CHAPTER-IV

MACHINERY FOR IMPLEMENTATION
(a) Various Machineries with regard to Land, Trading & Money Lending and also other Protective Measures:

For implementing the schemes for the development of the Tribes various administrative measures have been taken up by the Govt. of Assam. The Deptt. of Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes headed by a Special Secretary is responsible for the formulation of state level policies and programmes for the development of backward classes in the Plains district of Assam.

A separate "Directorate of Welfare of Plains Tribes and Backward Classes" has also been created to devote attention to the affairs of the Backward Classes and ensure timely and effective implementations of various welfare schemes.

The Assam Plains Tribes Development Board with Ch of Minister as Chairman and representatives of Plains Tribes as members has been constituted for the purpose of drawing up suitable programmes and overseeing their proper implementation. Besides, Sub-Divisional Tribal Development Boards have also been constituted in each sub-division to help in formulation of plans and review of plan programmes at Sub-divisional Level.
With a view to channelising institutional finance into the Sub-plan areas and also to accelerate the pace of development activities in Assam Plains Tribes Development Corporation has been set up. There is also one Advisory Council for the welfare of the Plains Tribes with the Minister, welfare of Backward Classes as the Chairman, and the MLAs and MPs as members to review and approve the different sectoral plan programmes at the State Level.

At the Project Level, there are Project Implementation Committee for each Integrated Tribal Development. Project.

Moreover the Assam Tribal Development Authority has been set up in 1983 headed by a Secretary to prepare short and long term plans for all round socio-economic development of the Plains Tribals.

It has a Board of 12 Directors which includes a minister, an MLA and a former MLA and 3 representatives of the State Govt. The Chairman is nominated by the Govt. (The Board was constituted under notification No. TAD/STP/101/91).

For implementing the schemes for development and other matters relating to ST of the two Hills District a separate department known as "Hills Areas Development" headed by a special secretary in the Ministry of the said department has been set up.
All Schemes under Hill Plan are prepared by the Development Commissioner Hills with the help and assistance of Joint Head or Deputy Head of the Development Dephtts. specially charged with the function of hills development and in consultation with the District Council under the direction of the Hill Planning Board. 8

In the hills districts the District Councils are entrusted with the implementation of the various schemes to a large extent. Almost all the development departments (now 40 deptts) have been placed under the administrative control of the District Council.

Again, the Deptt. of Social Welfare also undertakes various activities with a view to improve the living condition of the people both in the hills and plains.

However, as regards the structure for implementation of the various programmes for the improvement and welfare of Backward Classes, particularly ST and SC is concerned, it should be pointed out that while at the State Level Advisory Committees are there to formulate plans and programmes, there is practically nothing at the grass root to implement the programme. 9 Though this deficiency has practically, been removed by setting up a number of implementing machineries, the composition of these bodies has been criticised by some tribal leaders as politically motivated.
B. How far these Measures & Schemes benefit the Tribes:

The various development schemes as mentioned above have not achieved the desired end. This is revealed from the various reports of committees or commissions and personal opinion of the Tribal Leaders.

The Bench Mark Survey in the Tribal Sub-Plan areas of Assam conducted during December 1978 to February 1979 by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam, at the instance of Home Ministry has thrown up data on the socio-economic conditions of the People living in the Sub-plan areas. The Survey Covered 4420 villages with 8347 Hamlets recording a total population of 22.87 Lakhs of which Plains Tribals numbered 12.57 Lakhs. The survey showed that out of total area of 4.89 Lakhs hectares only 0.22 hectares (4.5%) were irrigated. Of the total tribal households (1,79,395), 13,029 households (7.8%) transferred land to non-tribals during the 10 years period prior to the data of survey. As regards, indebtedness of the total tribal families 36,473 families (20.33%) were indebted to money landers and traders. As regards financial assistance, during the period 1970 to 1978 total of 23,490 (13.09%) received such assistance.

The survey revealed that out of 3.51 Lakhs households 26,711 households (7.6%) had transferred land to non-tribals during the last 10 years. In spite of the stringent provisions in the Revenue Regulation, large scale encroachment on Govt.
Waste Land, reserved lands including transfer and lease of Patta Lands has taken place by fraudulent means with the Belt and Block areas. The survey also revealed that out of 3,50,894 households, 19.2% were found to be indebted in the project areas. It was found that almost all of the indebted households except 175 were indebted to the money lenders both to tribal and non-tribal communities. The picture of indebtedness obtaining in the project areas may be taken to be the general trend prevailing in all the palins District of Assam.

To review the working of the Tribal Belts and Blocks, the Govt. of Assam appointed in 1974 a Sub-committee of the Advisory Council for Welfare of ST (Plains) on Settlement of land in Belts and Blocks and of Forest Land. In its report in 1976 the Committee stated that large scale encroachment both in Govt. Waste Land and reserved lands, including unauthorised purchase or lease even on patta lands had taken place. The Committee had mentioned that 8259 hectares of Govt. Waste Land and reserved land had been encroached by 11,464 persons who were not eligible to get settlement of land in Belts/Blocks and that 2039 hectares of land had been transferred to 2371 ineligible persons. The report also has shown that the provisions of the Chapter-X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act have not been sincerely implemented. On the other hand, it appears to the Committee that the officials responsible for the implementation of the said provisions have instead of safeguarding the interest of the tribal people within such Belts and Blocks for whom these
were meant, frequently infringed the provisions by themselves by way of not only conniving the encroachers in sarkari land but also allowing illegal land alienations that have taken place from tribal to non-eligible, non-tribal and thereby, given indulgence to these ineligible persons to infiltrate. Many of such infiltrators have been able to get either settlement or mutation of land and also registration of sale deeds etc. through the collaboration of some of these officials. For instance, although there are hundreds of encroachment cases in each Belt and Block, none of these encroachers have been ejected from the Belts and Blocks except carrying out aviction of a few encroachers here and there by way of demolishing houses and sale of crops and likewise. The large number of unauthorised occupants in the pattaland occupied by making illegal transactions have not been taken any action as provided under section 165(3) of the said Chapter-X in any circle within this long period of 25 years or so, since the creation of Belts and Blocks. As a result, it has posed to be a serious problem now to eject these unauthorised encroachers but this has ought to be done in the interest of the tribal people. The committee is, therefore, of opinion that (1) the first and foremost duty of the revenue administration should be to eject all these in-eligible encroachments both from Sarkari as well as patta land within all Belts and Blocks within timebound programmes (2) All such land made free from encroachment should be simultaneously handed over possession to eligible landless persons of the Belts and Block. For that purpose, police squadrons have to be posted, if
necessary, to maintain peace and order in such areas. The report stated that the politicians and bureaucrats went mainly responsible for the non-implementation of the provisions for the protection of Belts and Blocks. The Bureaucrats at Dispur have wilfully violated it as alleged by the tribal leaders.

It is alleged by the tribal leaders that the Govt. has violated the provisions of the Chapter X by establishing undertakings in Belts and Blocks like oil refineries of Noonmati and Bangaigaon, capital at Dispur Veterinary College, at Khanapara etc. to set up Dhansiri Project at Udalguri and Hindustan Paper Corporation at Jagiroad about 1000 and 600 families respectively were evicted and no alternative arrangement had been made by the Govt. Recently, under Tamulpur Tribal Belt at Guabari revenue village and Darranga Unclassed forest about 1300 families were evicted and made homeless. This was criticised as anti-tribal eviction operation by the All Assam Tribal Students Union and the Tribal Solidarity Council of Assam.

In 1981, the Law Research Institute made an on the spot study of the impact of the provisions of Chapter X. It visited 13 typical villages in Tamulpur Tribal Belt and 8 in Kokrajhar Tribal Belt. It found that it slowed down the pace of penetration by non-tribal elements into tribal belt/block. In Tamulpur Tribal Belt out of 342 transfer plots studied 43.8%
were found to be transferred by tribals to tribals, 23.1% by tribals to non-tribals, 4.1% by non-tribals to tribals, and 28.7% by non-tribals to non-tribals. In Kokrajhar Tribal Belt, out of 237 transferred plot studied, 65% were found to be transferred by tribals to tribals, 7.6% by tribals to non-tribals, 4.2% by non-tribals to tribals and 23.2% by non-tribals to non-tribals.

As regards settlement of Sarkari Khas Land, out of a totalled settled areas of 1710 hectares in Tamulpur Belt, 1255 hectares were settled with notified classes and 455 hectares with others. In Kokrajhar Belt, out of a total settled area of 1232 hectares, 1061 hectares were settled with notified classes and 171 hectares with others.

Problems in these two tribal belts have been acute with regard to the encroachment to the Sarkari Lands. In village Angarkata of Tamulpur Belt, out of 1851 hectares of the total village area, 1167 hectares are under encroachment. A large number of encroachers are understood to have come from outside the belt.

The situation in tribal belt/block is not bleak as is sometimes made. The tribal people now seem to be aware of the special rights and prohibition applicable to them. It is the encroachment of Govt. waste lands and reserves that is causing some concern at the moment.15
As regards the hills district, the position is more or less the same. Though the Mikir Hills Dist. Transfer of Land Act, 1959 has been passed, unauthorized transfer of land is still taking place to non-tribals. The Chief Executive of the District Council has admitted the fact in the 97th session of the council.  

The District Research Officer, Karbi Anglong, in his report in 1973-74 on land alienation, stated that out of 23 Mikir families in Hanfonglong village, only 3 families had lands for cultivation and the 20 families had lands in their names only and crops etc. belonged to non-tribals. So also, the Regulations regarding money-lending and trading have been violated. 

Again the then Chief Executive Member of Karbi Anglong District Council Bidya Singh Englong expressed concern about the encroachment and wanton destruction of forest wealth of Doldoli and Laharijan and urged upon the Govt. to protect land and reserves. 

A survey of 5 tribal villages in Karbi Anglong shows that 43.48 p.c. of the families have alienated 30.79 p.c. of total land holdings. In the Pankumar village 42.83 p.c. of the land has been alienated. In the Phonglongpet village the figure is 51.08 p.c. and in Sildharampur 84.06 p.c. of the land has been alienated. Temporary leases of tribal land to non-tribals under Adhi system turns into permanent possession
by latter under inexorable economic laws and even tribal self-govt. has failed to control the operation of these laws.

The role of District Council have also been criticised as unsatisfactory for the protection of the Hills Tribes though they have been empowered with greater autonomy. It is revealed from the various studies that in some cases there is acute shortage of competent personnel to reap the benefits. Again power is concentrated in certain families which monopolise everything for their benefit only, while the common people languish as before. The Rules and Regulations are not properly observed. There are allegations of corruption against the officers of the Dist. Councils and of nexus between them and the money-lenders, traders and the tribal elite.

Thus, it is seen that from the studies carried out by the Commissioner for ST, the Census of India 1961, the Tribal Research Institutes of different states and some University Departments, the problems of money lending and land alienation have made their socio-economic condition miserable. As a result majority of the people have become landless and land is concentrated in a small section consisting of both tribals and non-tribals. Naturally, the benefit goes to this section of the people and not to the common people.

As regards reservation in posts and services there are serious allegation against the implementation of the Acts and Rules. It is seen that the Govt. has not implemented the Rules.
The rules for reservation for ST. Gandhiram Timung, an ex-minister of Assam made it clear that there would not have been unemployment if the reservation rule had been implemented in Karbi Anglong.20

The committee on welfare of sc and ST, 1976 in its 5th report stated that it had received various complaints/representations against alleged violation of rules and regulations governing reservation of SC and ST in posts and services21. Table III clearly shows the representation of ST (plains) in Govt. services upto 1986.22.

TABLE - III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>ST(P)10%</th>
<th>Nos Appointed</th>
<th>P.C. Backlog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Secretary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under Secretary</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographer (Grade I)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II Officer</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division Assistant</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>47.10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>610</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographer (Grade II)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographer (Grade III)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30.10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Select Grade)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
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<td>5.90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Record Supplier</td>
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<td>1.30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class IV</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>63.20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>66.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As regards financial assistance both from the central as well State Govt. there are various allegation of misappropriation of funds. Vidya Singh Kro, Editor 'Monjir' (Karbi Newspaper) has alleged that the development of Karbi Anglong has not come upto the expectation. The officers of the District Council hander after money while they are entrusted with power and not for the implementation of the various schemes. Those who can offer money (bribing) they only get the facilities from the District Council.

While replying to a question, Moneswar Deori, Ex-General Secretary, All Assam Tiwa Sanmellan, states that though the Constitution has provided various measures for the protection of the ST and various rules and regulations have been passed, all these are not implemented properly and the Govt. has shown lukewarm interests in implementing those provisions. Moreover, the members or the officers of the various development boards are appointed on political considerations who are mostly inexperienced in these matters. As a result, these people look after their political interests more than that of the tribal people.

Moreover, the facilities given to ST people have been appropriated by a small section of people of emerging middle class. The common people are ignorant of the various schemes and due to their poor economic condition they cannot proceed for which they are deprived of their needs and aspirations.
Despite special programme for educational development, the literacy rate of Plains Tribal people of Assam is not more than 22 p.c. as against 29 p.c. in general population of the state (1971 census). Economically, they remain very backward. For instance the plains tribals belong to bottom income group of 20 p.c. of the population of the state and their per capita income is estimated roughly at Rs. 227.00 at the price of 1973. In the two Hills Districts the situation is also the same. The 7th plan published by the Hills Areas Deptt., Assam, has revealed the economical backwardness of the districts in particular and all round backwardness of the people in general.

Again, the reports of the various committees and commissions appointed by the Govt. of India to study and report on the conditions of the SC and ST also point out to their economic backwardness. They pointed out that the Backward Classes are not well developed in all respects at par with other classes of people and recommended many a measures for the welfare and protection of these classes.

The tribal identity of North-East India stands by itself because of its geo-political and historical background. They remained, by and large, possessors of their land and forests. Christianity has emerged as a strong factor of modernisation and has given the tribal a sense of identity. Education, emergence of middle class and modern amenities like
communication, media etc. have developed a sense of large tribal identity. Therefore, the crisis of identity and undevelopment stimulate the tribal movement relying on means ranging from constitutional to insurgency. The tribal problem though socio-cultural and economic in the initial stage, has assumed a political dimension. It is for reasons more than one, the tribal people of Assam have demanded better and more facilities for their all round development. Lately, they have come to believe that these are possible in a separate autonomous administrative unit with distinct political identity.
Footnotes


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. P-12.


7. Ibid.

8. Government of Assam - Hills Areas Department, Guwahati.


11. Message from R.N. Basumatary, Minister WPT & BC, Assam, to a seminar on Alienation of Land and Tribal Indebtedness (March 7-9, 1984) held by Tribal Research Institute, Assam.


25. Following are the Committees and commissions:


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