

## **CHAPTER- II**

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF BTAD**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter discuss about the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and its powers and functions along with the political parties actively operating in the BTAD region. It is desirable to touch the subject from many perspectives and view point because the politics in this region along with people got more exposure to main stream politics with the emergence of regional political parties after the creation of Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). The region has also undergone new development and changes in the political, social and economic aspects within short span of its political history. In socio-economic and political development of the region many active regional political parties have their unique role and contribution through the mobilisation and interest articulation of the people. The researcher has given central focus on the overall socio-economic scenario of the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. An attempt has been made to make an in-depth analysis on the socio-economic problems and prospects of BTAD and in this light some of the major development and achievements of the Council since its inception are highlighted. The in-depth analyses will give a clear picture of the socio-economic problems and prospects of the region which will enable the researcher to understand its implications on the political and voting behaviour of the people of BTAD.

#### **2.2 PROFILE OF BTAD**

Bodoland Territorial Area Districts was created under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution by an amendment Act 44 of 2003. The tripartite agreement between the Govt. of India, Govt. of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) led to sign the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) dated 10.02.2003 resulted the creation of BTAD. BTAD covers a geographical area of 8790 sq.km spread over four districts viz, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa Udalguri. The BTC was set up as a self governing body to administer the Bodo Tribal dominated areas covering large part of Brahmaputra Valley. The main aim of BTC is-

1. To fulfil the economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and preservation of land rights, socio cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos.
2. To speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area.

At the time of its inception an Interim Executive Council was formed through an amendment to Para 19 for administering BTAD. The leaders amongst Bodo movement, the signatories to the Memorandum of Settlement and other representatives from the non-tribal communities were appointed to form an Interim Government till the Council election was conducted. The areas cover under BTAD Administrative jurisdiction has been defined in Annexure-I to MOS (P: 93). A tripartite Committee was also constituted to decide (by consensus) the inclusion of additional villages (Annexure-II to MOS, P: 94).<sup>17</sup> The Administrative jurisdiction of BTAD at present spread over 25 Development Blocks, 19 Revenue Circles, 408 VCDCs and 3082 villages.

### **2.2.1 COMPOSITIONS OF BTC LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution through an Amendment Act 44 of 2003, discuss in details about compositions of BTC Legislative Assembly in Para- 2(1). BTC consist of forty-six members, of whom thirty seats are reserved for ST, five seats to non-tribal communities, five seats are open for all communities and the remaining six shall be nominated by the Governor from amongst un-represented communities of BTAD resident, of which at least two seats are reserved for women. The nominated members also enjoy same rights and privileges as other members including voting rights. The forty members are directly elected by the people through adult suffrage. The Council comprise of 12 Executive Members including Chief and Deputy Chief of the Council. They enjoy equal status of the Cabinet Minister of Assam and the other Executive Members enjoy equal status of the Minister of State of Assam.<sup>18</sup>

The Governor is entrusted with the power to make rules for the district council in consultant with the existing tribal Council for the region concerned and such rules shall provide for- i) the compositions of District Council, ii) delimitation of territorial constituencies for the purpose of elections, iii) the qualifications for voting at such elections and the preparation of electoral role there for; iv) qualifications to be members

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<sup>17</sup>Some Important Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning Bodoland Territorial Council; p-1

<sup>18</sup>BTC, MoS. Op.Cit-112

of council; term of the members of Council; v) any other matter related to elections or nomination to the council vi) the procedure and the conduct of business and vii) the appointment of officers and staff to the districts.

## **2.2.2 POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BTC**

The Amendment of 2003 to the Sixth Schedule laid out in detail the powers of the BTC. Under this amendment, “3B, additional powers were conferred upon the Bodoland Territorial Council to make laws with respect to the 40 subjects, with the prior assent of the President. The legislative power over these subjects transferred to BTC is enumerated at Annexure III. The BTC shall have the executive, administrative and financial power in respect to these subjects.

The Council conduct their administrative activities and functioning through the Executive Council (EC) which consists of 12 Executive Members including the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and the Deputy Chief Executive Member. The non-Tribals are also given a fair representation to the Executive Council. The Chief and the Deputy Chief enjoys the status equivalent to the Cabinet Ministers and other Executive Members equivalent to the Minister of the State of Assam. The Executive Council is empowered with authority to control over officers & staffs connected with the delegated subjects working in the BTC area. It has also the power to transfer these officers and staff within the area.

BTC is competent to make appointment for all the post under its control except the recruitment or appointment to be made by the APSC. And, for the purpose 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. BTC can create posts with the concurrence of the State Govt. and make appointments to posts other than those to be filled up through the Assam Public Service Commission. There is a separate Inspector General of Police for the BTC area. However, Deputy Commissioners and Superintendent of Police remain outside BTC control.

BTC is also entrusted with the development functions and development bodies or agencies are also transferred to BTC. However, in respect of DRDA concurrence of Govt. of India is required or should be obtained. Though, the provision in Para-8 of

Sixth Schedule provides the power to assess and collect land revenue and impose taxes shall be applicable to BTC. Despite of such provisions the Council in financial matter depends on the State Government. The State government provides the grant-in-aid on the population basis in two equal instalments to the BTC for executing development works. The amount may be reduced proportionately if the State plan allocation is reduced or there is plan cut due to resource problem.

BTC has the power to make plan with the available amount allocated to it for development works, both under State share and Central share, covering any or all the activities of the departments under their control. The Council has full discretion for selecting developmental activities and choosing amount for investment under the same in any year covering all groups of people.<sup>19</sup>

The executive functions of BTC are exercised by the Principal Secretary whose rank is equivalent to the Commissioner of Secretary to the Govt. of Assam. The sanctioning power of Assam Govt. is vested with Principal Secretary of BTC and the sanctioning power of the head of the department is conferred with the senior most officer of the department not below the rank of Additional Director.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, BTC is the result of a long Bodo movement for separate State Bodoland. It is an autonomous administrative setup created as an alternative to the demand of separate State by an agreement between the BLT, State Government and the Union Government of India under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. It may be mentioned that under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India the local self government in the form of Autonomous District Council and Autonomous Council are in operation in many North Eastern States. And, as such BTAD is one created in recent decades with an aim to provide political autonomy and to accelerate the socio-economic development of this Tribal dominated region of Assam. And, so far it has been believed to be an instrumental in promoting socio- economic development in this region. Despite of many limitations BTC as a decentralised government under Sixth Schedule Constitution has been working not only in the direction of Socio-Economic development but also towards appeasing political aspiration of the people of this region.

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<sup>19</sup> BTC, MoS; Op. Cit, pp-3, 4

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, P-5

## **2.3 MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN BTAD**

The political party in a democracy is very essential for the administration of a State. It is a vital instrument which provide platform to the citizen in a government making process. It plays a vital role in transforming the socio-economic and political life of the people through mobilization, interest articulation and securing active participation of the people in the political processes and decision making process of the State. The political party is one of the most active agent and popular means which have a profound impact on the political and voting behaviour of the people. It is known fact that the socio-economic conditions of the people and the region as a whole is determinant factor of the political and voting behaviour' and the political party as an active agent plays their role in moulding these behaviours of the people by securing the goal of socio-economic enhancement through government mechanism. It is therefore necessary to understand the rationale of political parties and the types of political parties operating in the region for wider understanding the co-relation between the political party and the socio-economic and political life of the people. In this backdrop, the researcher has attempted to give a brief account of the major political parties operating in the BTAD region.

### **2.3.1 POLITICAL PARTY: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Political parties are an integral part of Parliamentary democracy. Modern democracy has been Indirect or Representative Democracy. In contemporary times it is considered to be the best suitable government for the people. It is operated through the elected representatives of the people who have the supreme role to direct and motivate the people to form their government.<sup>21</sup> Political parties are the backbone of modern political system. Without organised political parties smooth democratic change over of the government, effective representation of the people and stability of the government will become impossible. Democracy and political parties live and work together. One is meaningless without the other. They are the two faces of the same coin. There can be no such thing as non-party government in the modern representative democracy.

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<sup>21</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. VIII, (p- 134,) Cited by- Radha Rani Gowalini (1993): "General Elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly (1978-1985): A Study in Electoral Politics and Voting Behaviour", A PhD Thesis submitted to Gauhati University, (1993), p- 82, (Archived: Shodhganga-inflibnet) p-82

### 2.3.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTY

Political parties are of recent vintages. The origin of an organised politics at most is around 100 to 200 years old.<sup>22</sup> According to M. Duverger, there were no political parties in modern sense of the word in any country before 1850 except the USA.<sup>23</sup> The oldest and the first political party in the world- the Democratic Party can trace its origin in USA in 1772.<sup>24</sup> Since then, the formation of political parties gradually spread all over the world. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the multiplication of political parties across the countries. The rise and development of political parties are related to the movements towards nation-states, growing popularity of universal suffrage and the establishment of Parliamentary supremacy across the countries. In short the emergence of political party is fundamentally associated with the spread and endorsement of democratic traditions, values and ideas of the modern world.<sup>25</sup>

Although, the modern political parties are of recent origin but it has been existed in one form or the other from time immemorial since the man first became political animals. Political party has its root in the omni-present struggle for power within and among human communities. As far back as history record, the Chiefs, Tyrant, the Kings and the Queens have ruled over tribes, cities and nations. The rationalisation of the government fundamentally has been an indispensable for the common defence of the community and to ensure domestic tranquillity. History also shows that the tranquillity was often disturbed as the Kings, Chieftains and Tyrants have had to fight against groups and individuals conspiring to seize their power and position under one pretext or another. The palace struggles between “ins” and “outs” in fact were nothing but the primitive form of political party’s battles for power.<sup>26</sup> W. Ivor Jennings also agreed that the British political parties existed since men first became political animals. He writes,

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<sup>22</sup>Paul H. Conn (1971): *Conflict & Decision Making: An Introduction to Political Science*. New York: Harper & Row publishers, p-157.

<sup>23</sup>Maurice, Duverger (1954), *Political Parties: The Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*. New York John Willey and Sons Inc Publishers’ p-xxiii

<sup>24</sup>Shively W. Phillips (2005): *Power & Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*, Publisher- New Delhi: MacGraw Hill, p- 248

<sup>25</sup>Dr. Ayangbam Shyamkishor (2016): “Theoretical Perspective of the Origin of Political Parties in Mizoram” Published in JONER, A Peer Reviewed Interdisciplinary Research Journal, Issue: 004 Vol. 1, January – June 2016, P- 101

<sup>26</sup>Lexicon Universal Encyclopaedia (1983): Vol. 15(p) New York: Lexicon Publications INC. p- 400

“If one speaks of ‘conservative’ and ‘liberalism’ with small letters, it is clear that the ideas or attitudes of this kind have existed since men first became political animals.”<sup>27</sup>

The creation of political parties is a continuous process and its emergence is a useful institutional idea of a level of political development having related to a modernisation process. La Palombara and Weiner advocated three types of theories of party origins- i) Institutional theory that focuses on the relationship between early Parliaments and the emergence of parties ii) Historical situation theory that focuses on the historical crisis or task where systems have encountered when parties developed and iii) Developmental theory that relates parties to the broader processes of modernisation.<sup>28</sup>

M. Duverger feels that “On the whole the development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy that is to with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives. The more political assemblies’ sees their functions and independence grow, the more their members feel the need to group themselves according to what they have in common, so as to act in concert. The more the right is intended and multiplied, the more necessary it becomes to organise the electors by means of committees capable of making the candidates known and of channelizing the votes in their directions. The rise of parties is thus bound up with the rise of parliamentary groups and electoral committees.”<sup>29</sup> He also advocated two theories of the origins of political parties- i) The Electoral and Parliamentary origin of parties and ii) Extra- Parliamentary origin of parties.<sup>30</sup> D. W Brogan termed it as “interior” and “exterior” parties respectively.<sup>31</sup>

In the first theory Duverger explains that the party grew out of political assemblies when the members feel the needs of a group to act in concert. As the popular suffrage multiplies and extends, the organisation of electors become indispensable through the committees capable of making their candidates known and channelizing the votes in their direction. His theory thus postulates different stages of development of political parties. “First, the formation of parliamentary groups takes place, then the

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<sup>27</sup>W. Ivor Jennings (1971): *The British Constitution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-34

<sup>28</sup>Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (1966): Ed. *Political Parties and Political Development*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. p- 7

<sup>29</sup>Duverger (1954) *Ibid.* p-xxiii-xiv

<sup>30</sup>Duverger (1954) *Ibid.* p xxiv-xxx

<sup>31</sup>Duverger 1954: *Op.Cit.* p-vii

electoral committees and finally the establishment of connection between these two elements.”

Second theory explains the emergence of political parties outside the purview of parliament and election. Duverger maintained that the organisations such as Philosophical Societies, Trade Union, Church etc. working outside the parliament and election are also capable of giving birth to political parties. British Labour Party is one such classic example born out of a decision of Trade Union Congress to create an electoral and parliamentary organisation in 1899. The parties born outside the Parliament however mark a contrast with the parties born within the parliamentary and electoral cycle. The former are generally more centralised than the later. In fact, the former develop from the top whereas the later starts from the base.<sup>32</sup>

Whatever the theory may be, the birth of political parties is a continuous evolutionary process. Burke was the first to acknowledge the political parties in 1769 and some commentators trace the root of party in the Tory and Whig groups in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century or in the first endurance of organised political opposition within the political process. Ostrogorski and Weber also assert that the origin of party legitimacy could be traced in the effects of Reform Act 1832 and 1867 and the rise of extra-parliamentary organisations of political parties. The growth of more democratic in political process further helped the political parties to legitimize and assume necessary electoral organisations.<sup>33</sup> Modern political parties had its origin in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and USA. It originated in England after the 1832 Reform Act. The emergence of mass based political organisations in France and other parts of Europe were generally the result of revolution of 1848. In USA political parties emerged in late 1820's, although, there were Federalists' of Hamilton and "Anti-Federalists" of Jefferson in 1790's. In India the modern political parties came into being only after the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 although, many civil organisations and associations like British India Association 1815, Bombay Association 1852 and Indian Association 1878 were already existed.<sup>34</sup> At present India has multiple numbers of political parties actively operating in national, regional and local level.

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<sup>32</sup>Dr. Ayangbam Shyamkishor (2016): Ibid, P- 102

<sup>33</sup>John D Lees and Richard Kimber' Ed. (1972): Political Parties in Modern Britain: An Organisational and Functional Guide. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

<sup>34</sup>Dr. Ayangbam Shyamkishor (2016): Ibid, P- 102



### 2.3.3 RATIONALE OF POLITICAL PARTY

Political parties are indispensable part of democracy without which the government formation becomes impossible. Political parties whether regional or national are useful political actor struggles for power in a democratic system of government. It tries to legitimise itself through participation in elections with a view to achieve some goals.<sup>35</sup> They play an important role in interest articulation and interest aggregation of the masses. It also motivates the people to take active part in the activities of the government directly or indirectly. In the era of adult suffrage, political parties establish an intimate and direct contact with their sympathizers, supporters and contest elections with a view to capture power.<sup>36</sup> Political party generally publish their election manifesto before the election and promises to implement their development programmes of socio-economic and general welfare of the people.<sup>37</sup> Many political parties with different political ideologies compete in power struggles to form the government. It may be Regional and National in its nature and kind. National party generally operates and influences in broader areas and activities than that of regional parties. **Burke** defines political party as “a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours, upon some particular principles in which they are all agreed”. **MacIver** defines political party as “an association organised in support of some principles or policy which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinant of government”. To Professor **Leacock**, political party is “as more or less organised of citizens who act together as political unit”. They share or profess to share the same opinion on public questions by exercising their voting power towards a common end, seek to obtain control of the government”.<sup>38</sup>

Broadly speaking the political parties which had seen functioning in Assam till 1973 were mainly the National parties and few Regional and Local parties which were mainly confined to the hill areas and played a prominent role when Assam was composite State. But with the beginning of the “Assam Movement” a major changes took place in the political scene of Assam. The year 1985 witnessed the formation of the

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<sup>35</sup>Jadhav Ch. Basumatary (2016): A Study on the Bodoland People’s Front and its performance in elections of BTAD, Assam, (Published in JONER: A Peer Reviewed Interdisciplinary Research Journal, Issue: 004, Volume- 2, January-June 2016) p-102

<sup>36</sup>Rahul Daimary (2015): Trace Back to Formation of BPPF: Its Split and Performance (Published in www.joner.co.in, June 2015)

<sup>37</sup>Jadhav Ch Basumatary (2016): Op. Cit, p-102

<sup>38</sup>Rahul Daimary (2015): Op.Cit. p-1

major regional parties i.e. the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) and United Minority Front (UMF) although some political parties were existed even before have had their own space of influence but did not serve as a strong regional party. Mention may be made of PTCA which emerged as early as 1967 had its limited space in the State but had a strong base mainly in plain Tribal dominated areas.<sup>39</sup>

### **2.3.4 ACTIVE POLITICAL PARTIES IN BTAD**

The creation of BTAD was one of the major landmarks in the political history of Assam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was created under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution by an amendment Act 44 of 2003 comprising of four districts of lower Assam viz. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. It was the result of long struggle for Bodoland Statehood movement of the Bodos. It is an arrangement for political autonomy having been vested with certain amount of executive and legislative power over the 40 subjects.<sup>40</sup> The creation of BTAD witnessed an emergence of several new political parties at local level. Some of them assumed as recognised regional political parties while some parties formed by the support of powerful student organisations of locality worked as political wings of these student organisations. Some of the major and active political actors of the time formed after the creation of BTAD are discussed below:

### **2.3.5 BACKGROUND AND GENESIS OF THE BODOLAND PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE FRONT (BPPF)**

The creation of BTAD gave an impetus to the needs of political party to administer the Territorial Council. This need brought several Bodo intellectuals and leaders from different groups into common platform- in particular the surrendered BLT cadres which was the major signatory of Bodo Accord 2003 along with several former ABSU leaders. On 13 April 2005, the large and united intellectuals assembled at Ganga Cinema Hall of Kokrajhar town and formally gave a birth to the new political party with the name "Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front" (BPPF). It was created just before the first Council election of BTC to administer the Council. It provided a common platform

<sup>39</sup>R. R Gwalini: (1993): Op.cit, p-82

<sup>40</sup>Swler Basumatary(2017): "Role of VCDC in Rural Development with special reference to Kokrajhar Development Block (Titaguri Assam)" Published in IJCRT, Volume 5, Issue 4 December 2017 p- 1183

for the leaders of Bodo movement comprising of Ex- Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU). The BPPF at highest level of its organisational structure is composed of Executive Committee and Policy making body. This two apex body of the BPPF was composed of the top leaders of the Bodo movement of the time.

### **I. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF BPPF**

The designated member of the executive committee of this new political party includes the member of Ex-BLT and former ABSU leaders. Besides, the party also have drawn memberships from other communities living within the BTAD into their executive committee. Following were the executive members of the first executive committee of the BPPF- Rabiram Narzary as President, Chandan Brahma and Baktar Ali Hmed as Vice President, Hemendra Nath Brahma as General Secretary and Emanuel Musahary, Sobharam Brahma, Jagdish Sarkar, Lwmshrao Daimary, Niren Roy, Badan Hasda and Rihon Daimary as Secretaries.

### **II. POLICY MAKING COMMITTEE OF BPPF**

The policy making body of BPPF composed of the BLT Chief and Chief architect of BTC Mr. Hagrama Mohilary as its Convenor and Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary, Urkhao Gwra Brahma and Pramila Rani Brahma as other core member along with ten member representatives from each district.

### **III. SPLIT OF BPPF**

This political party was created with great enthusiasm with a vision to administer the BTAD region by the leaders of the Bodo movement but soon entangled in a vicious cycle of power struggle due to presence of some power mongering leaders. It is well known fact that the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) has been the most influential and prime actor of Bodo politics in particular and the politics of lower Assam region in general. The student leaders being more learned and experienced in politics have been leading the entire Bodo politics since its inception. Remarkably, the rigorous Bodo Movement for the creation of separate land was streamlined by the student organization. The historic movement of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) in 1993 was also the result of agitation by the student organization. Needless to say that this student union has assumed a role of parent body to several rebel groups from time to

time and being a vanguard of Bodo politics this organisation sought to assume a leading role in a new dimension of politics. This political event seemingly was an intending to sideline the main protagonist of the BTC accord in the pretext of new comer in the politics however did not go well down the throat among the Ex-BLT leaders.

Having said that the under representation of interest of the Ex-BLT cadres was a serious political blunder and may be considered as one of the prime cause of the division. Lack of equal inclusion of members in the new party from the signatories of the accord dissatisfied them. The Chief architect of BTC Mr. Hagrama Mohilary, the signatory of Memorandum of Settlement with Indian Government were offered neither President nor Secretary of the new party. Rather he was offered the Convenor of the new party which seems a secondary position and the other top Ex-BLT leaders and signatories of accord were also not assigned primary roles. As a result, signatory faction was in dissatisfaction since the inception of this new party.<sup>41</sup> Soon, Mr. Hagrama Mohilary, the Chief Executive Member of Interim Council lost interest in the parent party and started to support several independent candidates against official candidates in the Council election. Amid the first Council election the internal differences manifested into ugly poll war erupting violence between the supporters of the BPPF (H) and BPPF (R) factions.<sup>42</sup> In the post Council election the BPPF (H) faction got majority supports and formed the government in the Council which later renamed as BPF in December 2005. This split in the beginning created a political disharmony and chaos among the Bodos in particular and the region at large due to continuous involvement in dog fights. The event also split the intellectual leaders into two opposite camp in the crucial juncture of nation building. Long time unity for the cause of the Bodo race was harmed by a little power politics.

After a decade long years of political rivalry a significant political development occurred in the history of Bodo politics in 2016 when these two old political rivals spit out their venoms and make out a political accession for their common political interest. The grand political reunification of BPPF-BPF was declared on the January 17, 2016 at Thulungapuri, Dotoma in Kokrajhar to end their ideological differences that broke out

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<sup>41</sup>Dr. Rahul Daimary (2018): BPF a Dominant Regional Political Party in Bodoland Territorial Council Assam, Published in JONER A Peer Reviewed Multidisciplinary Research Journal , April 2018, Issue 6, Volume-2 ISSN: 2321-0583, p- 272

<sup>42</sup>Rahul Daimary (2015): Op. Cit. p-2

in 2005. Following this great political event the BPPF was dissolved and merged into BPF.<sup>43</sup>

### **2.3.6 BODOLAND PEOPLES FRONT (BPF)**

A great political convention under the leadership of Mr. Hagrama Mohilary was held on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 2005 at Debargaon in which a formal declaration was made for the formation of the Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF). The BTC Chief Mr. Hagrama Mohilary assumed the President, Mr. Emanuel Musahary as the General Secretary and Mr. Khampa Borgayary as Spokesperson of the party. The BPF as regional political party was registered by the Election Commission of India on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008. Since its inception the BPF has emerged as one of the dominant regional political party in the BTAD region in particular and in the State politics in general. It has been ruling the Council since its inception and has been assuming an important as a strategic alliance partner and a Kingmaker in the State politics.

## **I. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BPF**

The BPF has a well knit structures working at various levels in the BTAD region. The organisational structure of the party can be seen functioning in four tiers. These are as follows:

1. **Central Working Committee:** The Central Working Committee is the apex body of the BPF. This body works at the highest level as a policies making body of the party. The BTC Chief himself is the Convenor of this Committee.
2. **District Committees:** The District Committees functions at the sub-divisional level. Each district has a committees operating within the districts and sub-divisional level.
3. **Block Committees:** This Committee worked at Block level or Constituency level. It operates along with the Territorial Constituency Level Co-ordination Committee.
4. **Primary Committees:** This is the primary unit of the BPF which worked at the lowest level or grassroots level. It operates along with the existing VCDC at the village level.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>The Sentinel, "Seal on BPF-BPPF merger" Published in 18.01.16 (<https://m.telegraphindia.com>) Visited on 09/07/2019, Time: 1am)

<sup>44</sup>Jadhav Ch. Basumatary (2016): Op. Cit, p-103

## **II. IDEOLOGY OF BPF**

1. To administer the Bodoland and Assam as a whole through the principles of Democracy, Socialism and Secularism.
2. To work for the eradication of poverty and for the upliftment of the downtrodden people living in Bodoland and Assam as a whole.
3. To work for strengthening the Indian Nationalism providing due respect to the identities of all sections of people.
4. To strive for the all round development of the people of Bodoland as well as Assam.

## **III. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF BPF**

1. To work for the sovereignty and integrity of the country based on democracy, socialism and secularism.
2. To work for the political rights, economic development and social justice to all.
3. To make a Bodoland a model and a self-sufficient by influencing the State Govt. of Assam and the Govt. of India to explore the abundant natural resources like water, forest, minerals and human resources.
4. To work to free nationalism from the prejudices of castes, religions and languages to stand by the principles of co-operation, trust, tolerance, fraternity and co-existence.
5. To influence the Govt. of Assam, the Govt. of India and the national and international financial and industrial institutions to utilize their capacities to invest for the all round economic development of Bodoland.
6. To bring reforms in the field of education to suit present conditions.
7. To implement the Bodo Accord signed by BLT, Assam Govt. and the Govt. of India in letter and spirit as soon as possible with co-operation from all concerned.<sup>45</sup>

### **2.3.7 PEOPLE'S CO-ORDINATION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS**

PCDR is a conglomerate organization of several Bodo and non-Bodo political and non-political organisations including ABSU, BPPF, UDPF, Pro-talk NDFB (Gobinda faction) and supported by Sanmilita Janagosthio Aikya Mancha, a common platform of non-Bodo groups.<sup>46</sup> It was formed just before the Council election of 2015 to give a strong political fight to the ruling BPF. Rather, it was a bloc of several political

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<sup>45</sup>Dr. Rahul Daimary, Op. Cit. p- 272

<sup>46</sup>BPF win BTC election for third time, The Assam Tribune (April 13, 2015)

and non-political parties ensemble by common political interest and to stage a foundation for the parties' opponent to the ruling BPF. It was a united political opposition to the dominance of ruling BPF. And, remarkably it is popularly claimed to have been formed in response against widespread corruption, nepotism, unaccountability, non-transparency and undemocratic attitudes of the ruling BPF. The main election manifesto of PCDR was development, corruption and hegemony of ruling party BPF.<sup>47</sup>

### **2.3.8 UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY**

In August 2015, the ABSU and former Rajya Sabha MP UG Brahma summon a special convention of PCDR at Dotoma in Kokrajhar District and formally adopted a political party with the name United People's Party (UPP) by uniting several organisations. This new political party was created just ahead of State Assembly Election with a mission to expand their political adventure to the State. Former Rajya Sabha M.P, Mr. UG Brahma and Ex-BTC member Pradip Daimary assumed as President and General Secretary respectively and BTC member from Chirang, Maoti Brahma Hazowary as treasurer. The party have 9 Vice President, 13 Secretaries, 23 organising Secretaries and 17 CWC members from the four districts of BTAD. This new party was formed uniting two regional political parties, BPPF and UDPF apart from the PCDR members. With the floating of the new party both the BPPF and UDPF were dissolved unanimously.<sup>48</sup>

The above mentioned political parties are some of the major and active political parties actively operating in the region. These political parties through their active engagement in the politics has played a vital role in changing the socio-economic and political life of the people of this region by involving them in the political processes and governance through political mobilization and interest articulation. It is undeniable fact that the political party have their unique role and contribution in overall transformation of the socio-economic of this region. In fact, they have played an active agent for socio-economic change by educating the commoner about various pros and cons of the government's development policies and programmes.

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<sup>47</sup>PCDR seeks SIT probe into corruption in BTC, The Assam Tribune (April 5, 2015)

<sup>48</sup>The Telegraph, "New Party Launched in BTC" Published in 06.08.16 (<https://m.telegraphindia.com>) Visited on 10/07/2019, Time: 12.30am)

## **2.4 ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION**

Based on one of the hypotheses of the present study-“the BPF has been enjoying continuous support of the people of BTAD because of the fact that it has been in a position to deliver services to the people” the researcher has attempted to evaluate the possible causes for continuous support of the people to the ruling party BPF. In this light the researcher considered the role and contribution of the party towards the transformation of socio-economic condition of the region as the principal determinant of the party’s popularity since the party has been ruling the BTAD for more than a decade and as such the party is directly responsible for the socio-economic development in the region.

### **2.4.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE BTAD**

The election system is a component part of the whole political system of the country. The operation of the election system, therefore, is influenced by a variety of economic as well as social and political forces. In order to analyse election politics in a State, one should have a clear idea of the economic as well as the social and political contexts of the election.<sup>49</sup> The voting behaviour is directly or indirectly influenced by the socio-economic status of a person and the area in general. Socio-economic status (SES) as defined is a combined total of social and economic measures of an individual or a family or an area’s position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation etc. “Socio-economic status can be divided into three categories viz., high SES, middle SES and low SES. When placing a family or an area into one of these categories, any or all of three variables (income, education and occupation) can easily be assessed.<sup>50</sup>

Since the present study is the voting behaviour of the people of BTAD area, it is desirable that before going to discuss the central point of the study, a detail and clear analysis of the socio-economic profile of the study area is very much necessary. All the necessary aspects of the socio-economic status of the study area BTAD is analysed briefly with the help of relevant and significant data collected from different reliable

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<sup>49</sup>Dr. K.M Deka, Dr. MN Das, Dr. ANS Ahmed, Dr. NL Dutta & Dr. T Lahon (1987): Op.Cit. p-1

<sup>50</sup>Indrani Saha (2015): Assam Legislative Assembly Election, 2011: A Study of the Voting Behaviour of Bodo people in Kokrajhar District, (Ph.D Thesis submitted under Dibrugarh University) p-35

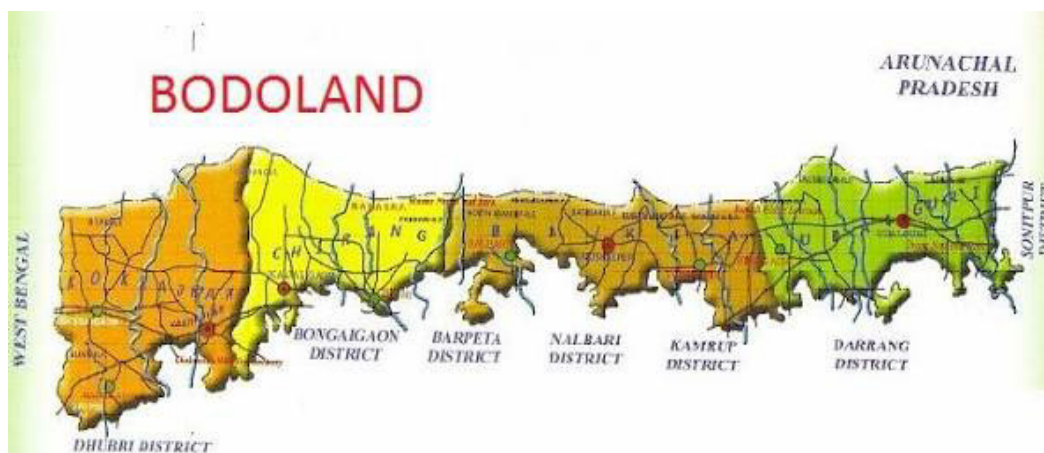


sources. With this assumption an effort has been made in this chapter to provide a brief note on the economic, social and political perspectives of the voting behaviour of the people in BTAD areas.

## 2.4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF BTAD

BTAD is the gateway to the entire North East Region of India. It is an autonomous administrative unit created by clubbing some areas of eight districts of Assam namely- Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur within the State of Assam covering an area of 8970 Sq. Km. which is about 11.24% of the total area of the State. The Administrative jurisdiction of BTAD at present spread over 25 Development Blocks, 19 Revenue Circles, 408 VCDCs and 3082 villages. BTAD is bounded by the Brahmaputra River in the South, Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan in the North, Sankosh River in the West bordering West Bengal and Pasnoi River in the East. The geographical boundary of BTAD lies between 26°7' N to 26°47'50 N Latitude and 89°47'49 E to 92° 18' 30 E Longitude and is in the North Western part of Assam. Kokrajhar town which is the Administrative Head Quarter of the Council lies roughly between 26° 25' N Longitude and 90° 16' 38" Latitude.<sup>51</sup>

**Figure 2.4.2 Political Map of BTAD indicating four districts viz- Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri**



Source: [incrediblebodoland.blogspot.com](http://incrediblebodoland.blogspot.com)

<sup>51</sup>Statistical Hand Book of BTC 2010

### **2.4.3 THE SOCIAL SETTING**

The social setting is an important determinant factor of the voting behaviour of an electorate of the region. The distribution patterns of the electorate have a profound impact on electoral mandate. In particular, in a State like Assam where core value of social mosaic is founded by the unique and distinct ethnic compositions, each of which have its political aspirations, the electoral politics is bound to be motivated by the multifaceted issues and aspirations of different ethnic groups. As such, the understanding of the social background of the region, the distribution of social pattern and the relationship among different social groups is desirable in order to understand the voting behaviour of the electorate of the region.

#### **I. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF BTAD**

The BTAD is predominantly Schedule Tribes concentrated region. As per the 2001 census report the total population in BTAD was 29.2 Lakh of which ST population constitutes around 52% with only 3% of total population living in urban areas. The average density of the population in BTC was 326 Sq. Km. compared to 340 Sq. Km. of Assam. Amongst the tribal population the Bodos constitute majority with 90% and the sizeable number of population of Rabhas and Garos constitute 10% in the area. The other communities like Rajbangsi and Sarania which are also originated from Bodo group constitute a sizeable and integral part of the total population of BTAD along with Tea Tribes or Adivasi community. Other general communities like Bengali, Assamese, Nepali and few numbers of Hindi speaking people are also found available in the Council area.<sup>52</sup>

As per 2011 census, the population of BTAD was around 3151047 of more than 3 Crore total populations of the State among which 1600712 are males and 1550335 are females. The BTAD comprises mostly of rural areas and less than 10% of land is semi-urban. As a matter of fact, the majority of population around 3010953 lives in rural areas and just an over of lakh population live in Urban. The table 2.4.3 (a) shows the distribution of population in four districts of BTAD viz. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. The population of BTAD is shown below in district wise.

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<sup>52</sup>[www.bodoland.in](http://www.bodoland.in), 2016

**Table: 2.4.3 (a) Distribution of Population of BTAD in District Wise**

| District             | Population 2011 (Census Report) |         |         |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                      | Persons                         | Male    | Female  |
| <b>Kokrajhar</b>     | 887142                          | 452905  | 434237  |
| <b>Baksa</b>         | 959975                          | 481330  | 468745  |
| <b>Udalguri</b>      | 831668                          | 421617  | 410051  |
| <b>Chirang</b>       | 482162                          | 244860  | 237302  |
| <b>Total in BTAD</b> | 3160947                         | 1600712 | 1550335 |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

As per the 2011 Census, the Bodo population was around 1,296,000 which were 5.3% of total population of Assam. The principal languages are Bodo and Assamese where both the languages are used as official language in the area. The Bodo population constitute dominant group among all other groups like Garo, Rabha, tea tribes and other SC and OBC population in the areas.<sup>53</sup> The Decadal Growth rate between the years 2001-11 in both rural and urban areas are respectively 9.34% and 9.25% as against the Annual Exponential Growth rate of 1.45% in between 2001-11. The Sex ratio in BTAD per 1000 male is 959 with density of population 374.75 per sq.km. The literacy rate as per Census 2011 is 64.71% and the BPL population as per 2009-10 was 37% in BTAD.

As already stated above that a major chunk of population in BTAD lives in rural areas the BTAD like other districts of Assam is no exception in terms of development. So far as the Socio-Economic position of BTAD is concerned it is well known fact that it is a backward region. More than 90% of the population of BTAD lives in rural areas.<sup>54</sup> As per HRD 2014 report the average monthly income in Assam is Rs. 2055. The annual per capita income in respective districts of BTAD- Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri are Rs. 18048, Rs. 21504, Rs. 18192 and Rs. 20436 respectively. The annual per capita income in BTAD is relatively lower as compared to other districts of Assam.<sup>55</sup>

The figure 2.4.3 (i) indicate the estimated birth rate, death rate and infant mortality rate of BTAD in five years. The average birth rate of BTAD in five years was 19.3 whereas the death rate was 7.4. Again, the average infant mortality rate of BTAD

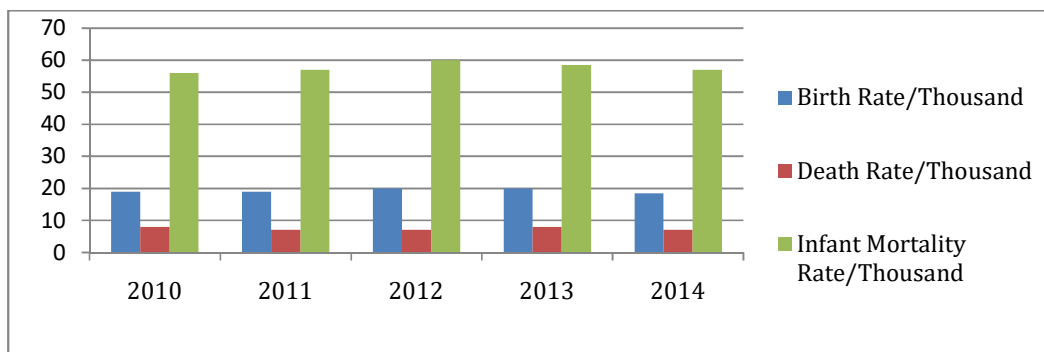
<sup>53</sup>BTC at a glance 2014-15, Department of Economics & Statistics BTC, Kokrajhar

<sup>54</sup>Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15, P-3

<sup>55</sup>Human Development Report, Assam, 2014

in last five years was 57.7. The figures indicating all the three categories are least impressive.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure: 2.4.3 (i) Estimated Birth Rate, Death Rate and Infant Mortality Rate**



**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

## II. STATUS OF EDUCATION SECTOR IN BTAD

Education is a vehicle of transforming the knowledge of a society from generation to generation. Education can enlighten the people regarding their possibilities for self-reliance and the removal of social evils from the region. Education brings awareness and awareness can bring enlightenment. A good primary education can prepare the tribes of the North-East towards integration with the rest of the country and the world. Education is an instrument of change.<sup>57</sup>

In matter of learning achievement in BTAD, the existing situation is a cause of concern. The extremely poor standards of primary education reflected in secondary and higher education stages as well. As a matter of fact, the Lower Primary Schools in BTAD areas are relatively smaller in numbers. As per the report of Director of Education, BTC, Kokrajhar the total numbers of LP School in 2014-15 is 5007 of which 4982 are Government and Provincialised and 34 Schools are maintained by Tea Garden and Local Bodies. The total enrolment of the students in these Schools is 366532 among which 182143 are girls. The number of teachers employed in these Schools is 11640. The numbers of Upper Primary School in BTAD are 1228 with total number of enrolled students 1, 55,313. The number of teachers employed in these schools is 8586.

<sup>56</sup>Op.cit, P-96

<sup>57</sup>Dr. Keshab Basumatary: Op. Cit P- 9

So far as, High Schools and Higher Secondary schools in BTAD is concerned the number is relatively smaller than the rest of Assam. It has total number of 376 High Schools with around 86796 students enrolled. It has 49 numbers of Higher Secondary Schools and 24 Junior Collages with 19625 and 12062 enrolled numbers of students respectively. The dropout rate in both LP and UP schools is quite alarming in all the four districts of BTAD. The dropout rate in LP Schools stands as high as 7.04% and 6.12 in UP Schools respectively. The existing standard in infrastructure of these schools is quite poor. Besides, the shortages of teachers and man power in these Schools have been a matter of serious concern. So far as the status of higher learning in BTAD like PhD, M. Phil, PG courses, UG Courses in various streams, B.E (Engg.) Govt. L.L.B/L.L.M the enrolled number of students is quite small. The number of enrolled students in PhD and M. Phil is 94 and the PG course is around 600. The conditions of under graduate collages and number of students in technical courses are proportionately least. Again, the performances in undergraduate courses have been not pleasing since decades. The region lack standard qualities collages and hence, enhancement in this sector is urgent needs of the time to impart quality education.

**Table: 2.4.3 (b) Showing Literacy Rate in BTAD**

| District  | Number of Literates |         |        | Literacy Rate |       |        |
|-----------|---------------------|---------|--------|---------------|-------|--------|
|           | Persons             | Male    | Female | Persons       | Male  | Female |
| Kokrajhar | 503178              | 283026  | 220152 | 66.63         | 73.44 | 59.54  |
| Baksa     | 589866              | 333856  | 256010 | 70.53         | 78.55 | 62.23  |
| Udalguri  | 481867              | 271529  | 210338 | 66.60         | 73.79 | 59.17  |
| Chirang   | 266380              | 149017  | 117363 | 64.71         | 71.35 | 57.87  |
| Total     | 1841291             | 1037428 | 803863 | 67.11         | 74.28 | 59.70  |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

Besides, the vocational courses and training in present generation is the urgent needs of the time so as to make the youths self reliant and economic viable by generating possibilities for avenues and self-employment through different vocational training and education. In contrast, the numbers of institutions offering vocational courses in BTAD is quite discouraging.

Remarkably, in recent years, BTAD government have taken a keen interest in the process of development in education sector and its infrastructure. Notably, the higher institutions like Universities, New collages, and Technical institutions like CIT,

Engineering Collage, few vocational courses like ITI and others have been established, and despite the region perform poor in this area. The region has been in the bottom list in comparison to other districts of Assam. Census report 2011 shows information on literacy rate in the irrespective districts of the State is found to be 67.11% and in the BTAD area the same was recorded 73.18% in the State of Assam. As per rural literacy as well as urban literacy rates are concerned, BTAD lagged behind the State average and other districts of Assam. The growth rate of literacy in the BTAD was significantly lower than the other districts and the State as a whole. Literacy rates among rural and urban as well as other districts in the State are also higher than the districts of BTAD.<sup>58</sup>

It is known fact that the region is blessed with geographic and cultural uniqueness and bounty. The wealth of geographical diversity and multi-cultural milieu has been put under destructive ethos today, due to lack of developmental processes in various spheres of this region's life, agriculture, trade and industry, training to serve its own prescribed needs. After all, our education has to become a dynamic force for economic growth, social and cultural progress by shedding its mere academic coat.

### **III. STATUS OF HEALTH SECTOR IN BTAD**

In progressive countries the enjoyment of good health care facilities and other basic amenities has become a basic right of its citizens. However, the ensuring of good health care facilities, other aids and the basic necessities in the third world countries stands as challenge to the State and its government. The health sector in India especially in rural areas is in poor conditions. It is a matter of fact that the government has failed to ensure good medical care facilities to the larger portion of rural population. As a result, millions of people die in rural India due to different diseases and due to lack of good health care facilities.

Likewise, the health sector in BTAD region is a matter of serious concern. Each districts of BTAD have Civil Hospital. The infrastructure in these hospitals is in poor conditions. In addition, the shortage of doctors and other man power in these hospitals further add difficulties in the health service. The whole BTAD areas have a single Sub-Divisional Civil Hospital. The number of Primary Health Centre and Community Health Centre is only 137 and 15 respectively in whole BTAD area. The number of

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<sup>58</sup>Op.cit, P-7

Sub-Centres is 552 which are relatively smaller proportion to the numbers of villages in BTAD areas.

**Table: 2.4.3 (c) Showing Health Sector**

| District    | Hospital | SDCH     | PHC        | FRU       | CHC       | Sub-Centres |
|-------------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Kokrajhar   | 1        | 1        | 44         | 4         | 4         | 177         |
| Chirang     | 1        | Nil      | 26         | 2         | 2         | 76          |
| Baksa       | 1        | Nil      | 44         | 5         | 5         | 157         |
| Udalguri    | 1        | Nil      | 23         | 4         | 4         | 142         |
| <b>BTAD</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>137</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>552</b>  |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

Again, the infrastructural standard and availability of medical facilities in these sub-centres are poor. As per the Health and Family Welfare Department, BTC, the total number of beds in different type of health institutions in 2014-15 is only 1328 for around 32 lakhs population. In 2014, the birth rate and death rate in BTAD area is 18.5 and 7 respectively per thousand populations. In the same year, the infant mortality rate is as high as 57 per thousand populations. The figure is quite higher in the rural areas indicate the acute picture of the conditions of the health care facilities in rural BTAD in particular and in general as a whole.<sup>59</sup>

The other basic amenities like pure drinking water, electricity, latrine facilities etc. are a parameter to gauge the decent and modest standard of social living conditions. Having stated the standard of living conditions in India, nearly 30% of the total population is living under abject poverty with no basic amenities. The State of Assam is no exception to it as nearly one-third population in the State lives without basic needs.

**Table: 2.4.3 (d) Households with basic amenities (in %)**

| District     | Total Households | Drinking water within premises | Drinking water near premises | Electricity as source of lighting | Sanitation facilities within premises |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kokrajhar    | 180071           | 57.5%                          | 23.9%                        | 23%                               | 29.2%                                 |
| Baksa        | 97259            | 52.8%                          | 24.8%                        | 23.1%                             | 28.7%                                 |
| Udalguri     | 190667           | 56.3%                          | 22.3%                        | 22.3%                             | 39.4%                                 |
| Chirang      | 168047           | 52.6%                          | 25.5%                        | 31.8%                             | 43.9%                                 |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>636044</b>    | <b>54.8%</b>                   | <b>24.13%</b>                | <b>25.3%</b>                      | <b>35.3%</b>                          |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, P-89

So far as BTAD area is concerned, it still lags far behind in terms of standard of living conditions. The households with drinking water facilities within premises and near premises constitute only 54.8% and 24.13% respectively and rest of the households without pure drinking water facilities constitute around 30.67% in BTAD. The households with proper electricity connection constitute only 25.3%, whereas the majority of the households don't have a proper source of lighting. It is a matter of fact that there are still many villages in BTAD with no electrification. The numbers of households with sanitation facilities constitute merely 35.3% in the BTAD areas; while the majority of the households especially in rural BTAD still live with no proper sanitation facilities.

#### **2.4.4 ECONOMIC STATUS IN BTAD**

The term Economic is a concept embracing multi-dimensional aspects of a social life. The concept of economic development has become more complex and wider with the changing perspectives and needs of the time in the threshold of development. Economic is a backbone of any modern civilised societies as well as States. The State with sound economic condition is considered to be a developed and prosperous State. Generally, in developed States industries and its productions are the primary sources of the economic progress.

India is a developing country with giant reservoir of natural resources and man power. However, the lack of good vocational training and education lags in scientific and technical advancement has staggered the Indian economic. India is a land of villages. More than half of India's total population still lives in rural areas. The rural population of India still lives a traditional way of life. And, more than half populations in rural areas still practices traditional way of productions for their livelihood and survival. Traditionally, the agriculture and other allied activities like cattle farming, poultry, sericulture and so on still occupies as primary occupation to millions of rural households for their economic sustenance.

So far as the BTAD area is concerned, it is economically one of the most backward regions. As per the report 2009-10, the BPL population in BTAD was as high as 37.8%, in which 39.7% lives in rural areas and 26.4% lives in urban. The area has seen no significant development of large scale industries in ages except few medium



scale industries in recent years. More than 90% of the total population in BTAD region lives in rural areas. And, more than half of the total population of BTAD are engaged in traditional activities like agriculture, small scale industries and other allied activities like livestock and poultry farming, cattle farming, piggery, fisheries, household industries, khadi, village industries, tourism and forest industries like plantation, smaller tea grower and rubber production etc. Agriculture is the backbone of the whole BTAD area. It is the major source of livelihood of more than half of the total rural households in BTAD. Agriculture occupies a significant position in economic life of rural populations of BTAD.

The economic status of any households and the State at large can be determined by analysing the nature of the occupations of the households. As such for the present study, to determine the economic profile of the BTAD region it is desirable to study the nature of occupation of the households living in BTAD. The households engaged in different occupations are discussed under two categories- Main Workers and Marginal Workers.

**Table: 2.4.4 (a) Main Workers in BTAD**

| District     | Main Workers  |               |                        |                    |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|              | Total         | Cultivators   | Agricultural Labourers | Household Industry | Other         |
| Kokrajhar    | 253110        | 128150        | 29518                  | 7337               | 88105         |
| Baksa        | 139027        | 66774         | 15896                  | 4241               | 52116         |
| Udalguri     | 278297        | 124450        | 44447                  | 10433              | 98967         |
| Chirang      | 253178        | 105110        | 3612                   | 6259               | 105689        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>923612</b> | <b>424484</b> | <b>125981</b>          | <b>28270</b>       | <b>344877</b> |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

The main workers in BTAD constitute about 9, 23, 612 of whom 4, 24, 484 are cultivators and 1, 25, 981 agricultural labourers. Again, the population engaged in household industry constitute about 28, 270 and 3, 44, 877 populations are engaged in other occupations. From the above figure, it can be easily determined that the majority population of the BTAD are engaged in cultivation as their main occupation. Again, the population of agricultural labourers also constitute fairly large indicates the landless populations relaying their livelihood as agricultural labourers. However, the people engaged in household industries are relatively smaller can be rationally understood from

the fact that such occupations have very little opportunities for avenues in the region. Neither, the government has taken a landmark steps to encourage such occupations among the households.

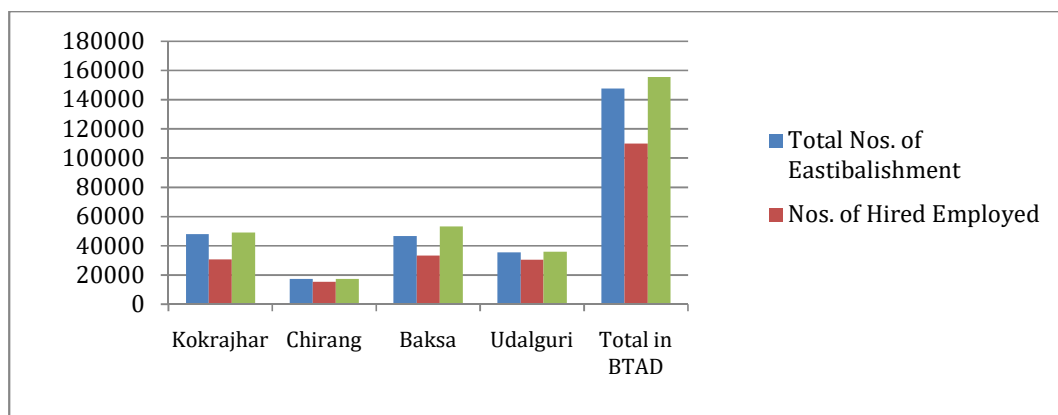
**Table: 2.4.4 (b) Marginal Workers in BTAD**

| District     | Marginal Workers |              |                        |                    |               |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|              | Total            | Cultivators  | Agricultural Labourers | Household Industry | Other         |
| Kokrajhar    | 88021            | 28603        | 26812                  | 5086               | 27520         |
| Baksa        | 54867            | 13554        | 19328                  | 3431               | 18554         |
| Udalguri     | 128459           | 24838        | 50144                  | 9877               | 43600         |
| Chirang      | 91852            | 19714        | 36624                  | 5542               | 29972         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>363199</b>    | <b>86709</b> | <b>132908</b>          | <b>23936</b>       | <b>119646</b> |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

The marginal workers in BTAD constitute 3, 63, 199 of whom 86, 709 are cultivators, 1, 32, 908 are agricultural labourers, 23, 936 are engaged in household industry and 1, 19, 646 are engaged in other activities.<sup>60</sup>

**Figure: 2.4.4 (i) District wise total number of establishments and number of persons employed (Combined) in BTAD**



**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

As per 2011 census, the total number of establishment established in BTAD area with and without fixed and inside households was 147697. The number of hired and non hired persons employed in these establishments was 265441. The average percentage of growth in establishment in both urban and rural BTAD is 7.24%. Likewise, the average

<sup>60</sup>Ibid, P-12

percentage of growth in employment in both urban and rural is 6.44%. The employment opportunities in BTAD area are very low. Employment has been a major problem among the youths of BTAD. In this matter, the Council government has done very little to generate employment opportunities for the youths. The youths in this region has suffered unemployment problem since decades. As such, due to lack of employment opportunities the households and the region in general suffers severe economic backwardness and other issues like extremism, extortion etc.<sup>61</sup>

The agricultural census suggests that agriculture is the lifeline of both the rural and urban population. Agriculture constitute major source of income for livelihood in rural BTAD. Some, of the major agricultural products yield in BTAD are rice, wheat, jute, sugarcane, potato, rape and mustard, pulses and oil seed and other cash crops etc.

**Table: 2.4.4 (c) Production of Major Crops in BTAD**

| Districts    | Production of Major Crops in BTAD<br>in the year 2014-15 (In Tonnes) |                 |                         |                   |
|--------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
|              | Rice<br>Production   | Jute Production | Sugarcane<br>Production | Pulses Production |
| Kokrajhar    | 287069   | 33294           | 6980                    | 675               |
| Chirang      | 133329   | 18561           | 6873                    | 1114              |
| Baksa        | 280054   | 3372            | 6400                    | 1199              |
| Udalguri     | 254332   | 31272           | 34357                   | 437               |
| <b>Total</b> | 954784   | 86499           | 54610                   | 3425              |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

The table shows the production of major crops in BTAD areas in the year 2014-15. Paddy cultivation is a major agricultural product of both rural and semi-urban BTAD. In the year 2014-15, the production of paddy was more than 9.54 lakh tons. The other kharif crops like Jute, Sugarcane and Pulses also contribute in economy of the BTAD. In the same year, the production of respective crops was more than 86 thousand tons, 54 thousand tons and 3 thousand tons. The crops and vegetable production in the area is relatively low despite of feasible conditions for the large scale production. The reason for such low productivity is lack of motivation and capital help to the farmers from the government. Besides, lack of good markets in the area, lack of good communication system and road connectivity in rural areas also often stands as

<sup>61</sup>VCDC wise population of Kokrajhar District, Census 2011, Dept. of Economics & Statistics, BTAD, p-73

difficulty for farmer. Further, the cultivation land in BTAD area is gradually reducing with the process of urbanisation and the rise of land grabbing incidences in tribal area have caused a land altercation.

**Table: 2.4.4 (d) Production of Major Crops in BTAD**

| Districts    | Production of Major Crops in BTAD<br>in the year 2014-15 (In Tonnes) |                      |                             |                     |
|--------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
|              | Cabbage<br>Production  | Potato<br>Production | Rape Mastered<br>Production | Wheat<br>Production |
| Kokrajhar    | 20558  | 69427                | 16243                       | 4093                |
| Chirang      | 19475  | 21810                | 3211                        | 616                 |
| Baksa        | 22818  | 32759                | 5361                        | 280                 |
| Udalguri     | 16590  | 31688                | 1328                        | 1543                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>79441</b>   | <b>155684</b>        | <b>26143</b>                | <b>6532</b>         |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

Again, the rabbi crops and vegetables like potato, cabbage, wheat, cauliflowers, master oil etc. are also grown at large scale in BTAD. In 2014-15, the production of potato was more than 1.55 lakh tons. Notably, the wheat production in entire Assam is quite low.<sup>62</sup> As per the economic survey the number of argicultural cultivators in BTAD are more than 3.11 crores and the area of more than 3.44 lakh hector is the agricultural land in operation. The Net Irrigated area is more than 75 thousands hector and more than 87 thousands hector land is Gross Irrigated area in which more than 86 thousands hector have a canals and 280 hector is irrigated with tube wells. It is very well known fact that Assam in general and BTAD in particular is a fertile land. BTAD receives good amount of rain fall every year during monsoon.<sup>63</sup>

The soil in BTAD is highly feasible for the agricultural productions. Despite of it, the agricultural productions in BTAD region have been very low. The major reasons for the low production of agricultural products are the traditional farming, lack of skill and training for scientific farming among cultivators, lack of information about HYV seeds, land development, capital aids to farmers etc. Besides, the irrigation system in BTAD is also poor. The agricultural lands are not connected with the proper irrigation cannel. Again, it is a matter of fact that BTAD is bestowed with many rivers and its tributaries, despite of it these rivers are not utilized for irrigation development in the

<sup>62</sup>Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, Op.cit, Pp-29-33

<sup>63</sup>BTC at a Glance 2014-15 Department of Economic and Statistics BTC, Kokrajhar, PP-5-7

area. As a result, the majority of cultivators in this area engage in paddy cultivation only once in a year during monsoon.

Development in agricultural sector has been the urgent need of hours because it is the backbone of rural economy in BTAD. The agricultural department have taken several initiatives to increase the agricultural productions. During 2015-16, the department have distributed 700 Qtls. of HYV Certified Paddy Seeds during Kharif season to 7000 beneficiaries. During 2015-16 around 44200 farmers and in the 2014-15, around 71400 farmers were distributed Certified Mustard Seeds and Hybrid Maize Seeds to around 14000 farmers. The HYV seed have been distributed to the farmers from season to season. The department also encourage the farmer to practise Eco-friendly IPM concept and organic farming in order to minimise the soil damage. To encourage the farmer the department organise Zonal workshop, Cluster training, and Kishan Mela with a view to exchange ideas between farmer and agricultural scientist to educate the farmer with scientific farming to raise the productions. In recent years the “Post Graduate Diploma in Bamboo Industrial Utilisation of North East” course was introduced in Bodoland University with a purpose of higher learning in the Agricultural sector.<sup>64</sup>

Again, livestock and poultry farming contributes considerable amount in economy of rural population in BTAD. The livestock and poultry farming include rearing of cattle, goat, buffaloes, ducks, pigs, chicken etc. for small scale trading and earning livelihood. The economic report 2014-15 suggests that the production of milk was 68.19 million litres, the nos. of egg production was 65.25 million and the production of meet was 9.22 tonnes. The live stock farming has been an integral part of allied agricultural activities for many cultivators in rural households BTAD. Almost all the households in the villages are engaged in the live stock farming like pig, cattle, poultry, and others. However, the live stock farming in BTAD have never been for a large commercial purpose except for few; yet such farming occasionally supports the households with capital help during their urgent needs in time of financial crisis. Although, live stock farming is not a primary source of income yet it contributes a considerable capital support to the rural household. It can clearly be affirmed that both agricultural and other allied non-agricultural farming constitute the rural economy.

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<sup>64</sup>BTC: An Achievement 2015-16, Published by Information & Public Relations Department. PP- 21

The farming of cattle has been an integral part of cultivator's and the rural households in BTAD. Besides, the pig farming, goat, poultry, duck and fowels farming are popular among the tribal households of rural BTAD. However, such farming has never been taken as serious for large scale trading purpose among many except few. The rural household in general and the government in particular should not overlook the commercial prospects in live stock farming.

**Table: 2.4.4 (e) Census of Live Stock and Poultry**

| <b>Live Stock and Poultry</b> | <b>18<sup>th</sup> Live Stock Census, 2007</b> | <b>19<sup>th</sup> Live Stock Census, 2012</b> |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Cattle                     |  |  |
| a. Indigenous                 | 1250211  | 1235947  |
| b. Crossed Breed              | 16747  | 18098  |
| 2. Buffalos                   | 25970  | 25285  |
| 3. Sheep                      | 107910   | 98982  |
| 4. Goat                       | 602240   | 1387240  |
| 5. Pigs                       | 316589   | 292415   |
| 6. Fowels                     | 2477920  | 2133199  |
| 7. Duck                       | 582741   | 499493   |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

The government should encourage the rural folk to introspect into its commercial prospects and profits. However, in this connection the BTC government has taken less significant role; rather the role of the government in this matter is more or less passive. Notwithstanding, BTAD government can play a significant role to encourage the poor villagers to take up live stock farming for large commercial purpose as well as for their main source of income.

**Table: 2.4.4 (f) Fisheries and its production in BTAD**

| <b>Types</b>                               | <b>Numbers</b> |                | <b>Districts</b> | <b>Production of Fish Seed in Millions Nos.</b> |        | <b>Production of Fish in Tons</b> |          |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|---|--------|-----------------------------------|----------|
|  | <b>2012-13</b> | <b>2013-14</b> |                  |   |        |                                   |          |
| <b>River Fisheries</b>                     | 29             | 29             | Kokrajhar        | 66  | 66.78  | 5775.95                           | 5780.32  |
| <b>Registered &amp; Unregistered Beels</b> | 114            | 114            | Chirang          | 95.10   | 109.15 | 1963                              | 1974.29  |
| <b>Forest Fisheries</b>                    | 41             | 41             | Baksa            | 45.50   | 47.52  | 5399                              | 5432.13  |
| <b>District water Bodies/ Swamp</b>        | 445            | 425            | Udalguri         | 125   | 125.94 | 1659                              | 1664.82  |
| <b>Ponds and Tanks</b>                     | 27470          | 27545          | <b>BTAD</b>      | 331.97  | 349.39 | 14796.95                          | 14851.56 |

**Source: Statistical Hand Book of BTAD, 2014-15**

The fishery sector also contributes in the economy of rural people of BTAD as the areas is surrounded by many small and medium size rivers and water bodies and swamp like ponds, tanks. Fish farming is fast growing sector in BTAD. It has total number of 114 bill fisheries both registered and unregistered and as many as 27445 numbers of pond and tank. As per the report there are 14835 hector under fisheries. The production of fish seeds was 349 million numbers and production of the fish was 14851 tons during the year 2014-15.

Considering, it the fishery department have taken a good numbers of schemes to develop the sectors particularly with a view to employ the youth in the pisci-culture. The department have constructed the fishery complex, (Meen Bhawan) at Kargaon, Kokrajhar, construction of DFDO at Udalguri and Baksa, SDFDO office at Gossaigaon. The department provides grant-in-aid to the poor fish farmers. This office look after the construction of Fish Seed Farms, reclamation and development of derelict water bodies, establishment of improved Mini Eco-hatcheries for production of quality fish seeds, and provides training and incentives to fish seeds traders and growers. During 2015-16, under AOP and amount of Rs. 325 lakh was earmarked for the development of derelect of water bodies, incentives to 120 numbers of fish seed traders and development of Model Fishery Villages, Development of existing ponds (IBS) and beel/river fisheries.<sup>65</sup>

BTAD have a rich forest resource since the area covers with lush green forest both reserved and protected with one National Park and three Wildlife Sanctuaries which can promote tourism industry. It can be a great potential to boost up the economy of BTAD if these forest resources are taken care by the government. The forest resources in the area can attract many tourists if the places are rejuvenated and infrastructural facilities are developed. BTAD is a home of famous golden langour, tigers, rhinos, other species and its scenic landscape and natural beauty. The place is rich in flora and fauna as well. It is culturally rich as well. The prospects in tourism industry are fairly good if promoted seriously. Besides, the forest resources have been a livelihood for many tribal households and the people living surrounding.

Again, the prospect for forest based industry is very high in the area. BTAD has 3, 46, 106.024 hectors under forest areas. The forest resources like timber, fuel wood, sand, gravel/stone silt/clay and others is an avenue for the forest department. As per the

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<sup>65</sup>Swler Basumatary (2018): BTAD: Prospects and Challenges” Published in International Journal of Research in Social Sciences, (IJRSS) Vol. 8 Issue 1, January 2018, Pp- 1063-1064

Forest Department BTC, in 2014-15 the revenue received from forest resources is approx. 12 crores. The areas in recent years have seen rise in the number of small tea growers. Though, the area doesn't have a big tea grower as well as big tea industries like in some other district of Assam, yet, around 283 numbers of small tea growers have registered in recent years. Besides, the rubber plantation is also encouraged in the areas. In the year 2014-15, around 496.25 metric tonnes of rubber production also contributed in the economy of BTAD.

The areas still lack big industry. However, in recent years, there are few establishment of small scale agro based industries and factories. It has total numbers of 81 registered factories. Some of them are- 10 Agro based, 3 Forest based, 1 Chemical, 4 Textile and 7 Electronic based small scale industries. It has only one big thermal power industry (NTPC) located at Salakati in Kokrajhar District. Industrial society is considered to be a modern society. It is utter truth that most of the industrially developed countries are economically sound and prosperous. Industrial States are regarded as progressive States. It is a fact that establishment of industries creates employment opportunities. For the ages the development of industries has been occupying top priorities among the policy framer at all level of planning- local, States, regional and national. BTAD is lagging far behind in this field. Notably, with the creation of BTAD some section of political class have owned and set up medium scale private industries like carbon industries, stone crushers and hotel business, automobiles dealers and so on.

The sericulture farming was very popular among rural folk in early years in BTAD. The rearing of Eri silk worm for food as well as for silk production purpose was practised almost in every rural household in early year. The Muga and Mulberry Cocoon farming were also very popular in early years however, it has seen decline drastically in recent years. As per the economic survey report 2014-15 only few families were found engaged in sericulture farming. The total nos. of 1580 sericulture villages is registered till the year 2014-15. The area under Muga and Eri farming is quite small. The production of Eri cut cocoon in the year 2014-15 was 886 metric tons, Muga and Mulberry reeling cocoon was 693 and 51.75 metric tons. The total production of silk yarn in the same year was 726.52 metric tons. The sericulture farming has a high potential with good prospect to usher the economic development in the region. It is



necessary that the government of BTAD should introspect in this sector to open up new possibilities of market and commercial activities. The sericulture farming can floor a solid foundation for the establishment of small scale industries like Khadi industries, silk production industries and weaving industries.

**Table: 2.4.4 (g) Showing Sericulture Farming & it Production**

| <b>1. Families engaged in Sericulture</b>    | <b>Units</b>            | <b>2014-15 (year)</b> |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Eri  | Nos.                    | 50,710                |
| Muga   | „                       | 548                   |
| Mulberry                                     | „                       | 597                   |
| <b>2. Area under Silk worm's food plants</b> | <b>Hect.</b>            | <b>2014-15</b>        |
| Eri  | „                       | 1846.18               |
| Muga   | „                       | 1127                  |
| Mulberry                                     | „                       | 214.48                |
| <b>3. Yield of Cocoons</b>                   | <b>MT (Metric Tons)</b> | <b>2014-15</b>        |
| Eri Cut Cocoon                               | MT                      | 886                   |
| Muga Cocoon                                  | MT                      | 693                   |
| Mulberry reeling Cocoon                      | MT                      | 51.75                 |
| <b>4. Production of Silk Yarn</b>            | <b>MT (Metric Tons)</b> | <b>2014-15</b>        |
| Eri Raw Silk                                 | „                       | 710                   |
| Eri Raw Silk                                 | „                       | 11.65                 |
| Mulberry Raw Silk                            | „                       | 4.87                  |

**Source: Department of Economics and Statistics BTC, Kokrajhar**

Considering the prospects in these sectors the BTAD government in recent years have set up few handloom training centres, Weavers Extension Service Unit and Handloom Production Centre in four districts of BTAD. In this connection, the BTAD has set up 12 Handloom Training Centre (HTC), 10 Weavers Extension Service Units and six Handloom Production Centres. Despite of the region is known for its popular culture of artistic handy craft and hand woven, the development in the sector of weaving industry has been very steady and gradual. Neither, the government is taking keen interest to promote this sector. Undoubtedly, this industry could absorb many crafty young unemployed youths through generation of employment opportunities if it is taken seriously by the government.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

From the above analyses, it may be stated that the economy of BTAD by nature is agrarian, forest based economy and few small scale industries operating in area contributes the economy of BTAD. As stated above that the BTAD is largely rural area, the majority of the people are engaged in agricultural farming, manual labourers, daily wagers, marginal farmers and workers. It is quite clear from the occupational background of the people to state that large chunk of the population of BTAD constitute rural electorate. In simple words the electorate formation of BTAD is mostly belong to lower economic social background. The region is also one of the most backward and underperforming in education sector is quite evident from the fact that the region has the higher percentage of illiteracy and poor performances in the higher education in compared to other parts of the State. In this light it may not be wrong to state that the electoral composition of the region lacks proper political education which is not the basic essence of political consciousness of the electorate. In this backdrop, it can be argued that the majority of electorate in BTAD do not have a high sense of political knowledge and aware about the political issues and problems of the region. Examining the role and contribution of the BPF, the ruling party' in socio-economic scenario of BTAD and the development have seemingly brought about many changes in infrastructures are visible though but in socio-economic sector it still remain critical since the progress in this sector has been very gradual. But, it is also a matter of fact that the BTAD' prior to its inception was reeling under deplorable conditions in all the fields. With the creation of BTC, the lights of development have just begun to touch the region with introduction of several policies and measures towards reformation and reconstruction in targeted areas of socio-economic dimensions. The region as well known fact is vastly a rural area was lagging far even in providing basic infrastructures to the people. It was an uphill task for the Council administration to accelerate the development in the regions and simultaneously to address all the persistent issues with a small amount of funds it receives. The construction of rural infrastructure came to manifest as the top priority in development manifesto before the Council government. Considering the urgent need of infrastructural development in rural areas several policies were initiated to bring the remote places in accessible conditions. To enhance the socio-economic condition of the regions, inclusive policies were framed to connect

all the villages with proper road linkages and other infrastructure like sports complex, cultural complex, up-gradation of academic infrastructure, hospital, school, collages and so on. Seemingly, the BTC government in its first decade have worked for the improvement of basic infrastructure in BTAD region. The Council government in its more than decade long governance have partly successful in bringing improvement and all round development of infrastructure in BTAD. Amid, all the charges and allegation of wrong doer against the ruling BPF, the party have successfully managed to administered the Council for more than a decade is partly because of the fact that the party have effectively rendered services to the people of all sections. The party's inclusive ideology and strong leadership and popularity of the BTC Chief Mr. H. Mohilary among all sections and cross communities also played its part to ensured continuous support of people to the BPF. Nevertheless, BTAD have a long way to go for bringing all round development in the region.

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