

The Bodoland Territorial Council and its Working in Term of Infrastructural Development

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Abstract—After a long time movement, the Bodo Accord was signed and the BTC was formed in February 10, 2003. After the formation of the BTC, the BTC government has improved many physical infrastructures in the region. As per the Official data (2015-16) from the Statistical department of BTC, there are total 2680 Graveled roads, 2650 Blacktopped construction have been completed and 56.55 length of National Highway in progress under the Department. There are many infrastructural developmental projects such as Administrative Assembly, construction of Secretariat Complex in Kokrajhar, District Headquarter, Sub-Divisional Offices and Bodoland guest houses. This paper will be focusing on the study of historical background of the Bodo movement and analyse the working of the Council in term of Physical Infrastructural development within its territory.

Index Terms—Bodo, Bodo movement, BTC Council, Department, Infrastructure

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bodoland Territorial Council is one of the districts council in the northeast India formed on 10th February 2003 under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to fulfill the aspirations of the Bodos and other Tribal people within the territory. It is the largest district council amongst the others district council in the northeast India covering four districts of Assam namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. It located in the northern bank of Brahmaputra River and surrounded by India's neighbor country Kingdom of Bhutan in the north, Sonkosh River in the West and Pasnoi River in the East. The main purposes of BTC are: to fulfill the socio-economic, educational and linguistic yearning and protection for land right, culture and ethnic identity of the Bodos and to expedite the infrastructural developments in the Bodoland Territorial Council.

At present, BTC has a total of 31, 51,047 population as per 2011 Census Report out of which the ST population is around 52% of which only 3% population live in the urban area. Amongst the tribal population Bodos, Rabhas, Garos, the Bodo population is around 90%. Other population like Assamese, Bengali, Nepali, Rashbongsi, Santhal, Urao and less number of Hindi speaking people are found in the area. The Administrative structure of BTC within the boundary of the Bodoland Territorial Area District allocate 10 Sub-Division, 25

Blocks, 19 Revenue Circle, 415 VCDC (Village Council Development Committee) and 3068 villages. It has 2 constituencies in the Lokh Sabha, 1 seat in Rajya Sabha and 24 constituencies in Vidhan Sabha. Now, there are 46 members in the Council, out of which 30 seats are reserved for ST communities, 5 seats are for non-tribal community, 5 seats are opened for all communities and remaining 6 seats are nominated by the Governor of Assam from the un-represented communities of BTAD. There are 40 members directly elected by the people through the Universal Adult Suffrage, out of which 12 the Executive Members (EM) are including the Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Council. Now Hagrama Mohilary is the Chief and Kampa Borgoyary is the Deputy Chief of the council from the last election held on 8th April 2015. Along with the Members of the Council there is a Principal Secretary and others Officers to function in the Executive Council. Principal Secretary is an officer of the rank not below the Commissioner/Secretary of the Government of Assam. Under the Principal Secretary there is a Deputy Secretary and under the Deputy Secretary, an Under Secretary with the Joint Secretary and other Officers in the four districts. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam shall be vested with the Principal Secretary of the BTC and sanctioning powers of a particular department, including technical sanction shall be conferred in the hand of the most senior-officer of the department. The Principal Secretary and the Officers exercise their powers and functions under the guidance and supervision of the BTC.

The Headquarter of BTC is located at the Bodofa Nwngwr, Kokrajhar district as the capital of territory. The major political party in that area is the BPF (Bodoland People Front), and other parties like AGP, AIUDF, BJP, INC, UPP (United People Party) are also found in the region. The spoken language is Bodo and Assamese, both are used as the official language in the area.

II. BODO MOVEMENT AND BIRTH OF BTC

Bodo movement is one of the oldest movements in India; historically it can be traced before the independence of India particularly during the time when some Bodo intellectuals

organized themselves in order to form such organization for political rights of the Bodo tribe in 1932 onwards. Bodo movement emerged due to the issue of land alienation, marginalization faced from the dominant Assamese community and the socio-economic backwardness. All these issues are the driving force to the emergence of Bodo movement.

During the period from 1932 to 1952, the Bodos were demanding political power and rights under the banner of All Assam Plain Tribal League a political party led by Rupnath Brahma for the purpose of separate electorate and representatives of 5 seats for the Plain Tribal.

During the period of 1952-1967, the movement was led by some educated Bodo leaders and they formed BSS (Bodo Sahitya Sabha) on 16th November 1952. In 1953, Bodo Sahitya Sabha submitted a Memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi for the introduction of Bodo language as a medium of instruction in Bodo medium schools. As a result, in 1963, Bodo language was introduced as a medium of instruction in the Bodo dominated area of Assam.

This movement witnessed the introduction of the Assam Official Language bill by Assamese community in 1960 which was the first historical exclusiveness of identity for the Bodo community. In 1967, on 27th February the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) was formed and turned to a new movement as an autonomy demand. They demanded a Union Territory called 'Udayachal' in the Bodo dominated area of Assam. In 1967 All Bodo Students Union was formed and adopted its Constitution on 2nd March 1969 with the objectives:

"We the All Bodo Students Union unanimously and with our pure hearts have resolved to organized the student of various Bodo groups into an organization for better and mutual understanding among ourselves, to safeguard and develop the socio-economy, culture, civilization, tradition, language and literature of the great Bodo nationality and this Organization is known as the All Bodo Students Union(ABSU) and on the expediency of having written guiding rules of the organization, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution on this day of 2nd March 1969"[1]

This period witnessed the anti-foreigner agitation of the All Assam Union and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (now AGP) in 1979. The PTCA and the ABSU also participated in this agitation in order to meet proposal which was taken by All Assam Union and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad. Later, this agitation came to an end with the signing of Assam Accord in 1985 and they had failed to meet the expectations of the Bodo people which led to the emergence of another wave of movement after the Assam Accord.[1]-[2]-[3]

From 1987, the post-Accord movement was led by late U.N Brahma (Now regarded as the father of Bodos) under the banner of the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) with the slogan "Live and Let live" given by U.N Brahma on the Voice "Divide Assam 50/50". This movement witnessed a pure political movement for separate statehood. This movement was a solution movement for the Bodos but from 1989 a militant

group-Bodo Security Force (BdSF) led by Ranjan Daimary demanded a sovereign state outside India rather than statehood. They demanded through the armed struggle which resulted in killing, bombing, murdering, kidnapping, and looting in the area. This group rejected the signing of Bodo Accord and Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) in 1993 because BdSF demanded sovereignty i.e. out of India. The Bodo Accord and BAC has failed and the BdSF resorted to armed struggle which resulted in Communal riots in 1993 September-October leading to death of many people, homeless and landless and the BdSF renamed the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) and regarded by the Government of India as the terrorist organization. Due to the failure of the Bodo Accord and the BAC in 1993, another armed outfit called Bodoland Liberation Tiger (BLT) force was formed in 1995 under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary. Due to the ideology difference, the BLT and the NDFB were fighting with each other and with the State forces till 2003. Later on, second Bodo Accord and BAC was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Assam and the BLT and created Bodoland Territorial Council under the Sixth Schedule of the constitution by the 44th amendment act of 2003.

Thus, the BTC covers total geographical area of 8790 sq.km comprising four district of Assam namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksha and Udalguri which is known as the Bodoland Territorial Area District under the jurisdiction of the Bodoland Territorial Council having the Administrative, legislative, Executive and Financial functions over the 40 subjects entrusted by the Assam Government during the time of signing of Memorandum of Settlement regarding the formation of BTC to work development in term of infrastructure and socio-economic aspects.[1]-[3].

III. BTC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure is the fundamental factor of a country in its economic growth. The economic growth of a country can be preserved with only the development of its infrastructure. Generally, the infrastructure can be defined as total sum of physical structure of a country such as roads, bridges, power generations, railways, transportation, postal facilities, irrigations etc.

Initially the term infrastructure was used to define military installation. Since 1927, it has been used to refer culturally to the roads, bridges, railways, and other public works which required for an industrial economy to function. The concept of infrastructure was first used by H.W Singer. He identified it with various kinds of investment which are not directly productive but they help in fostering developmental process. For example transport, power generation and irrigation. Infrastructure generally defined as the physical framework through which goods and services are provided to the public. It is closely connected to the multiple economy complexes which affect the production and consumption directly [4]-[5]. This paper will be focusing on the working of BTC particularly in

term of infrastructural development within the four districts of the Bodoland Territorial Area District and conclude the near future.

Thus the infrastructure development basically defined as the progress or a good condition of a country for its communication. Infrastructure helps to modify physical framework of a country. So the infrastructure development performed by the Bodoland Territorial council is also for the development of its physical improvement within the jurisdiction of the Council.

According to the Memorandum of Settlement, one of the most important aims was the land development power to the people. For the development of the region and to meet the aspiration of the people, the government of India was to provide an amount of 500 cr. for the five years term.[6] But only an amount of 250 cr. was received by the Council. As the power and function for its 40 subjects have been endowed for the overall development of the region including infrastructure and socio-economic development. So the working of the Bodoland Territorial Council for infrastructure development within its territory will be discussed through the following given department/sector wise performance of the BTC.

A. Administrative Infrastructure

After the formation of the council, the central government agreed to provide an amount of 50 cr. for the construction of Administrative blocks. Central government has provided fund as an agreement in the MoS. Accordingly an amount of Rs 17 cr. had approved and sanctioned for the construction of the Council Assembly and the Secretariat Complex in the capital of BTC at Kokrajhar. For the construction of District centre at Chirang district, an amount of Rs5 cr. has been approved. At Mushalpur in Baksha district, similarly Rs 5 cr. has been sanctioned for the construction of the District Centre and at Kazigaon Salbari, Tamulpur and Bhergaon an amount of Rs 2 cr. has been sanctioned respectively for the construction of the Sub-Divisional Centre.

Apart from these, there are many constructions taken by the Council like Bodoland Guest House at New Delhi, Kolkata, Siliguri and Guwahati and within the Council at Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Chirang, Salbari, Tamulpur, Mushalpur and Udalguri. These projects has been done and completely finished under the Public Work Department (PWD) of BTC.

B. Irrigation Department

The people of the Bodoland Territorial Area District are mainly dependent on agriculture. The people of this area use to cultivate mainly paddy through the irrigation over the rivers.

The irrigation is one of the subjects entrusted to the BTC during the time of MoS. It is the most important subject of the Council for the improvement of the living condition of people of the BTAD. There are rivers like Sankosh, Gurupella, Sabansiri, Aie, Pagladia, Champamati, Manas and others. Due to these rivers, during the time of rainy season the people of this area face a lot of problems mainly flood. For the prevention of

this flood, the Irrigation Department of the BTC has been taking various schemes/projects on these rivers which are expected as the benefits by the people of that area in their cultivation. In the previous year of 2006, the Council had allocated an amount of Rs 379 Lakhs to the Irrigation Department of the BTC for the renovation of some existing schemes as well as some new projects. Some achievements under the department in the four districts of the BTAD in the year 2005-06 mainly in Kokrajhar, there are 28 schemes taken by the Department out of which 25 were directly related to the irrigation. In Chirang district, there were 14 schemes taken by the department, 13 schemes were mainly about the irrigation. And in the district of Baksa and Udalguri there were 16 projects taken and 18 projects respectively these projects were directly linked to the irrigation mainly water supply for cultivation in the paddy fields.[6] All these schemes are now completed. Some irrigation projects created under the Department are shown in the following Table-1.

Apart from this, the Irrigation Department of the BTC Government has taken up many steps in Gross area. The following are the Gross area irrigated under the Government of BTC which has shown in the following Table-2.

Thus, the following Table-1: and Table-2, have clearly shown the irrigation created in term of major and minor irrigation and the Gross area irrigated under the Irrigation Department of Government of the BTC in the year of 2009 to 2016. The major project/schemes are mainly the construction on Champamati Irrigation under the BTC Government for Rs 43.85 Cr. work on Suklai for Rs 8.12 Cr. and the work on Dhansiri Irrigation project. All these projects are now completed and these projects are expected to the People of the BTAD for their cultivation.

C. Land Revenue Department

Land Revenue is one of the important subjects included in the Memorandum of Settlement of the Bodoland Territorial Council. During the time of the Bodo movement, land is one of the significant issues and it has been long time issue for Bodo people. As per as the Assam Land Revenue Regulation Act, 1886 many Tribal Belts and Blocks were provided for the protection of the tribal land but it has not been properly enacted by the Government of Assam and accused by many tribal leaders including Bodo leaders.

After the creation of the BTC, land revenue is entrusted as a subject to the Council under the Land and Revenue Department of BTC and many Revenue Circles and Mauzas- were bifurcated for the protection of the tribal land in the BTAD. Land revenue is basically the department for the purpose of collecting land revenue from the landholders. In order to provide a smooth functioning for department, the Council has taken many infrastructural projects/schemes of the Revenue Circle Offices and Tehsils. During the year 2005-06, the department planed an amount of Rs 1,32,61,560.00 for repairing or renovation of infrastructure i.e. Circle Offices building in Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Goreswar, Sidli, Gossaigaon-

Bhaoraguri, Dotma. Department has also constructed a building of Directorate of Land Record of BTC at the cost of Rs. 1,05,59.00 at Kokrajhar under the Annual Plan Fund of 2005-06. Moreover, the department has also constructed new Revenue Circle Office and quarter at Mazbat and Revenue Circle Office at Gossaigaon.

Thus, the Council has been taking various initiatives on the basis of Land revenue mainly for the purposes of the protection of tribal land. All these initiatives are controlled under the Land and Revenue Department of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

D. Public Work Department

Public Work Department is an integral part of the Council. It is entrusted as one of the subjects to the Council which basically covers the infrastructural development in terms of roads, bridges, Communication including others Infrastructure development. Since its formation, the Council has been taking various projects and works in term of roads, bridge and other constructions. Basically the Infrastructure is done under this department. For the development purposes, the ministry of the Development of North-East Region (DONER), Government of India under Non-Lapsable Centre Pool Resources (NLCPR) had funded to the department during the year of 2005-06. During that year, the Department had allocated for an amount of Rs 1748.00 Lakhs and had been approved by the State Level Standing Committee (SLSC).[6] Accordingly some projects have been undertaken by the NLCPR for the roads, bridges improvement. Some achievement under the PWD of BTC have been stated as follows,

In Kokrajhar, Narabari Daokibari Road, Bhaoraguri-Kuchugaon Road, Gossaigaon Saraibil Road, Fakiragram-Serfanguri Road and Gossaigaon-Khazigaon-Bhumka-Tipkai Road have been done under the department. In Chirang district, North Kajalgaon-Dangtol Road, Kashikotra-Basugaon Road, Sundari-Vidyapur via Kakragaon Road, Safaguri-Kakrabari Road and Kashikotra Bamungaon- Bengtol Road were undertaken by the department. In Baksa district, there are mainly the improvements of Dhamdhama-Tupalia-Subhankata Road, Kaurbaha-Nagrijuji Road, improvement of Jala-Rupahi-Saudarvita-Gabardhana Road and Tihu Doomni Road have been completed. In Udalguri district, Udalguri-Bhakatpara via Bhairaguri Road, Bhanargaon-Pakribari Road, Bhergaon Chewni via Khakrabari Road and Khowrang Mahunpur Road [6].

Apart from these projects, there are some project /works undertaken for an amount of 1725.00 lakhs under the Annual Operation Plan as per the Annual Financial year 2008-09. These works are the Metaling and Blacktopping, RCC Box cell

culvert, RCC slave culvert, Hume pipe culvert, improvement of road. Along with these works, there is also various overall roads improvement by type of road during the year of 2009-16. These have been shown in the following Table-3.

It has been seen in the above discussion that there are many developmental activities taken up by the BTC for infrastructural development in various sectors. The Bodoland Territorial Council, with financial assistance of both the State and Central governments, has taken initiatives for all round development in term of some existing infrastructure and creating new and modern facilities within the jurisdiction of the Council. Through the Infrastructure Department, the region has seen a spurt in the construction of administrative buildings which are the houses of various departments of the Bodoland Territorial Council. Added to this, the huge strides forward taken by the other departments such as the Irrigation Department, the Public Work Department and the Land Revenue department which have greatly contributed to the rapid rate of infrastructural development, can be looked upon as the developing District Council. The various accomplishments and ongoing projects of the different departments of the BTC are undoubtedly numerous and cover a wide field. Therefore, the Bodoland Territorial Council with its headquarters at Kokrajhar started with the objective of all round development in order to accelerate the basic infrastructural facilities within the region. The Office Secretariat cum Legislative Assembly Hall was constructed and some Bodoland guest houses are also constructed in the region and outside of the region. Besides, concrete buildings, market-stalls and sheds at different localities at BTC area and in the rural market areas were also constructed by the Public Works Department. Under this department, the construction of roads, culverts, Ring-Well, etc. is also constructed for the improvement of the transportation in order to boost the socio-economic development. Some building construction of Lower Primary Schools, Higher Schools and Colleges have been transferred to the Council for providing educations to the students along including higher and technical education such as ITI, training, establishment of the campus of the Bodoland University at Kokrajhar District of the BTC, the setting up of a centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) to impart technical education in various technological and vocational disciplines such as Information Technology, Bio- Technology, Food-Processing, Rural Industries and Business Management, etc. The CIT is subsequently upgraded to a centrally funded State University having technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC. These developments which are taking place in the area will be an open-gate to knowledge, higher education and career for the entire people of the BTC areas.

TABLE I
IRRIGATION CREATED THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT OF BTAD

District	Year	Major/Medium Irrigation	Minor Irrigation	Total Area in Hactare
Kokrajhar	2009-10 to 2015-16	8260	14660	22920
Chirang	2009-10 to 2015-16	5496	6166	11662
Baksa	2009-10 to 2015-16	1785	3385	5170
Udalguri	2009-10 to 2015-16	53258	35773	89031
Total		68799	59984	128783

Sources: Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council

TABLE II
 GROSS AREA IRRIGATED UNDER THE GOVT. IRRIGATION FACILITIES IN BTAD AREA IN HACT.

Year	District	Canals	Tanks	Tube wells	Total
2009 to 2016	Kokrajhar	22859	Nil	55	22914
	Chirang	20000	Nil	Nil	20000
	Baksa	5170	Nil	Nil	5170
	Udalguri	38810	Nil	Nil	38810
	Total	86839	Nil	55	86894

Sources: Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council

TABLE III
 DISTRICT WISE LENGTH OF ROADS BY TYPES OF ROAD UNDER PWD OF BTC DURING THE YEAR 2009-16

District	National Highway			PWD Roads		
	Under construction	Newly declared	Total	Black Topped	Graveled	Total
Kokrajhar	18.16	22.29	103.4	814	988	1802
Chirang	00	40.00	63.00	554	72	626
Baksa	26.39	51.05	101.44	751	322	1073
Udalguri	12.00	59.00	92.00	531	1298	1829
Total BTAD	56.55	172.34	359.89	2650	2680	5330

Sources- Statistical Handbook of Bodoland Territorial Council

IV. CONCLUSION

The Bodo Movement was particularly started due to various issues and challenges when some Bodo intellectuals became conscious about the marginalized, socio-economic exploitation and politically unconsciousness in the region. After the formation of the BTC, working of the Bodoland Territorial Council in term of Infrastructure we can clearly say that the region has improved but in the contemporary time, there are many observers or social activists are really finding some constraints behind these improvements and developments. There are many constraints found in the region and these constraints are mainly based on the observance of Civil Society. Most of the people of the region are not satisfied with the working of BTC. It has often been alleged of being involved in corruption, nepotism, and miss-governance. Most of the areas of the territory are not fully developed as a whole in term of Infrastructure and socio-economic development. Another problem with the BTC is the communal problem that means the other communities are not satisfied with the working of BTC.

There is another issues regarding the Boro and O-Boro (ethnic groups excluding Bodos) in term of many aspects of the society mainly in term of Political basis and buying and selling of Land. However, recently there has been controversy between Boro and O-Boro in 2018 concerning Land transfer in the region. As Chief of BTC said on 12 January, 2018 that non-tribal are not allowed to buy land in the BTC area. The BTC area in Assam, the sixth schedule area under the Constitution, has a sizeable non-tribal population.[7] The Bodoland Territorial Council has drawn flak for its stand on land transfer, with several organizations saying that the Council is biased against non-tribals.

In the present time, most of the Bodo peoples basically those who are from village areas are against the Council. The society is mainly divided into two categories, one is led by the ruling government and one is led by the opposition party. (Not

in case of political process) This issue is mainly based on demanding separate statehood called Bodoland. This is the main issue in the region even between the ruling Government of BTC and public under the banner of ABSU led by Promot Boro because of the Ruling Government has not been supporting in the protest since its formation. Therefore, the people those who are under the banner of ABSU are now opposed to the Ruling Government. The ABSU with others organizations like NDFB(p) (National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Progressive) and PJACBM (People Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement) have been created another political party called UPP (United People Party) to choose the representatives from their own party and MCLAs (Member Council of Legislative Assembly) for the support of the movement. Another most significant problem in the region is regarding the relation of the BTC to other Bodo groups. Even after the formation of the BTC, the extremist group, namely, the NDFB rejected the agreement and has continued unabated and several incidents of raid, kidnapping, extraction of ransom and want on killing have taken place in the BTC areas. The insurgent group (presently at ceasefire) has been a big rival against present ruling party (Ex-BLT). Each group has its own demands and requirements for its movement. Thus, even after the formation of the BTC, the NDFB group is not supporting the Council; rather their demand is for a sovereign state. So the ruling party (Ex-BLT) of the BTC is facing problems that pose against the smooth functioning of the Council.

On the basis of those above summarized demerits, we can assume that the Bodoland Territorial Council is not fully satisfied with people of the region both the Bodo peoples and others tribal communities. But as per the official data from many departments of the Council, we can clearly say that the Council has been trying to accelerate the infrastructure and socio-economic development in the region. All those above

mentioned problems and hindrances behind the working of the BTC could be found on the basis of only such narrow minded leaders and their working for self-interest at grass-root level. So, the region still could not bring how much it should be developed.

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