Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
(KAAC)
An introduction

The United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District came into existence on 17.11.1951. Prior to that the area formed parts of Nagaon District, Sivasagar District, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and Cachar District. The District was formed by combining partially excluded areas of Nagaon and erstwhile Sivasagar (Mikir Hills Tract), Block-I and Block-II of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and North Cachar Hills (excluded area), Sub-Division of Cachar District, on the recommendation of Commission appointed for the purpose vide Notification No.TAD/R/31/50, dt. 03.10.1950. Historically this area was administered by British a bit differently, in the sense that Govt. of India Act, 1919 classified these areas as Backward tract and Govt. of India Act, 1935 classified them as excluded and partially excluded areas. After independence, Constitution of India also maintained the special status by way of provisions contained in Sixth Schedule.

As per provisions of the Sixth Schedule, Karbi Anglong District Council was constituted on 23.06.1952 with its headquarters at Diphu. It was formally inaugurated by Late Bishnuram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam. Constitution of India vested upon the District Councils some Legislative, Executive and Judicial functions.

From 1st June, 1970, almost all the Development Departments of the Govt. of Assam functioning in the Karbi Anglong District have been placed under the Administrative control of the Karbi Anglong District Council. However the functioning of sixth schedule continued to be marred by the District Council's incompetence and the state's indifference. Accumulation of grievances and new aspiration of tribal youth to have
economic power gave birth to various movements for implementation of Article 244(A) of the Constitution. As a result, an M.O.U. was reached between Govt. of Assam and movement leaders on 01.04.1995 whereby more departments were entrusted to Karbi Anglong District Council.

It may be mentioned that consequent upon the M.O.U., the name of the Karbi Anglong District Council was renamed as “Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)”. As per the recent arrangements, the Secretariat cell of KAAC is headed by a Principal Secretary in the rank of Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Assam; two Secretaries in the rank of Secretary to the Government of Assam (one of whom is from a Technical Department); three Deputy Secretaries (one of whom is from a technical Department and remaining ones from the Assam Civil Services), all are to be placed under the disposal of KAAC by Govt. of Assam. Besides, the Council has also a few officers under Council sector like Deputy Secretary (C); Asstt. Secretary (C), etc.

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council consists of 30 (thirty) members, 26 (Twenty Six) of whom are elected and the four nominated with a view to provide representation to the minorities who constitute a considerable proportion of the total population of the sub-division. There are 26 constituencies from which members are elected to the District Council.

The tenure of the District council is for five years unless it is dissolved earlier. The District Council has a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman who are elected by the members of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951. The Deputy Commissioner functions as the Returning Officer in respect of the elections to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

The Governor of Assam may dissolve the Autonomous Council on some specific grounds as stated below:

(a) When the Commission appointed to enquire into the administration recommends the dissolution;

(b) When the Governor is satisfied that the administration of the Council cannot be carried on in accordance with the provision of Sixth Schedule;

(c) After dissolution, the Governor may direct a fresh general election or reconstitution of the Council. Pending the holding of the general election or the reconstitution, the Governor himself or a person or body authorised by him shall administer the affairs of the Council. But the period of dissolution should be confined to six months which can subsequently be extended for another period not exceeding six months.

There is an executive Committee of the Autonomous Council made up of one third members of the council and headed by the Chief Executive Member, appointed by the Governor of Assam as Executive Member on the advice of the Chief Executive Member. The Executive committee formulates policy decisions besides discharging of day to day functioning and matters of the council.

In accordance with the provisions laid down in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the functions and powers of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council can be divided under three main heads- Legislative, Executive and Financial.

**Legislative powers :-**

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council in respect of all areas within the district has the power to make laws with respect to :-
The allotment, occupation, or use or the setting apart of land other than any land which is reserved forest, for the purpose of agriculture or grazing, or for residential or other non-agricultural purposes likely to promote the interests of the inhabitants of any village or town.

The management of any forest not being a reserved forest.

The use of any canal or water course for the purpose of Agriculture

The regulation of the practice of Jhum or other forms of shifting cultivation.

The establishment of village or town committees or Councils and their powers

Any other matter relating to village or town administration including village or town policies and public health and sanitation.

The appointment or succession of chief or headman.

The inheritance of property.

Marriage.

Social Customs.

The District Council has also been empowered to frame laws to regulate and control moneylending and trading by persons other than the scheduled tribes.

Though the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council has the powers to make acts, rules, the Governor must give his assent to the same. The Governor has the power to suspend or annul any act or resolution of the Council if he is satisfied that it may endanger the safety of India.

Executive powers :-

The District Council may establish, construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, road and waterways in the district. It may prescribe the language and manner in which primary education should be imparted in the primary schools of the district.

Financial power :-

The District Council has been allotted specific items of revenue for the efficient discharge of its functions and to meet necessary expenses. The following Financial power has been vested with the District Councils:

(a) Powers to assess and collect revenue and impose taxes.
(b) To levy and collect taxes on lands and buildings, and tolls on persons residing within such areas.
(c) Taxes on profession, trades, callings and employment.
(d) Taxes on entry of goods into a market for sale and on passengers and goods carried in ferries.
(e) Taxes for the maintenance of schools, dispensaries and roads.
(f) Licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for, or extracting minerals. The District Council shall have the right of sharing the royalties accrued each year from licenses or leases for the purpose of prospecting for, or the extracting of minerals granted by the Government of Assam in respect of any areas within the autonomous district as may be agreed upon between the Government of Assam and the District Councils.