CHAPTER VII

The Committee System

The term committee denotes a body of persons charged with some specific function or functions. There appear to be three qualifying characteristics of a committee. First, this body should in some sense be derivative from or dependant upon another and usually a larger body. The etymology itself suggest that it is a body to which something has been committed. Second, it is usually smaller than the body from which it derives its authority. Third, the procedure in a committee is more informal than in the body from which it derives.¹ The British local authority committees are of two types. Some are permissive and some are statutory. The creation of the first type depends upon the discretion of the local authority concerned while the creation of the second is statutory and therefore obligatory on the part of the authority concerned.²

The Rules make sufficient provision of the formation of select committees.³ The District Council has not been making

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2. Ibid P.107.
use of these provisions and there are rare examples of the formation of select committees by the council. There are, however, large number of advisory committees constituted by the council from time to time. There are no committees to enquire, to negotiate, to administer and to scrutinise the various affairs of the council. The committees so far constituted, have been appointed by the council to aid and advise the Executive Committee in the exercise of its functions.

The Contract Settlement Committee, the Primary Education Board, the Karbi Text Book Committee and the Border Development Committee are permissive committees while the Council Forest Board, the Land Settlement Advisory Board and the Land Reforms Committee are the Statutory Committees.

The Contract Settlement Committee

This committee is the earliest of all the committees so far constituted. The principal aim of constituting this committee is to advise the Executive Committee in respect of settlement of contracts to be made by the council. The records relating to this committee are not available within the council office and therefore proper assessment could not be made on the committee concerned. The committee is not in existence since 1972.
The primary Education Board

The primary Education Board is the second committee constituted in 1962 with the principal aim of advising the Executive Committee in the matter of primary education of the district. Prior to the creation of the Board there were two sets of schools and teachers. One was managed by the Government under the supervision of the Deputy Inspector of Schools and other was managed by the council under the supervision of the Education Officer of the council. On 1.8.61 all Government managed schools were handed over to the council. On the transfer of these schools the council constituted the Primary Education Board with the Member-in-charge of Education as Chairman, Deputy Inspector of Schools as ex-officio Secretary and five other members mostly non members of the council.

The first Primary Education Board made important decisions on the issues relating to primary education. The most important was the fixation of academic qualification for the tribal candidates eligible for teachership. The Board decided that the candidates having passed the class VIII standard or M.E. or M.V. standard would be eligible for teachership. The Board also recommended compulsory test examination for teachers. The teachers who failed in the
examination would be disqualified. It further suggested cancellation of all appointments in respect of teachers who were given three chances to appear and yet they failed. The Government teachers who did not complete ten years of service would have to appear again in the test and get themselves qualified. These rules were relaxed in the case of female candidates. This was perhaps done to encourage female education in the district. The Board also opined that the teachers who intentionally avoided the test examination without showing any reasonable ground should be removed from service with immediate effect. The Board again reviewed the qualification of the teacher and decided that for male candidates the minimum qualification should be matric standard i.e. reading upto class X while for female candidates class VIII from recognised schools. The Board, however, decided to stick to holding of test examination for teachers. The Board took another important decision on enrolment drive to encourage enrolment in the primary schools of the district.

The second Primary Education Board was constituted in May, 1972 although it was to be reconstituted on the expiry

4. Proceedings of the Primary Education Board meeting dated 30.9.64.
5. Proceedings of the Primary Education Board meeting dated 30.6.65.
of two years of its first constitution. This new Board was constituted with the Member in Charge, Education, Deputy Inspector the ex-officio Secretary, two members of the council, two Head Masters of high schools one Head Pandit of a primary school. But this Board did not function till it was reconstituted again.

The third Board was constituted in March, 1973 with the Member in charge of Education as Chairman, Deputy Inspector ex-officio Secretary, E.O. District Council, the Assistant Secretary, two Headmasters of high schools, one professor and one Headmistress of a primary school. Thus this Board did not include members of the council except the Chairmah. This Board again reviewed the qualification of the teachers and opined that the matric standard would be the qualification for both male and female candidates. The Board further made it a point that for the improvement of teaching standard freshly recruited teachers without previous experience should not be generally posted in independent charge of a school. The Board gave certain valuable suggestions on the matter.

The fourth P.E.B. was constituted in September, 1976 with the Member in charge of Education as Chairman, D.I. of schools, the ex-officio Secretary the Inspector of Schools.

7. Proceedings of the P.E.B. meeting dated 22.3.73.
the E.O., one Headmaster, one primary school teacher, one educationist of repute, one professor and two members of the council as members. Most of the records relating to this Board are not available. Among other decisions the most important decision the Board took was the introduction of Roman script in the Karbi medium primary schools. But unfortunately the Board could not stick to the original decision and recommended the continuance of Assamese till the arrangement for the supply of books in Roman script are completed.

The fifth P.E.B. was constituted in 1981 with the member in charge of education as Chairman, D.I. as ex-officio Secretary, I.S., E.O. one Head master, one professor, one educationist, and two members of the council as members. The new Board did not take any major decision on primary education.

A close study on the P.E.B. reveals that most of the decisions it took were not properly executed by the council. The Board's most important decision on the holding of test examination was not properly implemented. The teachers who failed in the test examination were not removed. Some of the teachers deliberately avoided the test examination but still there was no follow up action. The candidates were selected not on the basis of merit. No test examination for English medium schools

was held although there was a decision to that effect. The Board's decision on enrolment drive was not implemented. The Board's decision on the appointment of experienced teachers in charge of a school was not implemented. On medium also the Board could not take decision. Thus the P.E.B. did not function effectively.

The Council Forest Board

The Council Forest Board was constituted in August, 1966 with the Member-in-charge of forest as Chairman and four others as members. The Board took certain important decisions on the creation of certain council forests and recommended to the E.C. for implementation. We have no records to note the working of the Board.

The second board was constituted in 1975 with the Member in charge of forest as Chairman, Secretary in-charge of revenue as ex-officio Secretary, all the E.M's and four members of District Council as members. The two Divisional Forest Officers were named as special invitees. The Board did not function effectively. It gave certain suggestions on the creation of reserved forest.

The third Council Forest Board was constituted in July, 1978 with the Member in charge of forest as Chairman, the Secretary, revenue as the ex-officio Secretary and four other members of the council as members. The two D.F.O's
were again named as special invitees. Thus it is seen that the third Board was not broad-based like the second board as it did not include the other members of the Executive Committee. The third C.F.B. recommended the creation of some reserved forest and eviction of some families from the proposed reserved forest.

The fourth C.F.B. was constituted in March, 1980 with CEM as Chairman, Secretary, revenue as ex-officio Secretary and four other members of the council as members. The two D.F.O's were again named as special invitees. This board could not take decisions before it was reconstituted.

The fifth Board was constituted in July, 1980 with a member of District Council as Chairman and four other members of the council as members. Thus it is seen that the fifth C.F.B. was constituted for the first time with an ordinary member as the Chairman.

The sixth board was constituted in July, 1981 with the Member in Charge, Forest as Chairman and two other members of the council as members. Nihang Teron was appointed as the Hony. Forest Officer with a lump sum honorarium of Rs. 150.00 p.m. Thus the sixth board was the smallest of the board so far constituted. The Board took certain important decisions in respect of the creation of some council reserve forest.
The C.F.B. cannot function effectively until the Karbi Anglong District (Administration of Justice) Act, 1954 comes into force. The Act specifically laid down that C.F.B. shall have the same powers of the courts under sub section 2 of the section 7 of the Act. But the Board has been functioning as an advisory body of the council. Most of the recommendations of the Board were not executed by the council for political considerations. Even though some evictions were made there was reenroachment and therefore it became thoroughly ineffective. Substantial steps, had however been taken to implement the recommendations of the Board in regard to the constitution of some council forests.

The Land Settlement Advisory Board

The Land Settlement Advisory Board was constituted in August, 1971 as per provisions of the Karbi Anglong District (Land and Revenue) Act, 1953 for the sole purpose of advising the Executive Committee for the disposal and settlement of waste land within the district. The Board consisted of the CEM as the Chairman, the Member in charge of revenue as the Vice Chairman, Revenue Secretary as the ex-officio Secretary and six other members of the council as members.

The Board, took important decisions regarding the proper execution of the Policy Resolution of 1954 on land and for that it suggested that necessary particulars so completed
year-wise indicating therein (a) the area of the land settled, (b) the persons to whom the land had been settled, (c) the authority allotting the land, (d) the category to which the land holder belonged as defined under the Policy Resolution. The Board also advised that settlement of all types of land henceforth be made by the Executive Committee and for that the Executive Committee should be furnished with (a) category of the applicant as per policy resolution, (b) duration of applicant's stay in the district, (c) area and classification of land held by the applicant in any place within the district. The Board also suggested to manage and control khutis and for that purpose the Board suggested that specified areas should be demarcated for allowing graziers to keep their khuties (b) all khutiwallas should be compelled to obtain license for keeping khuties within the district (c) the rate of taxation per head of cattle should be enhanced and the graziers who keep khuties outside the demarcated areas should be penalised by imposing double the tax assessable for khuties inside demarcated areas and (d) penal provisions should be incorporated so that

9. The Policy Resolution of 1954, among other things, provided that no settlement of land with any non-tribal who had come into the district after the 15th August, 1947 would be made and the persons coming after that date occupying land would be evicted forthwith.
the khutiwallas who contravened the proposed legislation might be prosecuted in a court of law.

The second L.S.A.B. was constituted in September, 1973 with the CEM as Chairman and ten other members of the council as members. The Secretary Revenue was named as the ex-officio secretary of the Board. This Board fixed 30 bighas of high land and 12 bighas of wet land for each family. The Board further decided to stick to the policy resolution of 1954 in respect of settlement of land with non-tribal. The Board empowered the Chairman to form circle-wise committee to advise the Executive Committee in the matter of settlement. The second Board also formed a committee to examine the possibility of the modification of the policy resolution of 1954.  

The third Board was constituted in July, 1976 with CEM as Chairman and eleven members of the council as members. This Board, as a matter of fact, became defunct and did not function at all. In its place the Land Reforms Committee had been functioning in recent days.

**The Ad-hoc Land Settlement Advisory Board for Hamren**

This committee came into existence in March, 1973. The main purpose of constituting this committee was to advise

the Executive Committee to make settlement of land within Donkamokam and its adjoining areas. The Board consisted of the members in charge of Forest as Chairman, the A.R.O. Donka as ex-officio Secretary, the M.L.A. of the Baithalangso Assembly Constituency, a member of the council, and three non-members of the council as members. The Board decided that ninety percent of the land would be settled with tribals while ten per cent would be settled with the non-tribals only. Out of the 88 plots recommended for settlement 79 had gone to the tribals. The Executive Committee approved the recommendations promptly and directed the A.R.O. Donka to settle accordingly. The Board of Hamren has not been functioning since 1975 and it does not exist now.

Circle Land Settlement Advisory Board

As per decisions of the L.S.A.B. two circle committees one for Diphu and another for Phulani were constituted in July, 1974. Sar Rongpi, E.M. and D.S.Terang, E.M. were named as the Chairman of Diphu and Phulani circles respectively. The committee included the M.D.C's, the mauzadars of the circles concerned.

Diphu Circle Land Settlement Advisory Board

The Diphu Board took some important decisions on the preservation of land from the onslaught of outsiders and equitable distribution of land among the deserving landless people. Like
other Board this Board also considered the Policy Resolution as the guiding factor but to tackle the difficulties regarding encroachment it decided that mauzadars would report against any sarkari gaon bura who illegally encouraged encroachment by outsiders. Any such allegation, if proved, would result in the dismissal of the Gaon bura and he would also be liable to pay fine fixed by the council.

The Diphu Board also suggested the setting up of mauza-wise land reforms committee to examine cases of illegal transfer of land in their respective areas and report for necessary action. The Board further suggested that all cases of paikas, adhis and suktis must come through the mauza committees for proper execution. It was decided that the mauzadar would be the Chairman of the mauza-wise committees and in his absence the M.D.C. of the area concerned would preside over the committee. Thus the Diphu Board started functioning as a land reforms committee. But the Diphu Board did not function for more than three years till its reconstitution in 1978. The third Board, when constituted, styled itself as a Land Reforms Implementation Committee with E.M. as Chairman and sixteen others as members. This Board also could not function and it was reconstituted again in 1979.

The fourth Board came into existence in 1979 with one E.M. as Chairman and nine others as members. This Board, however, came to be known as Land Reforms Committee constituted under the Karbi Anglong District (Land Reforms) Act, 1979. In 1981 the committee was again reconstituted with one M.D.C. as Chairman and some others as members. The performance of the last two committees is not known.

**Phulani Land Settlement Advisory Board**

The Phulani Board had taken some revolutionary decisions in respect of settlement of land within the circle. The Board's first decision was the eviction of encroachers from the Uttar Bar Bill model village, Bihani Adarsha gaon and Bomroi Kachomari Adarsha gaon. The Phulani Board further decided that all illegal transfers of land should be cancelled and eviction followed. The Board made it a point that no settlement would be done with persons hailing from outside Assam. The Board further recommended the formation of mauza-wise land reforms committee within the circle which would concern itself with mina, paikas, sukti etc. of the cultivators. The Board approved the policy resolution of 1954.\(^\text{12}\)

The Board took similar decisions in the meetings held on

\(^{12}\) Proceedings of the Phulani Board meeting dated 20.7.74.
subsequent dates. The Board, however, remained idle for more than three years till its reconstitution in 1978. In 1978 it was reconstituted under the name and style of Land Reforms Implementation Committee with one M.D.C. as Chairman and eighteen others as members, mostly non-members of the council. The Committee could not take steps in the desired direction and it had to be reconstituted again in 1979. The next Board of 1979 was formed with one E.M. as Chairman and all M.D.C's and mauzadars of the circle as members. The Board, is still in existence and the performance of the committee is yet to be assessed.

Silonijan Circle Land Reforms Committee

A committee for Silonijan circle was constituted in 1978 with one M.D.C. as Chairman, another M.D.C. as Vice-Chairman and seven others as members, mostly non members of the council. Prior to its constitution the Silonijan circle area was covered by Diphu Circle and all decisions taken in the meetings of the Diphu Circle pertaining to the Silonijan circle area also. But this committee was not constituted again. The performance of the Silonijan Circle is not known.
Donka Circle Land Reforms Committee

The Donka circle committee was constituted in 1979. Prior to its constitution, as stated earlier, there was the ad-hoc land settlement advisory board for Hamren which ceased to function since 1975. In 1981 the next board was constituted with one E.M. as Chairman, all mauzadars and the M.D.C's of the circle. The performance of these committees is not known.

The Land Reforms Committee

Initially, the Land Reforms Committee was first constituted on the suggestions made by the Sub-divisional Loka Samity formed in connection with the implementation of the Twenty Point Economic Programme of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the emergency. The committee that was constituted in 1976 with the CEM as Chairman, all E.M's, all M.L.A's of the district, the M.P. and four other members of the council as members. The Secretary Revenue was named as the ex-officio Secretary of the committee. This committee, as a matter of fact, did not function till it was reconstituted in 1978.

The reconstituted committee was formed with the M.D.C. Kanta Ram Meoh as Chairman and nine other members of the council as members. The Revenue Secretary became the ex-officio Secretary of the committee. But curiously enough
the Executive Committee in a meeting held on 30.9.78 requested the CEM to take over the charge of Chairmanship from Mech for the reasons best known to it. But Mech was appointed again as Chairman under the Karbi Anglong District (Land Reforms) Act, 1979 in September, 1979. The fresh appointment might have been necessitated by the passage of the Act. But in the mean time Mech was taken in as EM and therefore Brajendra Langthasa as M.D.C. was appointed as Chairman in October, 1979. But Langthasa also could not continue for long and was removed on 17.12.79. Langthasa's committee had a strength of eleven members. On Langthasa's removal Dhoni Ram Teron was appointed as Chairman and the same committee continued to exist till 1981 when it was again reconstituted. The committee of 1981 consisted of Dhoni Ram Teron as Chairman and all E.M's and three other members of the council as members. The Executive Committee in a meeting decided that the circle level land reforms committees would also function as land settlement advisory committee although it had been functioning since a long time.

The committee of 1981 had undertaken the most important task of redrafting the rules framed under the Act of 1979.

13. The Karbi Anglong District (Land Reforms) Act, 1979 made sufficient provision of the formation of land reforms committees at district, circle and mouza level.

14. Proceedings of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20.4.81.
Some amendments to the original rules were suggested by the committee and a Rule Committee was constituted to examine the pros and cons of the proposed amendments. The committee further felt the necessity of apprising the Deputy Commissioner and his offices of the consequences of the implementation of the Act and sought cooperation from him. The committee also directed the A.R.O. to send monthly progress reports on land reforms measures. The new committees started functioning very recently and therefore proper assessment could not be made. The Act of 1979 provided honorarium and house rent to the Chairman of the district committee amounting to Rs.300.00 p.m. and Rs.200.00 p.m. respectively. The Chairman of the circle committees were entitled to T.A. and sitting allowances also. It is reported that the Chairman of the district committee Dhoni Ram Teron had drawn an amount of Rs. 36,000.00 as T.A. in one year.

A critical analysis on the performance of L.S.A.B. and L.R.C. gives an understanding that these committee too could not effectively play the role of an advisory body to the council. On the allotment of Diphu bazar plots the CEM categorically stated that the Executive Committee did not like to take the advice of the committee and therefore decided unilaterally.\footnote{15. This was the reply of the CEM to the question No.26 put by L.W.Durang during the 91st session of the council.}
Moreover, the advice tendered by the committee sometimes were not practical. The Policy Resolution of 1954 was an instance in point. The sub committee formed to examine the resolution did not submit its report. The limit of land fixed by the committee could not be honestly implemented. The advice tendered by the Hamren Board, had, however, been executed to a great extent. Most of the suggestions, such as, Phulani Board's decision on eviction and settlement of land with landness people were not executed. One of the most important aspects of the committees is that they were formed very frequently during the post 1978 general election. This was done due to the political instability of the council. The committees, so constituted had practically done nothing in respect of land reform measures.

**Karbi Text Book Committee**

The Karbi Text Book Committee was constituted in 1973 to advise the Executive Committee in the matter of the production of sufficient number of text books in Karbi language to serve the purpose in Karbi medium primary schools of the district. The committee suggested the preparation and publication of different categories of books such as, language, subjects, arithmetic, other books (rapid reading, stories etc.) etc. The committee, however, realised the limitations and suggested that the programme, so fixed, should be done in a phased manner. The committee constituted a sub committee of
of three educationists of repute to take follow up action in regard to the preparation and publication of text books.

The committee took the decision that any text book of Karbi language would be printed and stories and biographies would be collected for preparation. The committee approved some manuscripts of new books for introduction in lower classes. The book on arithmetic, the committee decided, was to be examined by some members before it was sent to press. The committee further decided to entrust the members of the sub-committee to prepare text books for immediate higher classes. The same sub-committee was again entrusted to prepare books on essays, grammar and composition in the line of the text books already published by the Government. Thus the K.T.B.C. had taken some important decisions regarding the preparation and publication of Karbi books to be introduced in the Karbi medium primary schools of the district. The K.T.B.C. did not meet during 1974 and 1975. But it became again active during 1976. The decisions taken during the year gives an impression that the Executive Committee could not implement most of the programmes taken up on earlier occasions. The committee, in fact, had to await for help from

16. Proceedings of the Karbi Text Book Committee meeting held on 24.4.73.
17. Proceedings of the Karbi Text Book Committee meeting held on 15.11.73.
Assam Text Book Production Corporation Ltd. for the printing of books. The old books had to be introduced due to the non receipt of any categorical reply from A.S.T.B.P.C. regarding the printing of Karbi books. 18 Due to the late publication of Karbi Patiganit the committee decided to continue Assamese Patigonit as a stop gap arrangement. The committee further decided that Karbi should be introduced as language subject only at the secondary stage for obvious reasons.

The K.T.B.C. was constituted again after a lapse of six years with a non member of the council as Chairman and three other non members of the council as members. Thus, the K.T.B.C. of 1979 was a committee of all non members of the council. 19 The appointment of the non member as Chairman was contested by the K.A.P.C. and considered it as a political appointment as the person concerned was neither an educationist nor a linguist. The committee had done only one function and that too the approval of a manuscript of Karbi Primer in Roman script.

19. The first committee was not formally formed by the E.C. of the council and hence there was no official notification pertaining to the formation of the committee. It is known that it was a broad based committee presided over by the CEM himself. All functions of the committee were done by sub committee appointed for the purpose of preparation and publication of text books.
The third K.T.B.C. was constituted in 1980 with the Member in charge of Education as Chairman and three non-members of the council as members. This committee also approved the manuscript of another primer before it reconstituted again in 1981.

The fourth committee formed in 1981 with the Member in charge of Education as Chairman, one M.D.C. and two non-members of the council as members. Thus it is seen that the committee of 1981 had witnessed for the first time some non-members of the council as the members. The performance of this committee is yet to be counted.

A close study of the committee reveals that the creation of the committee itself is a step like putting the cart before the horse. A chronological assessment on the decisions taken gives sufficient proof on the above contention. Most of the decisions taken by the committee could not be implemented due to the paucity of fund. Except a textbook the committee could not proceed further for the publication of other books. Even the text did not come out in right time for which the students suffered a lot. Moreover, there were no sufficient number of writers to fulfil the needs of the committee. The same writers had to write different types of books and hence there was the slow moving of books to the press. Finally, the textbook committee had witnessed a non-member as Chairman which could have been avoided. Thus, the Karbi Text Book
Committee could not function effectively as an advisory body to the council.

The Border Development Committee

This committee is the latest of the committees so far constituted by the council. It was constituted in March, 1961 with one M.D.C. as Chairman and three other members of the council as members. The special officer, Border had been appointed as the ex-officio Secretary of the committee. The Chairman had been provided with an honorarium of Rs.300.00 p.m. He was provided with residential accommodation also. The sole purpose of constituting the committee was to advise the Executive Committee in respect of the development of the border areas of the district. The committee proposed certain developmental works, such as, construction of foot path, minor irrigation, fishery tank, foot bridge etc. for execution. It is seen that the Chairman himself settled the contracts and the E.C. simply approved the same.

Conclusion (general)

A general assessment on the role of the committees leads one to the following conclusion.

(1) Almost all committees constituted could not play the role of advisory bodies.

(2) The committees could not give practical advice to the Executive Committee.
(3) The committees, specially the L.S.A.D. and L.R.C. changed their titles without changing the nature of functions.

(4) Some of the statutory committees constituted under the Acts passed by the council were not brought into being immediately after the passage of the Acts.

(5) Large number of committees were brought into being during the post 1978 general election due to the political instability in the council. Thus, the politics of the council had some bearing on the formation of the committees.

(6) Finally, there was no fixed rule determining the strength of different committees.