CHAPTER XIV

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A study of the working of a District Council must necessarily lead us to certain important conclusions.

At the very outset let us take the administrative areas of the council. They have not been properly demarcated as a result of which border conflicts both inter-district and inter-state came into existence. There are some areas predominantly inhabited by the Karbis yet they are excluded from the Karbi autonomous district. Appropriate steps should have been taken so that the all Karbis in whose interest the autonomous district was created are included.

Secondly, the border demarcation has not been physically done on the ground. This demarcation is very essential for the proper implementation of the developmental programmes of the Government.

Thirdly, the administrative areas of the council is heterogenous which is completely detached from one another. This always prevents the council to run the administration smoothly. Finally, the administrative areas, as determined express the aspirations of the people, their culture and their way of life. The factors, such as, population, fiscal adequacy, transport and communication did not play effective roles in
determining the administrative areas of the council.

Second, the study of the constitutional structure of the council also leads to some conclusions. The strength of the council changed on two occasions, in 1971 and in 1973. The first was done according to the original provisions of the Sixth Schedule and the second was done according to amended provisions of the Sixth Schedule. Another noticeable feature is that the strength of the nominated members always remained at four.

Another notable thing of nomination is that the principal minority communities were not nominated on some occasions. Government should take appropriate steps to secure the representations of those minorities who cannot get themselves elected. Moreover, the nomination had been used on two occasions to keep the supporters of the Government in power. This is a fundamental mistake committed by the Government. When the nominated members rebelled against it they were removed. In other words, the nominated members had no independence of their own. It is, therefore, suggested that the tenure of the nominated members should be fixed. They should not be removed except for valid reasons. Another glaring mistake the Government committed was the non-inclusion of women as nominated members of the council. The male dominated District Council could not understand or appreciate the problems peculiar to their sex.
Further, the Government did not nominate persons of ability. Educationists or economists of repute should be nominated as members of the council. Finally, the Government should not nominate persons who were defeated in the election. Because the nomination of such persons strikes at the very root of democracy.

Third, the membership of the council forms an important part of our study. The term of the members of the council had been extended indefinitely for political purposes. This should be stopped forthwith. It may be suggested that the maximum period of extension should not exceed two years.

The disqualifications of the members provided in the Rules of 1951 are not sufficient. Some more disqualifications, such as, non fulfilment of fifteen years residential qualifications/suggested. The District Council, as a matter of fact, must continue to remain as a tribal institution. Otherwise, the aspirations of the constitution makers will not be fulfilled. Another significant point is double membership. Double membership necessarily follows double payment of salaries and allowances. This is not desirable. The members did not possess good economic and social background. Another notable feature of the membership is that most of the members did not possess good academic background to make effective participation in the affairs of the council. Finally, the members did not possess genuine political
party affiliations. This observation, however, is applicable to the members of the fifth District Council.

Fourth, the powers and functions forms an important part of the present study. It is significant to note that some of the powers enshrined in the provisions of the Sixth Schedule were not exercised by the council. Moreover, the powers exercised were not properly exercised. The District Council was reluctant to part with some powers provided in the Schedule. The formation of the Town Committees under the Town Committee Act is an important example to be cited. The District Council while exercising powers took decisions whimsically without considering the pros and cons of the issues involved. The language policy is an important example to be cited. Another most important power exercised by the council under the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1969 were not the powers but functions rendered by the council.

Fifth, the sessions of the council covers an important part of the study. The sessions were summoned according to Rules. But the conduct of business was not done according to the Rules in some specific cases. The Business Advisory Committee should be constituted to aid and advise the chairman in the conduct of business of the House. Again, all the questions put by the members were not answered by the Executive Committee.
This is a very bad parliamentary practice. An assurance Committee may be constituted to see that the assurances given by the Executive Committee are implemented. The members' participation in the council cannot be termed as excellent. In the early years of the council the Chairmen were conversant with the Rules and therefore the proceedings were conducted very smoothly. But in the later years of our study the Chairman himself did not know the Rules and therefore the business of the House was not conducted properly. It is remarkable to note that the sessions of the council did not witness any major unruly behaviour of the members. This is really a healthy development for the growth of good parliamentary institutions.

Sixth, the committees which were in existence since the inception of the council could not play the role of effective advisory bodies to the Executive Committee. Moreover, some committees could not give sound advice to the Executive Committee. Another most important point to be noted is that the politics of the council had some bearing in the formation of the committees. There were certain committees which were formed for political purposes. The Border Development Committee was a committee of this type. It may, therefore, be suggested that the committees having no effective role to play should be abolished immediately.

Seventh, election of members is an important part of this study. Some members were elected unopposed during the
period 1952 to 1971. It clearly shows that the people were not interested in the process of election. Moreover, there were not sufficient number of capable persons to contest elections. The delimitation of the constituencies done just on the eve of the general elections was not done properly. Therefore, the electoral strength differed greatly. Another significant point is that majority of the members elected in the general election of 1978 were elected by a minority vote. This was mainly due to the greater number of candidates contesting a single seat. Finally, the Karbi-A-Darbar which was a force to be reckoned with till the general election of 1971 lost its credibility in the general election of 1978.

Eighth, the Chairmanship is an important institution of the council. The role of the official Chairman was excellent. But all the non-official Chairman could not prove their worth as Chairman. It is important to note that election to the Chairmanship was unanimous till 1981 and that of Deputy Chairmanship till 1978. Altogether three OEM's subsequently became the Chairman of the council. There was only one example of the Chairman becoming the OEM. All these developments were mainly due to the intra-party rivalries of the same ruling group. Finally, the offices of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman became the pawns of political game in District Council politics. This development is most unhealthy and it should be done away with.
Ninth, the Political Executive is an important aspect of this study. Till 1981 there had been unanimous election of the CEM. This is, however, mainly due to the dominant position of the Karbi-A-Darbar in the District Council politics. The most unhealthy aspect of the Political executive is that the principle of collective responsibility which is essential of cabinet system had been openly violated on a number of occasions. Two OEM's had been elected from amongst the nominated members. This is highly undemocratic and remains as the most unhealthy precedent. It may be suggested that a nominated OEM should get himself elected from a particular constituency within a period of six months from the date of his election as CEM. Finally, the council had witnessed maximum number of Executive Committees after the general election of 1978. This was mainly due to dubious role played by the Ayarams and Gayarams in council politics. Although this role of the politicians is a national phenomenon it should be done away with at any cost.

The next part of our study is the personnel administration of the council. It has been observed, in course of our study, that the recruitment of the personnel was not based on merit. Favoritism played a very important role in the selection of candidates for different categories of jobs. It may therefore be suggested that a selection test should be held and the list prepared should be valid for a calendar year or a financial year.
Although the CEM is the appointing authority he should go according to the list. Again the most essentials of good personnel administration i.e. the principles of probation, transfer, training had not been observed by the District Council authorities. But the personnel of the council have their adequate security of service and the prospect of promotion.

Next comes the financial administration of the council. The financial administration, in fact, was not sound. All the sources of revenue provided by the Sixth Schedule had not been properly tapped by the council. Moreover, the sources tapped were not properly tapped by the council. It was due to this reason huge amount of the arrears of land revenue, house tax etc. had not been collected properly by the council. The grant-in-aid is an important source of income of the council. The District Council cannot satisfy the aspirations of the people if the grants are not provided by the Government. But it is observed that the grants provided by the Government constituted a sizable amount of the total revenue of the council. Next comes the loan, it is surprising to note that the council did not develop the habit of repaying loans to the Government which has, in fact, cast reflection on the integrity of the council. Again the council authorities incurred heavy expenditure on general administration and starved social services, such as, education, public health and rural communication.
Again as regards the relation of the District Council with the State Government it may be concluded that the legislative control was almost nil although the council was the subject of discussion on the floor of the Assam Assembly. The administrative control was sometimes misused by the State Government. The judicial control was almost complete as the council had been prevented from exercising some important powers of the Sixth Schedule.

In the final analysis it may be concluded that the administration of the council was not satisfactory as a whole. This is inevitable because politics influence administration and good human material which is the decisive factor for efficient administration was not available in plenty. No stream rises higher than the source and no human organisation can be better than the men and women at the helm of affairs.