

## CHAPTER-3

### TRADITIONAL RURAL SELF-GOVERNING INSTITUTIONS

The present chapter deals with the Traditional Rural Self-Governing Institutions of Meghalaya and also the analysis on the village council members and the Nokmas are all inserted to give a glimpse of the whole scenario of the governing institutions. From here we get to know how the various traditional rural self-governing institutions are functioning and with the role of village council members and the Nokmas the various blocks developing with state interventions. The Traditional Rural Self-Governing Institutions are a set of Legal institutions generally accepted and promoted by the working systems and mechanisms of the general public. Panchayati Raj Institutions at grassroots level can be equated with the self-governing institutions like other states of North East India where all the activities are carried out at village level (lowest) with the help of village councils assisted by concerned Nokma of the concerned village.<sup>25</sup>

Meghalaya, literally ‘the abode of the clouds’ was inaugurated as an autonomous state on April 2, 1970. It was declared as state on January 21, 1972. Khasi, Jaintia and Garo are the three major tribes and other smaller tribes are Hajong, Rabha, Delu, Babai and Mann. There are three District councils under the sixth schedule of the constitution covering the seven districts of the state. The District Councils are among the oldest in the country and began at the time of undivided Assam. Essentially created to protect the hill groups from domination by the plains, there is a distinctly anomalous situation in Meghalaya today. The District Councils as well as the state Assembly are dominated by the three major tribes. So certain questions arise: whose interests are the Autonomous District Councils protecting?

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<sup>25</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.-138-155.

Have they been effective in taking self-governance to the grassroots? If not, where have they fallen short?<sup>26</sup>

In Meghalaya, especially in the recent years, political instability, floor crossings combined with abrupt changes of leadership have disrupted functioning of the Councils. There is a overlap of authority in the state. Given its small size, a conflict of interest is bound to arise between the Assembly and District Councils. There are three competing systems of authority each of which is seeking to serve or represent the same constituency. The result has been confusion and confrontation especially at the local level on a number of issues.

### **3.1 Garo Hills District Council**

In Garo Hills, below the level of District Council there is an institution called Lasker which is recognised by the District Council as a traditional body. During the colonial rule they were under the control of the Deputy Commissioner. They have both Executive and Judiciary functions within their area. In Garo Hills, there is another institution at the village level called Nokma. Nokma who holds control over clan land is called A'king Nokma and there are village level 'Sardars' to assist the Nokmas in day to day village administration. The Nokmas and Sardars to are under the administrative control of the District council. Nokmanship is inherited by the clan members under the District council administration.

The A'king Nokmas have been reduced to mere custodians and supervisors of their A'kings on behalf of their wives and their clans. However, the Garo Hills District (Jhum) Regulation Act, 1954, conferred on the A'king Nokmas the right to allot land for jhumming to each family within his A'king in consultation with the residents thereof. But in the event of any dispute with regard to the land so allotted by the

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<sup>26</sup>ibid. pp.-123-146. op cite

A'king Nokma to any particular person or a family, the matter has to be referred to the village council, a power which was earlier exercised by the A'king Nokma.<sup>27</sup>

The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council passed the Constitution of Village Council Act in 1958 in order to establish and develop local self government in the rural areas and to make better provisions for rural administration and to develop them as self-sufficient units. A village council was constituted for each village and group of villages. There was a President and a Secretary for each village council. The duties and functions allocated to the Village Council included: cleaning and lighting of village roads and paths; sanitation, construction, maintenance and improvement of public wells and tanks; preventive measures in case of epidemic, opening and regulation of burial and cremation ground and places for disposal of dead animals, construction and maintenance of places for the storage of cow-dung and other manures, maintenance of record of population census, primary school education. Registration of births and deaths etc.<sup>28</sup>

The Nokma (Headman) and the village council are the oldest political systems of the Garos. Each A.king (land belonging to particular mahari, or clan) is an autonomous political unit; Nokma being the head. A.king comprises of a number of villages and Nokma holds the office through the right of the A.king, which in true sense belongs to his wife and her clan; as Garo society is matrilineal. Although, he plays a centre role in the religion-cultural and socio-political activities in the A.king, his position and power cannot be compared with that of Kings and Chiefs of other tribes.<sup>29</sup>

The real centre of power is the people of the A.king, particularly the mahari, to which the A.king belongs. The Garo Hills district Council has raised the position of

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid. pp.-128-138

<sup>28</sup> Harendra Singha, 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, p.-168.

<sup>29</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.-128-126.

the Village Council by entrusting them with full responsibilities in administering their own areas but the paucity of funds still stands in the proper functioning of the village Council. Succession to A.king Nokmaship is subject to ordinary laws of inheritance through the system of Nokma (hairess), and Nokrom (man married to a hairess), who are entitled to the A.king and they shall be recognised by the government as Nokma. When they succeed to a Nokmaship, their names are entered in the record of Nokmas by the Deputy Commissioner, but now the records are kept and maintained by District Council (Sangma). Usually, the A.king Nokma, like any other Nokma, looks for a nephew, that is the son of his sister, to come and be his son-in-law and heir. Thus, the nephew not only becomes the heir to the house and property but also succeeds to the 'headships' when his father-in-law dies. As a rule, a Nokma should be a member of the lineage and form the same village as the previous Nokma.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, generally a succession of Nokmas are member of one village and lineage descent but hold the status or headman in another village by virtue of being married to the girl who is successively chosen as heiress in the senior most house of the village (Burling). In the absence of a daughter, the nearest female relation of the Nokma's wife is adopted as heiress and she together with her husband succeeds to the A.king land. However, in recent years, there have been a few cases where, after the death of the Nokma, his surviving wife succeeded as Nokma in supersession of all her daughters and their husbands. In any case, it is the important relations of her clan who have a final say in the matter. They have every right to elect anybody to the Nokmaship by majority vote or consent and the Government will simply endorse it.

From the analysis we get some facts about the various Traditional Rural Self-Governing Institutions.

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<sup>30</sup>Harendra Singha. 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, pp.169-179.

**Table 3.1: Village problems that needs to be solved.**

Village problems that needs to be solved	Respondents	%
Yes	47	85.45
No	00	00
Don't Know	8	14.54

From the table 3.1 we get to know that there are many village problems that needs to be resolved through the village councils and around 85.45% of the village council members said yes about the problems that need to be solved through village councils. Village council play a great role in the daily governance through traditional governance mechanism and system which has deep roots with the support of all the members in the village.

**Table 3.2: Village developed certain areas in last 10 years.**

Village developed certain areas in last 10 years	Respondents	%
Yes	47	85.45
No	00	00
Don't Know	8	14.54

As per the data given in the Table 3.2, it is indicated that 85.45% of the village council members said there is development in the village in certain areas in the last 10 years. The village councils play a significant role in the development of the village in the Blocks and see to the various schemes that are available for livelihood.

**Table 3.3: Responsible Person for village Development**

Responsible person for village development	Respondents	%
BDO	43	78.18
Village Council	12	21.82
Nokma	00	00

The data in the Table 3.3, indicates that the responsible person for village development is BDO. Though BDO is the responsible person in the block, Village council members (21.82%) are responsible together with BDOs in order to bring development in the village. From here we come to know that the village council is an important body in the aspect of governance and administration and without which there cannot be implementation of any activity in the village.

**Table 3.4: Rural Development schemes like MGNREGA/IRDP/SGSY**

Rural Development schemes like MGNREGA/IRDP/SGSY	Respondents	%
Yes	47	85.45
No	00	00
Don't know	8	14.54

From the table 3.4, we get to know that 85.45% of the village council members said Yes that Rural Development schemes like MGNREGA/IRDP/SGSY is implemented in the village with the help of village council. Village council members are the sole person to bring various schemes and programmes for the upliftment of the various villages in the Blocks.

**Table 3.5: Implements RD Schemes in your village**

Who implements RD Schemes in your village	Respondents	%
BDO	44	80
Village Council	37	67.27
Nokma	31	56.36

From the Table 3.5, it is very clear, that though 80% of the Village council members said that BDOs are the persons who implement RD schemes in the village, 67.27% of village council members said it is the village council members who implement the RD schemes in the villages. On the other hand, 56.36% of the village council members do agree that at certain circumstances Nokma also implements RD schemes in the village.

**Table 3.6: Responsible Person in the Selection of the Beneficiaries**

Responsible person in the selection of the beneficiaries	Respondents	%
BDO	43	78.18
Village Council	5	9.09
Nokma	0	00
Don't know	3	5.45

From the Table 3.6, it is seen that though 78.18% of the Village Council members said that BDO is the responsible person in the selection of the beneficiaries, it is with the help of Village council members that the BDOs select the beneficiaries from the village. Thus, we can say that Village council members play a great role in the selection of the beneficiaries in the village.

### 3.2 The Nokma

From 1824 CE British colonial administration appointed their own officials - laskars and sardars - but continued to acknowledge the role of the village headmen, as "the clan chief and custodian of the clan land a'king."

'Many of the disputes of the Garos decided in their village Panchayats. When a man has some complaints against another he reports them to the Nokma or the village-head. If the nature of the complaints is simple, the Nokma in a meeting of the few leading persons of the village, decides the dispute; but if the nature of the complaints is complicated and not easy of solution the Nokma reports the matter to the Laskar. The Laskar is a very important and influential man in the Garo Hills District. The hills areas are divided into some elekas and each of such elekas is placed under a Laskar for convenient collection of the house tax as well as for deciding the disputes of small nature locally. The Laskar need not essentially be a literate man, worldly prudence is enough for the management of his eleka. In practice a Laskar wields immense influence in his eleka.'<sup>31</sup>

'The laskor has several duties. He collects the house tax within his district, keeping a fixed portion of this as his own payment, and he organizes work parties to keep the roads open. His most important duty, however, is to supervise and try to settle legal disputes. The loskor sometimes appoints one or more assistants called sordars, to whom the District Council pays an annual stipend of 100 Rupees, together with a shirt and a pair of short pants. Saljing, who lived in Rengsanggri, was a sordar; but not every village had one, and a sordar does not have jurisdiction over a particular village. As a general assistant to the loskor he may assist in collecting information about a dispute, and in petty matters a sordar may sit as representative of the loskor and

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<sup>31</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.-45-87.



preside at a trial. The Laskorship demands a large part of a man's time, but a sordar spends most of his time working in his fields like his neighbors.<sup>32</sup>

Mahari, Nokma and colonial Laskars were all involved in adjudicating legal matters at different levels but neither of these individuals were specialists at judging. Mahari: Disputes concerning "property, inheritance, and domestic quarrels within the family" would be dealt with by the Mahari.

Nokma: "The village judiciary system started with the a'king Nokma or Songni Nokma and the clan elders of that village. Nokma took the leadership in all village activities and since he was supposed to be a warrior, he was not expected to hesitate to punish the guilty if he suspected a foul play. In the past the Garo principle was 'blood for blood, head for head'.

The Nokma and the village council were the earliest political systems of the Garos. They were the only political systems that existed among them prior to the advent of the British.<sup>33</sup>

Origin of the Word: the word "Nokma" in common parlance means a "rich man". but it has two literal meanings. First, "Nok" means a "house" and "Ma" is both an affix and suffix, which in some context means "big". Thus, according to this etymology, Nokma means the "big house" Though it is used to refer to the man of the house, and not the house, it carries some meaning as the houses of the Nokmas are generally bigger than other houses of the village. Moreover, the houses are constructed with specially carved posts and decorative roofs. Secondly, the word "Ma" means "mother" and in this sense, it means the "mother of the house". Though it invariably refers to the man of the house, but since the man owns the house and the household property in the name of his wife and her clan, this etymology also conveys some practical meaning. Thus, though the Nokma, that is, the man is theoretically the owner,

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<sup>32</sup>Harendra Singha. 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, pp.169-173.

<sup>33</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.-120-126.

the actual owners are his wife and her clans. As the head of the clan, the Nokma is only custodian of the lands and property of his wife and her clan.<sup>34</sup>

### **3.3 Different Kinds of Nokma**

- a. The Gamni Nokma: He is a mere rich man of the village. He has neither power nor authority, and as such, it is not a political institutions.
- b. The Gana Nokma: He is also a rich man of the village, but in order to gain social prestige and standing, he performs the Gana ceremony in which he gives sumptuous feast to all the people and dances round and round merrily in front of the assembled guests. As a symbol of recognition of Nokmaship, he wears a thick metal ring around his elbow. Such a Nokma commands respect from his co-villagers because of his wealth, but is devoid of any political power. As such, he does not exist as a political institution.
- c. The Kamal Nokma: He is a village priest, and as a priest, he conducts religious ceremonies only. Therefore, he does not have any political power.
- d. The A'King Nokma: the A'king Nokma is a person who holds title to the a'king Nokma by virtue of his marriage with the girl of the senior most house of the village. As the head of the clan and as the custodian of the a'king land, he has certain powers and functions. As result, the A'king Nokma is the only Nokma which is a political institution.

Succession to A'king lands: Succession to a a'king Nokmanship is subject to ordinary laws of inheritance through the system of Nokna (heiress), and Nokkrom (man married to an heiress), who are entitled to the A'king and they shall be recognized by the government as Nokma. When they succeed to Nokmaship, their names are entered in the record of Nokmas by the deputy commissioner, but now the records are kept and maintained by the district council.

Usually, the a'king Nokma, like any other Nokma, looks for a nephew, that is the son of his sister, to come and be his son-in-law and heir. Thus, the nephew not

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<sup>34</sup>ibid. pp.-158.

only become the heir to the house and property but also succeeds to the 'headship' when his father-in-law dies. As a rule, a Nokma should be a member of the lineage and from the same village as the previous Nokma. Therefore, generally a succession of Nokmas are members of one village and lineage by descent but hold the status of Nokma or headman in another village by virtue of being married to the girl who are successively chosen as heiress in the senior house of the village.<sup>35</sup>

In the absence of a daughter, the nearest female relation of the Nokma's wife is adopted as heiress and she together with her husband succeeds to the a'king land. However, in recent years, there has been a few cases where, after the death of the Nokma, his surviving wife succeeded as Nokma in supercession of all her daughters and their husbands. In any case, it is the important relations of her clan who have a final say in the matter. They have every right to elect anybody to the Nokmanship by majority vote or consent and the government will simply endorse it.<sup>36</sup>

### **3.4 Position and Responsibilities of A'King Nokma**

#### **a) The Place of Nokma in Society**

Each Garo village community is an autonomous political unit, the head of which is the the Nokma. The Nokma holds his office through the right of the a'king which theoretically belongs to his wife and her clan. The office of the Nokma has the intrinsic importance from the point of view of the Garo organization. it is the pivot of the village organization, through which the basic network of the entire Garo society is woven. In fact, the Nokma plays the leading role as the central figure in the village activities, and externally represents the village.

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<sup>35</sup>ibid. pp.-149-178.

<sup>36</sup>Harendra Singha. 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, pp.169-173.

However, the position of the Nokma is very delicate. As a matter of fact, the Nokma cannot be compared to a Chief who exercises his political authority with various social and economic advantages. The Nokma is rather social and economic representative of the village without having any advantage or authority.

The Nokma's position becomes clear when we consider the characteristics of the Garo social structure, associated with the "Nok" is always backed by all the members of the two lineages in moiety relation. No Nok can develop a social solidarity or a differentiated status from others. The Nokmanship also follows this principle. No doubt, the Nokma's house has the prestige as the oldest household among the houses of the village. The word "Nokma" itself indicates "mother of the house" according to one etymology. However, the Nokma including his family members can not claim any superiority of status, because he is simply a selected member from both local lineage groups in which the members are of equal status in the kinship network.<sup>37</sup>

Any male member of the same lineage group may become the Nokma. The opportunity is provided according to the circumstances and sometimes, the villagers together with the important members of the lineage group have also the right to dismiss him from the Nokmanship should he fail seriously to perform his duties, as happened a few years ago in a neighbouring village of Rombagiri, where the Nokma was replaced because of his failure to arrange the funeral of his wife. Thus, structurally, the Nokma's status does not confer on him any distinguishable social rank.

Laskar (from 1824 CE): "The British Government, being actuated with the desire to have effective control over the villages and to facilitate the collection of revenues and house tax introduced the office of laskar with limited police, civil and criminal powers. Accordingly there was a laskar over a circle of villages; each having jurisdiction covering ten or twelve of villages. Although, the villagers were left to

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<sup>37</sup>Gram Vikas: Programmes at a Glance, Government of India. Ministry of Rural Development, 2001, p-13.

settle all disputes through the nokma and the village courts, they had right to appeal to the court of laskars against the decisions of the village councils."<sup>38</sup>

"Since the annexation of the Garo Hills by the British Government, a body of men called laskars has been formed, who act as a kind of rural police and also as honorary magistrates. They are empowered to deal with all minor matters and settle unimportant disputes. They do this by calling together meetings of villagers, in which they sit as presidents and give final decisions. Their powers do not exceed those of inflicting fines and awarding compensation to injured parties. This is but an adaptation of the ancient usages of the people, for in former times, the village met in conference to decide any matter in dispute between its members. When in these meetings evidence could not be adduced, recourse was, and is yet had to trial by ordeal. This is of two kinds, the s'il-s[unknown], or ordeal of hot iron, and the ch[unknown]okéla-s[unknown], or ordeal of boiling water."<sup>39</sup>

The tenure of Village Council needs to increase and also there is a need to develop decision-making power and financial power. There is a need of Block Level elected body, where the villages are scattered due to geographical location, for effective planning, participation and decision making in the District Councils area as well.

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The system of appointment of BDOs and his assisting staff failed to evoke belongingness in this office. Therefore direct recruitment and the rests through

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<sup>38</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.-129-133.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. p. 127.

promotion can be effective with training provisions. The functions of the BDOs and his assisting staff

With regard to the methods for the recruitment and qualification of the BDO is not uniform in all the states of Indian Union. At present, the posts of BDOs are filled through a) direct recruitment through State Public Service Commission and b) promotion or transfer from existing State Administrative Service. The practice of promotion or transfer from the state service is obtained in Meghalaya. The Meghalaya Civil Service (MCS) Junior Grade Officers are appointed as BDO in Meghalaya. Usually, persons in the age group of 25 – 31 and in possession of Bachelor's Degree on Arts, Science, Agriculture, etc are eligible for appointment as the BDO, giving importance on Administrative Experience, Social Service or Experience of Revenue Administration. The BDO also needs a comprehensive training for performing his duties as an extension worker, as a Programme Planner, as a Coordinator, as a Captain of the team functionaries and most important is, as an agent to motivate, encourage and assist village families.<sup>40</sup>

The BDO has to perform a wide ranging powers and functions as head of the office, as the manager of the development officers, as Coordinator and Convener of various block level committees, as planning officer, generating employment, in time of natural calamities, improving health. The BDO is being the head of the block administration, has also to maintain a perfect coordination and understanding with other staff. The success of block administration depends upon a perfect coordination, understanding and healthy relation with other block level staff.<sup>41</sup>

The BDO as a multipurpose functionary is expected to be more prompt, efficient, objective, and most important is motivating the rural poor. He is a ubiquitous figure today and no one at least, in rural India, remains, or can even afford to remain

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<sup>40</sup>Roy, A. (1976). 'Organizational Aspects of Rural Development'. Calcutta: World Press Publication. pp. 122-168.

<sup>41</sup>Harendra Singha. 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, pp.169-173.

unaware of his presence. The introduction of Community Development and changes in new functionaries has passed more than five decades. Since then, India has executed over forty programmes of rural development.<sup>42</sup>

In Meghalaya the atmosphere is very conducive for effective implementation of rural development programmes, because Meghalaya has a reputation of voluntary services for the community, no money lenders, no caste barriers, hard working nature of the people, etc.

In Garo Hills, rural development programmes have been badly affected due to the existence of different Insurgencies groups. Their activities have posed a big blow to the developmental activities carried on by the different Departments of the State Government. The communication, marketing system, agriculture and allied sector still needs to be explored although some achievement has been made with the efforts of the Government of Meghalaya especially after 1972.<sup>43</sup>

In spite of the fact that the District Council has been functioning, the area is still backward. There is no relation between the District Council and the State Rural development functionaries in the region. A certain degree of relation is important to avoid the duplication of work. A special package for agriculture and allied sector, industry, horticulture development is required for more concentrated efforts on developing infrastructure, farm mechanization, marketing facilities, communication, irrigation, etc. Due to remoteness and scattered nature of the villages and lack road transport facilities the farmers of the remote villages were not able to send their products even to the block headquarters. There is no regulated market and cold storage facility in the region, which needs to be developed.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>ibid. pp.169-165.

<sup>43</sup>Singh V. (2003).Panchayati Raj and Village Development (studies in Public Administration). Delhi: Oscar Publication.pp.-34-87.

<sup>44</sup>Harendra Singha. 'The Role of Block Development Officer in the Rural Development of Mizoram, 2006, pp.169-145.

Over fifty years have passed since the introduction of Community Development, but about 40% of rural population is still living in below poverty line. It is high time now to make continuous process of field survey, evaluation and establishing mechanism to check the proper and effective implementation and assessment of the performance of the rural bureaucracy. The Govt. should spend at least 5 % of the rural development funds in this region for independent and impartial study so that the fruits of development reach to the rural poor which it is meant for.

In the Rural Development Department, at the Directorate level, all the bureaucratic personnel's has been borrowed from the development department. As a result, among the bureaucrats the belongingness and motivation is lacking. Almost all the bureaucrats want to back in their parent departments and most of the officers do not have major assignments of works allotted. Thus, it is the wastage of the expertise of the bureaucrats. This important department should be reorganized like that in the pattern of other development departments. In fact, rural development department is as important as the other development departments. This will, bring unity, spirit of work and more responsibility and accountability in their work which will ultimately help the rural poor. A District Rural Development Department in each district should be created under the Directorate to supervise and monitor the programmes of rural development. An officer of Deputy Director's rank of the present Directorate may head this office. It will bring more transparency and effective implementation and supervision of the rural development programmes.<sup>45</sup>

The Block level bureaucrats play a very insignificant role in the development of various sectors like agriculture, small scale industry, horticulture, fishery, education, health etc. This is due to the communication constraint like lack of available staff and frequent transfer of the BDOs. The BDOs and Eos do not attend regularly training programmes organized by the State Institute of Rural Development. Thus, the BDOs posting for a longer period appointment of required number of level

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<sup>45</sup> S.K. Chattapadhyaya, S.K, (ed). Tribal Institutions of Meghalaya, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1985. pp. 129-133.



functionaries, area of operation of the Village Level Workers, reducing the area of operation by making an Additional Block needs to be made.

The system of appointment of BDOs and his assisting staff failed to evoke belongingness in this office. Therefore direct recruitment and the rests through promotion can be effective with training provisions. The functions of the BDOs and his assisting staff mostly found to be confined in the block office only. But it is observed that motivating the Extension Officers and Village level Workers by the BDOs to work on the field is lacking.

If the BDOs work on the field he will be able to motivate the other field staff of the block too. To settle various problems and poverty eradication programmes of the blocks regular meetings of Block Level Committees should held for which the BDOs are entirely responsible. The Village Council Presidents should be paid TA/DA to attend the meetings.<sup>46</sup>

The BDOs used to intimate the President of the Village Council through letters regarding new schemes and opportunities and necessities concerning them. Some villages are not getting benefits because there is no communication link. Involvement of NGOs in rural development process, a special policy of tax for raising funds for rural developments, involving higher education to motivate the rural people, special focus on a particular block in a given period, choosing appropriate technology for rural areas, coordination of various development departments, is essential in this multi dimensional process.<sup>47</sup>

Meghalaya, an agricultural state, the topographical isolation, bad communication networks, limited cultivable lands, primitive method of cultivation and insufficiency in food production is still backward. Facilities like transport, communication, irrigation, electricity and industry for development are not adequate. On consideration of above background, trained, skilled, specialized, efficient and

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid. pp. 112-146.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid. pp.133-145.

impartial bureaucracy is required in those involved in the process of rural development.

Garo Hills, the backward district of the state, needs topmost priority for all round development in all sectors of development. In the overall development of the region and success of rural developmental schemes, the key importance is the rural bureaucracy. Full-fledged staffing in all the rural development blocks and involving them effectively in all sectors of development - agriculture, small scale industry, veterinary, horticulture, fishery to generate employment for the rural poor is required. But the importance must be given in motivating the rural bureaucracy to work hard in assisting the villagers in a difficult working condition for which the BDOs are entirely responsible.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Sangma, M.( 1981). History and Culture of the Garos. New Delhi: Books Today.pp.24-33.