

## CHAPTER III

### THE SIXTH SCHEDULE AND THE WORKING OF VCDC IN BTAD

#### **3.1: Origin of Sixth Schedule and its Provision:**

The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution can be regarded as the guardian for the protection of the rights of the tribals in North East India. The origin of the provision of the Sixth Schedule can be traced back in the colonial policy of exclusion.

During the Ahom rule, before the advent of the British there was free intercourse between the plain and the hill tribes in terms of trade and commerce. The Inner Line Regulation Act of 1873 was introduced to control the free accessibility to the hilly areas. This Act separated the hill territories of Assam inhabited by the tribal people from the district administration. The policy of exclusion came as a response to the reckless expansion of entrepreneurs into the tribal lands, which threatened British political relation with the hill tribes. The British Government was much interested in the frontier areas of Assam not for the tribes living there, but for safe and secure frontier. The main concern of the Government was to control the frontier areas.<sup>36</sup> The demarcation was done along the foothills and rules were laid down to bring stringent control over the commercial relationship with the frontier tribes living on the boundaries of their jurisdiction. The inner line provided the tribal population with the protection of their land. Provisions were led to strictly maintain the boundaries to check the inflow of outsiders.

---

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Chandrika Singh, 2011, North-East India Politics & Insurgency, Manas Publication, New Delhi, Pg. 117

The colonial authorities drew an internal boundary dividing the Nagas and the Assamese. Inner line was eventually extended to all the hills except the Khasi, the Garo Hills, and the Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The inner line had been led down in Darrang towards the Bhutias, Akas and Daflas, Miris, Abors, Mishings, Khamtis, Singphos, and Nagas: in Sibsagar towards the southern Nagas: and in Cachar towards the Lushais. The idea behind this separation was to protect the hill people .

Other Acts like the Scheduled District Act of 1874 and the Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 were implemented with the view to give some special provision for these populations living in the Hill areas of the North East India. The Montague- Chelmsford report of 1918 recommended that the hill areas should be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Legislative Council. This acts and declaration ultimately led to the inclusion of the Sixth Schedule in the Indian constitution.

The Sixth Schedule empowers the District Council and Regional Council to make laws on the various legislative subjects, procuring grant-in-aid from the Consolidate Fund of India to meet the needs of the overall development such as health care, education, roads and regulatory powers to State control. The Sixth Schedule was incorporated in the constitution basing upon the recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee which made a kin observation of the special circumstances, needs and aspiration of the hill people on the eve of independence. The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution provided Autonomy to the Autonomous District Council in view of their political and economic backwardness. Almost all the recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee was considered and included by the Constituent Assembly.

Such arrangements were made for the hill tribes of the North-East India that neither their autonomies were affected nor the integrity of the nation was put in stake.

### **3.1.1: Bordoloi Sub-Committee:**

On the proposal made by the Cabinet Mission, the Constituent Assembly of India was constituted. It was proposed that an advisory committee was to be formed for the rights of the citizens, minorities and Tribal Excluded areas. The chairman of Cabinet Mission, Sir Stafford Cripps, suggested that a powerful committee was to be set up to make proposals for the administration of the Tribal Areas under the chairmanship of Sardar Vallabhai Patel to address the problems of Assam as well as of the tribal people of India. An advisory Sub-Committee was further constituted under the chairmanship of Sri Gopinath Bordoloi to assess and advice the Constituent Assembly to constitute the administration of the tribal inhabited areas.

The most remarkable thing about the Bordoloi Report was the skill with which the sub-committee sought to reconcile the hill people's demand for 'political' autonomy with the Assam government's drive to integrate them with the plains. The instrument, it was proposed, would be the district council which would protect the hill people from unscrupulous plains people.<sup>37</sup>

The committee constituted of chairman and other four members. Shri. Gopinath Bordoloi as its Chairman other members acted as full members of the Committee:

- Shri. J.J.M Nicholas Roy,
- Shri. Rup Nath Brahma,

---

<sup>37</sup> Sk Chaube, (1999) Hill Politics in Northeast India, New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, Pg. 100

- Shri. A.V. Thakkar,
- Shri. Mayang Nokcha, who was later replaced by Shri. Aliba Imti.

The sub-committee made a detailed study of the area by conducting field survey and discussing the ground problems with the tribal leaders. The hill leaders submitted memorandums to the Sub-Committee mentioning their needs and aspirations. Demands concerning economic, political, administrative, cultural and educational matters were placed before the committee. Hill tribes especially Nagas, expressed their doubts towards the plain leaders and demanded separate hill district from the Assam province. They demanded that their ethnic distinction should be considered and they should not be tagged with the plain people of Assam. Demands came from the Khasi and Jaintia Hills too, they expressed their desire to be separated from larger Assam Province.

The people of the Mikir Hills also demanded for the formation of a separate district of their own. Suggestions were made to the members of the sub-Committee that Mikir portion of Nowgong, Sibsagar, North Kachar Hills and Khasi and the Jaintia Hills comprising the Mikirs should be put under a new district of the Mikirs. The leaders of NEFA the present Arunachal Pradesh also forwarded their demands including their separate Administrative status under the Union Republic of India.

### **3.1.2: Report of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee:**

The throughout assessment and observation of the various tribal people and different political situations of North-East India lead the Bordoloi Sub-Committee to prepare its report including several recommendations for the constitutional and administrative adjustments of the tribal belt of the region. The Sub-Committee found

that the entire territories of the North Eastern region were put under four categories by the British. These were:

- The Plain district of Assam,
- The Excluded Areas,
- The partially Excluded Areas, and
- The Frontier Tracts.<sup>38</sup>

The committee analyzed that the entire North Eastern region were divided under four categories by the Colonial administrators - the Plains districts of Assam, the Excluded Areas, the Partially Excluded Areas, and the Frontier Tracts. The power was exercised over the hills tracts by the Governor of Assam as the agent of the Governor-General.

Another recommendation of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee was that “All the tribes of Provinces other than Assam, whether living in the plains or in the Partially Excluded Tracts, should as a whole be treated as minority. As regards Assam, conditions in Hill Districts of which the Naga Hills, the Lushai Hills and the North Kachar Hills have been excluded are on a totally different footing and the atmosphere, Partially Excluded Areas, is one which is not to be found elsewhere. These areas must, therefore, be treated separately from the rest.”<sup>39</sup> According to the Sub-Committee the areas of the North-East Frontier should be divided into two regions as – Autonomous Region and Non-Autonomous region.

---

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Chandrika Singh, (2011) Op.cit, Pg.172

<sup>39</sup> Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, No. 1, Appendix ‘c’, Report of the Sub-Committee on the North- Eastern Frontier, Assam, Tribal and Excluded Areas, Part III (Delhi, 1948) Pg. 132-33

The Bordoloi Committee also recommended the establishment of Regional Councils if there were distinct sub-tribes within autonomous district. Immediate constitution of District Council in all Hill States was also recommended. Recommendation was made that the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills, the Lushai Hills, the Mikir Hills and the North Cachar Hills were to be put under the Autonomous Regions. While the Sadiya, Balipara and Tirap and the Naga tribal areas were recommended to be brought under the Non Autonomous region. Regional Council or Local Council was to be established for each Frontier Tracts for the administration of the Non-Autonomous regions.

The Committee strived to provide cultural and social autonomies by providing the tribes full authority to administer their own. In regard to financial power the Sub-Committee recommended the Government of Assam to prepare a development program funded by central as well as the provincial Governments.

The Bordoloi Sub-Committee recommended for special powers to the Governor of Assam. The Governor was to be given the power to declare any Act of the Autonomous District council null and void if he/she thought that such Act was against the national interest.

The Sixth Schedule made the hill Districts of Assam Autonomous with respect of the provision under Sixth Schedule. 8.6% of Indian population, over 104 million People constitutes the tribal population distributed all over the country.<sup>40</sup> The tribal populations are seen to have different problems and needs unlike the plain population. Social, religious, cultural and economic autonomies were given to the tribal people

---

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in>

under this Schedule. Under the provision of the Sixth Schedule Autonomous District Council was constituted in several the Hill District of Assam and other parts.

The Sixth Schedule areas are divided into two parts - Part A and Part B.

There are 10 Autonomous District Councils in 4 states of North East under the provision of Sixth Schedule. There are three Autonomous District Councils in the state of Assam, three in Mizoram, one in Tripura and three in Meghalaya.

#### PART I

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

#### PART II

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

#### PART II A

The Tripura Tribal Areas District

#### PART III

1. The Chakma District.
2. The Mara District.
3. The Lai District.<sup>41</sup>

The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is the newest edition to ten Districts Councils in North East India. The Amendment Act of 2003 empowered BTC to enjoy

---

<sup>41</sup> Sixth Schedule, The Constitution of India. Pg. 197

the status of District Council under the provision of Sixth Schedule, with effect from 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2003.

### **3.2: Administrative structure of BTAD:**

The rigorous agitation of Bodo movement finally resulted in the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) between Hagrama Mohilary, chairman, Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT), on behalf of the Bodos, P.K. Dutta, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam and R.C.A. Jain, Secretary (BM), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India on 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2003. The autonomy under Sixth Schedule was for the first time given to the plain tribes through the signing of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Accord. The memorandum constituted Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) as self-governing institution which comprised of four districts, namely, Udalguri, Chirang, Kokrajhar, and Baska. Bodoland Territorial Council was been created within the framework of amended Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. It took almost a year to amend the provisions after the signing of the memorandum 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 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2003, adopted and approved the aforesaid MoS and resolved to extend executive powers to the 40 subjects.<sup>42</sup> The aims of the council as stated in the agreement are as follows-

- i. To accelerate the infrastructural development in the area.

---

<sup>42</sup> Some Importance Acts and Amendment of Indian Constitution concerning Bodoland Territorial Council, Published by Dept. of Printing and Stationary (Second Edition-2010). Pg. 1



- ii. To attend the goals of socio-cultural & ethnic identity of Bodos, to fulfil the economic, educational & linguistic aspirations and preservation of land rights of the tribal population.<sup>43</sup>

**Table 3.1: Administrative units in BTAD**

District	Subdivision	Dev.Block	VCDC	Villages
Kokrajhar	03	08	134	922
Chirang	02	04	67	479
Baksa	03	06	104	687
Udalguri	02	07	110	802

Source: Statistical Handbook of BTC, 2010

**Map 3.1 Map of Assam with the four districts of BTC**



Map Source: [assampanchayat.gov.in](http://assampanchayat.gov.in), accessed on 23.10.2020

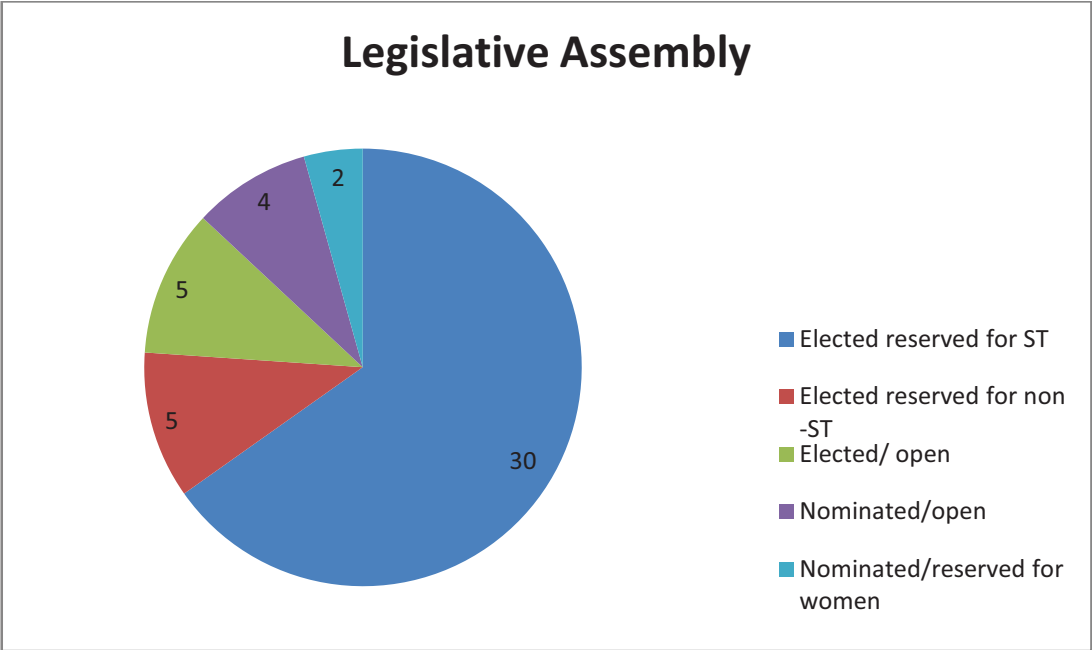
<sup>43</sup>Ibid, .Pg-1

The basic objective of creation of BTC as a self governing body was to fulfil the aspiration of the Bodo people relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development of the region under the provision of Sixth Schedule as mentioned in the memorandum.

**3.2.1: Composition and the functioning of BTC:**

Under the provision of Sixth Schedule, an Autonomous District Council is eligible for only 30 Members. BTC under a special provision added to the para 2(1) of the Sixth Schedule through an amendment and increased the Members in the Council up to 46 owing to the size of the area of jurisdiction under BTC.

**Figure 3.1: Composition of the Legislative Council.**



The total strength of the council is 46, out of which 40 are elected and 6 nominated, among which 30 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 are reserved for non-tribal communities, 5 seats are open for all communities and 6 are to be

nominated by the Governor of Assam, out of all two seats are reserved for women. The election is held within every 5 years, through universal adult franchise.

The Executive Council is empowered by the overall administrative functions of BTC. Similar power to the Cabinet in the State and the Central Governments are enjoyed by the BTC Executive Council. The members of the Council are called as Executive Members (EMs). A 12 member Executive Council is been elected out of which the leader of the party on majority becomes the Chief Executive Member (CEM) and also referred to as Chief and another becomes Deputy Chief of the Executive Council. Equivalent status as of the Cabinet Minister are been given to the Chief and the Deputy Chief of BTC. Other of the Executive Council enjoys the equivalent status as of the Ministers of State of Assam.

Governor of Assam appoints the EMs on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Members and distributes the portfolios to the Members. The Chief Executive Member and the Deputy Chief Executive Member enjoys the status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the Executive Members enjoys the status equivalent to the Ministers of State Government.

Executive Council is the apex executive body of BTC but the real executive functions are carried out through the Principal Secretary of the BTC. The Principal Secretary enjoys the rank equivalent to that of the Commissioner or the Secretary to Government of Assam. The Principal Secretary is vested with the sanctioning power of the Government of Assam and the senior-most officers of a department are designated as Director of the BTC for the particular department from which he/she

belongs. Under the overall guidance and supervision of the BTC Government the Principal Secretary and the other officers exercise their powers.

Speaker and Deputy Speaker preside over the Council session in the Legislative Assembly. The elected members of Council elect the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker enjoys the position as long as they win the pleasure and confidence of the Council Assembly. They can be removed at any time by a resolution of the Council. The speaker has the power to call for the session of the Council Assembly and he presides over the session and regulates the proceedings of the Council. He has the power to admit questions and motions and allows time for the discussion of business in the Council Assemble. In the absence of the Speaker it is the Deputy Speaker who takes over the preceding. The three secretaries assist the Speaker in his proceedings to the session.

### **3.2.2: Powers and Functions of BTC:**

BTC is vested with some legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers through the provision of Sixth Schedule.

#### **i. Legislative powers:**

Legislative power is given to BTC over the subjects it has been entrusted. BTC can make laws on all the subjects and requires the assent of the Governor to come into effect. Subjects which are entrusted to BTC are as follows:

1. Small, Cottage and Rural Industry:
2. Animal Husbandry & Veterinary:
3. Forest;

4. Agriculture;
5. PWD;
6. Sericulture;
7. Education(Primary Education, Higher secondary Including Vocational training, Adult Education, College Education(General);
8. Cultural Affairs;
9. Soil Conservation;
10. Co-operation;
11. Fisheries;
12. Panchayat and Rural Development;
13. Handloom and Textile;
14. Health & Family Welfare;
15. Public Health Engineering;
16. Irrigation;
17. Social Welfare;
18. Flood Control;
19. Sports & Youth Welfare;
20. Weights and Measures;
21. Library Services;
22. Museum & Archaeology;
23. Urban Development- Town and Country Planning;
24. Tribal Research Institute;
25. Land & Revenue;

26. Publicity/Public Relations;
27. Printing & Stationery;
28. Tourism;
29. Transport;
30. Planning and Development;
31. Municipal Corporation, Improvement Trust, District Boards and other local Authorities;
32. Welfare of Plan Tribes and Backward Classes;
33. Markets and fairs;
34. Lotteries, Theaters, Dramatic performance and cinema;
35. Statistics;
36. Food and Civil supply;
37. Intoxicating liquors, opium and derivatives etc.;
38. Labour and employment;
39. Relief and Rehabilitation;
40. Registration of Births and Deaths.<sup>44</sup>

## **ii. Executive Powers:**

A 12 member committee constitutes the Executive Council, among whom one becomes the Chief and another one, the Deputy Chief. There is equal representation of all the communities of both the tribal and non-tribal members in the Executive council. The Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Council have the status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the other Executive Members equivalent to the Minister of the

---

<sup>44</sup>Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) 10 February 2003, New Delhi.

State of Assam for protocol purposes in BTC area.<sup>45</sup> The Principal Secretary exercises the executive functions of the BTC. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam are vested with the Principal Secretary of BTC and the senior most officer of that Department preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who are designated as Director of BTC are the sanctioning powers of the Departments including for technical sanction. The Executive body of Principal Secretary and other officers exercises their executive powers under the guidance and advice of the Executive Council of BTC.

### **iii. Developmental Functions:**

Indian Government with the view of overall development of the tribal areas has entrusted BTC with some special developmental functions. Except DRDA where the concurrence of Government of India persists, all developmental functions and bodies within the power of BTC are transferred. The BTC government can utilize their discretionary power to plan and select their activities and decide the amount for the investment for the overall development of the region covering all groups of people in fair and equitable manner. The plans prepared by BTC are regarded as sub set of the state and become its integral part.<sup>46</sup> A prior approval of the central planning committee is therefore necessary along with the state plans. Along with the developmental function, there are numerous lists of projects which are mentioned in the MoS. Total of fifteen such developmental projects are listed and it is the

---

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) 10 February 2003, New Delhi.

<sup>46</sup> Konwar, Narayan(2007) Society and Politics in Assam, Book Land, Guwahati, Pg. 110

responsibility of the BTC to successfully implement the projects to attain over all development.

Besides governing and preparing the plans the BTC also looks after the projects, which are listed in the Memorandum of Settlement for the balanced development in all the spheres.

#### **iv. Powers to make appointments:**

The MoS also empowers BTC to make appointments for all posts under its control in accordance with the rules of appointment followed by the Government of Assam. A selection Board is constituted for the purpose of appointments and to make rules and to ensure that all the communities in the area are duly represented. However, in case of the area where Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) makes the recruitment the power of BTC is curtail in those areas.

#### **3.3: Provision of VCDC in BTC:**

As BTC was formed within the framework of the Sixth Schedule the power of the Panchayati Raj Institutions rest upon the council after the assumption of office by the council. The Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) and the Territorial Constituency Level Coordination Committee (TCLCC) were created after the first BTC election in the lines of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) was established in 2005 after the creation of BTAD with its primary objective to bring socio-economic development within the region. In the Para 4.8 of the MoS it is stated that; the powers



of the Panchayati Raj Institution is transferred to the council.<sup>47</sup> VCDC like the Panchayati Raj System is a body of local-self governance. VCDC was created after the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council in 2003 under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution for decentralization of the developmental works in BTAD districts at village level. There are total 415 VCDC in the four districts of BTAD, with 25 Developmental blocks and 3028 village.

There is some difference in the system of working and mechanism between Panchayati Raj and VCDC even if, the later replaces the former in the Sixth Schedule areas. There is some difference in the power and functions of VCDC from that of the Panchayati Raj system. There are no clear constitutional rules and regulations regarding the power and function of VCDC. VCDC works at the gram parishad level to carry out developmental plans and program in rural BTAD. The VCDC functioned at the village level like the Gram Panchayat and the TCLCC worked at the Anchalik Panchayat (AP) level. Thus, in the form of TCLCC and VCDC a two tier local governance structure exist in BTC. Implementation of the plans, programs, policies and schemes for development of rural BTAD is the main objective of the formation of VCDC.

### **3.3.1: Composition and functioning of VCDC and TCLCC:**

The Territorial Constituency Level Coordination Committee (TCLCC) is constituted at Legislative Assembly constituency level. The Chairman of all the VCDCs within BTC are the Members of TCLCC. The Chairman and the Members of the TCLCC are appointed by the discretionary power of the BTC authority. TCLCC

---

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), New Delhi, 2003

should include members from ST/SC community of the area and it is also mentioned that it is mandatory that TCLCC appoints a women member in the committee who belongs from the largest community of the population in the area. The Block Development Officer of the concerned Development Block works as the Member Secretary of the TCLCC. The TCLCC stays in office as long as the BTC government enjoys its terms: however in case of allegation of misappropriation the members can be removed by a simple 1/3 majority by BTC authority.

BTC government in 2009 published a set of guidelines for the constitution of TCLCC for BTAD areas. The guideline bearing Memo. No. BTC/RD (VCDC) 04/2006/19 states the composition and the function of the TCLCC and VCDC. Following are the guidelines in concern with the constitution of TCLCC and VCDC:

1. One TCLCC body will be constituted at the Block Development level by drawing of all elected members having jurisdiction in the Development Block.
2. All Chairmen of VCDC falling within respective Development Block will be the members of TCLCC.
3. Members from ST/SC community are included in TCLCC body (if such community is available within jurisdiction).
4. The committee must include a women member from the largest community of the area.
5. The members having largest jurisdiction area in the Block will be chairman of the Committee. The member may change the sitting Chairman on

consensus among members or by exercising opinion by raising hand of 1/3 majority.

6. The Chairman or any member will be removed on serious public allegation like moral turpitude and misappropriation of public money in simple 1/3 majority opinion or out rightly removed by the BTC authority.
7. The tenure of the TCLCC body is co-terminus with the Bodoland Territorial Council body.<sup>48</sup>

The Chairman and the members of the VCDC are nominated by the Council of BTC Government. The VCDC members enjoy the five years term tenure. The total strength of a VCDC is 14 nominated members. Among the 14 nominated members one Chairman is being nominated; and two states are reserved for female candidates; one member from scheduled caste, five general members, three for farmer members, one BPL member and one for social worker in the area. Junior Engineers (JEs) are appointed to assist the nominated members of council in the plans and programmes. A VCDC usually has jurisdiction of 7 to 10 villages. At least one member from each of the revenue village should be represented in VCDC.

The Chairman and the Members of the VCDCs in BTAD are appointed by the BTC Government. The BTC government in power appoints the Members and Chairmen from among the active party works in the village level. After the appointment of the Chairman, the Chairman along with the authority selects the other members of the VCDC.

---

<sup>48</sup> Bodoland Territorial Council Secretariat Kokrajhar P&RD Department, Memo.No.BTC/RD(VCDC) 04/2006/19

Their primary duty is to assist the members in preparations and formulation of developmental plans and policies in rural BTAD and in estimation of projects related to governmental schemes in the administrative districts. Several guidelines are set for the VCDC to conduct their developmental works, however, in several conditions this guidelines were ambiguous in nature and are looked over which has resulted in to a gap between the planning and implementation of the policies.

As per as the guidelines released from Panchayat and Rural Development Department (P&RD), on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006, following are the terms and condition on the working of VCDC.

1. The VCDC must be constituted with permanent inhabitant Revenue/ Forest village area.
2. The VCDC must have at least three members other than official members.
3. One member will be drawn from each revenue village.
4. The Chairman of the VCDC will be selected amongst non official members in consensus or opted by the BTC authority.
5. The tenure of VCDC will be co-terminus with that of BTC council e.g. five years.
6. The Chairman or any member will be removed on serious public allegation like moral turpitude and misappropriation of public money in simple 1/3 majority opinion or out rightly removed by the BTC authority.

7. The committee will sit for discussion in office of VCDC as many as required as works warrants.<sup>49</sup>

### **3.3.2: Powers and functions of VCDC:**

The VCDC in BTC are like an extension of Panchayat & Rural Development Department (P&RD). The responsibility of executing and implementation of developmental schemes are wholly vested upon VCDCs. The development schemes are implemented by VCDCs through DRDA at the village level. Currently 3 central Government Schemes are being executed through VCDC; MGNREGA, PMAG-Y and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).

Along with implementation and execution VCDC also acts as a village level extension of the line departments. It is the responsibility of VCDC to select the beneficiary to the departments. The departments rely on VCDCs for the distribution of subsidized goods to the public according to required criteria. Departments such as Agriculture and Handloom & Textiles etc. have been working in integrated manner along with VCDC in goods distribution and beneficiary selection.

VCDC also acts as a bridge between the public and the administrative units. They play a vital role in collection of data from the ground area level. They act as an agency to check the needs and aspiration of the people as well as they measure the satisfaction level. The data collected by VCDC helps to identify the potential beneficiaries of the government schemes and also analyses the developmental needs of the area. The VCDC thus, is a key to access to relevant information relating to

---

<sup>49</sup> Bodoland Territorial Council Secretariat Kokrajhar P&RD Department, Memo.No.BTC/RD(VCDC) 04/2006/19

selection of beneficiaries, disbursement of benefits etc from the office of Block Development office.

VCDC also participates in development planning through Village Council Development Plan (VCDP). VCDCs through Gram Sabhas discusses the development needs of the area and undertakes development Planning. All the developmental planning process is centred around Gram Sabha. Citizen of the area those who are eligible for adult suffrage can be a member of Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha acts as an integral part of VCDCs in development planning process. Gram Sabhas are to be held at regular basis at least 4 times in a year. The comprehensive planning for economic development and social justice is undertaken by Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in their respective Gram Panchayats. In the same way through Village Council Development Plan (VCDP) the functions of GPDP is facilitated by the VCDCs in BTAD. Through VCDP the VCDCs can undertake development planning in 29 subjects under Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

**Duties and Responsibilities of the Territorial Constituency Level Co-ordination Committee (TCLCC) are given below:**

1. The Block Development Officer communicates allocation to all TCLCC members of Block after the financial and physical allocation are received from DRDA.
2. After received of recommended schemes from VCDC based on Gaon Sabha meeting the TCLCC will discuss in detail in the Committee meeting and after

approving of it those select list will be handed over to the BDO who will in turn submit the same to the DRDA for discussion in GB DRDA concerned.

3. The TCLCC will recommend User Group/ Construction Committee for other works except NREGA works, based on suggestion made by the VCDC members.
4. The TCLCC will also ensure that no contractor is engaged in implementation of NREGA, SGSY and IAY work or any other Rural Development works.
5. For proper utilization of fund under NREGA the TCLCC will oversee conduct of social audit, Vigilance and Monitoring Committee at the VCDC level.
6. The TCLCC will ensure that the VCDC Gram Sabha have access to relevant information relating to selection of beneficiaries, disbursement of benefits etc. from the office of Block Development Office.
7. The TCLCC will monitor implementation of all Rural Development works and also monitor payment of wages to workers on weekly basis as per Departmental norms.
8. TCLCC will also oversee for proper identification of BPL families and updating of BPL in respective jurisdiction.
9. The TCLCC will sit for discussion at least twice in financial year in a Block Development Office to overview the implementation of Rural Development Office to overview the implementation of Rural Development & other works in respective jurisdiction.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Bodoland Territorial Council Secretariat Kokrajhar P&RD Department, Memo.No.BTC/RD(VCDC) 04/2006/19

### **3.4: Conclusion:**

VCDC is acting as the nerve of development in the region. The success and failure of every developmental program lies upon the members of VCDC. VCDC acts as an agent of mobilization among the masses in the village to promote different schemes of development. It is the duty of the members to educate the people about the governmental policies and programs and to make the optimal benefits out of it. Monitoring the implementation of Rural Development works and also monitoring the payment of wages to the workers on weekly basis as per Departmental norms, identification of BPL families and updating of BPL in respective jurisdiction also falls under the function of VCDCs. Major responsibility such as selection of the beneficiary, collecting ground information and till the implementation of the programs, the role and function of VCDC continues.

VCDCs ever since its inception has been working as the soul of the BTC Government for the development of region as a whole. VCDC is empowered equivalently as that of the Gram Panchayat. It plays the most sensitive and the crucial role as the connection between the rural public and problems with the government and the remedial schemes.