CONCLUSIONS

Significance of Accords in Ethnic Conflicts

We have a bunch of documents that lie before us called Accords. Accords are the texts of resolution of conflicts, protocols of power, scripts of status, arrangements of prestige, and the invitational metaphors for further conflicts and peace. Some have failed as tools of peacemaking while some have succeeded in its intended purpose with varying degrees. These texts of treaties, accords, memoranda of understanding, resolutions are enabling acts for their implementation. Some remain as musty sheets in dingy archives. Can we treat them differently, case by case, separately? Do they belong to a genre, a specific bunch, with their own rules of formation, their procedural laws?

Treaties and accords are not only understandings of a particular discursive shape. They may be interpretative documents of the current reality of conflicts. There is no inherent guarantee of Accords "success", or "failure". The actual occurrence of an accord is compromised by the external conditions of possibility (constitutional absorption and amendments), by its locus as an event of consent and compromise. They are driven by a desire for peace.

These Accords are also documents that contain the secret politics of the two desires - the innocent desire for peace, the culpable desire for power that masquerades as the desire for peace. Some of the accords become hostage to the vagaries of the political parties, and therefore hospitable to the idea of the impossibility of a "peace with justice". For example, the Bodo accord where each initiative was opposed by another group/fraction of Bodo Movement. The accord remains the "other" to both war parties and peace parties. The war party thinks that accord is surrender; the peace party thinks that the accord is a tool for the renewal of hostilities. Ridiculed, maligned and reviled, the institution of accord, in the politics of the region, is never fully legitimate, ironically not even to the
contracting parties. It remains the eternal outsider to the politics that had projected the institution of accord on the ground of the swelling desire for peace and both the Mizo and Bodo Accords are testimonies to this. Both the Accords discussed in this work reflects various aspirations of ethnic groups, some fulfilled, some yet to be fulfilled and some giving rise to newer conflicts.

The politics of accord (particularly the Bodo Accord) is marked by this fluidity and if anything stamps it with its presence it is the uncertainty, the absolutely contemporaneous nature of the agreement. What marks the accord by its absence is an understanding - understanding different positions, differences. The question is that since there is no single pattern of accords in the country and the region, can we find an order? A protocol?

First, accords are in this case subterranean, and therefore the idea of consensus subsumes the reality of an accord. As the strategy proved successful and the post-colonial state was formed on that basis, the state would like to see this form repeated everywhere.

Second, accords with peoples and regions that has to be made to accede to the Union of India form a distinct category. Its feature is that of a treaty with the formalities and trappings of sovereign negotiations. This includes the Naga-Hyderi Accord (1947), the sixteen-point agreement between the Nagas and the Government of India (1960), the Beg-Parthasarathy agreement (1975), and the Mizo accord (1986), the Assam Accord etc. Here the accord is loud and establishes a pronounced form which subsequent accords follow. The features of such a form are the attesting presence of the top bosses and the signatures of top bureaucrats, the detailed format, the subsequent legislative enactment at the union and state level including sometimes constitutional amendments, and subsuming the substantive part with the operative part. As presumed in this work the Accord with the Constitutional amendment and Institutional creation withstood the test of time (Mizo Accord) but one without constitutional amendment and institutions (Bodo Accord) failed to bring peace and development.
Third, we have accords with "ethnic groups" that result in their "empowerment" in the form of the creation of new states, autonomous councils, etc. The form of these accords such as the Mizo accord (which "conferred statehood on the Union Territory of Mizoram with a view to satisfying the desires and aspirations of all sections of the people of Mizoram" and undid the Twenty-seventh Amendment Act of 1971 that had made the Lushai Hills a union territory), and Bodo Accord, derives from the master form mentioned earlier. In this case we observe a certain trajectory i.e., from "nothing" to union territory/autonomous councils, and then possibly to statehood. Clearly, the federal form, the Sixth schedule, and the 73rd Amendment supply the flexibility to silence the discordant voices to death through the invocation of the compliant forms.

Fourth, there are accords that question the given federalism of the Indian polity - precisely the federalism to whose charm others are just acceding. We can cite the Assam Accord or the Bodo Accord. The net result here seems a zero from the point of the adversary of the state. Apart from homilies, they get nothing, precisely because the forms of settlement have not been imagined yet and remain without any constitutional amendment and backup. A senior Bodo leader rightly remarked that "if the ruling party decided not to implement a provision of the Accord or the Accord itself for political reasons, where do we go and what legality these Accords stand for?" Thus in these cases we have references to details of "post-trauma care", like how surrendered militants will be treated, released and rehabilitated, the mode of amnesty, or some restorative grants.

The Indian government now finds itself in the enigmatic closed circle -from ethnicity to accord, from accord to further ethnicity. The Bodo Accord signed in Guwahati on February 20, 1993, said in Art 3 (a) that the Bodoland Autonomous Council will exercise power over -villages having 50 percent or more of tribal population" on the basis of scrutiny of a figure supplied by the All Bodo Students Union and the Bodo Peoples Action Committee. Villages having less than 50 percent tribal population will also be

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234 A Senior Bodo Leader in a personal interview, also corroborated by A Mizo leader in Aizawl in Feb, 2003
brought under the Council's exercise for the purpose of internal structures of the various accords - a classification scheme *paradigm State adversary Society* of providing contiguous areas. There was no provision on protection of minorities in the Bodo areas, and no provision on harmonizing a plural "ethnoscape" in that region within the overall framework of the accord. This was an invitation to partition a land on ethnic lines as the talisman of solving a minority problem.

**Indian Democracy and Conflict Management:**

India's democracy is continuously challenged by communalism, excessive caste consciousness, and separatism often emanating from ethnic conflicts. But when the state responds to these challenges, it confronts yet another dilemma - weakening the very values of individual liberty that are at the core of its democratic commitment. In its attempts to quell endemic unrest and the challenge of ethnic conflict also sometime termed as terrorism in the government parlance, India has enacted a plethora of laws that have become instruments of repression. Police and paramilitary abuses seem to get worse while all sorts of other violations of human rights are reported with numbing frequency. But for all the challenges, pressures, and dilemmas to which India is exposed by virtue of its plight as a multicultural state, Indian democracy, sustained through fourteenth elections, still shows remarkable strength and resilience. It has enacted many a change in the constitution to respect ethnic identities and accommodate regional demands and various accords signed by it are testimony to it.

The troubling question is: can democracies, especially developing-country democracies, accommodate ethnic nationalism? India's past experiences are quite ambivalent.\(^{235}\) It is ironical that democracy and democratisation in a developing country setting first encourages the emergence of ethnic demands (alleged support of Bodos by the Central Congress leadership when Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was ruling power in Assam).

\(^{235}\) An important book that after a great deal of valuable empirical work reaches a conclusion that, though not identical, is broadly consistent with this conclusion is Horowitz. 1985. Third article: "Ethnic nationalism and subaltern political process: exploring autonomous democratic action in Kashmir", by John G. Cockell in Nations and Nationalism, 319-45, 2000.
Given an institutionalised state, however, if some of these demands are not accommodated, the sense of exclusion and injustice may well turn demanding groups towards militancy. That is why democratic leaders with inclusionary, accommodating ruling strategies fare better at dealing with ethnic conflicts. In sum, democracy in a developing-country setting both encourages ethnic conflict and under specific circumstance, provides a framework for their accommodation.

**Analysing the Mizo and Bodo Accords: Accords and Constitutional Reform**

The functioning of the accords in the two states of Mizoram and Assam (Bodoland) has brought this very clearly that Accords signed without any constitutional guarantee and amendment does not stand the test of time rather creates newer ethnic conflicts and intensifies the ongoing ethnic conflicts. Because in such a situation none of the parties are satisfied with what they have got in the accords as there is nothing to fall back upon and in a fluid political situation like that of North East, the Accord becomes the first victim if it is not in the likings of the ruling party. The success of the Mizo Accord lies in the Constitutional guarantee that it received through the amendment and creation of the institutions conceived in the Accord.

**The Reasons for the Success of Mizo Accord of 1986:**

The fear of losing Mizo ethnic identity was a strong component of Mizo regionalism. They wanted to maintain their ethnic identity in order to survive as an ethnic group in India. The fear of being assimilated was so strong that they made a number of demands for constitutional safeguards to maintain and protect their unique custom and tradition. It is because of this fear psychosis that they continued to maintain a negative attitude towards the plains people. The Mizo National Front under the leadership of the late Laldenga had abandoned the bush war following the Mizo Accord struck with the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the 1986. Laldenga, the ethnic movements most prominent leader went on to become the Chief Minister of Mizoram with the then incumbent gladly making way for the former rebel. This was one of the most significant
accommodative examples where a rebel/militant leader was allowed to become the Chief Minister and part of the mainstream politics.

The Mizo Accord is one of the few success stories and it prompted the Center to study the Mizo Accord and take a leaf out of the agreement reached between the Government of India and with other tribal conflicts going on in North East. Today Mizoram is one of the relatively advanced States in the North East region and is still making rapid strides on all fronts. The peaceful situation created after the Accord led to the conducive atmosphere where investors do not hesitate to invest their hard earned money and thereby ensure employment and generate income for the State.

Among the strongest constitutional implementation safeguards that were identified at the various negotiations were 'entrenchment clauses' to prevent arbitrary and unilateral reneague, revocation or repudiation of responsibilities under such agreements. These included constitutional safeguards and international inter-state treaties. Certain aspects of the Mizoram Accord of 1986, for example, are protected by a "double entrenchment" clause that prevents changes other than through a formal amendment of the national constitution of India (requiring a certain parliamentary majority and the consent of the country's two legislative chambers) and the consent of the State Legislative Assembly of the province of Mizoram.

The Article 242 (2) of the Constitution provides for autonomy and self government of Mara and Chakma autonomous regions of Mizoram which can be compared to the Constitutional Act 1992 (provision already in the Accord and subsequent amendment) and also comes closer to the spirit of Article 40 of the Constitution. These Autonomous District councils function and wield enormous power ranging from with executive to judicial. These are vibrant structures that help establish local democracy in the real sense of the term.

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236 Routary Bibhu Prasad; Assam: Another Uncertain Accord, South Asia Intelligence Review; Volume 2, No. 21, December 8, 2003
238 Ibid
After the Accord was signed, Article 371 was amended and 371 (G) gave Mizoram the preserve its customary laws and land rights. Such innovations are in tune with the spirit of the decentralized governance. This to a great extent helped the Mizos restore their confidence in the constitution and also helped preserved their identity and customary laws as now they did not see any conflict between the modern judicial laws and their own traditional customs and laws.

Many Indian scholars and politicians cite Mizoram as the model for a successful anti-insurgency policy and attribute its good results to the Indian government's willingness to allow an insurgent leader to emerge as an officially recognized leader within the political system. Agreements to resolve political unrest in tribal areas often restrict land ownership to local citizens and limit movement of people into the area.

The success of the Mizo Accord has mainly been attributed to Constitutional safeguards provided to them, so that there is always something to fall back in case of failure of implementation. The Constitutional changes made to accommodate demands gave a solid support to MNF to ask the government to fulfill it's promises. Also the autonomous District created had its institutional origin in the constitution itself and hence it was neither an ad hoc arrangement nor extra-legal or extra-constitutional creation.

Beside this a 'particularist approach' delivered the goods, which was negotiating with the main militant groups but not all in any single umbrella, and there was always the chance of few remained unsatisfied and chances of creating various power centres. The Mizo Accord, which is considered to be a successful agreement in the Northeast has reached without linking it to any other militants operating in the region?

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239 Personal Interview with a Bodo and Mizo leader. One of the Mizo leader is also a teacher in a college feb 2003.
Failure of the Bodo Accord

Majority – Minority Apprehensions: Bodos vs Others

It is widely believed by both bureaucrats and politicians that the situation in the area would not have deteriorated to the extent that it did if the Bodoland Autonomous Council Accord had been handled more sympathetically. The ABSU president U. G. Brahma, said once said that, "my organisation had signed the agreement in 1993, keeping in view the ground conditions that time. But now, the accord, even if implemented in totality, cannot satisfy the Bodos. Even before participating in the tripartite talks in New Delhi in 1998, the ABSU president had said, "there can be no solution to the problem by discussing the Bodo Accord and its implementation. Rather the talks should now mainly focus on the modalities of granting a separate state to the Bodos" 240. In September last year, as the tripartite talks were about to begin, the Congress party demanded that adequate safeguards for non-Bodos living in the Bodo Autonomous Council areas must be incorporated in any negotiated settlement of the Bodo issue. They felt that "Bodo leaders must remove the apprehensions among non-Bodos that their democratic rights may be curtailed under the BAC and that the Bodos and Non-Bodos will have equal status in all matters under the BAC set-up 241".

As a consequence, five years after the Bodoland accord was signed, nearly all influential Bodo groups, including the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), which were signatories to the agreement, had resumed the movement for a separate state. The merciless killings of non-Bodos, particularly, the Santhals, point to the intensity of feeling amongst the more extremist Bodos who were bent on ousting Bengali and other minority settlers from what they perceive is their homeland. Since the eastern and northern borders of Bodoland were not delineated to their satisfaction, they felt that by undertaking such actions, they can drive out "outsiders" and claim an area from Kokrajhar in the west to Darrang in the east, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river, for their new state of Bodoland.

240 The Statesman; Nov. 8, 1997
241 A prominent leader of the Santhals stating his concern about Bodo Accord, in Guwahati in March 2003
The outbreak of this war of ethnic cleansing between the Bodos and the Santhals added another deadly dimension to the conflicts already raging in Assam. The cause remained the same: land. Explaining the Bodos' hunger for land, S. K. Bwismutiary, member of Parliament from Kokrajhar, noted in a newspaper interview:

"The Bodos are now pretty sure that they are going to get Bodoland. Maybe it will take another two or three years. But in the proposed Bodoland, there may be many areas where Bodos constitute less than fifty per cent of the population. Naturally, they are keen on seeing that by the time Bodoland materialises, their numerical majority also becomes an accomplished fact and hence, the urge to evict the non-Bodos and grab their land."

According to the Bodo Accord, formation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was announced on December 10, 1993. However, as the population is mixed in a number of villages, and as the non-Bodo population is more than the Bodo population in the area, delineation could not be carried out. The Bodo leaders wanted 515 additional villages to be included, over and above the 2750 villages already notified. Unfortunately, the Accord was arrived at in haste without of the basics of territorial arrangements and there was no sufficient and authentic data to prove the composition of the population.

Unabated Violence

Even after signing of the Accord in 1993, for the next two years, the Accord remained on paper. Though the government reports said that more than 2000 Bodo militants have surrendered to the authorities since the Accord was signed in 1993, whereas in reality, the Bodo front was renamed Bodo Army and continued their activity. In fact the then Chief Minister asked the army to resume operation in Bodo Areas. The army head-quarter not only refused operation but also came out with a stinking rebuke of the state government for failing to properly implement the Bodo Accord, which it described, was signed in great haste without creating any institutional mechanism.
Rivalries among Political Parties

The BAC did not work for various reasons, especially the limitations inherent in the Accord that gave birth to it. Further, the agitation of which it was a product got mired in the rivalries between the Congress (I) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government, which was in office in Guwahati when the agitation began. In fact, the conviction continued to be widespread in Assam, and not merely among die-hard supporters of the AGP, that the Bodoland agitation was created, encouraged and even financed by the Congress (I) at that point of time, with a view to creating problems for the AGP government, the first seemingly coherent and viable regional political formation to challenge successfully the near-unbroken historic hegemony of the Congress (I) in Assam.

Failure to do Territorial Demarcation

The renewed violence was both fall-out of the failure to implement the Accord properly as also a prelude to the forthcoming elections. Foremost among the lapses was the failure to demarcate the boundaries of the BAC created by the Accord. Bodo leaders had demanded 3085 villages in the BAC area but got 2750. Following negotiations with the Bodo leaders in September 1995 again 112 villages were conceded. But this did not satisfy the Bodos. Another startling fact for a democracy was that in the over all BAC area the Bodo comprises a minority and not a majority. In spite of this the Bodos were demanding all contiguous areas even less then 50% of Bodo population to be included in BAC. There is little linguistic or ethnic contiguity in the state and this diversity reflected also in the BAC and such situations were not well conceived in the Accord.

The then ABSU President Swambla Basumatry said “this is a childish game and an insult to Bodo people.” He further elaborated, “they have included villages which we have never demanded and excluded about 170 villages we did.” As a result of all this there is still confusion over the southern boundary of the BAC. It was still to be defined.

245 Agradoot an Assamese New paper, October 3rd, 1995, Jorhat
246 Personal Interview with the Bodo Leader Oct 2002
The Language Issue

The script movement of the Bodos was followed by a movement for the recognition of the Bodo language as an official language of Assam. After four years of struggle, the Assam Government granted the Bodo language the status of an associate official language of Assam. It is significant that the State Government had some years earlier allowed the use of the Roman script for the Mishing language, which caused much resentment among the Bodos, who saw the rejection of their own demand for the Roman script as discriminatory. Many such demands often rest on the whims of the ruling political parties giving more unrest.

Non Withdrawal of cases and compensation of surrendered militants

Territory apart other major points of dissatisfaction over the implementation of the Bodo Accord relate to the rehabilitation of the surrendered ABSU militants, non withdrawal of police cases registered against them and non payment of compensation to those who had suffered loses during the 1987 –93 agitation.

Delay in Elections of Promised Autonomous Councils

The state government had led the impression to grow that that it is an ad hoc arrangement or it had elements of adhocism in its handling of both the Bodo problem and implementation of the Accord. While the Bodoland Autonomous Council was formed, the state government dragged its feet about holding elections to the 40 member council. The elections were being held later on in October 31st, 1995 following a threat from the Prem Singh Brahma faction of the Bodo people’s party to withdraw support to the Saikia Government (congress I). The agitational programme announced by ABSU to force the implementation of the Bodo Accord might have had something to do with the forthcoming of elections247. The Adhocism of the Accord implementation was apparent from the very fact that BAC election had been postponed not once but several times. Both

247 The Hindustan Times 16th Oct. 1995
the BAC and the state government was unsure of upholding law and order and ensuring free and fair elections.248

The Constraints of Coalition Politics

In addition, differences on various issues had split the Bodo leadership. Bodoland People’s Party (BPP) which had 9 legislators in 126 member Assam Assembly, seven of them belonged to the faction headed by Prem Singh Brahma, which also controlled the non-elected and Ad Hoc Bodoland Council and supported the Congress Government under Hiteshwar Saikia.

The Constitution’s Sixth Schedule Conundrum

There is a genuine problem given the history and evolution of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The Sixth Schedule, comprising "Provisions as to the administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghlaya, Tripura and Mizoram", is in practice applicable only to the so-called Hill Tribes in these States, that is, tribal people inhabiting the hilly regions of the northeastern region, known historically under colonial administration as 'excluded', or 'partially excluded' areas. The Sixth Schedule is not applicable to the tribal people living outside these Hill areas, the so-called 'Plains Tribes', who are not seen to be dwelling in any compact 'tribal area', but are rather loosely spread among other non-tribal people in the plains of the northeastern region.

The Sixth Schedule has evolved over several amendments. The description of hill areas in three parts. Part I comprises the two Hills Districts of Assam (North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills, now Karbi Anglong); Part II comprises the Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills Districts, all once part of Assam and now constituting Meghalaya; a subsection under this head is the Tripura Tribal Areas District, incorporated under the 49th Amendment, part of the process to provide greater autonomy to the tribal people of Tripura living in the 'hill areas' of the State; and Part III comprises the Chakma, Lakher

248 Sanjaoy Hazarika in The Telegraph, 5th November, 1996
and Pawi Districts, all part of the erstwhile Lushai Hills District when it was a part of Assam and now part of Mizoram.

This distinction between the Hill Tribes and the Plains Tribes, anchored in the geographical, indeed the topographical and altitudinal, location of the people concerned, and the administrative arrangements in respect of them, was based on two related perceptions of the history, the past and the future, of these people as charted by the colonial rulers. Put simply, while both the categories of people were categorised as tribal people, those living in the hill areas of the then undivided Assam were considered to have lived always in a distant and loose connection with the majority of the non-tribal people in the plains of Assam, and would continue to live so far into the foreseeable future.

Thus, the designation of these areas as 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas - not to speak of the more candid admission in respect of other even more turbulent people on the periphery of this periphery as inhabiting 'unadministered areas'.

Those in the hills, the 'simple tribal people with a unique way of life', would continue to remain isolated, underdeveloped, and so deserving of special protection, especially against the 'cleverer and unscrupulous' people from the plains who, given half a chance, would overwhelm and inundate them, reducing them to insignificant non-entities in their own land. Thus, the special provisions, the Fifth and the Sixth Schedules of the Constitution. This is the fear most of the Bodos have argued and sought to incorporate regions even where Bodos are in minority.

Although the Sixth Schedule has a provision — Para I (2/c) empowers the Governor to 'create a new Autonomous District' — in practice (as was the case with the creation of the Tripura Tribal Areas District) such Districts have always comprised the so-called Hill Tribes of the region.

The unique constitutional arrangements under the Sixth schedule have been able to bring in a sense of belongingness and participation that stands to benefit ethnic groups249. Though well intended in its purpose to provide a simple and

249 Hazarika Niru; Ibid Pp 288-292
inexpensive administrative set up and detailed in outlining the role and powers of the autonomous District councils to 'safeguard the in tribal customs and ways of life and secure to them a maximum autonomy in the management of their characteristically tribal affairs\(^{250}\).

**Final Remarks**

A careful examination of both the Accords brings out the fact that any Accord which has been signed without any Constitutional Reform or amendment stands little chance of solving the problem for which it is signed. In the fast changing political scenario where often the ruling party at the Centre is different from the ruling party in the state, the implementation of the provisions of the accords will remain a wishful thinking without a legal constitutional guarantee. And rationally speaking such accords will remain pieces of paper if not backed by constitution as many of the demands of the ethnic groups are just beyond economic development, for example, language issue, customary laws and institutions etc. The basic difference between the two Accords has been the guarantee and backup of the constitution in one and absence in another.

The Mizo Accord, which is considered to be a successful agreement in the Northeast, reached without linking it to any other militants operating in the region while in the case of the Bodos different strategies were adopted. In the case of the recent Bodo Accord the government has brought into various other groups thus creating confusion and disagreements. Every time an accord with the Bodos was signed, it had almost equal support and protest leading to flaring up of the movement by the dissatisfied parties.

The counter-insurgency apparatuses of the state and its modus operandi are geared fundamentally, and more or less exclusively, to containment. So long as insurgencies are only contained, and no sustainable peace processes are in place, democracy in the Northeast is likely to continue to co-exist with militancy and para-military governance. With the significant exception of the Mizo movement, most insurgencies in the Northeast have been transformed, or are currently transforming, into long-term, low-intensity conflicts. The perceived need for counter-insurgency operations never seems to go away.

\(^{250}\) Ibid.
Even in Mizoram, at least if one goes by military presence in that state, the end of the insurgency has not meant that the state within the state has been dismantled. In the case of the Bodos the army head quarter not only refused operation but also came out with a stinking rebuke of the state government for failing to properly implement the Bodo Accord, which it described, was signed in great haste without creating any institutional mechanism. Ethnic politics can play havoc if not handled with care while the implementation of both the Assam and Bodo Accord left much to be desired.

Another fact that needs to be taken into account is that there are several players involved in the Bodo agitation. The BLT, for instance, cannot be seen as representing the aspirations of the region as a whole. It is a fact that the BLT is a platform that emerged (at least as a major player) only after the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) had entered into an agreement with the Union and the Assam Governments a few years ago. The terms on which the ABSU had settled have hardly been put into effect. The ABSU representatives, incidentally, are reported to have been present during the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) but it has not been explained clearly as to whether the outfit too is party to this agreement. Apart from all these, there is the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), an outfit that has not only been engaged in an armed conflict with the state but also held on to the demand for a separate Bodoland, with its leaders speaking at various points of time of a solution outside the framework of the Constitution and its members are said to have links with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) too. True, the NDFB in recent times has climbed down to demand a separate State and in this sense sought a bifurcation of Assam. The fact that the tripartite agreement arrived at does not address any of these concerns is ground for some apprehension over the prospects of the settlement.

Accords and Constitutional Arrangements:

Accords signed without an institutional framework and constitutional amendments as back up exemplifies the limits to the policy makers as well as to the agenda-setting capacity of both the movement leaders and the state. A new agenda can not be forged. Old ones cannot be sustained. In this situation of agenda-vacuum, accords become
routine, their life cycle predictable. Hence accords fail to arouse popular enthusiasm, evoke respect in its being as a political form. This is the road to further ethnicity. The convergence of several moments defines this road - the moment of agenda loss of the state leaders, of despair of the rebels and of hopes of the power-seekers.

Accords embody a rational mode of governance. They are singularly incapable of placing on the agenda the issue of democratic restructuring of the polity and its basic law that should have been natural, given the fact that so many accords have been contracted in this country and the region. This is also true of the agreements that the Indian state has entered into with other states in North East. They have not been able to set a pattern of relations. In their implications they remain confined to the specific issues of agreements only. In short my submission is that accords are, if not well thought out are a paradox. And protocols of accords of both the Assam and Bodo Accords reveal that. They exemplify bureaucratic rationality at its best and worst. Legislative approvals of the texts, constitutional amendments, new elections to legitimize the result of the agreements, clemency - to begin with; and then failure to bring in necessary constitutional amendments and institutions to implement the clauses of the Accords only exemplifies ad hoc arrangements and reactive response to a problem which is more serious than it appears to be.