasat Basumtary	Flood Control, Public Health Engineering.
4.Executive member	Hitesh Basumatary	Irrigation, Handloom & Textile, Sports & Youth Welfare
5.Executive member	Sobharam Basumatary	Social Welfare, Animal Husbandary & Vetinary.
6.Executive member	Emanuel Muchahary	Education, Health & Family Welfare
7.Executive member	Mitharam Basumatary	Agriculture, Weights & Measures
8.Executive member	Lwmsrao Daimary	Printing & Stationery, Food & Civil Supplies, Publicity & Public Relations
9.Executive member	Shyam Sundi	Relief & Rehabilitation, Labour & Employment, Soil Conservation
10.Executive member	Lakhiram Tudu	Fishery, Market & Fairs
11.Executive member	Maheswar Basumatary	Urban Development, Town & Country Planning, Municipal Corporation, Improvement of Trust, District Boards and Local Authorities, Cultural Affairs
12.Executive member	Mono Kr. Brahma	WPT&BC (State Plan), Transport, Excise
13.Executive member	Singha Ram Boro	Co-operation, Library Services, Museum & Archaeology
14.Executive member	Budhi Narzary	Industry, Lottery, Cinema & Dramatic Performance

Source: First Bodoland Territorial Council Legislative Assembly, 2005 (BTC legislative Assembly Secretariat Kokrajhar, 2008)

The executive functions of the BTC shall be exercised through its Principal Secretary who shall be an officer of the rank not below that of Commissioner/Secretary to Government of Assam. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam shall be vested with the Principal Secretary of the BTC and sanctioning powers of a particular department, including technical sanction, shall be

conferred on the senior-most officer of the department, preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who may be designated as Director of the BTC for that department. The Principal Secretary and other officers shall exercise their powers under the overall guidance and supervision of the BTC. The administrative structure is shown in the following Flow Chart 2.5:

FLOW CHART: 2.5 ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF BTC



2.5 Powers and Functions of the BTC

The Bodoland Territorial Council shall have legislative powers in respect to subjects transferred to it as enumerated in paragraph 3, Annexure-III of the MoS and has executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of subjects transferred to it.¹⁰ The Government of Assam, vide notification No. TAD/BTC/161/2003/6, has resolved and entrusted the 40 subjects listed in Annexure-III of the MoS. These powers are without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 3. So the Bodoland Territorial Council within its area shall have power to make laws with respect to:

1. Agriculture, including agricultural education and research, protecting against pest and prevention of plants diseases;
2. Animal husbandry and veterinary, that is to say, preservation, protection and improvement of stock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice, cattle pounds;
3. Co-operation;
4. Cultural affairs;
5. Education, that is to say, primary education, higher education including vocational training, adult education, college education (general);
6. Fisheries;
7. Flood control for protection of village, paddy fields, market and towns (not of technical nature);
8. Food and civil supply;
9. Forests (other than reserved forests);

¹⁰ *Memorandum of Settlement, BTC, 2003, op.cit.*

10. Handloom and textile;
11. Health and family welfare;
12. Intoxicating liquors, opium and derivatives, subject to the provisions of entry 84 of List I of the Seventh Schedule;
13. Irrigation;
14. Labour and employment;
15. Land and Revenue;
16. Library services (financed and controlled by the State Government);
17. Lotteries (subject to the provisions of entry 40 of List I of the Seventh Schedule); theatre, dramatic performance and cinemas (subject to the provisions of entry 60 of List I of the Seventh Schedule);
18. Markets and fairs;
19. Municipal Corporation Improvement Trust, districts boards and other local authorities;
20. Museum and archaeology institutions controlled or financed by the state, ancient and historical monuments and records other than those declared by or under any law made by Parliament to be of national importance;
21. Panchayat and rural development;
22. Planning and development;
23. Printing and stationery;
24. Public health engineering;
25. Public works department;
26. Publicity and public relations;
27. Registration of births and deaths;

28. Relief and rehabilitation;
29. Sericulture;
30. Small, cottage and rural industry subject to the provisions of entries 7 and 52 of List I of the Seventh Schedule;
31. Social welfare;
32. Soil conservation;
33. Sports and youth welfare;
34. Statistics;
35. Tourism;
36. Transport (roads, bridges ferries and other means of communications not specified in List I of the Seventh Schedule municipal tramways, ropeways, inland waterways and traffic there on subject to the provisions of entry 40 of List, I and III of the Seventh Schedule with regards to such waterways, vehicles and other mechanically propelled vehicles);
37. Tribal research institution controlled and financed by the State Government;
38. Urban development - town and country planning;
39. Weights and measures subject to the provisions of entry 50 of List I of the Seventh Schedule; and
40. Welfare of plain tribes and backward classes.¹¹

Looking at the functioning of the BTC in relation to the 40 subjects, 39 subjects have been fully implemented and only one subject, that is, 'Relief and Rehabilitation', has not been implemented so far.¹²

¹¹ Memorandum of Settlement, BTC, 2003, *op.cit.*

Now therefore, the following administrative procedure and modalities are framed by the State Government in consultation with the Bodoland Territorial Council for the purpose of day to day administration in respect of the 39 subjects (excluding Relief and Rehabilitation) as referred above –

- A. In order to enable to Bodoland Territorial Council to finance the expenditure of the thirty nine entrusted subjects/departments without difficulty, the Government of Assam shall make Plan funds available as advance under the Head “8443-K-Deposit and Advances - (B) deposit not bearing interest-8443 civil deposits(personal) deposit (BTC)”. The State Government of Assam shall release the funds on a six monthly in April and October of each financial year subject to the ability with the State Government. The Council shall submit the detailed accounts every month to the Accountant General of Assam, to make necessary adjustment by debit to the appropriate Head of Account of the State Budget.
- B. The Council shall insure that the existing rules, instructions, norm, guidelines, etc. of the Government of India and the State Government, covering the implementation of plan schemes relating to the entrusted subjects/ departments and other matter including non-plan matters relating to the entrusted subjects are followed strictly till the Council frames rules for the purpose in terms of

¹² Some Importance Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning BTC, *op.cit.*, (According to the BTC Achievement Report of 2005-06 and BPF Election Manifesto, 2009, BTC, the State Government is on active consideration for transfer of Relief and Rehabilitation department to the Council. Though the Relief and Rehabilitation department is not yet transferred to the BTC, the Council has been providing Relief to the Camp inmates and rehabilitated villagers of Kokrajhar and Chirang districts during the year 2005-2006 and Udalguri district in the year 2008 affected by the ethnic violence out of the Plan Fund received as allocated to the department).

the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, it being understood that the rules, direction, etc. of the Government of India, Controller and Auditor General of India and other sound financial management/ principle cell always be followed.

- C. The State Government would decide the modalities for the transfer of plan and non-plan funds to the BTC in due course of time.
- D. The Council shall be responsible to the State Legislature in all matters relating to the funds transferred to the Council and for this purpose, the Principle Secretary and other Secretaries to the Council shall be made available for examination by the Public Accounts Committee and other committees of the State Legislature.
- E. The Council shall appoint a Principle Secretary who shall be an officer in the rank of Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Assam, and for this purpose, the Government of Assam will place the services of an IAS, officer of Assam Cadre, of this rank, at the disposal of the Council. The State Government will make available the services of officers in the rank of Joint Secretaries to the government of Assam for appointment as secretaries to the Council. The State Government will also make available Deputy Secretaries, Under Secretaries from the Assam Civil Service and from Technical Department as may be required for appointment of Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries respectively of the Council. The services in the rank of EAC from Assam Civil Service and officers of equivalent rank from Technical Department also would be placed at the disposal of the Council for appointment as Under Secretaries. All these officers shall be on deputation

from the State government to the council as per usual terms and condition and their services shall be placed at the disposal of the Council with prior consultation with Council.

- F. The executive functions of the BTC shall be exercise through each Principle Secretary. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam shall be vested with the Principle Secretary of the BTC and sanctioning powers of the Head of Departments, including the power of technical sanction shall be conferred on the senior most officer of that Department preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who may be designated as Director of BTC for the Department. The Principle Secretary and other officer shall exercise their powers under the overall guidance and supervision of BTC.
- G. The BTC shall have full control over the officers and staff connected with the entrusted subjects, working in the BTC area and shall be competent to transfer these officers and staff within the BTC area. The Annual Confidential Reports of these officers shall also be written by the appropriate BTC authority.
- H. BTC shall be competent to make appointment on all post under its control in accordance with the rules of appointment followed/prescribed by the Government of Assam. The Council shall constitute a selection board for appointment to be made by it and shall also make rules, with the approval of the Government of Assam, to regulate appointments. All circular relating to the filling up of vacancies and appointment issued by Government of Assam from time to time shall be followed fully. However, the posts where recruitment is to be made on the recommendation of APSC shall not be covered under this provision.

- I. The Chief Executive Member/Executive Member/Principle Secretary/Secretary to the Council shall be competent to initiate/review/accept the Annual Confidential Reports of all the officers and staff placed under the administrative control of the Council. The administrative control of the Council over the officers and the staffs at its disposal shall be complete in all matters of Council transfer and posting. As regards disciplinary actions, against the officers and staff of the entrusted subjects, the Council shall exercise the powers as the borrowing authority and the State Government shall exercise powers as the lending authority and both the State Government and the Council shall follow the relevant rules, regulation, etc., of the respective service rule.
- J. The State Government shall consult the Council, while posting and transferring the officers of the entrusted subjects in or out of the Council. The officers and staff not released by the Council shall normally not be accepted by the State Government. Before deputing any officer or staff the Government shall provide a panel of names enabling the Council to select and accept the same. The State Government shall take necessary action under the relevant rules and procedure against the officer and staff, found involved in any prima-facie case of misconduct/derelection of duty, etc., during the period of deputation to the Council even after they are repatriated to the State Government. In case of any different of opinion between the State Government and BTC on such matters, a reference will be made to the Welfare of Plain Tribe and Backward Class Department for final decision.

- K. The salary and allowances of the Principle Secretaries/Deputy Secretaries as well as the officers and staffs of the entrusted subjects of the Department who are on deputation to the Council shall be paid by the Council and necessary fund for this purpose shall be made available to the Council by the State Government. In respect of provident fund, group insurance and other related matters, these officers and the staff shall continue to be control by the State Government. The Council shall not be liable to pay any leave salary, pension, contribution, etc., in respect of these officers and staff of the entrusted subjects/departments placed under their administrative control.
- L. The Bodoland Territorial Council shall prepare the estimate of received and expenditure pertaining to the BTC in respect of entrusted subjects/ department as per the allocation, norms etc. communicated by the State Government. The BTC in their Council session shall consider the estimated receives and expenditure pertaining to the BTC in respect on entrusted subjects/department and sent the same along with the synopsis for consideration to the State Government within the stipulated time as provided for in the paragraph 13 of the six schedule to the Constitution of India. Ordinarily no change will be made in the estimated receives and expenditure as considered by the BTC in respect of the entrusted subjects/departments. However, for any reasons, if it becomes necessary to do so, the Council shall be consulted and reason for the proposed change shall be explained. The State Government shall then place the estimated received and expenditure as considered by the BTC, along with the synopsis before the state legislature as provided for in the paragraph 13 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

- M. The BTC authority shall prepare a plan with the amount likely to be made available for development works, both under the State share and Central share, covering any or all the activities of the departments under their control. The Council shall have full discretion in selecting the activities and choosing the amount for the investment under the same in any year. These plans will be sub-set of the State plan and would be treated as its integral part. Once the plan of the State, including BTC plan, gets the approval of the Planning Commission the BTC authority shall start execution of their plan in the BTC area. Modification, if any, made by the Planning Commission in the BTC proposal, shall be binding on the BTC authority. The BTC shall have a Planning Department to prepare the plans for the BTC area to be submitted to Planning Commission through the Government of Assam.
- N. All Centrally sponsored schemes/Central sector schemes/NEC schemes/external aided schemes, etc., in respect of the entrusted subjects/departments for which fund will be released by the State government to the Council as per sanction and release by the Government of India and the State Government
- O. The BTC will exercise its legislative power as conferred under clause 3(B) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- P. The delegation of executive powers in respect of Relief and Rehabilitation shall be notified separately.

Q. In case of any difficulty in interpretation of any of the clauses of the MoS or this OM, the matter shall be referred to the Governor, whose decision in the matter shall be final.¹³

Besides this, all laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented by him, shall have no effect. The Governor has power to alter laws or rules passed by the Councils, which are in violation of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. The Sixth Schedule, thus, makes the Governor the head of the Autonomous Council.

No posts shall be created by the BTC without the concurrence of the Government of Assam and it shall also abide by the decision of the Government of Assam in respect of abolition of any temporary and vacant post. Wherever needed, the development functions shall be transferred to the BTC. In respect of the DRDA, concurrence of the Government of India will be obtained.

As incorporated in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the District Councils are given financial powers to manage their own affairs. The Council is responsible for framing rules for the management of finances with the approval of the Governor. The BTC, thus, has financial powers over the subjects already implied to it. It has also given mutually exclusive powers to collect land revenues, levy and collect taxes on lands, holdings, shops, entry of goods into market and tolls, etc, within their respective jurisdictions. But the District Council has concurrent power on the professions, trade, callings, employments, animals, vehicles and hut, tolls on

¹³ *Some Importance Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning, BTC, (Department of Printing and Stationeries, BTC, 2005),*

passengers and goods carried in ferries and maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads. As regards to the tax on motor/vehicles, it is assigned and collected by the State Government on behalf of the District Council. Grants-in-aid, loans and advances, etc., from the State Government constitute other sources of income of the Council.

The State Government would provide an amount, to be decided every year on population ratio basis, as grants-in-aid in two equal instalments to the BTC for executing development works. The proportionate share for the BTC shall be calculated on the basis of the Plan funds available after setting aside the funds required for earmarked sectors and the salary. This amount may be reduced proportionately if the State Plan allocation is reduced or there is plan cut due to resource problem. In addition, the Council will be paid a suitable amount of Plan funds and non-plan funds to cover the office expenses and the salaries of the staff working under its control. The BTC shall deserve the salaries of the staff under its control and would ensure strict economy in the matter.

The State Government shall not divert the funds allocated to the BTC to other heads and also ensure its timely release. The BTC may have Planning Department to prepare the plans for the BTC area to be submitted to the Planning Commission through the Government of Assam.

2.6 Law and Order

The Law and order of any state is one of the most important subjects for development and strengthening the administration of that particular state. Thus, to strengthen the Police Administration, the Government of Assam has appointed an

Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the four districts of the BTC. The jurisdiction of the Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Kokrajhar, has also been modified to cover these four districts. The offices of the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendent of Police are outside the superintendence and control of the BTC.

2.7 Miscellaneous Powers and Functions

Besides the above mentioned powers and functions of the BTC, there are several powers and functions which are either applicable or not applicable to the BTC. There are some other powers and functions in the Revision of List of Scheduled Tribe of the area. Consequently, by the inclusion of the BTC area into the Sixth Schedule, the list of ST for the State of Assam has been modified, so as to ensure that the tribal status of Bodos and other tribals living outside the BTC area does not get affected adversely. Accordingly, the amendments to the Sixth Schedule have include provisions to protect the non-tribal and their rights and privileges including land rights in such a manner that non-tribals are not disadvantaged in relation to the rights enjoyed by them at the commencement of the BTC and are fully protected. Thus, safeguards for the settlement rights, transfer and inheritance of property, etc., of non-tribals are suitably incorporated in Para 3 of the Sixth Schedule. Yet any such law made by the BTC in this regard will not be applicable, in particular to:

a) Extinguish the rights and privileges enjoyed by any citizen of India in respect of his land at the commencement of BTC, and

b) Bar or disallow any citizen from acquiring land either by way of inheritance, allotment, and settlement or by way of transfer if such citizens were eligible for such confide acquisition of land within the BTC area.

Thus, the BTC cannot make any law in the above mentioned subjects, which is not applicable and suitable to the area according to the agreement of the BTC.

In terms of language, the Bodo language is applied as the official language of the BTC, and Assamese and English also continue to be used for official purpose. Provision has been added in Para 6 of the Sixth Schedule that in the BTC area, language and medium of instruction in educational institutions cannot be changed by the Council without approval of the State Government.

Provisions of Article 332(6) of the Constitution will be modified that the existing status of representation of the BTC area in the State Assembly is kept intact. After the creation of the BTC, the Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies has been delimited by the Delimitation Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

After the functioning of BTC, the Panchayati Raj system has ceased to exist in the Council area. Thus, the powers of the Panchayati Raj powers have been vested with the BTC authority. The Council has been vested the power to entertain and execute all developmental activities under the Panchayati system. With this the BTC assumed another additional power and functions.

The District Council is a product of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. The District Council is not created by the State legislature. The provisions of the Sixth Schedule can be amended only by the Parliament. The autonomous District Council is a body created by the Parliament. The autonomous District Council is a body corporate and, as such, it appears that the Council may act independently of the State Legislature. The Bodoland Territorial Council was started on 10th February, 2003, in true spirit of the Sixth Schedule and is hoped to execute the Provisions contained in the Sixth Schedule. The whole population of the Bodoland Territorial Council was enthralled by this boon.

The autonomous BTC has elaborate functions and powers in the legislative, executive, and financial domains. These powers are expected to uplift the people of the said areas in the domains of primary and higher education, health, culture, social customs, social welfare, forest, land, agriculture, water management, village administration, economic and rural development, etc. The BTC enjoys autonomy only in limited subjects transferred to it and the Acts of the both Parliamentary and the State Legislatures on the subjects under them do not normally apply to the autonomous District Councils. They may be extended with such exceptions and modifications as are considered necessary by the District or Regional Council concerned.

It is clear from the provision of the Sixth Schedule that the civil administration of the autonomous Territorial Council is placed with the two authorities that is the Deputy Commissioner representing the state government and the Executive Council of the BTC. The Council enjoys autonomy and control over departments specified in

the MoS, but it does not control the district administration. It is interesting to note that the MOS of the BTC has thus, created two sets of authorities with consequent anomalies and overlapping functions in the BTC areas.

Chapter – III

BTC and Infrastructural Development

Infrastructure can be considered as the backbone for growth and development of economy. Infrastructure is interpreted in different ways in relation to different types of State economy. Though, infrastructure is recognized as a crucial input for economic development, there is no clear definition of the term. With respect to policy formulation, setting of sectoral targets and monitoring projects, a clear understanding of what is covered under the rubric of 'infrastructure' is necessary to ensure consistency and comparability in the data collected and reported by various agencies over time. In general, infrastructure can be interpreted as active building in many sectors. To mention a few of such sectors we can cite railway connections, roads, bridges, runways and other airport facilities, telephone telecommunications network, pipelines for water, canal networks for irrigation, drinking water, electricity, sanitation or sewage lines, etc.

According to the Memorandum of Settlement, one of the main objectives is to lend developmental power to the people. As per the agreement, within the limitation of financial and other constraints, it is allowed for the Council to coffer, possible and sustainable additional incentives for attracting private investment in the Council area and also to support projects for external funding. Yet again, in order to accelerate the development of the region and to meet the aspirations of the people, the Government of India is to provide financial assistance of Rs.500 crores for the initial five years for projects for development in the area, in addition to the normal plan assistance of the State Government.¹ So far, only an amount of Rs 250 crores has been received by the Council from the Centre.² For this, 40 subjects have been entrusted to the BTC authority for overall development of the area, including infrastructural and socio-

¹ Memorandum of Settlement, BTC, 2003, *op. cit.*

² Manifesto of BPF for 15th General Lok Sabha Election, 2009, (Kokrajhar, 2009).

economic development.³ Therefore, in this chapter, a detailed review has been done on the working of the BTC in infrastructural development and its growth in BTC areas. This Chapter has been organised as follows:

3.1 Administrative Infrastructure

After the formation of BTC, one of the foremost necessities was administrative infrastructure. Accordingly, the Central Government has agreed to provide Rs. 50 crores required for initial construction and development of Administrative Infrastructure for the newly created Council.⁴ The Ministry of Home Affairs, Central Government, had released fund for development of Administrative Infrastructure as agreed (Rs. 50 crore) in the MoS.⁵ The following Administrative Infrastructure have been approved for construction as per fund shown against each project:

- a) **Construction of the BTC Assembly and Secretariat Complex at Kokrajhar:** For the construction of Council Assembly and Secretariat complex an amount of Rs. 17 crores have approved and sanctioned. This amount has been revised to Rs. 34 crores.⁶ Accordingly, construction of Council Assembly cum Secretariat Complex was started in the capital of BTC, at Kokrajhar. The project is under completion.

³ Memorandum of Settlement, BTC, 2003, *op. cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, (Published by Information and Public Relation Department, BTC, 2007-08).

⁶ *Ibid.*

- b) **Construction of the District Centre at Kajalgaon in Chirang District:** For the construction of District Centre at Kajalgaon in Chirang District an amount of Rs. 5 crores has been approved and sanctioned.⁷
- c) **Construction of the District Centre at Mushalpur in Baska District:** Similarly, for the construction of District Centre at Mushalpur in Baska District an amount of Rs. 5 crores has been approved and sanctioned.⁸
- d) **Construction of the Sub-divisional Centre at Kazigaon, Salbari, Tamulpur and Bhergaon:** For the construction of new Sub-divisional Centres in the four districts of BTC namely Kazigaon, Salbari, Tamulpur and Bhergaon, an amount of Rs. 2 crores each respectively has been sanctioned.⁹

The executing agency of these projects was under the Public Work Department of BTC. The above mentioned construction works have been partially completed. As such, some projects have started functioning. Besides the above mentioned administrative infrastructural development taking place in the BTC area, some other government buildings, like the Bodoland Guest Houses at New Delhi, Kolkata and Siliguri, have been started for providing lodging facilities to visitors from the BTC areas. Moreover, within the BTC area also there are many constructions such as of the Bodoland Guest Houses at Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Chirang, Salbari, Tamulpur, Mushalpur and Udalguri.

⁷ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op.cit.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

3.2 Public Work Department (PWD)

The Public Work Department (PWD) is an integral part of the development of infrastructure and is one of the major entrusted subjects of the BTC. The developmental work in infrastructure is being executed by this department. This department mainly deals with the construction and improvement of Roads and Communication, Bridges along with other infrastructure development. The department has executed huge volume of works both in roads and in the building sectors for overall development of the BTC area. For developmental work in this sector, the department has been funded by the ministry of Development of North East Region (DONER), Government of India under Non-Lapsable Centre Pool of Resources (NLCPR). The department has allocated Rs. 1748.00 lakhs during the year 2005-06, which was approved by the State Level Standing Committee (SLSC).¹⁰ Accordingly, a number of projects like RCC bridges and improvement of roads are being undertaken by NLCPR. Some completed projects or physical achievement in road infrastructure in four districts of the BTC undertaken by the PWD are stated below:

1. **Baksa District:** The improvement of Dhamdhama-Tupalia-Subankhata Road, Kaurbaha-Nagrijiuli Road and construction of Road from NH-31 Barama to Mushalpur, Improvement of Jalah-Rupahi-Saudarvita-Gobordhana Road and Tihu-Doomni Road were completed in Baksa District.
2. **Chirang District:** North Kajalgaon-Dangtol Road, Kashikotra-Basugaon Road, Sundari-Vidyapour via Kakragaon Road, Chapaguri-Khagrabari Road

¹⁰ *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, 2005-06, (Published by Printing and Stationary Department, BTC).

and Khasikotra-Bamungoan-Bengtol Road were undertaken in Chirang District.

3. Kokrajhar District: Narabari-Daokibari Road, Bhaoraguri-Kachugaon Road, Gossaigaon-Soraibil Road, Fakiragram-Serfanguri Road and Gossaigoan-Kazigoan-Bhumka-Tipkai Road were undertaken by the Council in Kokrajhar District.

4. Udalguri District: Udalguri-Bhakatpara via Bhairaguri Road, Banargaon-Pakribari Road, Kalaigaon-Kundarbil Road, Lailongpara-Kopati Road, Bhergoan Chewni via Khagrabari Road and Khowrang-Mohanpur Road were undertaken by the BTC.

Furthermore, the BTC, the PWD department was allocated with Rs. 1725.00 lakhs under the Annual Operation Plan for the year 2007-08.¹¹ The completed schemes within the allocated amount were:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (i) Metalling and Blacktopping | = 8.338 kilometres |
| (ii) RCC Box cell culvert | = 8 numbers |
| (iii) RCC slab culvert | = 21 numbers |
| (iv) Hume Pipe culvert | = 63 numbers |
| (v) Improvement of Road | = 288. 703 kilometres |

¹¹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

Besides the above mentioned completed projects, some completed works under the PWD for the following districts are as follows – the improvement of Kadamtali-Bhutankhuti Road with sand gravelling in Baksa district, the construction of SPT Bridge and the length improvement of Gwjwnpuri-Iragdao Road in Chirang district. In Kokrajhar district all renovation and replacement of triple opening Hume Pipe Culvert, construction of RCC Bridge on Narabari-Daokhibari Road and RCC Box Cell Bridge on Dotma-Balajan Road were also completed.

The electrical division of the PWD, in addition, has completed various projects, namely illumination of street lights, electrification of department buildings including light, fan, pump motor, geyser, air conditioner machine, generator set, etc. department park or garden beautification with dome lights, sodium vapour lamps and mercury vapour lamps were prominent. Again, in Kokrajhar town a 250 Watt sodium lamp fitted on a steel tubular pole provides beautification and illumination. The maintenance of electrification is done by this department regularly. The flush lighting in important places like Flyover Bridges and in designated buildings of Government is also maintained by this department.

The very important achievement of this division is in laying the Low Tension (LT) line at Special Area Games centre (SAG) at Kathalguri, Kokrajhar, where Lower Tension feeder lines have been drawn with different sizes of armoured underground cables and campus lighting with 150 Watts sodium vapour lamp on the steel tubular poles. Also, this division has proposed for drawing of Lower Tension feeder line with armoured underground cables to all the distribution lines of the main roads of the Kokrajhar town, by dismantling the existing overhead line in consultation with the

Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB) authority. Thus, to execute all the development projects in the BTC areas, the Public Work Department is playing an important role. Since the inception of the Council, various works under this department have been undertaken by the BTC authority. Whereas, some major works are in completion, some are newly taken up. Many construction and repairing works in the area have been undertaken by the Public Works Department funded under various schemes and projects by different Ministries of the Government of India.

3.3 Transport Department

Road transport is the common mode of transportation, and therefore, the Transport Department assumes much importance in any state. This department is one of the major revenue generator sectors. The main aims and prospective of the Department is to collect Government Revenue in the form of Motor Vehicle Tax and Fees and to regulate all types of commercial and private vehicles and to ensure safe and comfortable road transportation under the guidelines laid down in the Control Motor Vehicle Rule and Act.¹² The Department is also responsible to create road safety awareness among the public and to educate vehicle drivers about mandatory road signals in view to avoid road accidents.

Keeping in view the above objectives, the Transport Department of BTC has undertaken various schemes to provide comfortable and scheduled transportation system in the Council area. For this the department of the Council has set up District Transport Offices in all the districts of BTC that are at Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri Districts and Kokrajhar to provide proper transportation system both for passengers

¹² *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

and goods carriage. The district level Transport Office in all four districts namely Baksa, Udalguri, Chirang and Kokrajhar are opened and have become fully operational. Furthermore, following schemes have been completed by the department:

- (i) For proper facilities of road transport, the department has earmarked an amount of Rs. 50.00 lakhs during the year 2004-05 under the Annual Operation Plan.¹³ The total amount was utilised in renovation and up gradation of Bus stands and in the construction of waiting shades with water supply.
- (ii) During the year 2005-06, with an agreed outlay for annual operation plan for the sectoral scheme has been fixed by the BTC Council at Rs. 55.00 lakhs.¹⁴ The scheme has covered for construction of a Taxi stand at Kokrajhar and up gradation of existing Bus stand with construction of passenger waiting shades with water supply.
- (iii) In the year 2006-07, the BTC Council has fixed an amount of Rs. 65.00 lakhs under Annual Operation Plan.¹⁵ The Council purchases 4 Omni Type Deluxe Buses to run as BTC Transport in the BTC area.

Besides, a total number of 21 waiting sheds were constructed in all the Districts of the BTC along with sanitation facility for the benefit of the travelling public, 6 numbers of existing Bus Stands were renovated and developed as a part of the infrastructure development scheme for Transport Department. The main schemes of the BTC with its latest status are shown below in Table 3.1.

¹³ *An Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *An Achievement Report, BTC, 2006-07, op.cit.*

Table:3.1 Details of different schemes and achievement reports of the transport department during the year 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07

Name of the Scheme with year	Unit of Scheme	Amount outlay in (Rs.)	Total amount spent in the year in (Rs.)	Achievement of the scheme during the year Yes/No	Remarks
Year 2002-2005 Renovation and upgradation of Bus stand with construction of waitingshade		50.00			Total 17 nos. Bus stand upgradaed and amount 50.00 Lakhs is spent
1. Kokrajhar District	6 Nos.	---	15.00 Lakhs	Yes	
2. Chirang District	2 Nos.	---	9.00 Lakhs	-do-	
3. Baga District	3 Nos.	---	11.00 Lakhs	-do-	
4. Udalguri District	6 Nos.	---	15.00 Lakhs	-do-	
Year 2005-2006 1. Direction & Administration	15 Lakhs	Nil		Administrative approval is given and the works are in progress.
2. Construction of a Taxi stand in Kokrajhar District and renovation and upgradation of bus stand with waiting shade and water supply	5 Nos.	40.00 Lakhs	Nil	-do-	
Year 2006-2007 1. Purchase of 4 nos. of Omni-Deluxe Type Bus as BTC Transport	4 Nos.	65.00 Lakhs	Nil	No	

Source: An Achivement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2004-05,2005-06 and 2006-07

It is expected that the measures undertaken would go a long way in the development of motor transport system in the BTC areas. The growth rate of transport facilities especially road construction, bridge construction, etc, are fair in the area. The three important elements namely trucks, buses and road network have grown in a

remarkable rate. Above of about 50 percent of the total rural roads has been repaired or constructed which is green signal for the acceleration of rural economy.¹⁶ Thus, the development of road infrastructure and providing the transport facilities have been given some top priority by the Transport Department in order to connect and strengthen the road connectivity in different areas of the BTC to benefit the entire people of the region as well as to generate revenue.

3.4 Irrigation Department

Irrigation Department is one of the subjects entrusted to the BTC. It is one of the major departments spreading across 4 districts namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri and it has 13 working divisions under the BTC areas.¹⁷ The population of the BTC is mainly dependent upon agriculture. The people have been utilizing the perennial streams and rivers for agricultural purposes by irrigating the paddy fields with earthen bunds. But, with the advent of science and technology, the Irrigation has been using modern Technology Weirs, Shallow and Deep Tube-Wells, etc. This type of structures and schemes help the people to utilise natural water.

By tradition, Bodo society is agricultural in nature. The economic condition of this people mainly depends on agricultural earnings. For this reason, assured irrigation system is an utmost necessity in this area. The major rivers on the northern side of the Brahmaputra Valley are Sonkosh, Gurufella, Gongia, Saralbhang, Champamati, Aie, Manash, Beki, Pagladia, Puthimari, Dhansiri, etc., originating from the Bhutan hills, flow through the heart-land of the Bodoland Territorial Council area before meeting

¹⁶ Pulin Ch. Barman, "Transport and Economic Development in Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD)", in the Souvenir, *Jagni-Ban*, (Published by the Youth and the Women wing, BPPF, 2007).

¹⁷ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC*, (Published by Printing and Stationary Department, 2004).

the Brahmaputra River. The incessant downpour of rain during rainy season in Bhutan and on the catchment areas of the above rivers causes flood affecting agricultural field, live stock and damages the infrastructure of the different irrigation schemes of the BTC. As reported by the said department of the Council due to non-availability of fund, most of the Irrigation schemes have remained inoperative in the BTC area for the past few years. The BTC authority has taken steps for renovation as well as to construct some new irrigation schemes with the limited fund for the uplift of economic condition of the people in the BTC areas.

During the year, 2005-06 the BTC authority has allocated an amount of Rs. 379 lakhs to the Irrigation Department. Accordingly, the department has taken steps for improvement of some existing schemes as well as some new schemes to tap the rich sources of water bodies. These water bodies are abundant within the Council area giving thereby maximum benefit to the people of the four districts (Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri). The achievement of Irrigation Department in the four districts is shown below as district-wise:

- a) **Kokrajhar District:** In the Annual Operation Plan, for the year 2005-06, the Irrigation Department has taken up 28 schemes in Kokrajhar district. Out of 28 schemes, 25 schemes are directly related to supplying of irrigation water for cultivation and the rest 3 schemes are not irrigation oriented. Out of 25 irrigation oriented schemes, 23 schemes have been completed. A total potential of 5,400 hectares for both Rabi and Kharif crops have been an achievement of these schemes. The remaining 2 schemes are in progress.

- b) Chirang District:** In the Annual Operation Plan of 2005-06, the Irrigation Department has taken up 14 schemes both new as well as renovation/improvement of old schemes in Chirang District. Out of 14 schemes, 13 schemes are directly related to supplying of irrigation water for cultivation whereas only 1 scheme is not irrigation oriented. Out of 13 irrigation oriented schemes, 10 schemes have been completed and a total potential of 1172 hectares for Kharif Crops have been created as an achievement of these schemes. The remaining 3 schemes are also in progress.
- c) Baksa District:** During the year 2005-06, under the Annual Operation Plan, the Irrigation Department has undertaken 18 schemes, both new and renovation of old schemes in Baksa district. Out of these 18 schemes, the 16 schemes are directly related to supplying of irrigation water for cultivation and the remaining 2 schemes are not irrigation oriented. Out of the 16 numbers of irrigation oriented schemes, 15 schemes have been completed. With this, a total potential area of 8,230 hectares for both Rabi and Kharif crops have so far been created. The remaining 1 scheme is under progress.
- d) Udalguri District:** Under the Annual Operation Plan of 2005-06, the Irrigation Department has taken up 18 schemes both new as well as renovation and improvement of old schemes in Udalguri District. Out these 18 schemes, 16 schemes are directly related to supplying of irrigation water for cultivation and 2 schemes are not irrigation oriented. The 16 numbers of irrigation oriented schemes have been completed and a total potential of 2450 hectares for Kharif Crops have been so far created.

A total potential of 17,252 hectares for both Rabi and Kharif crops have so far been created after completion of 72 numbers of irrigation oriented schemes in the BTC area. The Rabi and Kharif potential created by these schemes during 2005-06 are now being utilised by cultivators for production of Kharif crops and thereby approximately 12,000 families of the area are being benefited. The schemes which were in a very poor condition and are about to collapse, have been revived and made functional. But still there are more schemes to be improved. The department, therefore, has proposed to take up some new schemes in the following years. The details of the irrigation project/schemes for duration of 2005-06 is shown in the following Table: 3.2.

Table: 3.2 Details of different Projects/Schemes of the Irrigation department during the year 2005-06

Sl. No.	Name of Districts	Name of Project/Scheme	Target for the Annual Plan	Target achieved	Target achieved	Potential created in hectare
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Kokrajhar	1. Improvement of Flow Irrigation 2. Improvement of E.L.I.S. 3. Improvement of D.T.W.S. 4. Improvement of Building	19 5 1 3	18 4 1 3	95% 80% 100% 100%	5400
2	Chirang	1. Improvement of Flow Irrigation 2. Improvement of Building	13 1	10 1	83% 100%	1172
3	Baksa	1. Improvement of Flow Irrigation 2. Improvement of D.T.W.S. 3. Improvement of Building	15 1 2	14 1 2	93% 100% 100%	8230
4	Udalguri	1. Improvement of Flow Irrigation 2. Improvement of Building	16 2	16 2	100% 100%	2450
		Total	78	72	93%	17252

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

Besides that, in the Annual Operation Plan of 2007-08, out of total amount of Rs.625.00 lakhs, an amount of Rs. 245.00 lakhs for Flow Irrigation Schemes, Rs. 114.00 lacks for Lift Irrigation Schemes, Rs. 50.00 lakhs for Deep Tube Well

Schemes, and Rs. 12.00 lakhs for Shallow Tube Well Schemes were earmarked. For repairing the Electrical fittings and cost of Transformer required in some non-functional lift irrigation schemes, Rs. 12.00 lakhs was earmarked, Rs. 42.00 lakhs has been earmarked for repairing of the iron shutters and hoisting arrangements of Sluice Gated of some Flow Irrigation Schemes.¹⁸

During the year 2007-08, a total sum of Rs. 2179.48 lakhs was received under the Annual Operation Plan. A total potential of 18,150 hectares for both Rabi and Kharif crops have so far been created after completion of the schemes. Rabi and Kharif potential created by these schemes up to 2007-08 are now being utilised by the cultivators for production of Kharif crops and thereby approximately 1500 families of the BTC in total are benefited.

Besides these, there are some major projects/schemes under the progress level¹⁹ are explained as follows:

- i. The work on Champamati Irrigation Project (major) under BTC package for Rs. 43.85 crores, work is in progress (physical progress 70 percent).
- ii. The work on Suklai Irrigation Project under BTC package for Rs. 8.12 crores is in progress (physical progress 50 percent)
- iii. The work on Dhansiri Irrigation Project and Bodolia Irrigation Project under BTC Annual Operation Plan and work are in Progress.

¹⁸ *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, 2007-08, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

These are the major irrigation projects/schemes undertaken by the Irrigation Department. These developments are expected to benefit the cultivators and the production level of the BTC areas.

3.5 Flood Control Department

Assam is a flood prone area. Flood affects the natural resources of the state, causes soil erosion, huge loss of agriculture crops, damage of forest, etc. This brings much misery and suffering among the masses of the state residing in rural areas, thus affecting severely the socio-economy of the people as well as of the State. The BTC area also suffers from flood, which naturally affects the socio-economy of the people. So the Flood Control Department forms one of the important sectors that deals with problems relating to floods in the areas, which destroy many basic infrastructures like bridges, roads and agricultural sector. So due to this problem in the Bodo areas many developmental projects/schemes have been undertaken by Flood Control Department of the BTC.

The BTC comprises of four districts, namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. The main river in Kokrajhar district is the Sankosh River and its downstream is called Gangadhar. Rivers Saralbhangra, Gaurang, Hel, Aie, Champamati, and Dulani are in Chirang district. River Beki, Manas, Puthimari, Kaldia, Pahumara and Bodolia are in Baksa district. Rivers Dhansiri, Golandi, Nonoi, Kalandi, Baranadi, Kulshik, Rowta, Pagala, and Ranganadi are in Udalguri district. Almost all the rivers of the BTC area originate from the foothills of the Bhutan.

One of the major problems the BTC areas, is that, all the rivers in the areas are flowing from the foot hills of Bhutan. During high floods, these rivers cause extensive damages in almost all areas under the BTC. The flood water with tremendous velocity used to carry huge quantity silt which gets deposited in the river bed and causing changes in the flowing pattern of the river and this ultimately causes erosion on both banks of the river. As a result, due to the meandering nature of river several villages, public properties, important cultivated land, roads, etc., get eroded.

To control the regular floods in various areas of the BTC, in the year 2005-06, under the Annual Operation Plan, Rs.250.00 lakhs have been earmarked for 45 schemes.²⁰ In addition, 3 numbers of Central Sector Schemes under the DONER amounting to Rs. 1,670 lakhs at Dainamari, Chotonilibari and Burijhar were included in the BTC package of development.²¹ Besides these, schemes at River Saralbhanga, protection of Champamati at NH-31 near Karigaon and protection of Haluadal, river Tarang were cleared by Central Water Commission.²² The remaining schemes, for the year 2005-06, undertaken by the Flood Control Department are discussed as follows:

1. Schemes executed under Kokrajhar West Range (W.R.) Sub-Division for 2005-06 are:

- a) Protection of Jhansibari village and its adjoining areas from the erosion of river Amteka.
- b) Construction of boulder deflector at upper soil of existing Bhatarmari protection works from the erosion of river Gaurang.

²⁰ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

²¹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2004, op. cit.*

²² *Ibid.*

- c) Protection of Dimalgaon and Kokrajhar-Ramfalbil PWD Road from the erosion of river Gaurang.
- d) Protection of Bodogendrabil village and adjoining area from the erosion of river Tarang.
- e) Raising and Strengthening of Saralbhanga Lower Bank Embankment.

2. Schemes executed under Chirang West Range (W.R.) Sub-Division for 2005-06 are:

- a) Protection of Dahalapara village from the erosion of river Kanibhur.
- b) Protection of Kauniabhasa (Ujanpara) and Phoolguri village from the erosion of river Chmapamati.
- c) Protection of Amguri (Nayapara) and adjoining areas from the erosion of river Kanibhur.
- d) Protection of South Kajalgaon villages and PWD Road from the erosion of river Kujia.
- e) Protection of Tilakgaon from the erosion of river Champamati.
- f) Protection of Khagrabari village from the erosion of river Aie on its river berth.
- g) Protection of Kaunibhasa-Mechpara and its adjoining areas from the erosion of river Champamati.
- h) Protection of Gedergaon village and its adjoining area from the erosion of river Suti.
- i) Protection of village, Laokriguri, Nakidhora and its adjoining areas from the erosion of river Bhur Nizla.

- j) Protection of Tirimari village and its adjoining areas from the erosion of river Champamati on its Lower Bank (L/B).
- k) Protection of Deolguri village from the erosion of river Champamati on its L/B.

3. Schemes executed under Gossaigaon West Range (W.R.) Sub-Division for 2005-06 are:

- a) Protection of Naigaon village (Batabari) from the erosion of river Saralbhangha.
- b) Protection of Ballamjhora village from the erosion of river Pagla.
- c) Protection of Nasraibil village from the erosion of river Janali.
- d) Protection of village Janaligaon from the erosion of river Janali.
- e) Construction of Boulder across erosion channel on Lower Bank (L/B) of river Pekua at 7/8 ride.
- f) Protection of Gossaigaon Brahma Seva Ashram from the erosion of river Modati: After the completion of the scheme, the Brahma Seva Ashram, Agriculture office, PWD Road of the town and thickly populated homestead, etc. from the erosion of the river.
- g) Protection of Hatigarh village from the erosion of river Guruphella.
- h) Protection of Surendrapur village from the erosion of river Sankosh.
- i) Protection of Nawarbhita village from the erosion of river Longa.

4. Schemes executed under Udalguri West Range (WR) Sub-Division for 2005-06 are:

- a) Protection of Kalikola village from the erosion of river Champamati.
- b) Closing Spill channel of Kulshik River at Khatowalpara village.
- c) Clearing of dead channel of Rowta River at Lamabari area.

5. Schemes executed under Tamulpur West Range (WR) Sub-Division for 2005-06 are:

- a) Channelisation to divert the river Kalanadi to its original course: After completion of the scheme, the villages Anrakata, Palashbari, Belkuti, etc. were benefited and saved from the erosion of river Kalanadi.
- b) Temporary restoration of Puthimari River Bank (R/B) at Khatpara: After completion of the scheme, Khatpara village and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Puthimari.
- c) Construction of Bamboo Muharrior and Ring Bund at Kabibari 6.5 kilometre on Puthimari R/B embankment including temporary measures: After the completion of the scheme, Habibari village and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the bank erosion of river Puthimari.
- d) Temporary restoration of Puthimari R/B embankment at Kelengchok: After completion of the scheme, the village namely Kelengchok and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the river bank erosion.

- e) Training of river Solmari to protect the village Bhangbari and its adjoining areas under Kumarikata against the bank erosion: After completion of the scheme, the areas of Bhangbari, Kumarikata Road and adjoining areas under Tamulpur Circle of Baksa district were benefitted and saved from the over topping of the flood water.
- f) Training of river Pagladia on R/B of RCC Bridge near village Hakta and Balabari: After completion of the scheme, the villages, namely Hakata, Balabari and adjoining areas are benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Pagladia.
- g) Mora Pagladia from N.H. Way-31 to Tihu Akhara PWD Road (Temporary closure of breach at Juluki): After completion of the scheme its adjacent areas are benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Mora Pagladia.
- h) Closing of avulsion of river Motanga (Kalanadi) at the down soil of RCC Bridge over Tamulpur-Daranga Road to protect villages under Kumarikata including Menoka Tea Estate: After completion of the scheme, the vast area of villages Angarkhata, Palashbari, Belghuti and Menoka Tea Estate under Kumarikata were benefitted and saved.
- i) Temporary restoration of Puthimari River Bank (R/B) at Habibari: After completion of the said scheme, the Habibari village and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Puthimari.

- j) Temporary restoration of Puthimari R/B embankment at Kawaimari:
The scheme is completed and the Kawaimari village and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Puthimari.
- k) Temporary restoration of Puthimari River Bank Embankment at Dhulabari: After completion of the said scheme, the Puthimari dyke at Salmara and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Puthimari.
- l) Temporary restoration of Puthimari R/B embankment at Dholkuch :
After the completion of the said scheme, the village namely Dholkuchi and its adjoining areas were benefitted and saved from the erosion of river Puthimari.
- m) Channel cutting of Sukla River at Niz-Kachula Hirachuba: After completion of the said scheme, the Goreswar-Tamulpur PWD Road, cultivation and the homestead land were protected from the change of course and erosion of the river Sukla.
- n) Channelisation of Sukla River through its original course at Nidhuwa:
After completion of the said scheme, the areas of Mukuldanga and Sukla Irrigation Project were saved from the diversion course of the river Sukla at Nidhywa.
- o) Morapagladia from Batachara to National Highway Road, Barama:
After completion of the scheme, the villages namely Batachara, Alajhar, Kalabari and its adjoining areas were protected from the erosion of river Morapagladia.

3.6 Soil Conservation Department:

The Soil Conservation Department deals with the conservation of soil and prevention from soil erosion caused by floods and other natural calamities. The BTC area has a problem of soil erosion. The main soil erosion problems are sheet, rill and gully erosion, stream/river bank erosion, carrying of silt, salt and other debris to the cultivable land, river beds, ponds, reservoirs, canals, etc. Due to deposition of this debris in river-beds, water carrying capacity of the rivers and canals is decreased and during rainy season floods occur. Due to destruction of vegetative cover, the soil is exposed to various forms of erosion and water percolation does not take place; and water runs off during rainy season and this causes draught in summer.

To tackle the soil erosion problems, a budgetary allocation of Rs. 132.00 lakhs was received for the financial year 2005-06 for implementation of the following schemes and shown in Table 3.3:

Table: 3.3 Details of Programmes/Projects under Soil Conservation Department

SL. No	Programmes/Projects	Numbers
1	Direction and Administration.	3
2	Gully Control Project.	14
3	Land Development Project.	1
4	Protection of Riverine Project and Stream Bank Erosion	15
5	Water Distribution Project.	1

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

Besides this, again an additional amount of Rs. 131.235 lakhs was approved for implementation of the above mentioned schemes during 2005-06. The above projects/schemes shown in Table 3.3 have been completed. Thus, to improve the soil conservation system in the BTC area, an improved facilities and techniques were implemented by the various projects and schemes.

3.7 Health and Family Welfare Department

In this period of advancement in Science and Technology, development of basic infrastructure is much needed for the well-being of common people. Health is the most important asset that a man possesses without which he/she is unable to exploit the opportunities that come their way. Therefore, to facilitate the basic health infrastructure in the BTC area, the Health and Family Department has undertaken various developmental works/schemes. The major and minor schemes undertaken by the Annual Operation Plan for the year 2004-05 for development and providing health care facilities are:

- a) Construction of 30 Bedded Rural Hospital with Staff Quarters at Basugaon.
- b) Construction of 30 Bedded Rural Hospital with Staff Quarters at Runikhata.
- c) Construction of 30 Bedded Rural Hospital with Staff Quarters at Suklai.
- d) Construction of Public Health Centre (PHC) with Staff Quarters at Owabari.
- e) Construction of Public Health Centre with Staff Quarters at Bangaldoba.
- f) Re-Construction of PHC with Staff Quarters at Amteka.
- g) Sub-divisional Magistrate (SDM) and Head-Quarter (HQ) Office at Gossaigaon.
- h) Extension of State Dispensary (SD) at Bijni.
- i) Marble flooring & Tile skirting at Rup Nath Brahma (RNB) Civil Hospital at Kokrajhar.

- j) Renovation of Electrical works at RNB Civil Hospital of Kokrajhar.
- k) Repairing/Renovation of 30 Bedded Rural Hospital at Bengtol.

Besides these, during the year 2005-06 Schemes/Projects undertaken are:

- 1) Extension of State Dispensary at Birhangaon.
- 2) Repairing/Renovation of main building with Staff Quarters at Rupsi.
- 3) Re-construction of Staff Quarter with brick boundary wall at Bijni State Dispensary.
- 4) Construction of Public Health Centre (PHC) and Staff Quarters at Bamungaon.
- 5) Construction of District Warehouse for Chirang at Kajalgaon.
- 6) Repairing/Renovation of 30 Bedded Rural Hospital at Bengtol.
- 7) Construction of new Public Health Centre at Mongolian Bazar.
- 8) Repairing/Renovation of Main Building with Staff Quarters and Brick Boundary Wall at Jalagaon Public Health Centre.
- 9) Purchase of 4 numbers of Ambulance (Marshal) and
- 10) Distribution of 15000 numbers of Mosquito Nets.

Again, in the year 2007-2008, the BTC has allocated Rs.529.50 lakhs, out of which Rs. 455. 82 lakhs²³ has been spent as shown below in Table 3.4:

²³ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

Table: 3.4 Details of Programmes/Projects under Health and Family Welfare Department during 2006-07.

Sl. No.	Schemes	Amount outlay	Expenditure
1	Direction and Administration	60	46.21
2	Procurement of Medicine	60	45.37
3	Procurement of Machines and Equipments	35	37.11
4	Procurement of Vehicles	35	26.18
5	Malaria Eradication Programme	15	18.49
6	Health Mela	15	Nil

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2006-07.

Besides this, during the year 2007-08, 2000 blankets were purchased and distributed to the poor people of the four districts of BTC. The 482 numbers of aluminium oxygen cylinders were purchased for distributing to all districts of the BTC for treatment of poor ailing patients. In addition to the above mentioned Plan Fund, the BTC has undertaken some works under Special Central Package, like under the 12th Finance Commission, health institutions are repaired and constructed. Construction of Rural Health Blocks is done under the National Rural Health Mission, which again falls under that same package, at:

- (i) Kachugaon Community Health Centre (CHC) for Rs. 80.84 lakhs.
- (ii) Gossaigoan Community Health Centre for Rs. 98.10 lakhs.
- (iii) Bhetagoan Community Health Centre for Rs. 70.42 lakhs.
- (iv) Up-gradation of CHC to Integrated Primary Health Society at Bengtol, Dotma, and Kachugaon for Rs. 37.20 lakhs each.
- (v) Construction of 100 Bedded Super Speciality Hospitals at Kajalgoan, Chirang.
- (vi) Up-gradation of RNB Civil Hospital, Kokrajhar.

Thus, the Health and Family Welfare Department of the BTC has undertaken various developmental activities for the betterment of health care facilities within the BTC area. This step is expected to provide basic and modern health care facilities both in rural and urban areas of the BTC. Moreover, for better administration and development of Health and Family Welfare, as per vide letter No. HLA. 1166/2007/12, Dispur, dated 7th September, 2007, Government of Assam, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has been transferred to the BTC. Accordingly, the Governing Body of District Health Society for all four districts of the BTC has been constituted with Principal Secretary, BTC as Chairman. The activities under NRHM are monitored and supervised by the BTC administration.²⁴

3.8 Public Health Engineering Department

The Public Health Engineering Department is one of the important sectors among the entrusted subjects to the BTC and it has a role to play in relation to the welfare of the society. The department is headed by the Director, the Council Head of Department (CHD), and by the Division and Sub-division officers. The Public Health Engineering Department plays a very important role in implementing the public health schemes both in rural and urban areas. The Public Health Department has implemented various schemes under the guidance of the BTC. The PHE Department mainly deals with the coverage of rural habitations in two categories namely not covered (NC) and partially covered (PC) habitations. The PHE department has different activities that are carried out both in rural and urban areas in the BTC area. Its various activities and achievements are:

²⁴ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

a) Sector A: Rural Water Supply

The Public Health Engineering Department has played an important role in providing safe drinking water in not covered and partially covered villages by installing Hand Pumps (M-I, M-II, Hand Tube Wells, Tara Hand Pump, Singur Hand Pump) and Ring Wells. In the northern part of the BTC (Bhutan foot-hills), known as boulder zone, where normal boring is not possible, the BTC authority has initiated rig boring project. The BTC has taken steps to provide safe drinking water through rig boring in the area where PHE Department has installed many M-III by rig boring.

The Department is also supplying safe drinking water from the pipe water supply scheme to the community. The department has renovated many ill-fated schemes in the last few years. The PHE Department has made available facility to provide pure and safe drinking water during floods. The water sources in the relief camps used to be disinfected with bleaching powder, etc., to stop breakout of cholera, diarrhoea and dysentery in the villages. The PHE Department has a wing for providing potable drinking water through water tankers in workshops, seminars, meetings and exhibitions, etc., as and when called for urgent requirement of drinking water.

In addition, the concerned in-charge of the department has personally taken a keen interest in successful implementation of spot source and piped water supply schemes and has been monitoring this at regular intervals.

b) Sector B: Urban Water Supply

In Assam, the PHE department is working to supply safe drinking water to the rural communities and fulfil the demand. There is also an Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board to look after the urban water supply. Since the inception of the BTC, the PHE Department has been working on 2 urban water supply schemes, the Kokrajhar Town Water Supply Scheme at Kokrajhar and Bijni Town Water Supply Scheme at Bijni. The schemes under the Sector B Urban Water Supply are:

1. **Kokrajhar Town Water Supply Scheme:** Kokrajhar water supply scheme was administratively approved during September, 2005 and foundation stone was laid on 20th December, 2005. The scheme was undertaken under the BTC special package for an amount of Rs. 2357.00 lakhs. The project will cover an area of approximately 7 square kilometre including 10 Municipal Wards of Kokrajhar and adjoining areas of Kokrajhar town. At present 60,000 population were covered but the project was expected to cover 1,20,000 population at the final stage.²⁵

Due to non-existence of Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board in Kokrajhar, the execution part of the project is entrusted to Rural PHE Department under the proper guidance of the BTC authority.

2. **Bijni Town Water Supply Scheme:** Bijni is a small commercial town of Chirang District of the BTC. The scheme was approved for an amount of Rs. 340.84 lakhs. The project will cover the entire area within the jurisdiction of Bijni Town Committee. At present, 13,000 population are covered but the

²⁵ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

scheme is expected to cover 20,000 population at the final stage. The up-to-date completion of the project is about 50 percent. Bijni Town Water Supply Scheme is expected to provide the people of Bijni Town with safe drinking water supply.

c) Sector C: Implementation and Execution of Swajaldhara Water Supply Scheme

The Swajaldhara Water Supply Scheme was started with 90 percent Central Government share and 10 percent beneficiary contribution. The strategies of rural water supply programme hitherto adopted revolve around the basic premise that provision of safe drinking water is the responsibility of the government. Increase outlay by the government, particularly in the last decade and a change in technology focus to hand-pumps fitted on tube wells and bore wells, had resulted in an impressive increase in the total rural water supply coverage. However, the availability of potable drinking water in rural areas, especially during summer months is still not satisfactory. Water is today perceived by the rural public as a social right to be provided free by the Government rather than as a scarce resource which must be managed locally as a socio-economic good in order to ensure its effective use. This perception has grown out of the fact that the present rural water supply systems are designed and executed by the department.

Demand preferences of the people are not taken into account while executing the schemes. In other words, rural water supply programme till now has been adopting a supply driven approach. Experience has shown that the present approach

has led to the failure of a large number of water supply schemes due to poor operation and maintenance. Now that substantial investment has been made and huge infrastructure and systems built up, it is paramount that they are made functional to a large extent to achieve sustainability. There is a general recognition that instead of a transformation from a target based supply driven approach which pays little attention to the actual practices and preferences of the end users, to a demand based approach where users get the service they want and are willing to pay for is urgently required. Implementation of a participatory demand driven approach will ensure that the public obtain the level of service they desire and can afford to pay. Further cost recovery of operations and maintenance and replacement cost will ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the schemes.

It is possible to institutionalize community based rural drinking water supply programme if the local communities are empowered to generate resources and are trained and equipped to plan, implement, use, maintain and replace water supply schemes themselves in co-ordination with the government agencies. Development of villages is not the responsibility of the government only. It is also not possible for the government alone to accomplish it. The entire society has to come forward to help itself in the development process and the community must become the principal stakeholder. Swajaldhara was launched in the year 2002, and is meant for taking up only simple and basically community oriented schemes.

d) Sector D: Total Sanitation Campaign

Individual health and hygiene is largely dependent on adequate availability of drinking water and proper sanitation. The concept of sanitation comprises personal hygiene, home sanitation, safe water, garbage, disposal, excreta disposal and waste water disposal. Sanitation is one of the basic determiners of quality of life and a human development index. Good sanitary practices prevent contamination of water and soil and thereby prevent diseases. 80 percent of the diseases that are prevalent today in developing countries including India are a result of inadequate water and sanitary facilities. They are therefore preventable. Children from the socio-economically weaker section are severely affected and many fall prey to diseases caused by contaminated drinking water and unsanitary conditions. The PHE Department has a project called the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) under Kokrajhar District. The aim of the project is to provide sanitation facilities in BTC areas with 100 percent coverage. The TSC project for other three districts under the BTC is in progress. Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is the vehicle of reform in the rural sanitation sector. TSC was launched in 1999 by restructuring the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP). There are various kinds of objectives which are:

- a. To bring about an improvement in the general quality of life in the rural areas.
- b. To accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas.
- c. To generate field demand for sanitation facilities through awareness creation and health education.

- d. To cover Schools/Anganwadis in rural areas with sanitation facilities and promote hygiene education and sanitary habits among students.
- e. To encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies in sanitation.
- f. To eliminate open defecation to minimize risk of contamination of drinking water sources and food.
- g. To convert dry latrines to pour flush latrines and eliminate manual scavenging practice, wherever in existence in rural areas.

This programme is being implemented in a demand responsive manner where community is the forefront of implementation. The programme gives emphasis on creating awareness through intensive Information Education and Communication (IEC) to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes for relevant hygiene practices. It is no longer merely a hardware programme for providing assistance for construction of toilets in the BPL households but a facilitating process for a community led campaign for demand generation of sanitation facilities and meeting the demand so generated through a wide range of technology choices suited to varying requirement of households in different income categories and hydrological conditions.

Out of 4 (four) districts, Kokrajhar district first conducted the Base line Survey for preparation of project implementation plan and as per sanctioned of project and the programme was started from the year 2005. In Chirang, Baksa and Odalguri, the programme is under process. As per the Base Line Survey it is revealed that only 6.47 percent of rural households have toilet facilities in old Kokrajhar district. The main aim of this programme in BTC is to provide toilets to every household in rural

areas, construction of school sanitary Block in every provincialised schools and construction of Anganwadi toilets in every government Anganwadi Centres. Information Education and Communication (IEC) are important components of the programmes. These intend to create demand for sanitary facilities in the rural areas for households, schools, Anganwadis.

Thus, the Public Health Engineering Department is playing an important role in providing clean drinking water supply in both the rural and urban areas within the BTC areas. Besides, various schemes and programmes have been implemented to bring better health and sanitation facilities for the people of BTC.

3.9 Education Department

Education enhances the development of human resources. For building a knowledge society, a country must possess a fairly good higher education system. Enrolment in higher education to access knowledge determines the future progress of a nation. To catalyse development, such a process is the order of the day. It is interesting to note that the educational renaissance (1919) came before the political renaissance in the path of the Bodo society. Later, the demand of educational related facilities was given an important place along with the Bodoland Movement. Thus, the BTC took up various schemes to uplift the educational sector of the region, which is one of the most significant entrusted sectors to the BTC. Education is another important area for infrastructure. The Education sector helps develop human resource and for this good and effective infrastructures are needed for the growth and development of the society. In the BTC, there are basically 4 numbers of sub-sectors in the education department, (1) Elementary Education (2) Secondary Education, (3)

Higher Education (college) and (4) Training Institute. Elementary education is meant for Lower Primary and Upper Primary Schools. Secondary Education is meant for High and Higher Secondary Schools. Higher Education is meant for College and University and the Training Institutes is meant for Basic Training Centre, DIET and B.Ed. College. The Director of Education of the BTC is the overall controlling authority under BTC area in Education Department.

The literacy percentage of the Bodoland Territorial Council is much lower than that of rest of the State of Assam and North East Region. Thus, after the formation of the BTC, the council has undertaken many developmental projects and policies for uplifting the education sector in the area and to accelerate the rate of literacy in this area. Programmes like Adult Education, Total Literacy Programme and Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission have been launched. Yet the Council areas have educationally remained backward. Now it is the responsibility of the Council to enhance the rate of literacy to the level of the rest of the country. Hence, the Council has made endeavour in this direction by placing handsome amounts under the Annual Plan Fund for 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, Rs. 795.00, 740.00 and 693.75 lakhs²⁶ respectively for improvement of teaching and learning condition in schools/colleges, furniture, laboratory equipments, school infrastructures like constructions of school/college buildings, extension of class rooms, boundary walls and girls' common room, etc., in the BTC area. The detailed progress report as regards to the sector-wise achievement on different projects/schemes undertaken under the Education Department out of the Budgeted Annual Plan Fund during the year, 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 are as follows and shown below in Table 3.5:

²⁶ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

Table: 3.5 Yearwise numbers of Units covered in the Education Department during the year 2005-06,2006-07 and 2007-08

Sl No	Schemes	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1	Construction/Extension of Schools, Colleges, Boundary Walls, etc	160 units	165 units	170 units
2	Providing of Furnitures, etc	500 units	550 units	565 units
3	Financial Assistance to Educational Institutes	37 units	42 units	40 units
4	Supply of Computer Sets	99 nos	25 nos	15 nos
5	Coaching Class to High School/ Higher Secondary Schools	50 units	75 units	100 units

Source An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2007-08

Under the above mentioned scheme, the infrastructure developmental works are fully executed by the department in charge. These works include, improving teaching conditions, increasing number of class rooms, providing facilities to the students for improvement in learning, providing laboratory equipments, school furniture, improvement of girls' hostels, etc., within BTC area. Moreover, the BTC provided teaching and learning materials to the 374 numbers of Primary Schools in the BTC areas under the Prime Minister Grameen Yojana Scheme.²⁷

Apart from this, according to the Memorandum of Settlement, an agreement was made for Technical Education in the BTC areas. In order to provide more qualitative and Technical Education to the students of the area, a Central Institute of Technology (CIT) was set up at Kokrajhar. The CIT has started functioning from December 2006 with two disciplines, namely the Electronic and Communication Engineering and Computer Engineering. Later the CIT has added two more disciplines which are the Instrumentation and Control, and the Food Processing

²⁷ An Achievement Report of BTC, 2005-06, *op cit*.

Technology, from 1st August, 2008. The construction works of CIT building is under progress. Moreover, a campus of Guwahati University had been set up at Kokrajhar. Funds had been provided for construction of buildings which are under the process. Further it was also decided that the University would be requested by the State Government for setting up of a Centre for Development and Research of Bodo Language.

Thus, the basic infrastructures in the education sector is developing within the BTC areas by setting up many primary, secondary, higher education facilities and technical institutes. For providing higher and technical education to the local inhabitants of the BTC area many educational institutes like ITI, training centres, schools, and colleges were set up. In the Kokrajhar district of the BTC a campus of the Guwahati University was set up. Another major achievement was the setting up of a centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) to impart technical education in various technological/vocational disciplines such as Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food-Processing, Rural Industries, and Business Management, etc. The CIT is expected to be subsequently upgraded to a centrally funded State University with technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC. Besides this, laying foundation of the 'Knowledge City' named project at Rowmari in Chirang district marks a significant step forward in the State's higher education sector.²⁸ In the first phase, the 'Knowledge City' is to have an engineering college with eight streams, a school of management offering MBA and BBA courses, a law college and a biotechnology college. The said project has started functioning according to the BTC report. The four districts of the BTC have very few institutes for higher learning, and

²⁸ Ceremonial Foundation Stone Laying, Assam Tribune, dated 7th February, 2009.

the initiative is definitely going to fulfil a long-standing need of a large area. Apart from catering to a vast number of students, the 'Knowledge City' would serve the purpose of enriching the overall educational environment of the area.

Higher education in the State continues to be an area of concern, beset as it is with a number of problems. Infrastructural constraints apart, lack of professionalism and administrative discipline in our institutions of higher education has been a bane in the qualitative growth of this vital sector. Education is passing through a period of transition, and demands greater level of dynamism, professionalism and discipline on the part of those imparting and managing education. While there is an urgent need of new subjects and syllabi to strive in the age of globalization, a similar zeal and professionalism ought to be displayed by the teachers. The State Government, too, has done little for expansion and consolidation of higher education over the decades. The absence of a sound, pragmatic policy has been having a debilitating impact on the development of our education. It is a fact that no Government can provide enough educational institutions to meet the needs of the students, and therefore, the role of private educational institutions will be more crucial in the days to come. An increase in the number of educational institutions will also lead to greater competition resulting in a corresponding increase in quality. The Government, as in many other spheres, can play the role of a facilitator to bring in the desired changes.

Educational and job opportunities remain the biggest problem for Bodos. Educationally the Bodos remain far behind others, because education came very late to Bodos. It is seedtime for the new and conscious generation and there is a need to remedy the degenerated social condition. It is also true that unless education goes to

the grass-root level of the society one could not expect change in the society. Thus, education is a very important sector for every developing society. It is only through effective human resource development that a society can march forward in the path of development.

3.10 Land and Revenue Department

Land and Revenue Department is one of the important sectors entrusted to the BTC, as land problem was the crucial problem of the tribals of then composite Assam. The tribals are very intact with the plot of land they held. It was proclaimed that protective measures through Tribal Belts and Blocks provided in the chapter X of Assam Land Revenue Regulation Act, 1886 have not been properly enacted by the Government of Assam and also has been accused by the then tribal leaders that many tribal villages and areas have not been covered by tribal Belts and Blocks.²⁹ As it has been a long standing problem of the Bodo people too. In fact, among the various reasons, the land problem was also one of the major issues for arousing the Bodoland movement. After the creation of the BTC, the Land and Revenue Department has been entrusted as one of the subjects to the BTC.

By the creation of the BTC, many areas were reorganised for demarcation of the BTC area which has bifurcated many Revenue Circles and Mouzas. The Land & Land Revenue Department is the department which ventured in collecting land revenue from the landholders of the BTC area. In order to provide smooth administration of the department, the BTC has been undertaken many infrastructural

²⁹ Why Separate State, (Published by ABSU, 1986), p. 55.

projects of the Revenue Circle Offices and Tahsils. The Annual Plan Fund of Land and Revenue Department was Rs. 159.00 lakhs for the year 2005-06. The department has earmarked fund for repairing and renovation of infrastructure that is Circle Office building of Udalguri, Kokrajhar, Goreswar, Sidli, Gossaigaon-Bhaoraguri, Dotma for Rs. 1,32,61,560.00. The department has also constructed a building for Directorate of Land Records of BTC at the cost of Rs. 1,05, 59,000 at Kokrajhar in the heartland of BTC, under the annual plan fund of 2005-06.³⁰

Moreover, the new Revenue Circle office and quarters at Mazbat and Revenue Circle office at Gossaigaon have been constructed. Further, the Land and Revenue Department is planning to computerise all the Land Records of the BTC area. This is hoped to help in maintaining and retrieving files easily and efficiently. Thus, many repairing and renovative works at the infrastructure side in this department have taken place in the four districts of the BTC.

It has been seen in the above discussion that there are many developmental activities taken up by the BTC for infrastructural development in various sectors. The newly created Bodoland Territorial Council, with financial assistance of both the State and Central governments, has sought to bring about all round development by a process of up-gradation of the existing infrastructure and incorporating new and modern facilities when and where the need arises. The problem of accessibility has always been a major setback to the development of the region. As such, it is seen that through the Transport Department, priority has been laid on the improvement and construction of roads and bridges. The improvement of connectivity will open up new

³⁰ An Achievement Report of BTC, 2005-06.

avenues to this hitherto isolated part of Assam which has great potential by way of resources such as oil, forest, agricultural products, gas, coal, limestone, etc. These resources which were previously limited to the region may, with improvement of the road and communication network, find new markets outside the region. Through the Infrastructure Department, the region has also seen a spurt in the construction of administrative buildings which are the houses of various departments of the Bodoland Territorial Council. Added to this, the huge strides forward taken by the other departments such as the Public Health Department, the Irrigation Department, and the Public Work Department, etc., which have greatly contributed to the rapid rate of infrastructural development, can be looked upon as the developing District Council. Since its creation the Council has made significant progress to integrate the region into one unit and thereby giving the pride and hope to the people of the region. The various accomplishments and ongoing projects of the different departments of the BTC are undoubtedly numerous and cover a wide field.

It is interesting to note therefore that the Bodoland Territorial Council with its headquarters at Kokrajhar started with the objective of all round development. The Office Secretariat cum Legislative Assembly Hall was constructed. The Official Bungalows for the executive members and the Officers were also constructed. Besides, concrete buildings, market-stalls and sheds at different localities at BTC area and in the rural market areas were also constructed by the Public Works Department. The rural development branch undertook the works in construction of roads, culverts, Ring-Well, etc. The Transport Department was started in a big way by running buses on important routes of the districts. The Department was looked after by the transport

Superintendent with a central workshop run by the Technical Staffs. The buses also carried mails of the postal Department to and from the District.

The developmental activities taken up by the BTC in infrastructural sectors are materialising. In accordance with the Provision of the Sixth Schedule, all the Lower Primary Schools, Higher Schools and Colleges have been transferred to the Council. For providing higher and technical education to the area many educational institutes like ITI, training centre, schools, and colleges were set up by the Education Department. The establishment of the campus of the Gauhati University at Kokrajhar District of the BTC is one of the major achievements and the setting up of a centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) to impart technical education in various technological and vocational disciplines such as Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food-Processing, Rural Industries and Business Management, etc., is another notable achievement. The CIT is subsequently upgraded to a centrally funded State University having technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC. These developments which are taking place in the area will be an open-gate to knowledge, higher education and career for the entire people of the BTC areas.³¹ In the following chapter, working of the BTC, through various departments or sectors, for the Socio-Economic Development has been discussed.

³¹ Moreover, proposal has been made by the Speaker of the Assam State Assembly, in his Assam Budget speech for the year 2008-09, to increase the plan allocation for the BTC. This will be further augmented by the flow of funds from the State Government against specific developmental schemes and projects to be implemented in the BTC area. In addition, he also declared to set up an Engineering College in the BTC area and to upgrade the present Kokrajhar Campus of the Guwahati University into a full-fledged separate University, and to set up a Planetarium at Kokrajhar (Budget Speech by the Speaker of Assam State Assembly, 2008-2009.)

Chapter – IV

BTC and Socio-Economic Development

The term socio-economic development may be interpreted in different ways. In general, this term refers to the process whereby people of a country or region come to utilise resources and facilities available to bring about a sustained and overall development of the society. Throughout the world there is a growing conviction that economic development holds the key to the realization of a variety of hopes and aspirations of the people. In the modern context, economic development is to be distinguished from the slow changes in the conditions of people and to accretion of knowledge that even the most nearly static society experiences. It means a rate of expansion that can move an underdeveloped country or region from a near subsistence mode of living to a substantially higher level in a comparatively short period of time. Generally economic development for a reason is described as industrialization. It is true that rapid economic growth has most commonly been associated with industrial expansion. Thus, a country or region, whose principal economic activity is based on a near subsistence agriculture, could without being industrialised experience a marked economic development.

Throughout the centuries, after their settlement in Assam, the Bodo economy continued to be based on agriculture. More than 90 percent of the Bodo population live in countryside villages and therefore agriculture is the mainstay of their economy.¹ The area of land they hold is indispensable to them for their livelihood. Though capitalism has been flourishing in India since the time of the British rule, the Bodo people have not been

¹ Janak Lal Basumatary, "Sustainable Economy in BTC area", in *The Bodo*, (the Mouthpiece of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 33rd Issue, 2008)

able to detach themselves from the Asiatic mode of production, nor have they been able to adapt themselves to the new system of economy. As a result, this economic condition of the people has continued till today with only minor deviations in recent times. The Bodo populated area covers almost all the districts of the Himalayan foothills of West Bengal and Assam and is immensely endowed with natural resources. It has vast forest area and water resources that can be tapped for electricity, irrigation, fishing and other possibilities. Majority of the tea estates are located in the Bodo area. Their number is growing fast and in recent years many new plantations have taken place. Besides, the land in the Himalayan foothills is suited for rubber plantation. Experimental rubber plantations have shown good progress though large-scale plantation; and government initiative is yet to be seen. The landmass inhabited by the Bodo people is fertile and capable of producing all kinds of crops. The productivity can be increased manifold with application of scientific methodology.

The agriculture expertise of the Bodos had been profusely praised by British officials. An American Missionary, who worked among them during the early nineteenth century, Captain Butler, in his 'Sketch of Assam', describes them as "the best cultivators. They irrigated their lands to a great extent, from hill streams".² In fact, the Bodo cultivators along the foot-hills of Darrang and Kamrup districts still do so in the present day and they even pay some sort of water tax to the Bhutan officials in kind or cash for drawing irrigating water from the hill streams flowing down from the Bhutan hills. Bodos not only cultivate rice of different varieties but also cash crops like mustard seed, cotton,

² Ajoy Roy, *The Boro Imbroglia*, (Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1995), p. 20.

sugarcane, vegetables and seasonal fruits like orange, banana, etc. But they were always obsessed with the idea of mono-cropping. They had a firm belief that multi-cropping robbed the land of its fertility and they were averse to using any other manure except burnt weeds and cow-dung. So, as their numbers increased, the pressure on land also increased and they have failed to increase their agricultural productivity proportionately by adopting better and innovative methods. As they were slow in taking to other avenues of employment opened up by the modern age, they were stuck to the only known economic activity that is agriculture. Their ever-increasing population put them to economic hardship.

Besides agricultural operation, another related economic activity in which the Bodos had a natural propensity was animal husbandry, particularly rearing of pigs and fowl. But seldom did they take to it for commercial purpose that is selling in the market on any large scale. Another economic activity in which the Bodos, mainly their womenfolk, work is the rearing of a kind of silk-worm on castor-seed plant leaves and drawing silk threads from their cocoons. This silk thread known in their hand-loom to produce warm wrappers have always a very good market not only in Assam but also in outside. Besides, this *Endi* (in local language) products, the Bodo women also weave various types of cotton cloths on their hand-loom both for their own use as well as for the market. It is however only recently that these hand-loom products of the Bodo women have caught the attention of outside markets and hence a new avenue of employment has opened up for them.

As stated in the earlier chapters, the Bodo society had to pass through different kinds of socio-political problems like; land alienation, poverty, unemployment, and related problems to the agricultural sector, which had affected the socio-economic status of the Bodo society. But after the attainment of the BTC, there is a hope hovering in the socio-economic life of Bodo society. The present chapter deals with the growth and development that are taking place in socio-economic sectors. Hence, it is pertinent to examine the socio-economic status of the Bodo society.

Accordingly, the present chapter is organized in the following ways: Section 4.1 studies the Agriculture Department, which can be considered as one of the most important sectors for economic growth. The Fisheries Department is discussed in Section 4.2, likewise the Handloom and Textile Department is discussed in Section 4.3. The Sericulture Department is analysed in section 4.4. Section 4.5 deals with the developmental activities taking place in the Tourism Department. The Small, Cottage and Rural Industry are also covered as one of the important sectors in section 4.6. The Panchayat and Rural Development Department is discussed in Section 3.7. Social Welfare Department is studied in section 4.8. Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department is seen in section 4.9. The Market and Fair Department is examined in section 4.10. Section 4.11 discusses the Welfare Department on Plain Tribes and Backward Class. And Section 4.12 deals with the Cultural Affairs Department.

4.1. Agriculture Department

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors among the entrusted subjects to the BTC. As mentioned above, the Bodo society is based on agriculture. Like in the rest of India, the BTC area is also primarily an agricultural economy where a major portion of the population is engaged in agriculture. For this, the Agriculture Department of the BTC has undertaken various schemes to execute for development and growth of the economy at the grassroots level. With a view for the enhancement of economic status of the farming community of the BTC, different strategies have been undertaken by the Agricultural Department for increasing agricultural production and productivity. Some of the specific achievements are summarized below:

1. Awareness Programmes:

- a) **Steps for re-orientation and awareness among officers and farmers:** A two days' Workshop Cum Seminar on Extension Methodology and prospect of commercial Horticulture for sustainable agriculture in the BTC was organized by the Department at "Amla Bhawan", Kokrajhar on 9th and 10th January, 2006. This workshop was organised to enlighten the modern concept of different technologies particularly for horticultural crops and extension of various methodologies among field extension machineries, progressive farmers, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). In this workshop different resource

persons and scientists from different disciplines participated and put forward valuable suggestions and ideas.

- b) **Steps for self-employment and income generation:** To generate self employment and income among the educated unemployed farm women, an attempt has been made to establish small agro-based industries by utilizing locally available fruits and vegetables. About 500 farm women have been selected from different SHGs and NGOs for the short duration training course on small agro-based industry. During this training course a practical demonstration on fruits and vegetables preservation was organised through the Departmental Demonstration Officer in different locations of four District of the BTC.
- c) **Exposure visit:** In the light of recent applications of modern technologies, 10 officers from four Districts of the BTC had been sent to Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR), Bangalore in January 2006 for training on “Production Technology of Commercial Medicinal and Aromatic Crops”. Similarly, 18 selected farmers of the BTC along with two officers had been sent to Kerala under Exposure Visit Programme in the year 2005 to 2006, to expose them to modern technologies for different plantation crops adoptable to the BTC area.
- d) **Awareness training programme on Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** To motivate field extension machineries and farmers to go for pest

management by application of different steps on biological pest control, about 1400 farmers in 35 batches have been trained in all the Agricultural Sub-Divisions of the BTC.

2. **Area expansion under Commercial Horticulture:** To encourage the farmers towards commercial Horticulture in the BTC areas a programme has been undertaken to uplift the economy of the farming community by providing grants and assistance under Special Central Assistance (SCA) and State plan budget. For this, from 2004-05 and 2005-06 budget an amount of Rs. 248.835 lakhs³ was sanctioned to cover an area of 350.50 hectares under different horticultural crops. Under this programme 240 selected farmers of the BTC have been benefited.
3. **Steps to adopt Organic Farming and Self-Employment Generation:** To utilise organic manure for different crops for higher productivity and to reduce cost of cultivation, a medium-size Vermi Compost Unit have been established. About 25 farmers selected from different districts of the BTC were provided with Rs. 30,000.00⁴ financial assistance for each unit, by which they had benefited in terms of income generation and self-employment.
4. **Production of Quality Certified Seeds at Departmental Agricultural Farm, Kokilabari under Baksa District:** To increase the area under High Yielding Varieties (HYV), Seeds of paddy for higher production, the Department of Agriculture, has taken up a production plan for producing certified Sali paddy

³ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

seeds under the ‘Seed Certification Programme’ at Kokilabari Agricultural Farm under the Baksa District. Out of the certified seeds the production was 891.00 quintals during the year 2005-06 and which have been distributed as a mini-kit demonstration per 5 kilogram among 17820 selected small and marginal farmers under the “Rice Development Programme” (2006-07). The beneficiaries had generated revenue of Rs. 9, 35,550.00 from the seeds supplied to them. Furthermore, 850.00 quintals of certified paddy seeds of variety Ranjeet and Mashuri were sold to the Assam Seed Corporate (ASC) and these had generated a revenue of Rs. 8,66,250.00.⁵ Also, 266.90 quintals of certified paddy seeds were sold locally to needy paddy growers, and which had generated a revenue of Rs. 2,80, 245.00. As such, a grand total of Rs. 24, 19,352.00 is generated from Kokilabari Agricultural farm under the Sali paddy seeds production programme for the year 2005-06. Thus, a programme for production of certified Sali paddy seeds has been taken up by the Agriculture Department. Besides this, during 2005-06, an amount of Rs. 7, 32, 00.00⁶ was generated by auction selling of 305.00 quintals of black gram produced at Barapeta Agricultural Farm.

5. **Step for Expansion of Area under High Yielding Varieties (HYV) Crops:** The main paddies that are covered under the expansion of area of High Yielding Varieties crops are rice, pulses and oil seeds.

⁵ *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, 2005-06, *op.cit.*.

⁶ *Ibid.*



- a) **Rice:** The Department has given stress on expansion of area under rice through distribution of High Yielding Varieties (HYV) seeds. Accordingly, 799.20 quintals of HYV summer paddy seeds have been distributed among 7992 small and marginal farmers at 10 kilogram per farmer as Mini-kit covering an area of 2131 hectares in assured irrigated area at the 100 percentage subsidised rate.
- b) **Pulses and Oil Seeds:** With the view to increase the areas under Pulses and Oil Seeds cultivation, the HYV Pulse and Oil Seeds have been used to get higher production. The Department has already distributed 118.08 quintals of pea seeds among 2958 small and marginal farmers covering an area of 197 hectares and 59.16 quintals of mustard seeds among 2958 small and farmers covering an area of 603 hectares respectively.
6. **Establishment of Soil-Testing Laboratory:** To maintain soil condition for higher production, soil testing is an important factor. With a target to achieve this soil-testing facility, a laboratory with machineries and equipments was established at Kokrajhar. This has helped the farming community to analyse the soil samples at free of cost.
7. **Engineering Wing:** The Agriculture Department has taken a plan for mechanisation of agriculture in order to increase the agricultural production and productivity throughout the BTC area. Under such a plan, steps have been

initiated to provide tractors, power tillers and pump sets for irrigation, to encourage the farming community, through different schemes.

- a) **Flow Irrigation Projects:** The Projects are meant for the farmers for creating irrigation facilities, soil and water management in the agricultural land and for restoration of the lands from siltation, etc., by adopting various technical and scientific measures suitable for the areas. An area of 16,091 hectares of agricultural land has been retrieved under this measure through the implementation of 60 schemes in four districts of the BTC.
- b) **Manufacture of Improved Agricultural Implements:** The scheme is for production of improved agricultural implements at the departmental workshop, for the farmers. The manufactured implements are sold to the farmers at 50 percent subsidy. During the year 2005-06, Rs. 3, 37,699.00⁷ was released for the farmers.
- c) **Mechanised Cultivation:** The project under mechanised cultivation is for increasing production of agricultural outputs, through utilization of modern agricultural machineries and implements. The project basically aims at grouping the farmers in a contiguous area, through a committee by assisting the farmers with provision of required agricultural machineries and equipments. Many demonstration programmes were carried out for various agricultural activities for increasing production. During the year

⁷ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

2005-06 six numbers of tractors, 24 numbers of pump sets were distributed to the ex-Bodo Liberation Tigers (an extremist group) at free of cost. Moreover, during the year 2005-06, 20 numbers of tractors were distributed to the selected farmers of the BTC at 60 percent subsidy.

- d) **Purchase of Dozers:** The dozers are made available for the farmers at a nominal rate for hiring for agricultural purposes. Thus, four numbers of Dozers were purchased, one for each district.
- e) **Community Irrigation Project:** The project aims at practicing agriculture and irrigation by pump sets through the involvement of farming community in a compact and contiguous agricultural area. During the year 2005-06, 104 pump sets had been distributed to one group of farming community in the district of Kokrajhar and Udalguri under the BTC area.
- f) **Construction of Agricultural Guest House:** The Agriculture Guest House is constructed at Kokrajhar district to facilitate the visits of departmental officers and staffs and other dignitaries visiting the BTC.
- g) **Flow Irrigation Scheme:** Many small Flow Irrigation Schemes (FIS) were completed in the four districts of the BTC. These are FIS at Pubjhora Goybari in Chirang district, FIS at Jakati River in Nandipur, Saltenka and Jaraguri, FIS at Gossaigaon sub-division in the Kokrajhar district, Reinforcement Concrete Cement Weir at Silpota Division, and Diversion Weir at No. 1 Bholatol, under the Chirang district.

Besides the above mentioned construction works, there have been many achievements of the Council in the agriculture sector achieved by the Council. Moreover, to provide financial aid, an amount of Rs.52.85 lakhs under State Plan had been provided for the year 2007-08 as grant-in-aid to 268 selected beneficiaries from the financial year 2006-07.⁸ Thus, after the formation of the Council, there have been many new development projects taking place in Agriculture Departments. As the Bodo population depends mainly on the agriculture, the schemes for increasing production of agricultural output through utilization of high productivity of crops, modern agricultural machinery and equipments are some worth mentioning achievements made by the Council.

4.2 Fisheries Department

Notably, fish is found abundantly in most water bodies in the BTC area. However, due to an ever-increasing population growth demand for fish has also increased manifold. As such, fishery or pisciculture has become indispensable. In fact, the BTC area is blessed with vast and varied aquaculture resources having immense scope of development of fisheries. There are vast existing water areas available in the shape of ponds and tanks, beels, community tanks, water logged areas, low-lying areas, derelict water bodies, paddy fields, etc., which can be used for fish production by properly utilizing and exploiting water bodies.

As fishing is an age old tradition in the Bodo society, more developmental schemes and projects have been taken up in this area of work. Fishery and fishing will

⁸ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op.cit.*

prove an important source of self-employment. With an idea for production of fish, a good number of schemes had been proposed in the Annual Operation Plan (AOP) for the year 2005-06, and many of these scheme proposals had already been approved by the Council. The total allocation of fund during the year 2005-06 was Rs. 121.00 and which had already been approved and sanctioned.⁹

For further development in pisciculture sector the following schemes had been proposed in the BTC for production of fish:

- a) **Development of Farmers Pond:** For the developmental work of ponds and for purchase of other inputs for piscicultural practices a sum of Rs. 26.99 lakhs¹⁰ had been sanctioned.
- b) **Development of community tanks for Pisciculture use:** For the development of community tanks located in the BTC areas which were lying un-exploited a sum of Rs. 27.99 lakhs¹¹ had been approved in the Annual Operation Plan and which had been utilised for the said scheme.
- c) **Development of Derelict water bodies:** There is a huge water area lying in the shape of derelict water bodies or dead water logged areas where there is an immense scope for production of fish. For this a sum of Rs.

⁹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

21.99 lakhs¹² had been approved during the year 2005-06 and it had been utilised.

- d) **Pig cum Fish Culture:** The Bodo people are mostly fond of rearing pig. It was aimed that the pig cum fish culture as an integrated farming would be easily adopted by the people and that farmer would be benefited from this integrated farming by way of fish and meat production. During the year 2005-06, a sum of Rs. 3.99 lakhs had been approved in Annual Operation Plan and it had been implemented.¹³

Moreover, the quality fish seed is the main input in pisciculture practices to obtain good production of fish. Accordingly, 3 Eco-hatcheries have been established in the districts of Udalguri, Baksa, and Kokrajhar where the production of quality fish seeds has been started. Thus, for using new technologies in the fishery sector the main thrust has been given on technology; for farmers to take up scientific fish culture practice through seminars and short term training programmes. In this regard, priority has been given to the educated un-employed youths for their self-employment and economic generation. With this aim, developmental activities had been implemented under the guidance of technical personnel of Fishery Department.

¹² *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

4.3. Handloom and Textile

Weaving is an integral and age old culture of the Bodo society. Many families rear their own silkworms, the cocoons of which are then spun into silk. Bodo girls learn to weave from a young age, and no Bodo courtyard is complete without a loom. Most women weave their own *Dokhnas* (the traditional dress of the Bodo women) and shawls. The Bodo women are among the earliest traditional weavers, who have over the centuries woven magic in the clothes they wore. However, their skills need to be honed up and improved, in course of time, so that weaving would not only be enjoyable but that would develop into a serious culture.

The Handloom and Textile Department is an important sector of the economy. To develop this sector into a source of earning to the weavers, many aims and objectives have been undertaken by the department. The main objectives of the Handloom and Textiles Department are as follows:

- a) To achieve significant target by cloth production under organised and unorganised sectors.
- b) To make handloom weaving in Bodoland a major revenue earning sector in the rural economy.
- c) To increase socio-economic condition of the weaker section (especially women), many trainings, exhibitions, fairs and handloom *melas* had been proposed to be held, and which would focus on women empowerment. For this many trained women were proposed to be sent in batches to visit

important places in the country, where the handloom sector operated in a more organised manner; thereby to learn the latest designs and quality work, to bring about increased productivity.

- d) To train weavers with induction of modern techniques and how to use the latest handloom weaving machinery.
- e) To develop infrastructure by increasing better working conditions for the women weavers.

With a view to focus on the above mentioned objectives, the BTC had sanctioned Rs. 1.40 crores to the department during the year 2004-05.¹⁴ With this amount, various schemes had been undertaken, which included exhibition to motivate the people for marketing of handloom goods and also to provide a platform to show their skills, infrastructural development like repairing departmental offices, supply of looms and accessories to weavers and supply of yarn as grants-in-aid to the Below Poverty Line weavers. Furthermore, One-time-grant in cash was also released to weavers under “Health Package Scheme” for weavers and this included treatment for eye ailments, expenses on maternity grounds and treatment of some specific weaving related diseases that occur to weavers. The fund was also spent in purchasing of books on textiles, designs and other related topics, to be used in the handloom training institutes. Moreover, to develop and encourage handloom co-operative societies the department had released funds from the same year allotted amount.

¹⁴ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2004-05, op. cit.*

During the year 2005-06, the Handloom and Textile Department had sanctioned Rs. 1.54 crores for developmental works in this sector. With this amount, 5 Common Facilitation Centres for weavers was constructed and the Director of Handloom and Textiles Office was constructed at Kokrajhar.¹⁵ The Department also delivered grants-in-aid to handloom co-operative societies and Below Poverty Line weavers in cash and kinds with the same amount.

Furthermore, considering the potentialities of this sector, the department had taken up various schemes and programmes for the development of this sector during the financial year 2007-08.¹⁶ An achievement made by this sector has been highlighted below:

- 1) 180 numbers of weavers trained in 12 Handloom Training Centre for skill up-gradation.
- 2) 25 numbers of weavers obtained higher training for one year in Handloom Training Institute at Mushalpur with stipend of Rs. 250 per month.
- 3) 1860 numbers of weavers engaged for production of handloom fabrics under the 9 numbers of Weavers Extension Service Unit.
- 4) 583 numbers of weavers engaged for production of handloom fabrics under the 7 Handloom Production Centres.
- 5) Grants-in-aid in the form of looms and accessories with yarn distributed to 885 numbers of deserving weavers.

¹⁵ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

¹⁶ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

- 6) 10 numbers of Co-operative Societies assisted with financial help as working capital.
- 7) 40 numbers of looms, accessories with jacquard provided to Handloom Co-operative Societies for production of high value cloths.
- 8) 75 numbers of weavers trained for jacquard weaving (continuing).
- 9) 900 numbers of weavers cash grants awarded to flood victim weavers.
- 10) 37,600 numbers of Below Poverty Line (BPL) weavers received yarn (1 bundle) 4.5 kg under Bayan Jyoti Programme.
- 11) 34200 numbers of BPL weavers received blanket.
- 12) One Yarn Bank at Mushalpur established to ensure quality supply of yarn at Millgate Price Scheme taken by the Government of India, Ministry of Textile.
- 13) One Computer Aided Design Centre established at Kokrajhar for development of design.

Handloom is one of the popular sectors that has great potential to uplift the economy of the area. For this reason, the Handloom and Textiles Department had undertaken to make this sector organised by imparting modern techniques, introducing latest machinery and pump, by supplying sufficient funds to significantly increase productivity and earn precious revenue and to make weaving as a profession. Now in the entire BTC area this sector is advancing rapidly towards usage of weaving machines instead of the age old technique of weaving. The various improved designs by using the modern technology helped to compete in the modern market. By using these modern

equipments weavers can weave hundreds of cloths in a short span of time and very easily. This is making weaving an easy earning source to the weaker section and even to the uneducated Bodo women of the society, and this has been opening up a new avenue of market in this sector. So there are many small industries growing mainly in the mainland of Bodoland, which is in Kokrajhar and Udalguri, under the Handloom and Textile Department. Thus, like other sectors, this sector is also generating income source and heightening the economy of the region.

4.4 Sericulture Department

Closely related to the weaving tradition, Sericulture is also not a new tradition in the BTC area. The art of weaving cotton and silk has been closely associated with the culture and tradition of the Bodo community. The BTC area is endowed with climatic condition suitable for commercial production of Muga and Eri silks. Therefore, for better and faster development, the Sericulture Department of the BTC has implemented various schemes in pre-cocoon and post-cocoon sectors which are summarised and shown below in Table 4.1 as follows:

1. **Pre cocoon sector:** Under the pre-cocoon sector the most successful schemes were like Kesseru seedling Nursery for Eri sector and Som Seedling Nursery for Muga sector. In Eri sector 450 acres of land and in Muga sector 625 acres of land covered for Kesseru and Som plantation respectively by Individual, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Community sectors. To meet the demand of rearers 10 lakhs Kesseru Seedling and 15 lakhs Som Seedling nurseries had

been prepared in both government and private sectors. Out of which 80 percent had been government production and 20 percent had been private sector production. Besides this, for production of Eri cocoon and Eri yarn, Muga reeling cocoon, Muga raw silk with financial assistance had been provided to Individual Eri and Muga rearers. Under this programme 220 beneficiaries had been provided grants-in-aid during the year 2005-06.¹⁷

2. **Post cocoon sector:** In post-cocoon sectors for production of Eri yarn, a total of 550 motorised Eri spinning machines have been working in the field both in Individual and SHG. Presently 220.84 metric tonnes (MT) of Eri raw silk have been produced. In Muga sector, 120 number Motorised Muga Reeling machines have been working and have produced 12.80 metric tonnes Muga raw silk. Besides this, in the Muga sector, one Muga Reeling Unit had been established at Kokrajhar. The main objective of the Unit is to consume entire Muga reeling cocoon produced in the entire BTC area.

The product of Muga raw silk and Eri yarn are consumed by the weavers of the area and also consumed by some weaving units. To mention a few weaving units that consume Muga raw silk are like (i) Roje Eshanshali Co-operative Society, (ii) Bodoland Silk House, Kokrajhar, (iii) Siskin Silk Industry, Kokrajhar and (iv) Silk Route, Kokrajhar. They are producing various traditional dress materials of Muga and blended dress materials with Eri silk. There are other weaving units, namely, Indo-Luo Enterprise, Kokrajhar and Alongbar Development Society, Udalguri, which consume Eri yarn for

¹⁷ *An Annual Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

producing more Eri dress materials and they have now been able to compete with good National and International markets. The detail of achievement of different components for the year 2005-06 has been shown in table 4.1.

Besides this, a special project, '*Thaokri*', for development of Eri and Muga silk industry in the BTC has been introduced. To take up potential economic activities for overall development of the area, the present State Government has identified 'Vanya Silk Culture' as one of the key ventures to bring prosperity in the Council area. The Central Silk Board in coordination with the State Government, Sericulture Department, has implemented different schemes on Muga and Eri under Community Development Programme (CDP), Sampooma Grameen Sarojgar Yosjana (SGSY) and United National Development Programme (UNDP). This programme provided several opportunities for income generation through cocoon production to enhance product development and marketing among the people in the area. With a view to further consolidate the Muga and Eri Culture in the area, a Perspective Plan for a period of 10 years (2005-2006 to 2015-2016) had been drawn by a committee constituted by the Central Silk Board, with the following objectives to be implemented in the BTC area:

- (i) To formulate an integrated project by utilising the potential for development of Muga and Eri Silk industry as household activity in the BTC areas.
- (ii) To protect Environmental degradation through plantation programme and adopting sustainable eco-friendly income generating activities.

(iii) Improving production, productivity and quality in Muga and Eri silk through transfer of appropriate technologies, and

(iv) To introduce globally marketable designs and diversifications in silk products through strengthening of infrastructure, consultancy, networking and promotional campaign.

Accordingly, the project was approved by the Central Silk Board (CSB) under Ministry of Textile, Government of India. This, project was launched on 20th September, 2005.¹⁸ As a part of perspective plan the project proposed for three years had been approved and finalised with a plan to produce 8 metric tonnes of Muga yarn and 14 metric tonnes of Eri yarn. The project was implemented under the guidance of Central Silk Board with the sharing pattern of 50 percent to Central Silk Board, 10 percent of BTC and 40 percent for beneficiary share.¹⁹ Accordingly, for the year 2005-06, fund was released to be implemented under the mentioned programme and those schemes were implemented in the districts of the BTC. Some completed plans are highlighted as follows:

- a) The scheme for raising Eri food plants, training and supply of start-up tools (Kesseru Castor intercropping) has been completed and this has covered 600 beneficiaries and a plantation area of 300 acres.

¹⁸ An Annual Annual Achievement Report of BTC, 2005-06, *op cit*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

- b) Financial assistance had been provided for construction of 600 numbers of Eri rearing houses. Accordingly, the 1st batch of Eri rearing was harvested of 820 kg of Eri cocoon.
- c) In Muga sector, for rising of Muga food plants, 300 beneficiaries were benefited and plantation has been completed in an area of 300 acres.
- d) Assistance had been provided to 300 numbers of Muga seed rearers.
- e) Equipment support had been given to Muga seed rearers.

Besides, for up-gradation of Muga seed and Eri seed granaries, 1 (one) seed granary had been constructed for each. Again, an additional of 500 numbers of motorised Eri spinning machines and 100 numbers of Muga reeling machines had been supplied to the rearers and spinners covering all four districts of the BTC.

The Sericulture Department has provided the best ground for rural economy in sustaining a sizable rural production in the BTC areas. Though recently introduced in the Council areas, Muga production has shown an increasing trend over the years. However, adherence to age-old traditional practices and use of primitive spinning devices are still the limiting factors in most of the areas, and this requires to be addressed in order to enhance exploitation of the existing potential. Besides non-adoption of improved technologies, absence of market infrastructure and supporting linkages are also the major constraints for development of Muga and Eri silk industry in these districts or areas. Non-conversion of huge quantity of Eri cocoons into silk is depriving the people of the area from employment and sustenance of the industry. Thus, the department has implemented

various schemes and projects for exploiting the immense potential of the area in this sector to generate more employment opportunities and shown in Table 4.1:

Table: 4.1 Details of different Projects/Schemes of the Sericulture Department during the year 2005-06

Particulars of Schemes/Project	Item	Unit	Target of the Annual Plan 2005-06	Target achieved till Sept /05
1	2	3	4	5
Eri Scheme	A Grants-in-aid Incentive cum grants-in-aid for increasing their existing production, seed, seedling equipments and appliances			
	B Production of Dfls (Eri Seed)	Nos	100	100
	C Plantation Programme	Dfls	5000	5000
	D Raising of Kesseru Seedling Nursery	Acre	70	70
	E Training Programme	Nos	3000	3000
	F Study Tour	Nos	100	100
	1 Farmers	Nos	50	50
	2 Office & Staff	Nos	10	10
	3 Reshom Krishu Mela	Nos	10	10
	Muga Scheme	A Grants-in-aid Incentive cum grants-in-aid for increasing their existing production, seed, seedling equipments and appliances		
B Production of Seed Programme		Nos	100	100
C Plantation Programme		Dflys	1000	1000
D Som Seedling Nursery		Acre	59	59
E Human Resource Development		Nos	5000	5000
1 Muga Reeling Training		Nos	100	100
2 Muga Farmers		Nos	100	100
3 Muga Jali House (Private)		Nos	10	10
Mulberry Scheme	A Grants-in-aid Incentive cum grants-in-aid for increasing	Nos	20	20
	B Plantation Programme	Acre	25	25

Source An Achvement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

3.5 Tourism Department

The Tourism department is another important department because it has the potential of contributing revenue in the region. So to tap the tourism potential in the area, several projects have been taken up in different districts of the council. Some of the major schemes and projects that have been undertaken by the department are stated as follows:

- 1) The Central Government has sanctioned construction of Eco-Tourism at Kokrajhar. The project involves development of recreation centre at Gaurang, which will provide facilities of guest house, cafeteria, public utilities services, etc. Under the same project water sports and amusement parks are also being developed at Kokrajhar and construction works at project sites are in progress.
- 2) The Department has been entrusted for the implementation of the project that is for the construction of the Bodoland movement cemetery at Debargaon with a total cost of Rs. 496 lakhs.
- 3) For developing the Sankosh-river as tourist spot, because it has rapid water current and is suitable for adventure tourism like rafting, etc., the Department has constructed an Eco-Tourism centre at Srirampur at the estimated cost of Rs. 16 lakhs.²⁰

The Department is taking construction of Gaurang Park at the banks of Gaurang River near Kokrajhar. The park is developing into a beautiful recreation site with

²⁰ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit.*

facilities for boating. The project involves construction of a footbridge and development of parking sites, public utility facilities, etc., in the park. To provide accommodation to visiting tourists in Kokrajhar town, the Department has constructed a tourist lodge at the estimated cost of Rs. 31 lakhs in the town.

In addition to the above projects, the following schemes had also been taken up with the funds sanctioned by the Council - (a) scheme for development of Suklai Deer Park an amount of Rs. 6 lakh had been released to the Committee for the park and (b) scheme for construction of Recreation Centre at Mushalpur for which Rs. 3 lakh had been released.

Besides these, some of the main projects of the Department for the year 2007-08 are as follows:

1. Construction of Children's Park at Ramjabil, Kokrajhar.
2. Implementation of Manas Centenary Celebration.
3. Butterfly project at Ultapani, Chirang.
4. Construction of Forest Tourist Lodge at Kokrajhar.
5. Construction of Eco-Tourism Picnic Spot at Bhairabkunda, Udalguri.
6. Construction of Rupnath Brahma Culture Centre, Kokrajhar.
7. Development of Tourist Lodge at Jumduar Singhimajuli and Jalimuk.

8. Development of Orchiderum in Haltugaon.
9. Maintenance of Bijni Mini Zoo at Bijni, Chirang.
10. Construction of Bodoland Movement Cemetery cum Tourist Centre Debargaon.
11. Construction of Tourist Lodge at Darranga Mela, Baksa.
12. Construction of Eco-Tourism Guest House at Kalamati.
13. Construction of Chakrachila Eco-Toursim project.
14. Construction of Forest Rest House at Gubhurkunda Tourist Lodge.
15. Construction of Eco-Tourism Project at Bhairabkunda.

The above cited various constructions and implementations of tourist infrastructure like, eco-tourism guest house, forest lodge, various tourist spots, children's parks, etc., have been completed by the Department. In consequence, the infrastructural development in this sector has brought increasing numbers of domestic and foreign tourists touching a figure of 15,500 and 7481 respectively and has fetched a handsome amount as revenue.²¹

4.6 Small, Cottage and Rural Industry

Adequate infrastructure facilities are considered to be the pre-requisite for industrial development. Lack of infrastructure in North Eastern region is one of the main

²¹ As Annual Achievement Report, (Tourism Department, BTC, 2007-08)

reasons for the poor growth of industries. Industrial development is assumed as one of the vital means for socio-economic development of any region. Therefore, the BTC proposes to give topmost priority to development of infrastructure facilities by setting up of Industrial Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDC), Growth Centre, Mini Industrial Estate and Commercial Centre in rural areas. These will provide facilities in an integrated manner including roads, power, water, telecommunication and security to promote growth of industries as well as to attract private investors from outside.²²

The BTC is considered as the most industrially backward area. There are no medium and large scale industries in the BTC, except Bongaigoan Refinery and Petro-Chemicals Ltd. at Dhaligoan under Chirang District. There are more than 1,500 registered and unregistered small scale and cottage industries in the four districts of the BTC which generated employment to 10,000 persons directly and indirectly. The existing small and cottage industries of the BTC are rice mill, *atta* mill, mustard oil mill, printing press, motor garage workshop, general engineering workshop, steel fabrication, wooden and steel furniture, bricks factory, handloom and textile and handicrafts, cane and bamboo furniture and household products, etc.

For industrial development, this area has a large scope for cottage and small industries for generating higher level of employment in the region. For the development of this sector, the District Industries and Commerce Centre has taken effective role in setting up of cottage and small scale industries in the BTC areas. These industries are

²² *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, 2005-06, *op.cit.*

based on locally available raw materials and market, as well as generation of adequate employment opportunities through self-employment in the sector. The BTC area possesses vast natural resources such as horticultural resources - fruits and vegetables, medical plants, agricultural products oil seeds, ginger, *chili* and forest products – trees, bamboos, herbs, orchids, sand gravels, etc. The following steps for developing cottage and small scale industries in the BTC areas are being taken:

- a) Promotion of village and cottage industries, artisan, tiny and small-scale industries throughout the BTC areas.
- b) Developing industrial infrastructure facilities for industrial growth.
- c) Development of local skills and entrepreneurship through intensive publicity, motivation, campaign and training programme at district, sub-division and block-level.
- d) Promotion of traditional items and handicrafts sector covering cane and bamboo products, handlooms, woodcrafts by providing training to improve the skills and quality of products, marketing and technical and other supports as and when required
- e) Giving priority in setting up of Agro-based, food-based industries depending on locally available raw materials and consuming units.

Furthermore, for rapid industrial development various added schemes are introduced and launched by the Government of India under North East Industrial Policy. These schemes are, Integrated Infrastructure Development (IID), Growth Centre,

Transport Subsidy, 15 percent Central Capital Investment Subsidy, Interest Subsidy on working capital loan, Central Comprehensive Insurance Schemes, etc. The various schemes of NEDFI and NEC and other agencies for small scale and cottage industries sectors have also been implemented. The Prime Minister Rozgar Yojana (scheme), which creates and provides sustainable self-employment opportunities to educated unemployment youth through micro enterprises, has been implemented, ensuring 100 percent achievement.

The incentives and concessions provided by the Government of Assam under the Industrial Policy 2003 have been provided to the Small Scale Industries sector in the BTC area. A brief note on schemes undertaken by the department²³ has been discussed and explained below in Table 4.2:

1. **Training Programme:** The scheme aims at motivating and guiding the unemployed youths to taking entrepreneurship as a career, so that they can run and manage their enterprises successfully. Under the programme, Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), Industrial awareness campaign, seminars and workshops, on-the-job trainings under the existing industrial units inside and outside the state, study tours to visit the successful industrial units are to be organized.
2. **Margin Money Assistance from Bank/Financial Institutions:** The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance by way of

²³ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

margin money loan to the entrepreneurs to enable them to obtain credit facilities from Banks/Financial Institutions to set up small scale and cottage unit. The margin money will be provided to the extent of 30 percent of project cost accepted by the Bank/Financial Institutions subjects to a maximum of Rs. 7.5 lakhs in margin.

3. Financial Assistance for Setting Up of Small Scale/Cottage Units:

Financial assistance up to the limit of Rs. 2 lakh each as loan are to be provided for setting up and development of small scale and cottage industries in the BTC areas.

4. Incentives and Subsidy to Small Scale Industries (SSI) Units:

The new Industrial Policy of Assam, 2003 had provided a package of incentives for promotion and development of small scale, tiny cottage industries in the state. The incentives offered are: (a) 30 percent subsidy on total fixed investment on plant and machinery, (b) Interest subsidy on working capital, (c) Power subsidy on consumption unit, (d) Captive power generation subsidy, (e) Subsidy on feasibility study cost, (f) Subsidy on quality control certificate, (g) Subsidy on drawl of power line, and (i) Marketing assistance.

5. Exhibition, Fair and Publicity:

The scheme aims at acquainting the public about the plan and programme and various activities of the Industries Department as well as other development departments. For this purpose, industrial exhibition was to be organised, where exchange of

ideas, designs, artisans as well as buyer and seller meets, which would help the enterprises to market their products.

6. **Industrial Estate and Commercial Estate:** Industrial growth depends on the availability of right type of infrastructure facilities in the area like developed land/plot, built up shed, road, power, water supply, etc. Industrial estate, Growth Centre was to be developed in the suitable plot of land in the BTC area and built sheds/open space was to be allotted to the prospective entrepreneurs/unemployed youths for setting up of small scale and service industries. Sheds of Commercial Centre were to be allotted to the prospective entrepreneurs/unemployed youth for setting up of their self-employment ventures in business, industries and services.
7. **Special Incentives to Women Entrepreneurs:** Special emphasis was to be given for development of women entrepreneurship by conducting and imparting training on some suitable trade for women. Special incentives at 40 percent Margin Money assistance to the women entrepreneurs on credit advanced by the Banks/Financial Institution and 50 percent Capital Investment Subsidy to the women owned Small Scale Industries and Cottage units were to be provided.

Table: 4.2 Details of different Projects/Schemes of Small and Rural Industry during the year 2005-06

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme	Amount released during 2004-05 (in Rs. Lakhs)	Financial achievement during 2004-05 (in Rs. Lakhs)	Physical achievement	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Direction and Administration:	
	i. Purchase of office furniture, computers for newly created district and sub-divisional office.	6	6	...	
	ii. Contingency and office stationery.	2	2		
2	Training Programme	7.45	7.45	6	Training course
3	Margin money loan to Small Scale Industry/Cottage units	68.2	68.2	15	Units
4	Financial assistance to Small Scale Industry/Cottage units	126	126	306	Beneficiaries
5	Incentives under New Industrial Policy	33.09	33.09	30	Units
6	Exhibition/Fair and Publicity	3.58	3.58	3	Programme
	Total	246.33	246.33		

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

By implementing the above mentioned programmes and plans of the State and Central Government, the achievements of the Council in this sector during the fiscal year 2007-08 are as follows:

The Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana, a self-employment scheme of the Government of India is being implemented with active participation of the Nationalised Commercial Banks. The objective of the scheme is to provide employment to the educated

unemployed, having minimum HSLC qualification and ITI diploma qualification. This scheme provides loan from the Banks for setting up of micro enterprises in business, service and industrial sectors. By implementing this scheme, during the year 2006-07 and 2007-08, a sum of Rs. 1010.00 lakhs has been sanctioned by the participated bank and a total number of 808 beneficiaries have benefited by the scheme.²⁴

With a view to motivate and to create awareness amongst the unemployed youth for setting up of micro and small enterprises for their self-employment the District Industrial and Commerce Centre (DICC) had organised Entrepreneurship Development Programmes. Accordingly, in the year 2007, a skill development programme on jute handicrafts and weaving products was conducted by the DICC. In this programme, 40 women artisans of the districts participated. A team of 20 members of prospective entrepreneurs were sent to New Delhi to study on existing units in and around New Delhi and to acquire knowledge of management of micro and small enterprises. Besides this, two handloom and handicrafts units of Kokrajhar district participated in the India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi held on 14th to 27th November, 2007.

The objective of the Margin Money Assistance on Credit advanced by Banks scheme is to provide financial assistance by the way of margin money loan to the entrepreneurs to enable them to obtain credit facilities from Banks to set up small and micro enterprises. During the year 2007-08, 11 numbers of units had been assisted by

²⁴ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op.cit.*

providing a total of Rs. 61.51 lakhs of margin money and 116.44 lakhs credit advanced by the Banks.

The Industrial Policy of Assam, 2003 has provided a package of Capital Investment Subsidy/ Incentives to Micro and Small Enterprises Scheme for promotion and development of micro and small enterprises.²⁵ The incentives are: (i) 30 percent capital investment subsidy on investment made on plant and machinery, (ii) Interest subsidy on working capital loan, (iii) Power subsidy on consumption of unit for production purpose, (iv) Capital generating set subsidy, (v) Subsidy on feasibility study course etc. The DICCC, the district of Kokrajhar has implemented the schemes with the fund provided by the BTC. Accordingly, by this scheme for the year 2007-08, 127 numbers of units had been covered by providing subsidy of amount Rs. 60.00 lakhs.

Besides this, through the BTC fund a financial assistance was provided for setting up of micro enterprises and rural artisans for purchase of tools and equipments to run the enterprises. By this scheme, 152 members have benefited, and the expenditure was up to a total amount of Rs. 74.50 lakhs.²⁶

²⁵ Industrial Policy of Assam, 2003 (A package launched under the Industrial Growth of Assam, 2003, Government of Assam)

²⁶ *An Annual Achievement Report*, BTC, 2007-08, *op cit*

3.7 Panchayat and Rural Development Department

The development of rural area assumes a lot of importance as about 80 percent of the population in the BTC area resides in the countryside.²⁷ The socio-economic condition of the people in rural areas can develop only when this area comes under the supervision of the present government of the council. Therefore, as per the provision of the BTC, the Panchayati Raj System has been vested with the Council for better development of the region at the grass root level.²⁸ With the view for development of the weaker section, the BTC has taken various schemes to implement in rural areas of the region. Thus, for execution of plan and policies the Panchayat and Rural Development Department had placed 14 fully and 26 partially Development Blocks in the area. Again there are 4 reorganised District Rural Development agencies (DRDA) to monitor the activities of Rural Development Schemes.

Therefore, many developmental schemes in the entire BTC area are being taken up by Community Development (CD) and Rural Development (RD) wings of Panchayat and Rural Development Department. These schemes are basically small schemes - like construction of rural roads, box type culverts, wooden bridge, bamboo foot bridge, etc., which are constructed in rural areas. The other schemes like; agricultural bund canals, education institution buildings, minor irrigation projects, construction of community halls

²⁷ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op.cit*

²⁸ Some Importance Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning, BTC, *op.cit*, (also see, Appendix-A, Memorandum of Settlement. BTC, 2003)

in rural areas, water supply schemes, construction of waiting sheds and sanitary latrine are implemented under the CD and RD wings²⁹.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is one of the developing agencies which implement various rural development works for eradication of poverty in rural areas. During the year 2004-05 and 2005-06, the DRDA had taken up various development works under the programmes of National Rural Employment Guarantee Assurance Act (NREGA), *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY), *Swarnajayanti Gram Swa-Rozgar Yojana* (SGSY), *Indira Awaas Yojana* (IAY), *Prime Minister Grameen Yojana* (PMGY) and award of 11th Finance Commissions and had met with considerable success in implementing them. The various schemes/projects under the DRDA have been shown along with their physical achievements in respective schemes:

- 1) **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):** Under SGRY programme various schemes were undertaken and implemented. Accordingly, under this programme the total amount received during the year 2004-05 was Rs. 2028.14 lakhs including fund of previous year of SGRY. The availability of fund during this current year was Rs. 2322.18 lakhs including the carry over fund of Rs. 186.14 lakhs from the previous year of SGRY. The expenditure made under this programme was Rs. 2249.17 lakhs. The total rice collected during this year was 21380 metric tonnes and the same was distributed to the BPL family at a

²⁹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op.cit.*

subsidized rate of Rs. 8 per kilogram. Under the IBS, a total of 2965 beneficiaries were covered with an expenditure of Rs. 190.00 lakhs during the year 2004-05.

- 2) **Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) (New Construction):** Under this programme the total amount received during 2004-05 was Rs. 748.06 lakhs including fund of previous year. The expenditure made under this programme was Rs. 741.49 lakhs against the construction of 2755 numbers of houses.
- 3) **Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) (Up-gradation):** The total amount received during 2004-05 was Rs. 187.02 lakhs including the fund from previous year. The total availability of fund was Rs. 204.29 lakhs including the carryover fund of Rs. 17.27 lakhs from previous year. The expenditure made under this programme was Rs. 150.39 lakhs against the completed 1509 numbers of IAY houses. During the year 2005-06 total amount of Rs. 86.86 lakhs had been received including the carryover fund of previous year. During the year total fund available under this programme was Rs. 140.22 lakhs including opening balance of Rs. 53.36 lakhs of previous year. An amount of Rs. 122.23 lakhs has been utilised for up-gradation of 180 numbers of houses.
- 4) **Prime Minister Grameen Yojana (PMGY) New Construction:** During 2004-05 under this programme the DRDA, Council had received Rs. 43.56 lakhs for construction of houses under the PMGY scheme. The DRDA had received only Cash Component under this programme and accordingly the total fund received was released to all implementing agencies for construction of 697 numbers of houses.

- 5) **Prime Minister Grameen Yojana (PMGY) Up-gradation:** Under this programme the DRDA had also received an amount of Rs. 56.56 lakhs during 2004-05 against the Cash Component up-gradation of houses. Out of this amount, 3771 number of beneficiaries have benefited for up-gradation of their houses.
- 6) **Swarnajayanti Gram Swa-Rojgar Yojana (SGSY):** The SGSY scheme is one of the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development, strategically designed for rural poverty alleviation. The objective of the SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line through a process of social mobilization, training, capacity building, and provision of income generating assets through a mix of Bank credit and Government Subsidy.

Thus, to eradicate this problem of the society, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department under the DRDA had undertaken some basic projects to implement. During the financial year 2004-05, an amount of Rs. 158.52 lakhs had been released as subsidy to 166 numbers of Self Help Groups (SHGs) against Rs. 317.04 lakhs of credit. Altogether, Rs. 72.50 lakhs has been utilised as revolving fund for 725 numbers of SHGs. During this year the total amount utilised for development of SGSY infrastructure is shown in Table: 4.3:

Table: 4.3 Details of different Projects under Panchayat and Rural Development during the year 2005-06

Sl. No.	Name of the Block	Amount in (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Kokrajhar Development Block	Rs. 14.50 lakhs.
2	Sidli-Chirang Development, Block	Rs. 7.80 lakhs.
3	Dotma Development, Block	Rs. 9.10 lakhs.
4	Kachugaon Development, Block	Rs. 12.30 lakhs.
5	Gossaigaon Development, Block	Rs. 6.70 lakhs.
6	Hatidhura Development, Block	Rs. 5.20 lakhs.
		Total Rs. 55.60 lakhs

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

During 2005-06 the DRDA had received Rs. 416.85 lakhs under SGSY. Out of the total allocation of Rs. 501.10 lakhs including the opening balance of Rs. 9,225 lakhs, and amount of Rs. 247.37 lakhs had been utilised during that same year. In the all four districts of BTC, total 2,560 numbers of SHGs have been formed from inception, out of which 1083 number of SHGs have qualified for grade-1 stage. Amongst them only 783 SHGs were taken up economic activities.

7) **National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP):** The District Rural Development Agency of Kokrajhar is one of the five districts in Assam which is implementing the National Food for Work Programme. A total amount of Rs.4962.59 lakhs had been received during 2004-05 as a Cash Component and some 32490.00 metric tonnes of rice had been allocated for the district against the programme. The utilisation of fund and rice component was 85 percent out of received amount.

Further, during the financial year 2004-05 and 2005-06 physical assets created under SGRY, IAY, PMGY, NFFWP and SGSY programmes are as follows in Table: 4.4:

Table:4.4 Details of development works under Panchayat and Rural Development during the year 2005-06

Sl No	Name of Work	Physical Achievement	
		2004-05	2005-06
1	Construction of Rural Road	1730 km	1800 km
2	Up-gradation to all weather road	---	164 km
3	Construction of bundh and irrigation canal	894 nos	620 nos
4	Medium size bridges and HP culverts and Slab culvert	220 nos	314 nos
5	Construction of school building & community halls	80 nos	60 nos
6	Construction of waiting sheds and markets	119 nos	80 nos
7	Digging/Improvement of Fishery Tanks	81 nos	115 nos
8	Plantation of Som/Banana trees	126 hect	178 hect
9	IAY (NC)	2754 nos	1933 nos
10	IAY (UG)	1373 nos	180 nos
11	PMGY (NC)	192 nos	697 nos
12	PMGY (UG)	46 nos	3771 nos

Source An Achivement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

Note

- a) IAY(NC) - Indra Awas Yojana (New Construction)
- b) IAY(NC) - Indra Awas Yojana (Up-gradation)
- c) PMGY(NC)- Prime Minister Grameen Yojana (New Construction)
- d) PMGY(NC)- Prime Minister Grameen Yojana (Up-gradation))

Besides this, under the 11th Finance Commission, during the financial year 2004-05, the BTC has received an amount of Rs. 2,40,59,789.00 from the Deputy Commissioner, Kokrajhar and from the Chief Executive Officers of Sonitpur, Bongaigaon, Darrang and Dhubri Zilla Parisha. The following schemes were implemented as per Government guidelines in the BTC area.

- a) Drinking Water Supply Scheme.
- b) Primary Health Care Scheme.
- c) Schemes for creation of enumerative assets for Village Council/District Councils (VC/DC).
- d) Construction/Repairing of VC/DC offices.

- e) Purchase of office furniture for VC/DC office.
- f) Street lighting.
- g) Primary Education Schemes.

The Government of Assam had also released an amount of Rs. 5,57,63,099³⁰ under the award of 11th Finance Commission 2005-06. The following schemes were recommended to be taken up for implementation:

- a) Primary Education.
- b) Primary Health Care.
- c) Safe Drinking Water.
- d) Street Lighting.
- e) Sanitation including drainage and scavenging facilities.
- f) Maintenance of creation and burial grounds.
- g) Public conveniences and other common property resources.

Besides the above mentioned projects undertaken under the DRDA, the Community Development/Rural Development wings of Panchayat and Rural Development Department has taken some schemes with the fund allocated by the

³⁰ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op cit*

Government of Assam in the State Annual Plan schemes. The budgeted Annual State Plan during 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 were Rs.110.00 lakhs, Rs. 150.00 lakhs, Rs. 61.00 lakhs, and Rs. 54.00 lakhs respectively.³¹ Thus, with the allocated amount, small schemes like construction of rural roads, box-type culverts, wooden bridges, bamboo foot bridges have been constructed in rural areas. The other small schemes like agricultural *bundhs*, canals, educational buildings, minor irrigation projects, water supply schemes, waiting sheds, sanitary latrines, community halls which are essential to the rural people had also been implemented with meagre funds.³²

It may here be noted that one new programme, National Rural Development Guarantee Act (NREGA), had been notified on 7th September, 2005 and launched on 2nd February 2006 in 200 identified districts in 27 States in its first phase of implementation. Accordingly, Kokrajhar district was notified in the first phase of implementation of NREGA in Assam through which various schemes had been implemented like, the construction of River Saralbhangra Railway Bridge (on both banks under NREGA 2007-08 is one of the biggest schemes of Assam), 100 days employment to every household in the financial year 2008-09, etc.³³

Moreover, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department of the BTC had during the year 2006-07, under the SGSY had assisted altogether 292 Self Help Groups with Rs. 10.000 each and 143 numbers of SHGs had been provided subsidy for

³¹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op cit*
- *ibid*

³³ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op cit*

strengthening their economic activities. During the year 2007-08, a total number of 260 SHGs were formed against the target of 325 SHGs, out of which 476 SHGs (including previous years) had been provided with Revolving Fund. Again under the IAY scheme financial help of Rs. 27500.00 per unit had been provided to the beneficiaries for construction of IAY house. During 2007-08, the National Old Age Pension scheme was launched in Kokrajhar district and an additional target of 6600 numbers of beneficiaries had received help. A total amount of Rs. 158.40 lakhs has been released so far.

To cover the socio-economic development of the weaker section of the society in the BTC area, where 80 percent of the population live in rural area, the development activities in the entire BTC areas were undertaken by the DRDA, RD and CD wings of the Panchayat and Rural Development Department under different schemes with the help of meagre funds allocated by the Central Government.

4.8 Social Welfare Department

The main aim and objective of the Social Welfare Department is to extend services for the enhancement of the weaker section of the society. Under this Department, a number of schemes have been undertaken in various activities in all the districts under the BTC. The Social Welfare Department of the BTC have set up Child Health Development (CHD) and the District Social Welfare Offices in each district of the BTC. The services of all categories of offices and staff under this department have been placed under the Council by the Government of Assam, Social Welfare Department. There are 21 numbers of International Child Development Scheme (ICDS) projects and 3051

numbers of Anganwadi Workers Centre (AWC) falling within the Council area. At present all the ICDS projects and AWCs are functioning with officers and staffs including Anganwadi Workers and Helpers in each AWC. This department is also committed to uplift the weaker section of the society through the NGOs funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.³⁴

The following schemes have been undertaken for the development of the weaker section of the society in four districts of the BTC.

- a. Welfare of Handicapped Persons
- b. Assistance to the active Voluntary Organisation.
- c. Medical grants to the infirm and sick persons.
- d. Assistance to persons or groups working for orphanage and old aged society.
- e. Nutrition for child through existing Balwadi Centre.
- f. Nutrition for child through AWC.

Thus, keeping in view the above points, the Social Welfare Department is all set to implement different schemes out of the total allocated fund of the BTC and has implemented the following schemes in the area during the year 2005-06.³⁵ The various schemes has been summarised below and shown below in Table 4.5:

³⁴ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2004, op. cit.*

³⁵ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op. cit.*

- 1. Welfare for Physically Handicapped Person:** The following schemes have been implemented for help of the physically handicapped persons:
 - a) **Rehabilitation grant to physically handicapped persons:** a sum of Rs. 12 lakhs had been earmarked for the scheme and a total of 1,200 beneficiaries had been targeted for award grant at Rs. 1,000 per beneficiary.
 - b) **Scholarship to physically handicapped students (Middle and High School Standard):** A scholarship of an amount Rs. 1,200 per annum was awarded to 80 students who were pursuing their studies in different institutions middle and high schools standard and a sum of Rs. 96,000 had been sanctioned for the same.
 - c) **Prosthetic Aid to Physically Handicapped Persons:** A total 100 numbers of beneficiaries had been awarded with Rs. 1,000 per beneficiary as prosthetic aid and sum of Rs. 1 lakh had been sanctioned for the same project.
- 2. Assistance to Registered Active Voluntary Organization:** A sum of Rs. 19 lakhs is awarded to a total of 20 registered Voluntary Organizations who were working in the field of social activities and awareness campaign in the area.
- 3. Medical Grants to Sick and Infirm Persons :** A total sum of Rs. 18 lakhs was awarded to sick and infirm persons, for their medical treatment including cancer patients and by this scheme 1708 numbers of beneficiaries were directly benefited.

- 4. Other Welfare Programmes:** A sum of Rs. 5 lakhs was earmarked for the scheme. A sum of Rs. 1 lakh was paid to disable persons associations on the observation of National Disable Day on 21st and 22nd March, 2006 and another sum of Rs. 2 lakhs was given to each District Social Welfare Office of Chirang and Udalguri districts for implementation of schemes for social mobilization of polio eradication and strengthening routine immunization.
- 5. Nutrition for Children through Balwadi Centre:** A total sum of Rs. 50,000 had been utilized for the existing Balwadi Centre at Kokrajhar and Bijni for nutrition of children age group of 3 to 6 years.
- 6. Nutrition Programme:** Under the nutrition programme, 21 ICDS projects covering 2,965 Anganwadi Workers Centres were implemented. In this project nutritious food to the children of age group of 0 to 6 years as well as pregnant and nursing mothers was provided. This programme has benefited total 2,96,500 numbers of beneficiaries in the BTC area.
- 7. Construction of Anganwadi Centre Building:** A total of 200 Anganwadi centre buildings had been constructed in different projected areas of BTC. The Social Welfare Department, Government of Assam, sanctioned a sum of Rs 2.50 crores for construction of the said project.

Table: 4.5 Details of Achievement of four districts under Social Welfare Department during the year 2005-6

Sl.No	Name of Schemes	Kokrajhar District		Chirang District		Baksa District		Udalguri District	
		Fund utilized Rs. in lakhs	No. of benifi-ciary	Fund utilized Rs. in lakhs	No. of benifi-ciary	Fund utilized Rs. in lakhs	No. of benifi-ciary	Fund utilized Rs. in lakhs	No. of benifi-ciary
1	Rehabilitation grants to physically handicapped persons.	1.75	175	1.5	150	1.37	137	1.37	137
2	Scholarships to physically handicapped students (Middle and High school)	0.24	10	0.12	10	0.12	10	0.12	10
3	Prosthetic aid to physically handicapped persons	0.25	12	0.12	12	0.12	12	0.12	12
4	Assistance to registered voluntary organisation	11.25	5	2.00	1	0.50	1	1.00	1
5	Medical grants to sick infirm persons	2.89	229	2.04	192	2.08	188	1.98	198
6	Other Welfare Programme	1.00	1	2.00	1	--	--	2.00	1
7	Balwadi Scheme (Nutrition to beneficiary)	0.25	40	0.25	40	--	--	--	--
8	Nutrition Programme	--	83800	--	38700	--	11500	--	59000

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06.

Besides the above mentioned implemented projects/schemes the Social Welfare Department had taken up various schemes under the Annual Plan 2007-08 for the four districts under the BTC,³⁶ which are as follows:

- 1) **Direction and Administration:** For the Direction and Administration an amount of Rs. 19.90 lakhs had been released.
- 2) **Rehabilitation grants to Disabled Persons:** To mitigate the barriers of physically disabled persons and to train them to utilise their own skills, one time rehabilitation grant had been provided to per beneficiary a sum of Rs. 20,000 which covered 110 beneficiaries in the four districts. Accordingly, a sum of Rs. 22.00 lakhs had been released and implemented for the above said scheme.
- 3) **Scholarship to Poor Students (Middle and High School):** To minimise the numbers of school drop-out students, particularly from lower classes, a sum of Rs. 2.45 lakhs had been sanctioned for the scheme. Accordingly, a lump-sum amount of Rs. 2,500 for per annum per beneficiary had been granted to poor students of middle and high school standard to purchase books and articles pertaining to education.
- 4) **Rehabilitation grants to Widows under Below Poverty Line (BPL):** Due to incidents like violence, riot, ethnic clashes, atrocities on women, premature death of husband and cases of divorce, some widows in the weaker section of the society suffer a lot and become a social problem. To

³⁶ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

mitigate the suffering of such helpless widows, a social support has been provided by the department for their livelihood. Thus, a sum of Rs.11.30 lakhs was projected for rehabilitation of widows and Rs. 5000 per beneficiary under BPL family was awarded in all the districts of BTC.

- 5) **Nutrition for Balwadi Centre:** For the children between the age group of 3 to 6 years, a supplementary nutrition feeding system had been given for pre-school children through the existing Balwadi Centres in the Council area. To increase awareness among the guardians who are economically backward and to make the child habituated for school an amount of Rs. 0.6 lakhs had been provided for the said scheme.
- 6) **Grants-in-aid to Active Voluntary Organisation:** Under this scheme selective registered active voluntary organizations had been awarded grants; those working in the field of social activities for uplifting the society. A sum of Rs. 5.00 lakhs had been spent in the year 2007-08.
- 7) **Grants-in-aid to Individual/Groups working for Orphanage and Old Age Society:** Under this scheme, an initiative has been taken to help orphans and the old age persons for their livelihood and rehabilitation. In many cases the old aged persons and orphans become a social problem for which they suffer both physically and mentally. Therefore, Individual/groups actively working in this field are assisted by this scheme. Accordingly, a sum of Rs. 4.00 lakhs had been utilised under this scheme in the year 2007-08.

- 8) **Grants-in-aid to Women Welfare Voluntary Organization for Women Empowerment:** The Registered women Voluntary Organisations those who are working in the field of women empowerment are provided financial assistance; for which a sum of Rs. 3.00 lakhs had been utilised for the scheme for the year 2007-08.
- 9) **Construction of Orphanage Shelter Home:** A proposal for construction of 'Orphanage Shelter Home' in each district of the BTC was submitted in the 11th Five Year Plan. Accordingly, in the year 2007-08 a sum of Rs. 30.00 lakhs had been released for the construction of Orphanage Shelter Home for the four Districts of the BTC, and the project is under progress.
- 10) **Other Welfare Programme:** Other social problems are like, juvenile crimes, diverse atrocities on women, immoral trafficking, witchcraft, etc. To eradicate these problems from the society and to educate and bring awareness among the people, through this scheme, an amount of Rs. 3.00 lakhs had been released in the year 2007-08.

Besides this, the Government of Assam had sanctioned Rs.11.50 crores for the implementation of Supplementary Nutrition Programme in the BTC for the year 2007-08 covering a total 3044 Anganwadi Centres under 33 of ICDS projects. Thus, vast schemes/projects have been undertaken by the Social Welfare Department under the BTC. Some schemes have already been implemented and it is expected that the department will continue to implement welfare to the weaker section under the above

mentioned schemes. At present there are 3,644 numbers of Anganwadi Centres under the BTC area. During the year 2005-06, the department had constructed 200 numbers of Anganwadi Centre buildings in the BTC and also the department has undertaken schemes for construction of 570 Anganwadi Centres, and construction work are in progress under the Annual Operation Plan 2007-08.³⁷

4.9 Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department

The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department is another income generating sector of the BTC. For the Livestock development and to support services through its vast network of Animal Health and Extension work, production support and Artificial Insemination, the department has taken utmost initiative for repairing, renovation and construction of dilapidated Veterinary in all the four districts in the BTC. Livestock population in the BTC is composed of many economically important species of animals and birds. However, from the available data on livestock contribution towards the state economy, which stands 7.7 percent as net state domestic production as per 1997-98 report, it can be assumed that livestock sector can play a major role in building the rural economy of the BTC. Therefore, with a view to bring about socio-economic development of the area, this department is taking up the following programmes with the aim of achieving development of projects for livestock productivity.

³⁷ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op cit*

- A. Construction of Dispensaries and First Aid Centres:** There are 57 Dispensaries and 49 First Aid Centres (FAC) in the BTC area. But more than 90 percent of the service delivery institutions do not work as per their potential mainly due to deplorable conditions of buildings and staff quarters. However, first priority has been given to repairing and renovation, reconstructions of these institutions for the interest of public service.
- B. Distribution of Livestock and Birds under Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Individual Beneficiary Society (IBS):** For uplifting of SHG and IBS, programme for providing grants-in-aid to the selected beneficiaries has been taken up by this department. These schemes are taken for alleviation of rural poverty by self-employment through Livestock rearing. The beneficiaries were selected by the district level selection committee and thus approved by the BTC authority. For the year 2005-06, there were 171 SHGs and Co-operative Societies and 169 Individuals under IBS that were benefited. Again in the year 2007-08 total 92 SHGs and Co-operative Societies and total 316 numbers of Individuals under IBS were benefited.
- C. Mass free Treatment, Vaccination, and Awareness Camp:** Massive Programmes are taken to cover the most interior places where the poor villagers are deprived of Veterinary services for several years.
- D. Training Sponsored by Institute of Co-operative Management:** The department organized training and motivation programmes for the interest of farmers and breeders of SHGs/Co-operative Societies and IBS for development

and Production Skill with the aim of self employment generation and sustainability. Therefore, with a view to achieve the goal, the department during the year 2005-06 conducted 4 trainings 1 (one) each in four districts on Management of Dairy Co-operatives in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department of BTC. Again during the year 2007-08, the department had organized a total of 12 numbers of camps, 3 each in four districts of the BTC.³⁸

- E. Exhibition:** Exhibition helps the people to know about various objectives and functions of a particular department. People from various places can have the access for interaction directly with the department experts present in the exhibition stall and can gather practical knowledge which would help them in the field. With this view the department had organized Exhibition Programme in connection with the 44th Annual Conference of *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* held at Bijni from 3rd to 5th February, 2005 and during the 47th Annual Conference of *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* held at Dotma in Kokrajhar District in 2008.
- F. All Round Development of Panbari Sheep and Goat Farm, Kokrajhar District:** With the aim of economic development of rural people for the interested breeders, a unique programme has been taken up in the Government Sheep and Goat Farm for the production of Cross Breed Goats for the purpose of distribution to the SHGs and individual beneficiaries as per the Government norms. There are 3,15,598 numbers of goat populations as per Census Report 2003 in the BTC

³⁸ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2007-08, op. cit.*

area.³⁹ These small animals play a great economical role in helping the weaker section of the people. Keeping this point in view all round development activities have been taken up for raising the parent stock of Beetle Goats by checking mortality rate through proper prophylactic measures, treatments, management and feeding. The male goats will be utilised for cross breeding with local female goats in the villages in due course. The Panbari Sheep and Goat Farm is the only Government Livestock Farm in the BTC area. The following Table 4.6, shows the achievements during 2005-06:

Table: 4.6 Details of different Projects under Animal Husbandary and Veterinary during the year 2005-06

Sl No	Total Numbers of Projects/Schemes	Number achieved
1	Total numbers of livestock treatment	12671
2	Total numbers of Vaccinations	30890
3	Total numbers of Castration	552
4	Total numbers of Caponisations (Birds Castration)	102
5	Total numbers of Awareness Camp organized	22

Source: An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

To the above mentioned projects, a total ear-marked amount of Rs. 25 lakhs had been spent during the year 2007-08 for procurement of Medicines, Animal Feed Supplement, different types of Disinfectants, Appliances both for Treatment, Castration and Allied matters, Instrument and Vaccines for prophylactic measures and immunity thereby to the livestock and poultry. Moreover two Feed Mills have been constructed at Runikata in Chirang District and at Barkhata in Baksa District with the aim for preparation of concentrated feed to be made available for the livestock and poultry at subsidized rate as per the Government norms.

³⁹ *An Annual Achievement Report, BTC, 2005-06, op cit*

4.10 Market and Fairs Department

The Market and Fairs Department is another body which provides the infrastructure for selling the agriculture products in the market. For the development of economy of the society the Market and Fairs Department has an important role. Therefore, for providing better market facilities many market infrastructure development schemes had taken place like, construction of market shed under plan fund of Rs. 28.60 lakhs of 2005-06⁴⁰ at (A) Puthimari, Mazbat, Rowta, Bhergaon under Udalguri District, (B) Tamulpur, Goreswar, Doomni and Ananda Bazar under Baksa District, (C) Bodobazar, Bengtol and Dangtol bazar under Chirang District, (D) Nayekgaon, Patgaon, Halang Bazar and Mithinga Bazar of Kokrajhar District.

Besides the schemes under plan fund, the Market and Fairs Department had taken up a number of schemes under Miscellaneous Revenue Receipt 2005-06 that is construction of drainage and link road at Dingdinga Market for Rs. 5.00 lakhs, and construction of market shed at Dotma Market.⁴¹

Thus, the above mentioned infrastructure developments taken place in the various sites through the Market and Fair Department had helped in the growth of economy in the agrarian sector. It also helped in the growth of economy of the mass people as well as the society. Hence, the development of the market infrastructure will go a long way in contributing to develop trade and commerce in the area. Another note-worthy feature of

⁴⁰ An Achievement Report of BTC, 2005-06, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Market and Fairs Department is the handsome contribution to the BTC exchequer by the way of collecting sum from the markets, etc.

4.11 Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes

With a view to uplift of the backward classes in the BTC area, the Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes (WPT and BC) have been transferred to the BTC. The main functions of the WPT and BC Department is to look after the development of SC/ST/OBC people living under the BTC and to acquire schemes for their welfare. The WPT and BC department has formed three boards namely (a) ST Development Board (b) SC Development Board and (c) OBC Development Board under each Sub-division in the BTC area. These boards function as divisional ST/ SC/OBC boards similar to other subdivisions in Assam.

This department had sanctioned funds for the year 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 for various developmental schemes implemented by the PWD for irrigation, industry, buildings of institutions, construction of drains, etc., which include many major infrastructure development projects of the BTC area.

In addition to this, the WPT and BC Department has implemented the following schemes:

1. Distribution of Bicycle, Spray machines, Sewing Machines, Cotton Yarn, City Ride Vehicles, etc., to Below Poverty Line families.
2. Plantation of Jetropha.

3. Financial assistance for medical treatment.
4. Grant-in-aid to Individuals/ NGOs.
5. Educational Excursion grant for students.
6. Grants for Higher Education.
7. Ex-gratia for families of those killed in natural calamities/ criminals violence.
8. Publication of Books.
9. Cultural grants to needy institutions/individuals.
10. Construction of Buildings/Roads/Culverts/Drains etc.
11. Grants to Self Help Groups/Co-operative Societies.
12. Grants to important Social Organizations.

Furthermore, Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme and Infrastructure Development Scheme have taken place in the entire Council area. The Integrated Tribal Development Programmes (ITDP) and Sub-Divisional Welfare Offices are entrusted with distribution of Scholarship and other developmental works for SC/ST/OBC students under the BTC. The following schemes had been implemented under WPT and BC Department for the financial year 2007-08 and shown in Table 4.7:

Table: 4.7 Details of different Schemes under Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Class during the year 2007-08

Sl No	Name of the Schemes	Total numbers of Beneficiaries
1	Medical Treatment	582
2	Higher Education	9
3	Self-Help Groups	78
4	Individual Beneficiaries	152
5	Construction of Buildings/Roads/Culverts/Drains, etc	32
6	Cultural Grant in Aid	2
7	Jetropa Cultivation	5000
8	Cotton Yarn Distribution	5000
9	Swing Machines Distribution	575
10	Bicycles Distribution	2,250

Source An Achievement of the Bodoland Territorial Council, Annual Publications, 2005-06

Thus, as this people are backward and far behind as compared to other societies, to bring faster growth and development in the area, the WPT and BC Department has been implementing a number of schemes within the BTC to uplift weaker sections of this society. The schemes like grants-in-aid for medical treatment, aid to poor students for higher education, aid for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), for construction of slab culvert and drain under Municipality Board, construction of school building, aid to Self Help Groups and grants-in-aid for supply of Hand Puller and Rickshaw to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and Bi-cycle to poor students, etc., are significant help to the weaker section of the society.

4.12 Cultural Affairs

Language and culture are the corner-stone of every society, without which a society cannot develop and it becomes an anonymous society. Hence, the Bodo society is a culturally rich society which is very old and bears a distinct identity in terms of their language, culture, tradition and literature. The Bodo people are rich in the culture of music and dance. Traditionally they have a scourge of colourful dance styles which are mainly related to Bathouism and agro-based life of the Bodo people. *Bagrumba*, *Jara-fagla mwsanai*, *Sikhri-Sikhla mwsanai*, *Khwijima fonai*, *Kherai gwlaow mwsanai*, etc., are some of them. *Kham* (unique drum), *Sifung* (an unique flute with five holes), *Serja* (violin type of string instrument) and *Jotha* (small kind of cymbal) are their traditional musical instruments. Many talented artists and renowned writers have done great jobs to popularize the culture both at the regional and national levels. The artists from this area,

especially the Bodo cultural groups have many times represented cultural troops in the Republic Day Celebration in New Delhi and also participated in different places of India. Thus, after the attainment of the BTC, the Department has been taking up various developmental works to uplift and promote the culture and language of Bodo community.

To preserve the language and culture of the Bodo Community the Government of India had recognized the Bodo language in the Eight Schedule to the Constitution of India. The Bodo Language became official Language in the BTC area on the condition that Assamese and English shall also continue to be used for official purposes. Moreover, under the aegis of the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* is preparing more than forty thousand scientific and technical terms in the Bodo language.

Furthermore, department has provided grants-in-aid to old ailing artists, NGOs (cultural) and Individuals to develop their arts. To encourage artists, an annual award title has been introduced, namely, the 'Nileswar Brahma Award' for contribution to the Art of Excellence. Besides this, publication of books, training in tribal folk dance, folk songs, and workshops on drama, dance and music preparation and other folk performance arts are undertaken by the department. Further, the Council has made financial sanctions for construction of cultural offices, cultural halls and stages in all the four districts. Moreover, to improve and preserve the rich culture and heritage of different communities of the BTC areas a Cultural Complex at Kokrajhar had been constructed.

The above study on the working of the BTC in various sectors of socio-economic development has shown that to speed up the socio-economic development of the BTC area, the Council has undertaken different projects and schemes with the financial assistance of both the State and Central Governments. It is found that there are many physical achievements in every sector. The Bodos predominantly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Thus, with an aim to grow and develop, interest has been particularly given to the agriculture sector by providing more facilities and by applying scientific way of cultivation to increase the production of crops. This is, in fact, a vital economic generator for the society. In addition to this, the steps undertaken by other departments such as the Tourism department, Fishery Department, Weaving and Handloom Department, Sericulture Department, Animal Husbandry Department, etc., are creating with better facilities. These developments of various socio-economic sectors have provided income source to the people and particularly to the uneducated youths.

The BTC has taken various schemes to develop the human resource of the society, by taking into consideration basic health care facilities, culture, sports, etc., which would benefit the society as a whole. Many new primary health centres and hospitals are either set up or renovated in the BTC area to provide good health care facilities. Furthermore, to prosper the common people and develop the area, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, the Social Welfare Department of the BTC area have taken and implemented various schemes for the welfare of the physically handicapped persons by providing medical grants to the sick and the infirm, construction of the Anganwadi Centres in the BTC areas, etc.

To mention a few other important aspects of this dimension of development, it is important to state that the unemployment problem is also one of the most serious problems the present economy is facing and it is not a regional problem but a national problem. Therefore, to generate more employment opportunities, the Labour and Employment Department of the BTC has taken up mobile registration for the unemployed youth in the remote areas which are away from the head-quarters. This programme has immensely helped the job seekers in getting their names registered or renewed. In today's competitive world where the best survives in the job market, choosing the right kind of education with proper career information is very important for the students of schools and colleges. For this purpose career talks are conducted in various educational institutions and materials of career information are supplied to them. Vocational Guidance Programmes were conducted in different locations of the area. These various programmes have helped in motivating the educated unemployed youths towards self-employment. Further, the ITI and Craftsmen is one of the important institutions for short-term technical training to the young entrepreneurs which helps young entrepreneurs to seek their livelihood in any factory/industry. Presently, there are only three ITI centres in the BTC area which is not sufficient to meet the increasing number of population. So, more initiatives and measures have been undertaken for further generation of employment opportunities for the youths of this area. Another mention may be made that the agricultural infrastructure and export linkage in the BTC areas, Rs. 15 crores had been granted to venture on the project, 'Integrated Logistics Centre', at Kajalgaon in Chirang district which was inaugurated on 5th September, 2008. This project

was under the BTC in partnership mode with the Public-Private Partnership (PPP). The Centre is a cold storage of 7,500 metric tonnes capacity, a warehouse of 20,000 square feet, with accommodation facilities.⁴² Thus, through this project the Council is expected to get a fillip in the agro-horticultural sector which is among the key areas at par with power, infrastructure and tourism and agricultural sectors in the area for improvement of economic sustainability.

Overall, it can be seen that the BTC has been working in an efficient manner towards development of economy and society through the various mentioned departments. Through various schemes employed both by the BTC itself and the Central and State governments and through various funds acquired, the economic condition of the people is facilitated and improved. Together, infrastructure goes hand in hand with economic development, and we have seen that these aspects have been dealt with most vigorously in recent years by the BTC since its formation.

⁴² “Projects to boost BTC Agri-infrastructure opened” Assam Tribune dated 06-09-2008, Guwahati, Sept 5)

Chapter – V

Conclusion

The tribals of North East India, prior to the Independence, were constituted under the rubric name of Assam. This led to dissatisfaction among many tribal societies residing in the then composite Assam. To eradicate this problem of the tribals, soon after India attained her independence, the importance of local government in the country was recognized. It has become one of the basic policies of the Government of India to give special priority to promote and protect the distinctive identity of tribal people. With this basic objective, the Government of India granted the district level autonomy for tribal people. Thus, the main purpose of the Sixth Schedule was to provide the tribal of North East India with a simple administrative set-up which could safeguard their customs and ways of life and could secure them with maximum autonomy in the management of their own affairs.¹ B.R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee said that the “Hill People of Assam were not Hinduised and therefore, had a culture very different from the rest of Assam.”² In a country like India with so many different ethnic communities, the conceptual idea behind the establishment of local bodies would obviously vary from region to region and state to state and even within the region. Thus, in the North Eastern region Autonomous District Councils were established under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India for the primary purpose of enabling the hill people to participate in the administration of their areas and also to protect and safeguard their own cultures and customs. It is a special creation for the people of North East India which asserted a new era of autonomous administration known as the ‘District Council’ or ‘Regional Council’.

¹ *National Constituent Assembly Debates*, vol. ix, pp. 1010-12.

² *Ibid.*, pp.1025-27.

Accordingly, in the entire North Eastern region there are nine District Councils working under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule. The Bodo society of Assam then was scattered under various districts of Assam. As a result, the Bodos, an indigenous tribe of Assam came across with a demand for separate administrative power to manage their own affairs and to protect their self identity, language, culture and tradition. The separation of various hill tribes from Assam to form their own territory and the growing fear to be oppressed by the Assamese high caste hegemony made them conscious of their own identity and ushered them into initiating ways to preserve their distinct identity. Such an initiation served as example towards the rise of political aspirations among the Bodos. Consequently, the Bodos launched a vigorous Bodoland movement covering a number of issues and this movement went through different phases as it continued to highlight, in course of time, particular issues and problems of the Bodos. There was the socio-religious reformation movement led by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma in 1919 for the preservation of the distinct identity of the Bodos, the Tribal Land Preservation in 1954, the 'Udayachal Movement' led by the PTCA in 1967 for demanding creation of a separate tribal land for the tribals of Assam, the demand for the Bodo language as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges in 1953, the Roman Script Movement in 1974 led by both the *Bodo Sahitya Sabha* and the All Bodo Student Union and, finally, the Bodoland movement led by the ABSU in 1987 with the objective to create a separate state for the Bodos.

After the series of movements, an Autonomous Council was created on 10th February 2003 for the Bodos to administer their own affairs within a definite territory. This territory was known as the Bodoland Territorial Council, and it started to

function provisionally from 7th December, 2003. The Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) Chief, Hagrama Mohilary, was sworn in as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the interim BTC on 7th December, 2003 to administer the Council provisionally. Again in the BTC Executive Council Election held on 13th May, 2005, the Hagrama Mahilary led BPF party won with a majority votes and Hagrama Mohilary was sworn in as a Chief of the BTC. The BTC area as demarcated covers an area of 3082 villages, 4 districts and 9 sub-divisions under its jurisdiction. The Council has been given executive, financial and legislative powers over 40 subjects for overall development of the area. To execute the given subjects both the Centre and State Governments have been providing financial assistance in order to accelerate the development of the area and to meet the aspirations of the people. From then on the Bodoland Territorial Council started to fully function with its headquarters at Kokrajhar.

The administrative unit has been created with a mission to accomplish development in the fields of economy, education, preservation of land rights, linguistic aspirations, and socio-cultural aspects, and also to preserve the ethnic identity of the Bodos. Thus, the present study has also examined the administrative powers and functions of the BTC under the provision of Sixth Schedule and its working in bringing about Socio-Economic and Infrastructural Development in the BTC areas.

The major findings of the study are summarised and highlighted chapter-wise. The findings of chapters I and II are as follows:

1. The factors behind the launching of the Bodoland Movement were the consciousness of the Bodos to preserve their identity, socio-economy, language, tribal land, culture and education. This movement led to the creation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) on 10th February, 2003.
2. The BTC has been vested with certain powers and functions, Legislative, Executive and Financial, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. As per the Memorandum of Settlement, the powers and functions of the BTC spread over 40 subjects, out of which 39 subjects have been fully implemented and only one subject, that is, 'Relief & Rehabilitation', has not been implemented so far.
3. It is found that the civil administration of the Autonomous Territorial Council is placed with the two authorities, that is, the Deputy Commissioner, who represents the state government, and the Executive Council of the BTC. The Council enjoys autonomy and control over the departments specified in the MoS, but it does not control the district administration. The Sixth Schedule has, thus, created two sets of authorities leading to consequent anomalies that overlap and create confusion over the jurisdiction in execution of their authorities.
4. In terms of the size or total number of seats in the Council, there is no uniformity in all the District Councils of the North East India. In the BTC, the total strength of the ruling body is 46 and this is the highest size in all the District Councils in North East India.

5. The BTC has been successful in changing the scenario of the Assam state politics. The regional party of the BTC known as Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF), under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary, has 11 MLAs in the Assam Legislative Assembly, out of which 3 are holding office as Cabinet Rank Ministers and 2 candidates have also been elected as Members of Parliament from the same party. The present Government of Assam is a Coalition of the BPF and the National Congress Party, which is a big achievement in the history of Bodo politics and this development took place only after the attainment of the BTC.

After the establishment of the BTC, there are some developments that have taken place in the BTC areas, particularly infrastructural and socio-economic developments. The major findings of chapters III and IV of the study are:

1. The departments' achievement reports of socio-economic and infrastructural sectors of the Council show that during the five years period (2003-2008) the Council has initiated various developmental measures. The most significant achievements of the Council since its creation can be seen in the development of Infrastructures. The main sector in which this development has taken place is the administrative sector. The development of administrative infrastructure can be substantiated with the construction of the BTC Assembly and Secretariat Complex at Kokrajhar, the construction of District Head Quarters in all the four districts of the Council, the construction of Sub-divisional Centres at Kajalgaon, Salbari, Tamulpur and Bhergaon and the office building of the various departments of the BTC.

2. The Public Works Department has also taken up many projects for the development of road communication. Some of the important works of the development include the Dhamdhama-Tupalia-Subankhata Road in Baksa District, the Kaurbaha-Nagrihuli Road in Baksa District, the Narabari-Daokibari Road in Kokrajhar District, the North Kajalgaon-Bangtol Road in Chirang District, the Bhaoraguri-Kachugaon Road, the Kashikotra-Basugaon Road, the Sundari-Vidyapour via Kakragaon Road, the Fakiragram-Serfanguri Road, and the Bamungaon-Bengtoll Road. Besides, the construction of roads from NH-31 Barama to Mushalpur, improvement of the Jalah-Rupahi-Saudarvita- Gobordhana Road, the Udalguri- Bhakatpara via Bhairaguri Road, the Banargaon-Pakribari Road, and the Kalaigaon-Kundarbil Road were also undertaken by the Council.
3. The socio-economic condition of the Bodo society is seemingly improving as they are moving forward from agriculture based economy to a semi-commercial based economy.
4. The agricultural sector has been given more emphasis and has been provided with more facilities including scientific ways of cultivation to increase the production of crops as well as to accelerate agricultural development. Major and minor irrigational projects have been constructed, namely the Champabati Irrigation Project, the Suklai Irrigation Project and the Bhwirabkunda Irrigation Project.
5. Fishery, weaving and handloom and animal husbandry sectors are developing with the help of better facilities, and this has helped to boost the economy of the people.

6. As per the provision of the BTC, the Panchayati Raj Institution is put under the Council for better development of the region at the grass root level. Hence, the BTC is the only District Council in North East India that enjoys this power. Accordingly, the BTC has taken up various schemes to implement in rural areas of the region. To execute the plans and policies of the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, 14 full and 26 partial Development Blocks have been created in the areas. Again there are 4 reorganized District Rural Development Agencies has placed to monitor the activities of Rural Development programmes.
7. Relating to the development of human resource, the Council has initiated measures to improve health care facilities, education, sports and culture. Many new Primary Health Centres and hospitals have been established by the BTC. Sport grounds, playgrounds and stadium are also seen to have been either constructed or renovated within the BTC areas.
8. The various construction and implementation of tourist infrastructures like, eco-tourism guest houses, forest lodges at various tourist spot, centenary, children park etc., have been completed under the Council. The infrastructural development in this sector has brought an increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists.
9. With regards to cultural and literary development, the inclusion of the Bodo language in the Eight Schedule to the Constitution of India is yet another significant achievement of the BTC. Besides, to improve and preserve the rich culture and heritage of different communities in the BTC areas, the

construction of a Cultural Complex at Kokrajhar is also an achievement of the Council.

10. In the field of educational infrastructure, establishment of institutes like the ITI Training Centre, various schools and colleges, the campus of the Guwahati University in the Kokrajhar District of the BTC are considered a major development. Another major achievement of the Council is the setting up of a centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) with the objectives of imparting technical education like Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food Processing, Rural Industry, Business Administration, etc.
11. Another developmental project of the Council is the inauguration of the Knowledge City in Chirang District. This Knowledge City comprises of an Engineering College with eight streams, a school of management offering BBA and MBA courses, a Law College and a Bio-Technology College. The four districts of the BTC have very few institutes for higher learning and this initiative is definitely going to fulfil a long-standing need of the areas. Apart from catering to a vast number of students, the Knowledge City would serve the purpose of uplifting the overall educational environment of the area. Thus, particularly the educational department has brought noticeable changes in the BTC areas.

Having observed the above findings of this study, it is seen that with the completion of 5 years of its formation (2003-08), the Council, under the leadership of its Chief, Hagrama Mohilary and his team of Executive Members, has made an overall progress in subjects entrusted to it, and has been successful in integrating the

region into one unit and thereby giving pride and hope to the people of the region. According to the development reports of various departments of the Council, it is seen that the Council has been able to take up a number of working areas for development and these are in progress. The Council has made considerable progress and improvement in the field of infrastructure and thus many developments could be seen in the socio-economy of the region which is helping the common people to transit from agricultural society to semi-commercial society. In spite of the above mentioned developmental functions in the area, some problems continued to exist since the commencement of the BTC. Now the question arises as to whether the BTC has actually been able to fully fulfil the aspirations of the people, and as to whether it has been able to outline the future of the Bodo people and the BTC itself. Some of the continuing problems in relation to operation of the BTC are outlined as follows:

The **first** problem is in relation to the BTC with other communities in the area. As the middle class continues to grow in size, the demand of the middle class for an extension of autonomy is also growing. But extension of autonomy means extension of power. When the founding fathers of the Constitution of India provided for the creation of Autonomous District Councils with a considerable amount of autonomy in the administration of tribal districts in Assam, they never thought that the tribals would ever ask for more power and autonomy. Today most of these Autonomous District Councils have been upgraded into State administrations. Newspaper reports show that the non-Bodo communities of the BTC area are showing dissatisfaction with the functioning of BTC and this has been demonstrated very often through their calling of *bandhs* and road blockades in pursuit of various demands like Scheduled

Tribe (ST) status by the Adivasis and the Raj Bongshis and the Autonomous State demand by the Rabhas and the Raj Bongshis and vice-versa. However, unlike the various hill tribes in and around Assam, the Bodos may face one formidable difficulty in attaining additional and exclusive autonomy, while they had already experienced during the previous Bodoland movement. In addition, the present BTC areas include a very substantial number of non-tribal populations with particular concentration in urban and semi-urban localities. There is also a very substantial Bodo population outside the BTC areas both in the plains as well as in the hills of Assam. While the permanent non-tribal residents in the BTC territory may oppose tooth and nail any move for granting more autonomy to the BTC, it may lead to violence by the non-tribals in the BTC areas.

In course of time, such demands may also be raised by the Bodo leaders not as a bargaining plank (as they had already done during the so called Bodoland movement) but as a real objective. The BTC already has now control over Land and Revenue and the Bodo leaders will no doubt utilise this power to make it impossible for the non-tribals to own and occupy land in the BTC areas. Even trade permits and other sanctions in connection with business and commerce will not be made easily available to the non-tribals. Such things have already been happening in other tribal areas enjoying autonomy at District level or State level. There is no reason to suppose that the Bodo leaders will always behave differently than the tribal leaders elsewhere in the North East. Assam with its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population is extremely fragile in this respect. Already the Memorandum of Settlement of the BTC, signed at New Delhi, has reportedly created some tension between the Bodos in

Karbi-Anglong and the Karbis there. The creation of the BTC has soured the relation between the Bodos and the Koch-Rajbongshis, both having the same ethnic origin. All these developments should be taken note of by the tribal as well as non-tribal leaders and a serious consideration should be made to find out a lasting solution to the endemic intra-ethnic and tribal unrest in the Council areas.

The **second** problem is regarding the relation of the BTC to other Bodo groups. Even after the formation of the BTC, the extremist group, namely, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) rejected the agreement and has continued unabated and several incidents of raid, kidnapping, extraction of ransom and wanton killing have taken place in the BTC areas. The insurgent group (presently at ceasefire) has been a big rival against present ruling party (Ex-BLT). Each group has its own demands and requirements for its movement. Thus, even after the formation of the BTC, the NDFB group is not supporting the Council, rather their demand is for a sovereign state. So the ruling party (Ex-BLT) of the BTC is facing problems that pose against the smooth functioning of the Council. The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) initiated and took very active role in leading the Bodoland movement till the attainment of the BTC and supported the Ex-BLT party to run the Council by forming a political party, namely the Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF). However, just before the BTC Legislative Assembly re-elections held on 13th May, 2005, the ABSU withdrew its support to the BTC Chief, Hagrama Mahilary, and his ruling body. They formed a new political party regaining former party's name the Bodoland People's Progressive Front (BPPF) under the leadership of Rabiram Narzary. On the other hand, Hagrama Mahilary also reconstituted a new political

party named, the Bodoland Progressive Front (BPF). The Rabiram party, the BPPF, contested the Council Elections held on 13th May, 2005 against the Hagrama party, the BPF, where the later emerged victorious. It is interesting to note here that the ABSU that had led the Bodoland movement and supported the Hagrama led BLT Party to run the Council also got divided. The main reason behind the faction of these two groups was because the ABSU led by Rabiram did not make any agreement with the BPF in running the Council jointly. Thus, it shows that the clashes for political power rose from within the same community itself.

However, despite the weakness mentioned above, the District Council is not without opportunities for improvement in its overall operation. It depends on the people of the BTC area to elect responsible leaders who in turn are responsible and accountable in implementing policies of development and in recruiting qualified staff workers in the Council. Thus, in the light of the discussion, the following suggestions may be made to improve the functioning of the Council:

Policy Implications and Suggestions

It deserves to be acknowledged that after the formation of the Council and to articulate its objectives, the BTC is executing various developmental measures. It is important to note that the Council may be able to achieve greater success if following positive strides towards development are undertaken:

a) **Operation of Autonomy:** On the day of Inauguration of the BTC, the honourable Deputy Prime Minister of India, Shri Lal Krishna Advani emphatically

said, “Now the ball is in your court, strike it properly and push into the goal” it is a big task for the entire Bodo people. If BTC is the outcome of a long cherished demand for Bodo homeland, starting from the PTCA demand for ‘Udayachal’ to this end, now it is a high time for the ‘Bodoland helmsman’ to give a concrete design to their own state with satisfaction in different fields like political, economic, social and cultural and so on and so forth. The main idea of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule are looked upon as instruments for welfare of the people and to preserve their own tradition and culture with maximum autonomy in the management of their own affairs. Contributing to social, political, economic and cultural development is the core strategy of the Councils. Likewise, the main thrust of BTC agreement was to raise the Bodos with basic all round development of the areas in respects of infrastructure and socio-economic change and enhancement of the Bodo Society as a whole. Thus, it is the responsibility of the Council to bring progress to integrate the region into one unit and thereby fulfilling the aspirations of the people in the region.

b) **Development of Economy:** The region is primarily dominated by rural people and their occupation is mostly agricultural in nature. Firstly, it is very important that the BTC has to rightly initiate the scheme for mechanized and modern cultivation and provide assistance in all aspects of agricultural growth. These sectors should be the priority of the BTC to boost the economy of the region. Secondly, the BTC is apparently not much of a resourceful area if considered from the natural resource point of view except the two prominent and renewable natural resources namely forest and water resources. But having bountiful natural resources is not a guarantee for economic development according to modern economists. In the present

day economy, built-up human resource has been counted as the most important factor. In the present day world it is very difficult to thrive either as a society without industrialisation and commercial advancement. An all round development is foreseeable, in one way, only if the personalities at the helm of the administration can sort out the men of quality and fit them into the different branches of development without prejudice. Thirdly, timely utilization of government funds is most important. Sometimes, the failure in timely utilization of funds ensures failure of developmental projects. Given the nature of underdevelopment in the region, the Council ought to have exhibited with greater dynamism and sincerity in implementing developmental projects, more so when the Centre is providing the necessary financial assistance. Therefore, timely execution of the plans and policies for the welfare of the people is the most important issue.

c) **Need for BTC to define its goals with the other communities:** The formal launching of the BTC and the assumption of office by the Council has generated fears and anxieties among a considerable non-Bodo population (some non-Bodo organizations are the All Assam Koch-Khystria and Raj Bongshi Students' Union, the Adivashi Students' Union of Assam, the Birsa Commando Force and the Sanmilitiya Janagostiya Sangram Sammittee).³ Perhaps, if the Council shares its autonomy with other minority non-Bodo communities and prevents the ideas and practices of political domination and subordination, it may pave the way for peace and harmony. Further, by fulfilling the urges and aspirations of all other communities in political, economic, social and other spheres like education and culture, it could bring

³ Parmeswar Brahma, *Ethnocentric Movement and its Manifold Aspects in Politics and Social Life of Assam*, in Mugani Sahki, (Published by ABSU, Korajhar, 2004), p. 16.

understanding and cooperation between the Bodos and the non-Bodos, to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony and development. Moreover, a people-oriented development free from all traces of corruption is the need of the hour.

Hence, the formation of the BTC in Assam is one of the major steps towards development of the Bodo tribal community. This Council has contributed immensely, as per provisions laid down in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, towards overall progress in the region. In the few years since its commencement, the Bodo people have witnessed positive change in the area. However, the area that falls within the BTC is also home to many non-tribal people of Assam. The Council is yet to define its goals in ways that do not clash with the interest of these communities. This can be achieved is only through active rethinking of leaders. The powers and functions of the BTC inspire other tribal communities to emulate its operations in many areas. It still stands out as one of the biggest autonomous councils in the north-eastern region of India, whose sole purpose is in integrating the tribal society into a modern and developed society. As such, the BTC, with its effective functioning and achievements can set a good example for the rest of the Councils in the North East India to follow.

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Appendix - A

MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT WITH BLT, 2003

The Government of India and the Government of Assam have been making concerted efforts to fulfill the aspirations of Bodo people relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development. Towards this end, a series of talks were held between Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) since March, 2000. As a result, it is agreed to create a self-governing body for the Bodo areas in the State of Assam as follows:

2.OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the agreement are : to create an Autonomous self governing body to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the State of Assam and to provide Constitutional protection under Sixth Schedule to the said Autonomous Body; to fulfill economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of Land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and to speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area.

3.AREA

3.1: The area of the proposed BTC shall comprise all the villages and areas as per Annexure-I to be so notified by the State Government. The above mentioned villages and areas shall be divided into 4 contiguous districts after reorganisation of the existing districts of Assam within a period of 6 months of the signing of the agreement on the lines of the proposal given by BLT subject to clearance of the Delimitation Commission.

3.2: A Committee comprising one representative each from Governments of India & Assam and BLT will decide by consensus on the inclusion of additional villages and areas in the BTC from out of villages and areas given in Annexure-II on the basis of the criteria of tribal population being not less than 50%, contiguity or any other agreed relevant criteria within a period of three months of signing of this MoS.

4. STATUS OF BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL

The provision of the Sixth Schedule and other relevant Articles of the Constitution of India will apply to BTC, mutatis mutandis in terms of this agreement. The safeguards/modifications for the non-tribals in BTC area, inter-alia, will include the followings:

4.1: Provisions of para 1(2) of Sixth Schedule regarding Autonomous Regions will not be applicable to BTC.

4.2: A provision will be made in para 2(1) of the Sixth Schedule for increasing the number of members for BTC up to 46 out of which 30 will be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities and 6 to be nominated by Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities from BTC area of which at least two should be women. Nominated members will have the same rights and privileges as other members, including voting rights. Election from the 40 constituencies of BTC shall be on the basis of adult franchise. The term of the elected members of BTC shall be for 5 years.

4.3: Safeguards for the settlement rights, transfer and inheritance of property etc. of non-tribals will be suitably incorporated in para 3 of the Sixth Schedule. Any such law may be made by the BTC in this regard will not, in particular:

- a) Extinguish the rights and privileges enjoyed by any citizen of India in respect of his land at the commencement of BTC, and
- b) Bar any citizen from acquiring land either by way of inheritance, allotment, settlement or by way of transfer if such citizens were eligible for such bonafide acquisition of land within the BTC area.

4.4: Provision will be added in para of Sixth Schedule that in BTC area, language and medium of instruction in educational institutions will not be changed without approval of the State Government.

4.5: Provisions of para 8 of Sixth Schedule regarding power to assess and collect land revenue and impose taxes shall be applicable to BTC.

4.6: Para 10 of the Sixth Schedule will not be applicable to BTC area.

4.7: Provisions of Article 332(6) of the Constitution will be so modified that the existing status of representation of BTC area in the State Assembly is kept intact. After the creation of BTC, the Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies shall be delimited by the Delimitation Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

4.8: In the event, Panchayati Raj system ceases to be in force in the Council area, the powers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in such matters shall be vested with the Council.

The amendments to the Sixth Schedule shall include provisions in such a manner that non-tribals are not disadvantaged in relation to the rights enjoyed by them at the commencement of BTC and their rights and privileges including land rights are fully protected

5. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

5.1: The Council shall have legislative powers in respect to subjects transferred to it as enumerated at Annexure-III. All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect. The BTC shall have executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of subjects transferred to it.

Subjects to be entrusted to BTC by Assam Government

1. Agriculture, including agricultural education and research, protecting against pest and prevention of plants diseases;
2. Animal husbandry and veterinary, that is to say, preservation, protection and improvement of stock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice, cattle pounds;
3. Co-operation;
4. Cultural affairs;
5. Education, that is to say, primary education, higher education including vocational training, adult education, college education (general);
6. Fisheries;
7. Flood control for protection of village, paddy fields, market and towns (not of technical nature);
8. Food and civil supply;
9. Forests (other than reserved forests);
10. Handloom and textile;
11. Health and family welfare;
12. Intoxicating liquors, opium and derivatives, subject to the provisions of entry 84 of List I of the Seventh Schedule;
13. Irrigation;
14. Labour and employment;
15. Land and Revenue;

16. Library services (financed and controlled by the State Government);
17. Lotteries (subject to the provisions of entry 40 of List I of the Seventh Schedule);
theatre, dramatic performance and cinemas (subject to the provisions of entry 60
of List I of the Seventh Schedule);
18. Markets and fairs;
19. Municipal Corporation Improvement Trust, districts boards and other local
authorities;
20. Museum and archaeology institutions controlled or financed by the state, ancient
and historical monuments and records other than those declared by or under any
law made by Parliament to be of national importance;
21. Panchayat and rural development;
22. Planning and development;
23. Printing and stationery;
24. Public health engineering;
25. Public works department;
26. Publicity and public relations;
27. Registration of births and deaths;
28. Relief and rehabilitation;
29. Sericulture;
30. Small, cottage and rural industry subject to the provisions of entries 7 and 52 of
List I of the Seventh Schedule;
31. Social welfare;

32. Soil conservation;
33. Sports and youth welfare;
34. Statistics;
35. Tourism;
36. Transport (roads, bridges ferries and other means of communications not specified in List I of the Seventh Schedule municipal tramways, ropeways, inland waterways and traffic there on subject to the provisions of entry 40 of List, I and III of the Seventh Schedule with regards to such waterways, vehicles and other mechanically propelled vehicles);
37. Tribal research institution controlled and financed by the State Government;
38. Urban development - town and country planning;
39. Weights and measures subject to the provisions of entry 50 of List I of the Seventh Schedule; and
40. Welfare of plain tribes and backward classes.

5.2: There shall be an Executive Council comprising of more than 12 Executive Members, one of whom shall be the Chief and another one the Deputy Chief of the said Executive Council. There shall be adequate representation for the non-tribal members in the Executive Council. The Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Council shall have the status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the other Executive Members equivalent to the Minister of State of Assam for protocol purposes in BTC area.

5.3: The BTC shall have the full control over the officers and staff connected with the delegated subjects working in the BTC area and shall be competent to transfer these officers and staff within the BTC area. ACRs of these officers shall also be written by the appropriate BTC authority.

5.4: BTC shall also be competent to make appointments for all posts under its control in accordance with the rules of appointment followed by the Government of Assam. However, the posts, where recruitment is made on the recommendation of APSC, shall not be covered under this provision. The Council may constitute a Selection Board for appointments to be made by it and may also make rules, with the approval of the Governor of Assam, to regulate appointments and to ensure adequate representation for all communities living in the Council area.

5.5: No posts shall be created by BTC without concurrence of the Government of Assam and it shall also abide by the decision of the Government of Assam in respect of abolition of temporarily keeping vacant any post.

5.6: Development functions and bodies within the competence of BTC shall be transferred to BTC. In respect of DRDA, concurrence of Government of India will be obtained.

5.7: The offices of the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendent of Police will be outside the superintendence and control of BTC.

5.8: The State Government would provide an amount, to be decided every year on population ratio basis, as grants-in-aid in two equal installments to the BTC for executing development works. The proportionate share for the BTC shall be calculated on the basis of the Plan funds available after setting aside the funds required for earmarked sectors and the salary. This amount may be reduced proportionately if the state plan allocation is reduced or there is plan cut due to resource problem. In addition, the Council will be paid a suitable amount plan funds and non-plan funds to cover the office expenses and the salaries of the staff working under their control. The BTC shall deserve the salaries of the staff under their control and would ensure strict economy in the matter.

5.9: BTC authority shall prepare a plan with the amounts likely to be available for development works, both under state share and central share, covering any or all the

activities of the departments under their control. The Council shall have full direction in selecting the activities and choosing the amount for the investment under the same in any year covering all groups of people in a fair and equitable manner. This plan will be a sub set of the state plan and would be treated as its integral part. Once the plan of the state, including BTC plan, gets the approval of the Planning Commission, the BTC authority shall start execution of their plan in BTC area. Modifications, if any, made by the Planning Commission in the BTC proposal, shall be binding on the BTC authority. The State Government shall not divert the funds allocated to the BTC to other heads and also ensure its timely release. BTC may have Planning Department to prepare the plans for BTC area to be submitted to Planning Commission through the Government of Assam.

5.10: The executive functions of the BTC shall be exercised through its Principal Secretary who shall be an officer of the rank not below that of Commissioner/Secretary to Government of Assam. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam shall be vested with the Principal Secretary of BTC and sanctioning powers of head(s) of the department(s) including for technical sanction shall be conferred on the senior most officer of the department preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who may be designated as Director of BTC for that department. The Principal Secretary and other officers shall exercise their powers under the overall guidance and supervision of BTC.

6. LAW AND ORDER

To strengthen the Police Administration, Government of Assam shall appoint an IGP for the four districts of BTC and the jurisdiction of the DIG, Kokrajhar shall also be modified to cover these four districts.

7. REVISION OF LIST OF ST

Consequent to the inclusion of BTC area into the Sixth Schedule, the list of ST for the State of Assam shall be so modified, so as to ensure that the tribal status of Bodos and other tribals living outside the BTC area does not get affected adversely.

8. GRANT OF ST STATUS TO BODO-KACHARIS OF KARBI ANGLONG AND NC HILLS DISTRICTS

The Government of India agrees to consider sympathetically the inclusion of the Bodo-Kacharis living in Karbi-Anglong and NC Hills Autonomous Council area in the ST (Hills) List of State of Assam

9 DEVELOPMENT OF BODO LANGUAGE

9.1: The Government India agrees to consider favourably the inclusion of Bodo language in Devnagri script in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

9.2: Bodo Language shall be the Official Language of BTC subject to the condition that Assamese and English shall also continue to be used for official purposes.

10. ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE OF BTC

10.1: The State Government, within the limitation of financial and other constraints, may offer or allow the Council to offer, possible and sustainable additional incentives for attracting private investment in the Council area and would also support projects for external funding.

10.2: In order to accelerate the development of the region and to meet the aspirations of the people, the Government of India will provide financial assistance of Rs.100 Crores per annum for five years for projects to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in BTC areas over the above the normal plan assistance to the State of Assam. The size of the Corpus will be reviewed after a period of five years. Suitable mechanism will be build in the system to ensure that the funds are transferred to BTC in time and at regular intervals. An illustrative list of projects which may be considered to be taken up in BTC area is at Annexure-IV.

List of Projects:

1. To establish a centre for development and research of Bodo language.
2. Upgradation of existing educational infrastructure by way of renovation/addition of buildings, providing modern facilities for teaching such as computers, science laboratories etc. from primary level to college level in BTC area.
3. A cultural complex to be established at Kokrajhar to promote and develop Bodo tradition and cultural heritage.
4. To establish a super-specialty hospital with all modern facilities at Kokrajhar. Government hospitals shall be established in all districts, sub-divisional and block headquarters.
5. To establish sports complexes in all the district headquarters
6. Food processing plants and cold storage facilities at Kokrajhar, Kajalgaon, Udalguri and Tamulpur.
7. Construction of a bridge over river Aai to connect Koilamoila, Amguri etc. with the rest of the district.
8. To build a Bodoland Bhawan in Delhi.
9. To set up integrated agro-processing park and textile-cum-apparel park.
10. Revitalisation of Kokilabari Agricultural Farm.
11. To develop adequate infrastructure to promote Manas sanctuary as an international tourist spot.
12. To complete Champa, Suklai and Dhansiri irrigation projects.
13. To construct a highway on the Indo-Bhutan border from Jamduar to Bhairabkunda to connect remote places located adjacent to the border.
14. To set up model dairy, fishery, horticulture and poultry farms/training centres at different places in all the 4 districts to encourage youths for self-employment.
15. To enhance the existing facilities in veterinary hospitals in BTC area.

10.3: Government of India will provide necessary one time financial assistance required for development of administrative infrastructure in the newly created district

headquarters, sub-divisional headquarters and block headquarters, besides the BTC Secretariat Complex at Kokrajhar.

11. CENTRALLY FUNDED UNIVERSITY

11.1: A Centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) will be set up to impart education in various technological/vocational disciplines such as Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food-Processing, Rural Industries, Business Management etc.

11.2: The CIT will be subsequently upgraded to a Centrally funded State University with technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC.

12. RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

12.1: The BLT would join the national mainstream and shun the path of violence in the interest of peace and development. After the formation of the Interim Council of BTC, BLT will dissolve itself as an organisation and surrender with arms within a week of swearing-in of the interim council. The State Government would provide full support to relief and rehabilitation of the members of BLT who would surrender with arms in this process in accordance with the existing policy of the state. Financial support in such cases, however, shall be limited to be provisions of the scheme prepared and funded by the Government of India. Withdrawal of cases against such persons and those related to over ground Bodo movement since 1987 shall be considered according to the existing policy of the State of Assam.

12.2: The Government of India will initiate steps for review of action against the Bodo employees of Government of India and subordinate offices as well as in respect of Central Government undertakings. Similar action would be taken by the Government of Assam.

12.3: Bodo youth will be considered for recruitment in Police, Army and Para-Military Forces to increase their representation in these forces.

13. SPECIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY ETHNIC DISTURBANCES

The Special Rehabilitation Programme (SRP) for the people affected by ethnic disturbances in Assam, who are at present living at relief camps in Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon etc. shall be completed by the Government of Assam with active support of BTC. Necessary funds for their rehabilitation shall be provided by the Government of India and lands which are free from all encumbrances required for such rehabilitation shall be made available by the BTC.

14. INTERIM COUNCIL

Immediately after signing of the agreement, Interim Executive Council for BTC shall be formed by Governor of Assam from amongst the leaders of the present Bodo movement, including the signatories to this settlement, and shall include adequate representations to the non-tribal communities in BTC area. The Interim Council shall not continue for a period beyond 6 months during which period election to the Council shall be held. Government of Assam shall dissolve the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) and repeal the BAC Act.

15. Government of Assam will consider inclusion of all tribals including Bodos in RHAC/MAC/LAC in consultation with leaders of this Councils.

16. The implementation of the provision of the Memorandum of Settlement shall be periodically reviewed by a Committee comprising representatives of Government of India, Government of Assam and BTC.

Appendix -B

1.1 The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2003

The Bill seeks to create an autonomous self-governing body to be known as the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the State of Assam under Schedule VI of the Constitution of India which shall have legislative, administrative and financial powers in respect of specified subjects. The Bill further seeks to provide for adequate safeguards for the non-tribals in the BTC areas in regard to rights and privileges including land rights presently enjoyed by them at the commencement of BTC.

During his deposition before the Committee on 26 June 2003, the Joint Secretary (NE), Ministry of Home Affairs traced the genesis of the Bill and informed the Committee that the Bodos were the largest recognized plain tribe in Assam comprising 1.2 million people or 5.3% of the total population of Assam of 22.4 million as per 1991 census. They were chiefly inhabitants of Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang Districts of Assam.

1. He also apprised the Committee that the Bodo problem primarily arose due to perception of negligence of the Bodo areas by successive Governments in Assam since independence, influx of migrants from other parts of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Bangladesh, which led to alienation of tribal land, though prohibited by the Assam Land Revenue (Rules and Regulations) 1886 and search for separate Bodo identity. The proposed BTC areas would also include other tribes living in Deori, Hojai, Kachari including Sonowal, Lalung, Mech, Miri and Rabha.

He further stated that in order to address and solve the Bodo problem, the Government of India signed the Bodo Accord on February 20, 1993 with All Bodo Students Union and Bodo People's Action Committee with the following salient features:

- (i) A Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) to be formed by an Act of Assam Legislative Assembly;

- (ii) The Council to have powers to make by laws, rules and orders for application within the BAC areas on the specified subjects;
- (iii) The geographical area of the BAC as agreed upon can be changed with the mutual consent of the BAC and the Government of Assam;
- (iv) The BAC will have power to regulate trade and commerce within its jurisdiction, in accordance with the existing laws;
- (v) The Government of Assam will deposit in the BAC fund, revenue collected from the tea gardens falling within the BAC area;
- (vi) The BAC would also receive grant-in-aid from time to time within the principles and policies enunciated by the Government of India; and
- (vii) The Government of Assam and the BAC will jointly ensure that all rights and interests of the non-tribals as on date living in the BAC area in matters pertaining to land as well as their language are protected.

In pursuance of the Bodo Accord, the BAC Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Assam which came into force on 13 May 1993. The Act provided for the establishment of an administrative authority known as Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) and for certain matters incidental and connected thereto.

2 Joint the Secretary further stated that the BAC had, however, failed to achieve the objectives for which it was set up and the Bodo groups were of the view that Bodo Accord had become unworkable due to non-implementation of the Accord in letter and spirit and were making renewed demands for separate State of Bodoland for the following reasons.

- (i) No elections could be held to the General Council of BAC so far;

- (ii) There was also dispute over the areas to be included in the BAC;
- (iii) BAC had no legislative powers; and
- (iv) Allocation and transfer of adequate funds for development works to BAC was not assure

Thus, the BAC had failed to achieve the objectives for which it was set up leading to renewed demand for separate State of Bodoland.

3 It was against this backdrop that the Government of India initiated a fresh process of dialogue with the Bodos in September 1997. In response to the initiative of the Central Government, the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) unilaterally suspended its operations with effect from 14 July 1999. This was followed by a series of tripartite talks between Government of India, Government of Assam and BLT. After twenty one rounds of tripartite talks, a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed on 10 February 2003. The main terms of agreement *inter alia* include:

- (i) Creation of an Autonomous District to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Areas District within the State of Assam and provision of Constitutional protection under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India;
- (ii) The Government of Assam to repeal the BAC Act, 1993 and dissolve the existing Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC);
- (iii) Adequate safeguards to ensure that the non-tribals in the BTC area are not disadvantaged in relation to any rights and privileges including land rights presently enjoyed by them at the commencement of BTC;
- (iv) Increasing the number of members for BTC upto 46 out of which 30 will be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities and 6 to be nominated by Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities from BTC area of which at least 2 should be women. Nominated members will have the same rights and privileges as

other members, including voting rights. Election for 40 constituencies of the BTC shall be on the basis of adult franchise. The term of the elected members of the BTC shall be for 5 years;

- (v) The Council shall have legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of 40 subjects to be entrusted to it;
- (vi) Additional financial assistance of Rs. 100 crore per annum (over and above normal plan assistance to the State of Assam) for next five years for projects to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in BTC areas;
- (vii) The Government of India has also agreed to consider favourably the inclusion of Bodo language in Devnagri script in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution;
- (viii) A Centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) to be set up to impart education in various technologies and vocational disciplines such as information technology, bio-technology, food processing, rural industries, business management, etc. The CIT to be subsequently upgraded to a centrally-funded State University with technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC; and
- (ix) The Government of India to consider sympathetically the inclusion of Boro Kacharis living in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills Autonomous Councils area in the Scheduled Tribes (Hill) List of State of Assam.

4 Here, it may be pertinent to compare the distinct features of the proposed BTC under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the BAC under the State Act:

- a) The BTC will be created under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India whereas the BAC was created under the State Legislation;

- b) The number of members for the BTC will be 46, out of which 30 will be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities from BTC areas of which at least 2 will be women. On the other hand, the number of members of BAC was 40, of which, 30 seats were reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 10 seats were open seats;
- c) BTC will have a defined territory whereas BAC territory was not defined;
- d) Elections will be ensured in BTC after every five years, while no elections could take place in BAC in the last ten years;
- e) BTC will have legislative powers over specified subjects which was not so with BAC;
- f) Adequate safeguards for the non-tribals in regard to rights enjoyed by them including land rights have been provided in the BTC and the existing representation of Scheduled Tribes and non-scheduled tribes from BTC area in the State Assembly is to be kept intact.

Further, while touching upon the earmarked area and population of the proposed BTC, the Joint Secretary stated that 3082 villages were to be included in the BTC area. Besides, a decision was to be taken to add 95 more villages in it. He informed that the total area of BAC as against proposed BTC included 2941 villages and approximately 8300 sq. kms. of land with a population of around 25 lakhs. Out of which total Bodo population was 9.84 lakhs. However, the area as well as population of the proposed BTC may undergo slight change with the increase in number of villages.

5. The Joint Secretary also apprised the Committee of the steps already taken by the Government to implement the Memorandum of Settlement such as repeal of BAC Act, 1993 and dissolution of BAC by the State Government, agreement on 3082 villages to be included in BTC, consideration of proposal for grant of Scheduled Tribe (Hill) status to Boro Kacharis living in North Cachar Hill and Karbi Anglong districts as also the proposal for inclusion of Bodo language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution. The

allocation of Rs.100 crore per annum to BTC and establishment of centrally funded Central Institute of Technology was also under consideration of the Government.

6. While justifying further the inclusion of proposed BTC in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, he drew the attention of the Committee to the recommendation of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution that the Sixth Schedule should be extended to the BAC with protection for non-tribal and non-Bodo groups.

7. Before winding up the presentation, the Home Secretary proposed further additions/amendments in the Bill which was under consideration of the Committee. Explaining the need for additions/amendments in the Bill, the Joint Secretary stated that in the State of Assam, Scheduled Tribes were divided into two categories viz. Scheduled Tribes of Autonomous Districts and Scheduled Tribes of areas other than Autonomous Districts. Bodo Kacharis were at present included in the list of Scheduled Tribes of areas other than Autonomous Districts and were popularly known as Scheduled Tribes (Plains). Consequent upon the formation of BTC Area District and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the Bodo Kacharis residing in the plain districts of Assam would stand disqualified from the Scheduled Tribes (Plains) status. In order that Bodo Kacharis continue to enjoy the Scheduled Tribes status, amendments were proposed to be carried out in the Schedule to the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes Order, 1950) in Part-II Assam as under:

- i. In item No.I "in the Autonomous Districts" be substituted by "in the Autonomous Districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills".
- ii. In item No.II for "in the State of Assam excluding the Autonomous Districts" be substituted by "in the State of Assam including the Bodoland Territorial Council Areas District and excluding the Autonomous Districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills".

8. He informed the Committee that the proposed additions/amendments would be included in the Bill as "Miscellaneous Provisions".

9. After due deliberations, the Committee expressed its whole hearted support to give a fair trial to the tripartite agreement signed by the Government of India, Government of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 10 February 2003 by way of the proposed legislation.

10. The Committee then took up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

11. The Committee having adopted the clauses of the Bill without any amendments and having approved the Government amendments to be included as 'Miscellaneous Provisions' in the Bill, recommends that it may be passed.

1.2 The Constitution (Ninety-ninth Amendment) Bill, 2003

This Bill is a natural corollary to the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2003 which has been dealt with in Chapter-I of this Report. Accordingly, this Chapter is devoted to the Constitution (Ninety-ninth Amendment) Bill, 2003. This Bill has also emanated from the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between the Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 10 February 2003. It fulfills one of the terms of the agreement which reads as under:

"Provisions of Article 332(6) of the Constitution will be so modified that the existing status of representation of BTC area in the State Assembly is kept intact. After the creation of BTC, the Parliamentary & Assembly Constituencies shall be delimited by the Delimitation Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution."

Thus, this term of the MoS seeks to protect the existing status of representation of proposed BTC area in the State Assembly by way of amending Article 332(6) of the Constitution.

2. Before having a look at the provisions of the proposed Bill, it may be pertinent to delve into Article 332(6) of the Constitution. It stipulates that no person who is not a member of a Scheduled Tribe of any autonomous district of the State of Assam shall be

eligible for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State from any constituency of that district.

2.1 Thus, Article 332(6) prohibits election of non-tribals to the State Legislative Assembly from the constituencies which fall within an autonomous district. Now with the creation of one more autonomous district in the State of Assam, namely, Bodoland Territorial Council Area District, the provision under Article 332(6) will also apply mutatis mutandis to it unless it is amended or modified otherwise. In other words, if the provision under Article 332 (6) is not amended, it will deprive the non-tribals living in BTC area of their representation in the State Assembly. Hence, need for amendment.

3. Against this backdrop, this Bill seeks to insert a proviso in clause 6 of Article 332 of the Constitution which aims at protecting the political rights of the non-tribals by ensuring that the existing representation of scheduled tribes and non-scheduled tribes from the proposed BTC areas in the State Assembly remains intact.

4. The Home Secretary along with other officials made a brief power point presentation on the Bill before the Committee in its meeting held on 26 June 2003.

5. The Committee also took up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill in the same meeting

6. The Committee, having adopted the Bill without any amendments, recommends that it may passed.

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BIO-DATA

1. Name : Junmani Basumatary
2. Gender: Female
3. Date of Birth: 22-09-1981

4. Permanent Address: C/o- Smt. Praneswari Basumatary
Vill- Sapkati No-2
P.O- Udalguri
Dist- Udalguri (BTC)
State-Assam
Pin-784509

5. Correspondence Address: C/o- Miss Tutumani Basumatary
North-East Pain Clinic of India
(Opposite Bata Show Room)
G.S Road, Banghagarh
Guwahati-781005 (Assam)

6. Educational Qualification: M.A(Pol Sc) & U.G.C/NET.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the above information furnished by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Junmani Basumatary
Department of Political Science
North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong – 793022