



Sixth Schedule in Indian Constitution *Manipur Experience*

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Abstract

Abstract: Federalism forms an elementary part of the Indian constitution. It is not conventional federalism like that in the USA but we have devised our quasi-federal model, which best suited our needs. Federalism is a term derived from the Latin word "foedus", which means a covenant. It is a legal politico device. India has a federal character of Centre-State relations i.e., centralized federalism. Our federalism is usually termed asymmetrical in nature and character. It has a flexible and accommodative character on one hand but has a strong central bias on the other. The basic objective of this study is to understand this complexity and analyse the advantages and drawbacks of the Constitutional provisions specified in the Sixth Schedule concerning the state of Manipur. The Fifth and Sixth Schedule was added in the Constitution as an attempt to recognise the significance of the social and cultural diversity that India has, protect tribal people and culture and incorporate the idea of self-rule, and autonomy. Despite these provisions, Manipur remained deprived off of all developmental benefits through participatory democracy in India as applies to the grassroots level empowerment and emancipation i.e., 'bhagidari' by which governance is known by its relation with the people. The constitution addresses needs but not in toto, there are various issues involved which needs to be addressed and amended. Thus, this paper provides historical perspective, pragmatic approaches, and offers an empirical study of the above.

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1. Introduction

Federalism can be termed as an arrangement of power-sharing between the central government and the state government as per an agreement or covenant that is usually made a part of the federal constitution. It is more of a centrifugal in the Indian case than a centripetal as it is in the USA. In a centripetal process of formation of the federation, several smaller states having geographical continuity tend to come towards the centre to form a

bigger sovereign state by surrendering some of their powers to the emergent federal polity. The current 50 states of the US federation were unconnected colonies of the British that gradually joined the United States federation by revolting against the British. The federal government enjoys a set of definite powers, known as the enumerated powers, which are spelt out in the Constitution whereas the residuary or the reserved powers are vested in the people that are, in fact, the powers of the states. However, the judicial review in its verdict *McCulloch v. Maryland* of 1819 had considerably expanded the powers of the federal government. Whereas, Indian federal structure, though which came into existence through a centrifugal process after the commencement of the Constitution of India on January 26, 1950, is an example of the administrative units going away from the centre to exercise more powers than previously enjoyed now, yet British India was technically a unitary colony under the British. For administrative convenience, the British had created provinces but these provinces exercised through provincial governors were delegated to them by the Governor-General who was under the direct control of the Secretary of State for India, a member of the British cabinet. Thus, it was a highly centralized arrangement wherein the real powers belonged to the British Parliament. Although Dr B.R. Ambedkar's opinion on the "The States under our Constitution is in no way dependent upon the centre for their legislative or executive authority" has been contested, however, by an expert, Granville Austin, who points out that "in theory Articles 200 and 201 invalidate the division of powers for there is no means of overriding a President's veto in case of State legislation." This statement is endorsed to the extent that Article 200 empowers the Governor of a State to reserve a Bill for President's assent and Article 201 under which the President may veto such a Bill practically negate the spirit of federalism. However, the usage of the term 'Union' instead of 'federalism' was deliberate and not without justification. As in his speech of November 4, 1948, in the Constituent Assembly, Dr B.R. Ambedkar said this about Indian federalism: "All federal systems including the American are placed in a tight mould of federalism. No matter what the circumstances, it cannot change its form and shape. It can never be unitary. On the other hand, the Draft Constitution can be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances. In normal times, it is framed to work as a federal system. But in times of war, it is so designed as to work as though it was a unitary system..." There were historical, financial and ethnic reasons for creating a federal structure with a strong Centre. The Constituent Assembly was under tremendous pressure to frame a Constitution that could effectively protect the unity and integrity of the nation. Briefly, the following are some of the other reasons for strong centralised tendencies by design: 1. Jammu and Kashmir issue was resolved by its abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A (2019). 2. North-eastern India of which Naga secessionist issue and other subsequent developments of the region through subversive activities (Pan Naga Framework under consideration). 3. Public Finance power by Union Government to allocate financial resources to comparatively backward in terms of economic, social and educational development than while in British India. 4. The ethnic diversity was one of the overriding reasons to create linguistic States and a strong Union to keep these diverse federating units together. 5. Single Citizenship 6. Single Constitution 7. Unified Judiciary 8. All-India Services 9. No Equality of State Representation(the total members of Rajya Sabha are 250 out of which 238 are elected by the members of Legislative Assemblies of the States and the number of elected members is assigned to each state as per its population(varying from 1-34 number of members). The remaining 12 members are appointed by the President of India for their distinguished services in the fields of literature, science, art and social service. 10. Strong Central Bias This central biased feature of federalism is remarked as quasi-federal (K.C. Wheare). Though this point is critiqued as there is nothing quasi or semi about federalism but simply new federalism that has taken root and is now increasingly assertive (Arora: 2012). This is further strengthened through the process of participation by state-based political parties at the national level that has reduced the incidences of the use of President's Rule, which had often been used in the past to keep the state governments under check (*Ibid*). Federalism and other components of the Indian constitution in its manifestation for flexibility and diversity are remarked as "stretchable as a rubber band/balloon (Kamson M: 1997 a personal interview; He influenced the policy of Indo-Naga unconditional talks initiated by the then Prime Minister Narshimha Rao as seen in his status note to him (PM) as Minister of State, Home Affairs. He was specifically assigned to initiate. Wherein in his Status Note to the Prime Minister it was found that he consulted the then Chief Ministers: RishangKeishing of Manipur, S. C. Jamir of Nagaland, and Chief of Army Staff, Shankar Roy Choudhury)." This is echoed similarly by Arora that India's search for unity in diversity has led it, with the help of a flexible and adaptable Constitution, to experiment with a wide range of devices available in the federalism toolkit...and the sky is the limit, provided space can be located in the Constitution...diversity has

thus been federalized in diverse ways, retaining the essence of the federal principle but displaying remarkable pragmatism in adjusting it to suit Indian realities. This may be termed as identity or in other words, diversities in India are an identity itself.

Sixth Schedule In Indian Constitution

The addition of the sixth Schedule in the Indian constitution was a welcome addition to the Indian Constitution. It guaranteed decentralisation of power. The idea took birth in 1915 under British Government and later was made part of the Indian constitution as the sixth schedule(Keynote address of Manik Sarkar, Chief Minister of Tripura, on the Regional Autonomy, Sixth Schedule of India Constitution, Experience of Northeast and Tripura. 12th Nov 2006). It was the fulfilment of the demand for identity assertion along with providing a fruitful solution to the need for self-rule by formation and acceptance of ADC(Autonomous District Council). Thus, acquiring the status of ADC was looked upon as a forward step for the empowerment of tribal people. There is a criterion to determine the adoption of policy implementation of the Sixth Schedule in the constitution of India. First, these tribal states of the Northeast are backwards educationally and economically. Thus, as per the constitution of India, irrespective of majority-minority calculus, all northeastern tribes are declared backwards educationally and economically (S. Chiru, 2014).

The Analysis of ADC in Northeast India

There is a pertinent question that arises regarding the existing different style or pattern of the Autonomous District Councils (ADC) in the Northeast States(Ibid). While the ADCs in Assam and Tripura are meant for the tribal areas which are the minority in comparison to the majority communities which rule the State. Whereas, the ADCs in Meghalaya are for the tribal groups (Khasi, Jaintia and Garo) who are themselves the majority and ruling people in the absence of any other majority community in the State. Still another variant is that in Mizoram the ADCs are for the minority tribal groups (Chakma, Mara and Lai) and not for the majority Mizo Tribe who are ruling people in the absence of any other majority community in the State. From this point of view, the study will attempt to make a comparative study of the various pattern of ADCs set up in five states (excluding Nagaland, Arunachal and Sikkim) for the protection of the minority tribal groups from the ruling majority communities who do not avail the benefits of the Sixth Schedule for themselves(S.S. Chiru: 2019, p. 22). Therefore, the Sixth Schedule is the best option available for the Manipur hill people to overcome the problem of finance. For instance, the 10 Autonomous District Councils (ADC) under the Sixth Schedule viz., the ADCs of North Cachar Hills District, Karbi-Anglong District and Bodoland Territorial Areas District viz., in Assam; (2) the ADCs of Khasi Hills District, Jaintia Hills District and Garo Hills District viz., in Meghalaya; (3) the ADCs of Chakma District, Mara District and Lai District viz., in Mizoram; (4) the ADC of Tripura Tribal Areas District viz., are provided "fund" from the Centre approximately between Rs.50 crores to 150 crores annually for each of the ADCs, in addition to the normal grant-in-aid received from the concerned States(M.Kamson, 2004; Refer to Bhuria Report, 2004). The Autonomous District Councils of Manipur under the Act of 1971 are deprived of this central funding.

Another point to be noted is that the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council of West Bengal which is also created by an Act of the State of West Bengal (like the District Councils of Manipur) is in receipt of sufficient fund from the State government of West Bengal. The West Bengal State government provides the fund with an annual grant almost equivalent to the central funding available under the Sixth Schedule and Article 275(Ibid). The State government of Manipur did not follow this pattern of funding either.

Thus, one thing to be borne in mind is that despite a varying pattern of implementing the Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India, the sole criteria remains i.e., the Sixth Schedule is designed for the ethnic tribes of Northeast India irrespective of minority-majority calculus(S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 22). It is upto the minds and wisdom of the authority concern to adopt which pattern as existed in these Northeastern states suitable and accordingly implement. However, the study would be interested and appreciative for suggesting a uniform pattern of implementing the Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India.

The dream for the uniform pattern being a far cry, at least the study is focused on Mizoram pattern as being benefited by the minority within minority i.e., Lai, Mara and Chakma. Tribes in Manipur are not a minority in the Mizoram sense of the term yet they deserve the Sixth Schedule. On that minority status basis, the state of Manipur is inhabited by the tribals, covering as large as 93 per cent of its territory. The tribals accounted for almost 32 per cent of the state's population. Whereas, only 7 per cent of the state's territory is inhabited

by the plains Meeteis who accounted for 60 per cent of the state's population(Ibid). Therefore, the tribals in Manipur hills form a minority. There is no specific definition for the minority concept in the Indian constitution. Conventionally minority should form less than 50 per cent of the given population. Tribals in Manipur form 32 per cent. However, either linguistic or religious minority status cannot be the only criteria to determine the award/declaration of the minority status. Rightly, tribals in Manipur are both Linguistic and Religious Minority, the solid criteria in determining the minority status. The basic premise of the nation to the linguistic minorities is that every minority will have a place of honour in the state in which they live (Ragongning). To achieve this, the founding fathers of the constitution had enshrined in the constitution the safeguards for linguistic minorities as fundamental rights, entitled: cultural and educational rights and with a headline of the Article: 'protection of rights of minorities (Ibid).'.

However, the tribal inhabited areas are neither declared as "Scheduled Areas" under the Fifth Schedule nor specified as "Tribal Areas" under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Therefore, tribal inhabited areas are not covered by the Fifth or the Sixth Schedule (S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 23).

The Manipur Experience

In Manipur, six Autonomous District Councils were established in the hill districts under the state legislation called the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971, run on the meagre funding of the State. These nominal Autonomous District Councils created by the State legislations in Manipur and, are not part of the Sixth Schedule and, as such, are devoid of autonomy or central funding(M.kamson, 2004; Refer to Bhuria Report, 2004).

One pertinent question is why these tribal populations and tribal inhabited areas are left out 'unspecified' and not covered by the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution? Because of which they are being deprived of the Constitutional benefits of autonomy and development. The Constitution needs to answer such a question as this. As this is a serious 'gap' in the provisions of the Constitution or its implementation.

The princely state of Manipur was independent as any other princely states. In this independent princely state of Manipur, only house tax was collected from the tribals of the hill by the native rulers(S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 23). To this day a certain amount of this house tax is being collected by the Manipur government. But the administration of the landholding system and economic tax was left untouched or never interfered. Which the Nagas have in the general community-owned land, clan owned land and individual owned land. Whereas in the case of the Kukis, ownership of the land was chiefly in the hand of the haosa or chiefs of the village and normally, the number of the chiefs several of them in particular Kuki village.

In the princely state of Manipur, the rulers imposed a hill house tax. The economic tax was never imposed on the hills of Manipur. They gave autonomy to traditional polity and their land system. So was in the colonial era the British never imposed any land tax on the tribals. This implies the tribal land, polity and administration were intact and independent to the extent that the tribes were de jure ownership and administration of their land(Ibid., 23).

The colonial administration also never interfered in the administration of the landholding system. Except in the mid-fifties of the 20th century, the Manipur 'Part C' status enacted the village authority acts and thus dilution of the administration was made.

In 1947, in the post-independence era, the government of Manipur introduced the Manipur Hill People's Regulation Act, 1947. In 1956, the government of India introduced the Manipur (Hill Areas) Village Authorities Act for the administration of the hill areas of Manipur. These two Acts somehow diluted the administration of the hill areas. However, it never affects the landholding system (Manipur (Hill Areas) Village Authorities Act, 1956; Also refer to J.M. Kujur, 2011, p.105).

The state of Manipur was granted full-fledged statehood in 1972. And ever since then an agreement was entered between the hills and the plains of Manipur (S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 23).

The 1972 agreement between the state of Manipur and the tribals was that the state agreed in principle to earmark a 32 per cent quota reserved for the tribals of Manipur and in return the product of the hills to be shared through the system of trade and commerce. So far, the produce of the hills is marketed in the different bazaars of the plains with great difficulty of transport and communication. There are other areas where the interest of the hills is not properly attended (S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 25). For instance, when the Eighth Schedule

status was granted to Manipuri, a similar understanding was involved in which the then Members of Parliament appended the Manipuri language being accorded as one of the Eighth Schedule languages status to be included in the syllabus of the Manipur Secondary School Board, i.e., till 8th class in exchange for granting of Sixth Schedule to the hills. Besides, there are so many interests being attended to or granted by the centre for the plain Manipuri (Meetings). There has been long demand for the Kangla Fort (the seat of Meetei kingdom) to be vacated. Assam Rifles had been making its Battalion here. In the recent past, the demand for the surrendering of the site was implemented. Another contentious issue is the Arm Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958(amended 1972 coincidentally, Manipur being granted Full-fledged statehood). In the hills, the sovereignty demand by the Naga Independent movement has been going on since the early 20th century. Ever since the start, many people had been affected by the imposition of the draconian AFSPA designed for northeast India. The district which affected the most was Ukhrul where women and children were not spared. Particularly, accesses committed, by Indian regular security forces in this district has been sidelined by the state's locals and national dailies or other media fraternity (Content analysis would hugely reveal this gap). Women being raped by the security forces has been the order of the day in Ukhrul district and other hill districts in the past almost a century. The Hunger strike of Irom Sharmila for several years to protest against it remained futile.

There seems to be bias and discrimination meted out to the hill problems in Manipur (S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 23). The centre is all for the plain Meeteis for sheer endorsement of the British policy of divide and rule. Even among the hill tribes themselves, the ethnic line conflict is being created by the higher authority i.e., be it colonial British or independent India or the government of Manipur. When compared, the three, the worst is Independent India. Colonial India had some kind of policy/ies which was exclusivists and parochial in a way. That was done thus, in a way, to suit northeast India, which was not in complete domain and control of British India. That was why different approaches were adopted to suit the interest of the people of this land. The development through the adoption of the policy/is was/were welcomed by the northeast people, particularly the Mizos and the Nagas.

Now, Mizos having conceded to the creation of the Mizo state rather than the sovereign independent Mizo country somehow demonstrated a kind of peace mission and a lesson from which the militant inflicted region could learn a lot from. There are different ways to look at this story. Mizos conceded to the pressure of the Indian government to be a part of India. How? By convincing Laldennga, the then militant leader to give up arms struggle and become the Chief Minister of Mizoram. He gave up his struggle to become the leader of the Mizoram. That may be the sort of a good gesture for his people or a bad gesture for his people. From an Indian perspective, he has become a faithful boy to his big brother, India. Some Mizos might have scorned him for this approach. Some may also be convinced as similar other arm struggles in the Northeast are uncertain of getting their demand. In Nagalim's sovereignty movement, the leaders are determining to resolve not through statehood but much higher than the status of the statehood. The demand for the sovereign country has a history parallel to the Indian independence movement. The provision of the Sixth Schedule was extended to Tripura State in 1984 and created the single Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule. But the tribal districts of Manipur which constitute more than 90 per cent of the total territorial area of the State have so far been denied Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule, despite their consistent demand for the last almost five decades, due to objection raised by the state government. Normally, the realization of demands with the aspirations of the people in Northeastern India, take a time duration of similar half a century conventionally. It looks like Autonomous District Council is agreed as transitional measures to accommodate Naga aspirations for sovereignty movement (T. Muiva and Karan Thapar TV Interview)

Notwithstanding for those with the provision of statehood being granted following the birth of new States out of the erstwhile hill districts of the Sixth Schedule and enactment of new hill districts under the Sixth Schedule, at Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, consists of the following hill district specified as "Tribal Areas" to constitute autonomous district councils therein:-

| Part -- I | Part – II | Part – IIA | Part – III |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.NorthCachar Hills District. | 1. The Khasi Hills District. | Tripura Tribal Areas District | 1.The Chakma District. |
| 2.The KarbiAnglong District | 2.The Jaintia Hills District. | | 2.The Mara District. |
| | 3.The Garo Hills District | | 3.The Lai District. |

Source:Constitution of India

In time, the Framers of the Constitution recognized the necessity for a separate political and administrative structure for the hill tribal areas of the northeast region which the British had treated as “backward tracts” and later on as “excluded areas” comprised within the erstwhile British province of Assam. They felt the necessity to maintain the distinct culture and customs of the tribal people of the region, the necessity to prevent exploitation of their economic and social life by the non-tribal, and the necessity to allow them to develop and administer themselves according to their genius. With this in view, the Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule were structured with inbuilt autonomy thereof. In this context ‘autonomy’ may be construed as limited powers to a certain extent to manage internal affairs and the right of self-government. In this sense, the Six Schedule is considered as special provisions for the tribal areas of the northeast.

However, questions may be raised in various aspects. Why certain tribal hill districts are specified by the Sixth Schedule (Paragraph: 20) as “Tribal Areas” which could have autonomous district councils and autonomous regional councils, while some other tribal inhabited areas of the same region (read ‘hill districts of Manipur’ and ‘plain tribal areas’ of Assam) are not given the benefit of having Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule? The Constitution is silent about the difference between the nature of protection necessary for the tribal areas from the non-tribal ruling majority (refer to Tripura tribal minority and non-tribal ruling majority community of Tripura), and the protection necessary for the smaller tribal groups from the ruling tribal majority group (refer to the small tribal groups of Chakma, Mara and Lai vis-à-vis the ruling majority Mizo community of Mizoram). There is no provision in the Constitution to explain or justify how protection would be necessary for tribals of the Khasi Hills District, Jaintia Hills Districts and Garo Hills Districts from their people who rule in Meghalaya State. Are they said three districts need protection from their tribes? The Constitution has no explanation why the tribal districts of Arunachal which is a hundred per cent tribal-state are not specified as “Tribal Areas” under Paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule for constituting Autonomous District Councils like Mizoram or Meghalaya. Why they have been put under Panchayati-raj instead of Autonomous District Councils? Nagaland is a unique case, which rejected the Sixth Schedule and did not opt for panchayat-raj. They utilize the traditional villages as the basic units for the implementation of the development scheme of the government. While the Tripura tribals have been conceded autonomous councils under Sixth Schedule (since 1984), why the tribal districts of Manipur State are denied this constitutional privilege, on the ground that the state government, being influenced by the majority community, are opposed to it. Can the extension of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to any tribal areas be prevented by a government of a certain majority community? If that is the case, the very purpose of this constitutional provision to protect the tribals from the non-tribal majority is defeated. Why the central government should not be vested with the final deciding authority to concede the Sixth Schedule to every deserving tribal district irrespective of objection from the non-tribal majority community. These are some of the ‘gaps in the provisions and practice of the Sixth Schedule which the Constitution does not provide an answer to.

Conclusions and Observations

For all these factors, there has been a series of protest and boycott of the Autonomous District Council elections since 1990. So many assurances came from the centre and the state for the grant of ADC in tribal inhabited areas of Manipur but never translated into action. Worst of all, the ‘rider clause’ inserted in oppose to the grant of ADC to the tribal people is the indirect message of no succumbing to the demand for the same by the tribals in Manipur.

There are important questions this study raises and which need to be addressed. There is a need to look into various recommendations and initiate the changes.

As per the recommendation of the Second National Scheduled Areas & Scheduled Tribes Commission (2004): In 2004, the second National Schedule Areas & Schedule Tribes Commission, Govt. of India, in its report submitted to the President of India, recommended that “*(1) Since the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution was specially designed by the framers of the Constitution to suit the local administration of the tribal areas of the northeast region, the Commission recommends that as far as possible the tribal inhabited areas which fulfil the minimum criteria should be declared as “Tribal Areas” under Paragraph 20 of the Sixth schedule. (2) The five hill districts of Manipur fulfil every condition for extension of the provision of the Sixth schedule. The Commission recommends that they should be specified as “Tribal Areas” under the Sixth Schedule and the provisions of the Schedule be extended to them (Bhuria Report, 2004).*”

The Framers of the Constitution specially designed the Sixth Schedule as a mechanism to enhance speedy development in the “tribal areas” of the North-east region, through additional “fund” from the Center and sufficient autonomous “powers” for the councils to execute their works effectively. For this reason, the hill people of Manipur rejected the Act of 1971 and demanded extension of the Sixth Schedule to the district councils of Manipur. The district councils in Manipur under the Act of 1971, have proved useless and ineffective to bring any remarkable development in the hill areas during its functioning for 18 years from 1972 to 1990 -- the main reason being lack of sufficient fund and power.

There is a lack of sufficient fund, the boycott of the district council election of 1990 resulting in the defunct of the district councils, the Deputy Commissioners are implementing the functions and schemes allocated to the District Councils, appropriating (misappropriating) the funds at their whims for the last 20 years (1990-2010) till today (S.S. Chiru, 2019, p. 19).

Therefore, the Sixth Schedule is the best option available for the Manipur hill people to overcome the problem of finance. For instance, the 10 Autonomous District Councils (ADC) under the Sixth Schedule -- namely: the ADCs of North Cachar Hills District, Karbi-Anglong District and Bodoland Territorial Areas District -- in Assam; (2) the ADCs of Khasi Hills District, Jaintia Hills District and Garo Hills District -- in Meghalaya; (3) the ADCs of Chakma District, Mara District and Lai District -- in Mizoram; (4) the ADC of Tripura Tribal Areas District -- are provided “fund” from the Centre approximately between Rs.50 crores to 150 crores annually for each of the ADCs, in addition to the normal grant-in-aid received from the concerned States. The district councils of Manipur under the Act of 1971 are deprived of this central funding.

Another point to be noted is that the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council of West Bengal which is also created by an Act of the State of West Bengal (like the district councils of Manipur) is in receipt of sufficient fund from the State government of West Bengal. The West Bengal State government provides the fund with an annual grant almost equivalent to the central funding available under the Sixth Schedule and Article 275. The State government of Manipur did not follow this pattern of funding either.

One may pose a question to the State government of Manipur – whether the State government is ready to follow the West Bengal pattern of funding with annual grant-in-aid equivalent to the amount of central-funding received by each of the ADCs of Meghalaya, or Mizoram, or Assam, or Tripura under the Sixth Schedule?

It should be observed Autonomous power: Under the *Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act, 1971*, the district councils were handicapped by the interference from the various State Departments, and sometimes the councils were dissolved for petty political considerations of local MLA or minister -- which are not permissible under the Sixth Schedule. For effective functioning in the work of development, the district councils need a reasonable amount of ‘autonomy’ – free from indiscriminate interference, suspension or dissolution. The district councils have had bitter experience in respect of the powers of ‘control’ and ‘supersession’ under section 46 and 47 of the Act of 1971 being misused by the State authorities with unnecessary interference, supersession, dissolution of the district councils on flimsy grounds or petty political considerations. The Sections do not provide a time frame within which election to the dissolved district council should be held, which is a common constitutional obligation either for the Parliament or State Assembly or the Autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule.

Thus, if these suggestions are implemented in the tribal areas the Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in addition to addressing the need for autonomy for tribal people would also fulfil the need for development. The recommendations of various committees and talking to all stakeholders involved will be the best possible solution. At the end of the day, the true achievement of our federalism is to fulfil the needs and redress the grievances of the people and strengthen them from the grass-roots level.

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