

CHAPTER-VI

Findings of the Opinion Survey

The opinion survey carried out during the study forms an integral component of the study. The opinion survey was carried out at two levels in this Study. We have surveyed the opinion of few leading personalities of the Tiwa and the Rabha communities and also of the common voters living in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area on the issue of political autonomy and more specifically regarding functioning of the Autonomous Councils. For the purpose series of interview was carried out with structured questionnaire among the leaders and the voters.

6:1 Excerpts of the Interview with the leading personalities of the Tiwa and the Rabha Community:

Although many leaders were interviewed, excerpts of a few leaders from both the communities are given here to avoid repetitions since almost similar views were endorsed by the leaders. During interview, they expressed their opinions in Assamese which were translated into English for the purpose of the study. To get the opinion of the leaders, series of queries were framed on specific areas like factors of autonomy demand, role of the Organizations, on provisions of the Accord and regarding functioning of the Autonomous Councils. The opinion of the leaders are given below-

6:1:1 Excerpts of the Interview of the leaders representing the Rabha Community:

Tankeswar Rabha,

Chief Executive Councillor, Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council; Former President, All Rabha Students Union(ARSU); Convener, Rabha Hasong Joint Movement Committee (RHJMC)

Date of interview: 9th July, 2014

Office of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council, Dudhnoi

Goalpara, Assam

Mr. Tankeswar Rabha is a leading personality of the Rabha Movement during recent times. He leads the Rabha movement for autonomy by spearheading organizations like All Rabha students Union (ARSU), Rabha Hasong Joint Movement Committee (RHJMC) etc. Due to his leadership in the movement he was unanimously selected as the leader of the newly elected members of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) and became the Chief Executive Councilor of the first elected RHAC.

On Autonomy Demand:

When asked about the causes of the autonomy demand for the Rabhas in Assam he said that, “the Rabhas are a deprived community. These people are deprived from their right of equal development along with the other communities of Assam. Ever since independence they have been suffering from under development due to lack of will and ignorance of the ruling class irrespective of whichever party is in power. Aggrieved of such negligence, a new generation of Rabha leaders has emerged to fight for their political autonomy.”

He said that, “the issue of identity crisis is related with the issue of relative deprivation. Therefore, the political autonomy is essential for ensuring development with the protection of rights for self-determination.” He further states that, “political autonomy gives recognition to the smaller indigenous social groups and thereby allows them to take part in the development process, hence they get the opportunity to protect, preserve their culture, language and identity. It strengthens the unity of the States.”

Role of the Rabha Organizations in demand articulation:

Talking about the role of the organisations in their struggle for autonomy he expressed that, “the Demand for Political Autonomy of the Rabhas in Assam is very well articulated by various Organisations and they have strongly placed the demand before the Government of Assam.” He said that, “it is due to the strong role of the Rabha organisations, the Government of Assam has constituted the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council in Assam.” He expressed that the organisations are successful to make the Rabha masses aware about their legitimate right for self-rule in Assam. Therefore, he reiterates, “the common Rabha masses have actively participated in various programmes organised by the Rabha organisations. During the last Panchayat Election (in the month of February, 2014), it is due to their strong support and participation the Rabha organisations had successfully resisted the Panchayat election in Rabha Hasong area till the holding of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council election.

Finally the Assam Government held the first Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council election in the month of April 2014 due to the strong agitation of the Rabha community.” He also informed about the efforts of the Organisations to unite all the sections of the people living in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area to ensure equal development of all. He regretted that some people are trying to spread a misconception about the future political dominance of the Rabhas over the other sections of the people in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council. He said that in the Autonomous Council, there is provision for representation of all sections of the people living in the Council area. He expressed that for development of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area, the participation of all the sections of people is necessary. Therefore, the ARSU, during his Presidentship, was working to unite all the Organisations representing the people living in the RHAC area. With that initiative they succeeded to form the Rabha Hasong Joint Movement Committee, comprising 34 organisations representing 18 communities in the Rabha Hasong area.

About the Rabha Accord of 1995:

Regarding the Rabha Hasong Accord signed in 1995 he said, “Signing of the Accord is the recognition of the Rights of the Rabhas to have self-rule for their development.” However he expressed that the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act passed in 1995 is not all inclusive of necessary provisions for the autonomy of the Rabhas. But it can be appraised as the first step of achievement for the Rabhas in Assam in the struggle for protection of socio-cultural identity and for ensuring right to equal development.

Functioning of Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council:

On being asked about the nature of functioning of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council for last 18 years, he said, “The present Autonomous Councils could not enjoy the real autonomy. There is interference of the State Government in the functioning of the Autonomous Councils. The State Government funded the Autonomous Councils in Assam from the Tribal Sub- Plan Fund received from the Center. There is no separate account for the Councils as mentioned in the Autonomous Council Act, 1995. There is no standard mechanism for the fund allocations among all the Six Autonomous Councils in Assam. Funds are not allocated on the basis of the population of the Council but it is done in party line. The Council authorities belonging to the same party ruling the State is receiving more money than the Councils run by other parties. In the existing system, the Autonomous Councils are facing multifaceted problems i. e. delay in fund release, limited fund, party influence etc.” Therefore

he supported the demand for the Autonomy of the Rabhas under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution for two reasons which are- 1) it will help them to be free from the State Governments' interference and 2) funds will be earmarked on the basis of the population of the Council.

Sri Kushadhwaj Rongkho

Former President, Sixth Schedule Demand Committee (SSDC); Former Office Secretary, Rabha Sahitya Sabha (RSS); Former President, Rongsumi Huri (Sanskritik Sangha)

Date of Interview: 12th July 2014

Thekasu (Dudhnoi)

Goalpara, Assam

Kushadhwaj Rongkho is a well known personality among the Rabhas. He has been associated with various Rabha organizations. He has published several articles in various publications including the News papers about the political struggle of the Rabhas for the Autonomy.

Opinion on Autonomy Demand:

Expressing opinion about the Autonomy Demand of the Rabhas he said, "In Assam, the State Government has been neglecting the development of the tribal societies. Every year funds have been raised for the development of the tribal societies, but in practice the allotted funds and programmes are not properly utilized." He said, "Endangered language, culture and identity as a whole, underdevelopment of the Rabha society, protection of ownership of land where the Rabha people are living for long period, political and economic dominance of the Caste Hindu Assamese people over the Tribals etc. are the main factors of autonomy demand of the Rabhas in Assam." He said that "In the post independence period, the Rabhas in Assam could not take the opportunity to exercise the political power because the Rabhas are scattered over many districts. The sporadic distribution of population into different Assembly constituencies was the cause for their inability to attain success in electing representatives to the Assam legislative Assembly so far." He opined that "the Political Autonomy for the Rabhas will help them to protect their culture, tradition and customs which are very closely associated into their life."

Role of the Rabha Organizations:

In his opinion, the Rabha national organizations have strongly placed their demand for autonomy before the State Government. It is due to the strong role of the organisations, the Rabhas in Assam have been able to establish their distinct ethnic identity. Now the Government of Assam has provided a tribe specific Autonomous Council to the Rabhas (though it enjoys very limited power) only due to the continuous pressure from various Rabha organisations. He further opined that the Rabha organisations are successful in making the common Rabha masses aware about their legitimate political rights. He pointed out that, organisations like the All Rabha Students Union and the Sixth Schedule Demand Committee etc. were holding meeting at the Village level to orient the people politically. At the organisational level they hold workshops for field level workers to motivate the members of their organisation. He expressed that the Rabha people have actively participated in the programmes organised by the Rabha organisations. It is due to the active participation of the Rabha masses, the Government of Assam has to concede to the demands raised by the Rabha organisations. He cited the example of the agitations during the last Panchayat Election held in February 2014, when the State Election Commission had to suspend the Panchayat election in the Rabha Hasong area due to the protest of the Rabha masses for not holding of election of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council. Finally the State Government had to hold the Council election in April, 2014 following the demands of the Rabhas.

Opinion regarding the Rabha Accord and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995:

Regarding the Rabha Hasong Accord of 1995, he expressed that the Accord does not cover all the aspects necessary for the Autonomy in the true sense of the term. He said, even the State Government does not transfer the authority to the Councils over the subjects mentioned in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995. He expressed that the Rabha Accord of 1995 and the subsequently the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act of 1995 could not protect the ethnic identity of the Rabhas in Assam.

Functioning of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council:

Regarding functioning of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council for last more than 15 years he said, “Despite the limitations of power and autonomy, the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council have made some efforts for the socio-economic development in the

Council area”. According to him, the major obstacle in the proper functioning of the Council is the financial dependence of the Council over the State Government. He expressed that, it is due to the undue interference of the State Government on the Autonomous Councils, the demand for separate Statehood has been raised by the aggrieved tribal ethnic organizations.

6:1:2 Excerpts of the Interview of the leading personalities of the Tiwa Community:

Maneswar Deuri,

Well known Scholar; Recognized as a scholar of Tiwa Language in Tiwa Society;
Former adviser of the Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee (ALDDC).

Date of Interview: 13th March 2014

Morigaon, Assam

He is a well known scholar belonging to the Tiwa community. He was actively involved with the organizations working for the revival of the ethnic identity of the Tiwas in Assam. He was one of the organizers of the Lalung Yuba Sanmilan during 1970's the first organized move of the Tiwa youths for the establishment of the Tiwa ethnic identity. Later on he was the advisor of the Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee (ALDDC) which was the main organization with whom the Government of Assam signed the Tiwa Accord in 1995.

He is also well known for his scholarly contribution towards the revival of Tiwa language and culture. He has published a large volume of articles and books in both Tiwa and Assamese languages. Excerpts of his opinion on the issues asked during the time of interview is given below-

Opinion about the Autonomy Demand of the Tiwas:

When asked about his opinion on the factors of Tiwa Autonomy Movement he stated that, the demand for political Autonomy for the Tiwas has its root in the history of Assam. According to him, “the Tiwas are the indigenous tribal ethnic race in Assam having their own territory with self- rule.” He stated that before the establishment of Ahom Rule, the Tiwas had their own system of Governance. Even in the history, it was mentioned about the

existence of the Tiwa Kingdoms under the aegis of the Ahom Rule. This apart, there are historical records found in the form of texts in the *Bark Leaf (Shansi Pator Puthi)*, in the *Copper Plate (Tamor Fali)* which proves the existence of Tiwa Kingdom within the territory of Assam. Incidentally, these historical evidences make the Tiwa people aware of the solidarity of the Tiwa community which helped to assert it through Autonomous Self Rule in the present democratic political system of India.

According to him, another factor which led the Tiwa leaders to think for the Political Autonomy is the Socio-Economic backwardness of the Tiwa community compared to the other non tribal communities. After independence, the Tiwa community was deprived of proper political representation in the democratic politics of Assam. In 1960, the Morigaon Legislative Assembly Constituency is dereserved, which was earlier a reserve Constituency for the Schedule Tribe. This has resented the Tiwas because the Tiwas are dominant voters in the Morigaon Legislative Assembly Constituency where they can get the opportunity to elect at least one MLA. Since there is no scope for the participation in the political decision making process and the non tribal caste Hindu Assamese leaders are failing to understand the problems of the indigenous tribal communities, the Tribal communities of Assam are demanding for political autonomy with the intention to ensure progress according to their own culture and traditions.

Another factor he mentions for the growth of autonomy demand among the Tiwas is the endangered ethnic identity of the Tiwas in Assam. He said, “Tiwas are the indigenous tribal ethnic group who has distinct culture, language and tradition. In course of time, with the growth of the Assamese language centric Assamese nationality, they are assimilated to the Assamese nationality. Consequently the Tiwa language and culture gradually extinguished in Assam. But they are not accepted as equal by the Caste Hindu Assamese society. Now the development of the demand for political autonomy of the Tiwas is closely associated with the preservation of the Tiwa ethnic identity.”

View on the Role of different organizations representing the Tiwas:

Expressing his opinion regarding the role of Tiwa organizations towards representing the ethnic aspirations of the Tiwa Community as a whole, he expressed utter dissatisfaction about the role of the organisations. He said, “Earlier organizations had well represented the will of the Tiwa masses. Those organizations were committed to the greater interest of the

Tiwa Community. But today, Organisations are weak and lack proper representation of the people's will. The narrow political interest of the leaders had made these organizations vulnerable. Today's organizations are factional. There is clash of interest among the leaders. Split in the organizations occurs due to conflict of interest among the leaders. Thus organizations are less committed to the greater interest of the common Tiwa masses."

View about the Tiwa Accord, 1995:

Expressing his views on the Tiwa Accord of 1995, he said that, "signing of the Tiwa Accord was the first step of success of the Tiwa Movement, struggling for the revival of their ethnic identity and establishment of self-rule for the Tiwas. The Accord gives an opportunity to the Tiwas in Assam to fulfill, at least to some extent, their ethnic aspirations." However, he admits that the Tiwa Accord signed in 1995 is not all satisfactory. At the same time he expressed that the proper implementation of the Accord by the Government is most important to fulfill the ethnic aspirations of the Tiwas in Assam. But he regretted that the Government of Assam so far is reluctant to properly implement the spirit and contents of the Tiwa Accord in the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act 1995.

View on the functioning of the Tiwa Autonomous Council:

Opining on the functioning of the Tiwa Autonomous Council, he expressed his dissatisfaction in clear terms. He said, for a long time the Government did not constitute the Tiwa Autonomous Council democratically which is a clear violation of the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act 1995. During that period the loyal party workers of the ruling party in the State ran the Council. Moreover some leaders of the Tiwa community also joined in the Ruling parties to capture the authority of the Council. Thus a nexus between the Ruling party/Government and some Tiwa leaders had grown up centering the politics of the Autonomous Councils. The leaders in the Autonomous Council are less committed towards the development of the poor Tiwa people; rather with the help of Autonomous Council they only fulfill their own interest. There is report of misappropriation of funds of the Tiwa Autonomous Council.

Another observation he shared was that, there is clash between the leaders for capturing power in the Autonomous Council to serve their selfish end rather than the benefit of the masses. Therefore he said that, though personally he supports more autonomy for the

Tiwas under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, yet he has reservations until the Tiwa leaders be committed towards the development of the Tiwas. Mere political autonomy would not ensure development for the Tiwas, unless its efficient and proper implementation essential to serve the real purpose of the Autonomy is achieved.

6:2 Findings of the Opinion Survey amongst the Voters:

The findings of the opinion survey among the common voters in both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council is considered as the vital part of the Study for the fulfillment of the Objectives and to test the Hypothesis guiding the Study. The findings of the opinion survey and its analysis are presented in the following-

6:2:1 The Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Constituencies:

The opinion survey was carried out at the villages falling under the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Councils. The Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Councils are constituted with 36 constituencies. The Villages are selected from the Constituencies of both the Councils. The Constituencies of both the Council are as follows:

Table: 6:1: The Tiwa Autonomous Council Constituencies

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Category	District
1	Jamadari	ST	Marigaon
2	Borongoni	ST –Women	Do
3	Bhurbandha Constituency	ST	Do
4	Kunwargaon	ST	Do
5	Dhekiphala	ST	Do
6	Manipur	ST	Do
7	Garmari	ST	Do
8	Ghagua	ST-Women	Do
9	Domal	ST	Do
10	Tetelia	ST	Do
11	Junbil	ST-Women	Do
12	Nakhula	ST	Do
13	Nellie-Khala	ST	Do

14	Gobha	ST	Do
15	Bihubori	Open	Do
16	Solmari	Open	Do
17	Bhumuraguri	ST	Do
18	Charipunia-Chabukdhora	ST	Do
19	Borchila	ST	Do
20	Baropujia	ST	Do
21	Topakuchi	ST	Nagaon
22	Pukhuripar	Open	Do
23	Jorabari	Open	Do
24	Jongalbalahu	ST	Do
25	Chahari	Open-Women	Do
26	Kaki	ST-Women	Do
27	Lutumari	Open	Do
28	Kamargaon	ST	Do
29	Nambor Lalung	ST-Women	Do
30	Lalungpar	ST	Do
31	Digarua	Open	Kamrup
32	Khetri	Open-Women	Do
33	Sonapur	Open	Do
34	Ampri	Open	Do
35	Phong-Ari	Open	Do
36	Dimoria	ST	Do

Source: Assam State Election Commission, Housefed Complex, Dispur, Guwahati-6

Table: 6:2: The Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Constituencies

Sl. No.	Name of the Constituency	Category	District
1	Dhupdhara	Open	Goalpara
2	Kothakuthi	ST	Do
3	Dhanubhanga	ST	Do
4	Rongjuli	ST	Do
5	Kushdhowa Darrangiri	ST	Do
6	North Dudhnoi	Open	Do

7	South Dudhnoi	ST	Do
8	Bandarshi	ST	Do
9	Majjakhilli	Open	Do
10	Salpara	Open-Women	Do
11	Habraghat	Open	Do
12	Dirmajakhili	ST	Do
13	Pub Ajagar	ST	Do
14	Jinari	ST-Women	Do
15	Agia	Open	Do
16	Dwarka	ST	Do
17	Bardamal Kalyanpur	ST	Do
18	Dariduri	ST	Do
19	Dodan	ST-Women	Do
20	Joyramkuchi	ST	Do
21	Jarihat	ST-Women	Kamrup
22	Bondapara	ST	Do
23	Khalihakoth	ST	Do
24	Luki	ST	Do
25	Hahim	ST	Do
26	Jongakhuli	Open	Do
27	Boko	Open	Do
28	Uttar Bangaon	Open-Women	Do
29	Dakshin Bangaon	ST	Do
30	Bamunigaon	Open	Do
31	Gobardhan	ST	Do
32	Pantan	ST	Do
33	Kulsi	ST	Do
34	Chandubi	ST	Do
35	Silputa	ST-Women	Do
36	Rani	Open	Do

Source: Assam State Election Commission, Housefed Complex, Dispur, Guwahati-6

6:2:2 Methodology Followed in the selection of areas and respondents of the Survey:

Since the area of the study is too vast geographically, considering the constraints of time and resources, we have done our survey on the cluster sample method. In the first stage we have selected some constituencies based on some fixed criteria, from the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council and then we took one villages from each Council constituency based on uniform criteria and have fixed the respondent voters from the Voters List of the Village, framed for the purpose of election of the respective Autonomous Council.

In the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council constituencies we have categorized the constituencies in the following ways:

- a) The constituencies reserved for the Schedule Tribe communities. The number of such constituencies in both the Council is 20.
- b) The unreserved constituencies known as Open seat where the General non tribal people can contest in the Election. The number of such seat in both the Council is 9.
- c) The special reserved seats for the Women from the ST communities. The number of such seat is 4.
- d) The Open Constituencies but reserved for the Women. The number of such seat in both the Council is 3.

From these categories of constituencies we have selected one constituency from each where the highest numbers of voters are concentrated. On the other hand, from each selected constituencies one village is selected where the highest number of voters are concentrated. From the voters list of the selected village the respondents are selected at a fixed interval. The list of the selected constituencies and the Villages in both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council along with its population size is given below in a tabular form:

Table: 6:3: Selected Constituencies of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council for the opinion survey:

Name of the Constituency	Category	No. of Villages	No. of Voters
Dakshin Bangaon	S/T	55	8633
Silputa	S/T (Women)	32	4914
Boko	Open	22	8139
Uttar Bangaon	Open (Women)	15	6532

Source: Office of the Deputy Commissioner (Election Branch), Kamrup (R): Amingaon, Kamrup, Assam

Table: 6:4: The Villages of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council constituencies selected for the opinion survey:

Name of the Village	Constituency Name	Category	No. of Voters
Katalpara & Nisinapara	Dakshin Bongaon	S/T	845
Moirapur & Pajibandha	Silputa	S/T (Women)	705
Turukpara	Boko	Open	724
Chaudhuripara	Uttar Bongaon	Open (Women)	720

Source: Office of the Deputy Commissioner (Election Branch), Kamrup (R): Amingaon, Kamrup, Assam

Table: 6:5: The Constituencies of the Tiwa Autonomous Council selected for the opinion survey:

Name of the Constituency	Category	No. of Villages	No. of Voters
Bhurbandha	S/T	08	9177
Junbil	S/T (Women)	11	6148
Solmari	Open	09	7810
Chahari	Open (Women)	12	7712

Source: Office of the Deputy Commissioner (Election Branch), Morigaon; Morigaon, Assam

Table: 6:6: The Villages of the Tiwa Autonomous Council constituencies selected for opinion survey:

Name of the Village	Constituency Name	Category	No. of Voters
Auguri	Bhurbandha	S/T	1232
Udmari	Junbil	S/T (Women)	1283
Banpara	Solmari	Open	944
Meragar Grant	Chahari	Open (Women)	1091

Source: Office of the Deputy Commissioner (Election Branch), Morigaon; Morigaon, Assam

- **A brief classification of the Respondents:**

Tables: 6:7-A Gender based distribution of the respondents

Category	Rabha Autonomous Council		Tiwa Autonomous Council		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Male	53	53.0	57	57.0	110	55.0
Female	47	47.0	43	43.0	90	45.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

Tables: 6:7-B Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Age

Rabha Autonomous Council			Tiwa Autonomous Council		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Upto 25	15	15.0	14	14.0	29	14.5
26 – 40	41	41.0	48	48.0	89	44.5
41 – 60	36	36.0	30	30.0	66	33.0
Above 60	8	8.0	8	8.0	16	8.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

Tables: 6:7-C Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Caste:

Rabha Autonomous Council			Tiwa Autonomous Council		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
SC	10	10.0	6	6.0	16	8.0
ST	82	82.0	63	63.0	145	72.5
OBC	2	2.0	3	3.0	5	2.5
Other	6	6.0	28	28.0	34	17.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

Tables: 6:7-D Distribution of respondents in Literacy group:

	Rabha Autonomous Council	Tiwa Autonomous Council	Total
--	--------------------------	-------------------------	-------

	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Illiterate	12	12.0	16	16.0	28	14.0
Upto Class X	19	19.0	18	18.0	37	18.5
Matriculate	14	14.0	15	15.0	29	14.5
HS passed	15	15.0	14	14.0	29	14.5
Graduate	35	35.0	31	31.0	66	33.0
Post Graduate	5	5.0	6	6.0	11	5.5
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

Tables: 6:7- E Distribution of respondents in Occupation:

	Rabha Autonomous Council		Tiwa Autonomous Council		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Unemployed	56	56.0	36	36.0	92	46.0
Agriculture	12	12.0	16	16.0	28	14.0
Business	7	7.0	19	19.0	26	13.0
Teaching	14	14.0	16	16.0	30	15.0
Govt Employees	10	10.0	11	11.0	21	10.5
Others	1	1.0	2	2.0	3	1.5
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0	200	100.0

6:2:3 Analyses of the findings of Opinion Survey-

6:2:3 (A) General political awareness among the Respondents in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

In the survey, we have tried to find out the general political awareness among the voters of both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council areas for which nine interrelated questions are asked on very common issues/areas. The responses of the voters are given in the following table. Although there are variances of response in different questions, yet we deduct the overall awareness of the respondents by calculating the average of the total right/yes responses. The responses of the respondents are given in the following tables.

❖ Political awareness of the respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

The following table shows the political awareness of the respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area.

Table: 6:8-A General political awareness among the respondents in the Rabhas Hasong Autonomous Council area:

(Total count 100)

The quarry	Total Right/ Yes	Total Wrong/no
Whether vote cast in the election	100	--
Whether informed about Fundamental Rights	61	39
Name of the Prime Minister	96	04
Name of the Local MLA	100	--
Name of the MP	72	28
Name of the Chief Minister	100	--
Name of the Chief Executive Councilor	83	17
Whether he/she is informed about 6 th Schedule of the Indian Constitution	51	49
Whether informed about the special privileges provided by the Constitution for the Schedule Tribes	52	48

From the above table we can assume that majority of the respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are politically aware. The average of the total right/yes responses among the respondents is 79.4%. However, from the responses it is observed that, large numbers of the respondents are not aware about the provision of the 6th Schedule and other special privileges provided by the Indian Constitution for the Scheduled Tribe communities.

❖ **Political awareness of the respondents in the Tiwa autonomous Council area:**

The findings of the opinion survey regarding the general political awareness in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are presented in the following table:

Table: 6:8-B General political awareness among the respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area:

The quarry	Total Right/ Yes out of 100	Total Wrong/no out of 100
Whether vote cast in the election	100	--
Whether informed about Fundamental Rights	66	34
Name of the Prime Minister	100	00
Name of the local MLA	98	02
Name of the local MP	63	37
Name of the Chief Minister	100	--
Name of the Chief Executive Councilor	54	46
Whether he/she is informed about 6 th Schedule of the Indian Constitution	46	54
Whether informed about the special privileges provided by the Constitution for the Schedule Tribes	62	38

From the responses of the people in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area, we found that the respondents are politically aware. The average of total right/yes responses among the surveyed population is 76.5%. But it is remarkable to mentioned that, regarding the provisions of the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, it is only 46% respondents are aware in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area.

6:2:3 (B) Findings of the Survey about the Issue of Identity Crisis.

The apprehension of Identity crisis among the Tribal ethnic groups is considered as a driving factor for the growth of autonomy demand in Assam. To ascertain this factor the opinion of the common voters are taken with some specific questions. The findings of the Opinion Survey in both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are given in the following table :

Table: 6:9: Opinion about the Ethnic Identity Crisis in both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

(Total Count is 100 in each Council)

Statement	Tiwa			Rabha		
In Assam, whether the Tiwa/Rabha tribes are losing their distinct ethnic identity	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>	<i>(Figures and per centage)</i>
	68 (68%)	29 (29%)	03 (3%)	67 (67%)	19 (19%)	14 (14%)

From the table it is observed that in both the Council area, majority of the respondents have agreed about the ethnic identity crisis of the Tiwas and the Rabhas in Assam. In the Tiwa Autonomous Council area 68% respondents agreed about the ethnic identity crisis of the Tiwas. On the other hand in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area 67% respondents feel that the Rabhas are facing an ethnic identity crisis in Assam.

It is also remarkable that 29% of respondents in the Tiwas Autonomous Council area viewed against it. In the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area too 19% of respondents have responded against it. Apart from this, in the Rabha Hasong area 14% respondents have no comment on the issue of ethnic identity crisis of the Rabhas in Assam which signifies that they are not aware about the issue.

6:2:3 (C) Findings of the Survey regarding factors of Ethnic Identity Crisis among the Tiwas and the Rabhas:

In our opinion survey we are trying to ascertain the factors for emergence of the feeling of Identity Crisis among the Tiwas and the Rabhas. The findings are given in the following table:

Table: 6: 10(A) Factors of Ethnic Identity Crisis among the Rabhas:

(Total Count is 100)

Factors	Responses
A) Adoption/assimilation to Assamese Culture	27
B) Lack of awareness	11
C) Non-practice of language, culture and traditions	18
D) Negligence of the Government	06
A+C	01
A+B	01
No Response	03

From the above table, the factors of ethnic identity crisis of the Rabhas are the adoption/assimilation to Assamese culture, lack of awareness among the Rabha people for the protection of the culture and identity, non-practice of the language, culture and traditions of their own and lack of initiative from the Government for the protection of the ethnic identity of the tribal ethnic groups in Assam. There are very few respondents who cannot explain the reason for the feeling of ethnic identity crisis among the Rabhas.

Table: 6: 10(B) Factors of Ethnic Identity Crisis among the Tiwas:

(Total Count is 100)

Factors	Responses
A) Dominance of Assamese Culture	10
B) Negligence of the Government towards the protection of the Tiwa culture and language	05
C) Assimilation with the Assamese society/ assimilation through Baisnavite movement	14
D) Lack of awareness	04
E) Non practice of custom and traditions	03
F) No explanation	02
A+B	02
B+D	02
C+D	09

C+E	10
E+B	01
B+C	03
E+D	02
A+C	01

From the above table it is found that the factors responsible for the ethnic identity crisis of the Tiwas are the dominance of Assamese culture, assimilation with the Assamese society through the Vaisnavite movement, negligence of the Government for the protection of the Tiwa language and culture, lack of awareness and non-practice of their customs and socio-religious traditions by the Tiwa peoples in Assam. There are few respondents who cannot explain the factors of ethnic identity crisis of the Tiwas in Assam.

6:2:3 (D) Opinion regarding allegation of Cultural Hegemony of Assamese nationality which resulted in extinction of Cultural identity of the Tiwas and the Rabhas in Assam:

There is an allegation by the Tiwa and the Rabha organizations that in Assam, the cultural hegemony of the greater Assamese Nationality has resulted in the extinction of the cultural identity of the smaller tribal ethnic groups in Assam. We have tried to ascertain the fact among the common peoples living in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area. Following are the findings of the opinion survey:

Table: 6:11 Opinion about the Cultural Hegemony of Assamese Nationality:

(Total Count is 100 in each Council)

Statement	Tiwa			Rabha		
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
The contention held by some leaders that the cultural hegemony of the greater Assamese nationality has resulted in the extinction of the distinct cultural identity of the Tiwa/ Rabha tribal community of Assam.	37	62	01	33	66	01

From the Table it is found that, in both the Council area, most of the respondents are aware about the allegation and few of them are supporting the allegation but the major portions of the Respondents are denying the allegation. In the Tiwa Autonomous Council area 62% respondents have responded against the allegation. On the other hand, in the Rabha

Hasong Autonomous Council area 69% respondents have responded against the allegation.

6:2:3 (E) Findings of Opinion survey about the Socio-Economic backwardness as a factor of Autonomy Demand in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

There is an allegation from the leaders of both the communities that the Tiwas and the Rabhas are afflicted by socio-economic backwardness paving the way for the demand of political autonomy for the upliftment of their communities. In this study we are trying to ascertain the fact from the opinion of the common voters of both the Council area with some questions related to socio-economic backwardness of the Tiwas and the Rabhas. The findings of the survey are given below-

Table: 6:12-A: Opinion about the Socio-Economic backwardness in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

(The total counted population is 100)

Question	Aware	Not aware	Agreed	Not agreed
That the Rabhas are socially and economically backward compared to other peoples	99	01	99	00
That the Rabhas are deprived from the basic facilities of education, health, communication etc.	74	26	74	00
That the Government fails to make the Rabha peoples economically self sufficient	65	35	65	00
The Government fails to provide necessary support in the agricultural sector to the Rabhas to make them economically self-sufficient	55	45	55	00
The Rabhas are losing land ownership	28	72	27	01

From the above table, in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area, it is found that almost all the respondents (99%) have considered that the Rabhas are socially and economically backward. Among the respondents, 74% have agreed that the Rabhas are deprived of the basic facilities like education, health, communication facilities. There are 65% of the respondents who considered that the Government failed to provide necessary sustenance to make them economically self-sufficient. Among all the respondents 55% have

alleged that the Government at the Center as well as in the State fails to provide necessary support in the agricultural sector to the people in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area to make them economically self-sufficient. Regarding the factor of loss of land ownership, it is only 28% of the respondents who have agreed about the allegation. Majority of the respondents (72%) are not aware about the allegation. From all the responses, the average of conscious persons on the issue is 64.2% (calculating the respondents who are able to give response).

Table: 6:12-B Opinion on Socio-Economic backwardness of the Tiwas in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area:

(The total counted population is 100)

Question	Aware	Not aware	Agreed	Not agreed
The Tiwas are socially and economically backward compared to other peoples	96	04	96	00
The Tiwas are deprived from the basic facilities of education, health, communication etc.	81	19	81	00
The Government fails to make the Tiwa people economically self sufficient	77	23	75	00
The Government fails to provide necessary support in the agricultural sector to make them economically self-sufficient	84	16	82	02
The Tiwas are losing of land ownership	27	73	27	00

In the Tiwa Autonomous Council area too, it is clear that majority of respondents (96%) have agreed that the Tiwas are socially and economically backward. Among the respondents 81% of the respondents have considered that the Tiwa people are deprived from the basic facilities like education, health, and communication etc. There are 75% respondents who agreed that the State Government fails to make the Tiwa people economically self-sufficient. Regarding the allegation of loss of land ownership, only 27% respondents have felt that the Tiwas are losing land ownership which directly affected the economic conditions of the Tiwas. A very large section of (73%) respondents are not aware about the allegation in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area. From all the responses, the average of alert persons on the issue is 73% (calculating the respondents who are able to give response).

6:2:3 (F) People’s Awareness about the Autonomy Demand in the Tiwa and the Rabhas Hasong Autonomous Council area:

To know about the people’s awareness regarding demand for political autonomy and to ascertain whether the common people are also supporting or involved in the Autonomy Demand of the Tiwas and the Rabhas, four inter-related questions are asked to the respondents. The responses are given in the following tables.

Table: 6:13-A People’s awareness about the Autonomy Demand in the Rabhas Hasong Autonomous Council area:

(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
Autonomy is essential for the socio-economic development	14	60	01	00	25
Autonomy is essential for the protection and preservation of their ethnic identity, language and culture	14	61	01	00	24
Almost all the people are participated in the agitational programmes for the autonomy	10	39	45	00	06
The leaders are successful to bring ethnic consciousness among the Rabhas	13	66	11	00	10

Abbreviations:

SA – Strongly Agree

A – Agree

DA - Disagree

SDA – Strongly Disagree

NC – No Comment

In the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area, it is found that majority of the respondents are aware about the Autonomy Demand. A large number of respondents (74%) are of the opinion that the Autonomy is essential for the socio-economic development of the Rabhas in Assam. Again 75% of the respondents have agreed that the Autonomy for the Rabhas is essential for the protection and preservation of their ethnic identity, language and culture.

But at the same time, only 49% respondents have expressed that all the Rabha people have participated in the agitational programmes initiated by the Rabha organizations for the Demand of Autonomy. However the majority respondents (79%) have appreciated that the leaders of the Rabha community are successful to make the Rabha people conscious about their rich Ethnic Identity. It is noteworthy that, a large section of the respondents (25%) have not commented on the issue of demand for political autonomy of the Rabhas. It is assumed that they are not aware about the autonomy demand. From all the responses, the average of aware persons about the autonomy demand in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are 75% (calculating the respondents who able to respond on the Issue).

The findings of the opinion survey on the same issue in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area is given below:

Table: 6:13-B Awareness about the Autonomy Demand in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area:

(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
Autonomy is essential for the socio-economic development	30	37	04	00	29
Autonomy is essential for the protection and preservation of their ethnic identity, language and culture	28	36	05	00	31
Almost all the people are participated in the agitational programmes for the autonomy	05	12	58	00	25
The leaders are successful to bring ethnic consciousness among the Tiwas	22	52	07	00	19

Abbreviations:

SA – Strongly Agree

A – Agree

DA - Disagree

SDA – Strongly Disagree

NC – No Comment

In the Tiwa Autonomous Council area also, it is found that majority of the respondents are aware about the Autonomy Demand. A large number of respondents (67%)

are of the opinion that the Autonomy is essential for the socio-economic development of the Tiwas in Assam. Again 64% of the respondents have agreed that the Autonomy for the Tiwa is essential for the protection and preservation of their ethnic identity, language and culture.

But, 58% of respondents are of the opinion that, all the Tiwas have not participated in the agitational programmes for the Autonomy of the Tiwas. However, 74% of respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council have appreciated the leadership role in bringing the ethnic consciousness among the Tiwas.

It is significant that, the percentage of respondents who fail to give comments on the issue of autonomy demand is 26% which signifies that a large number of respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are not aware about the autonomy demand. From all the responses the average of aware persons about the autonomy demand in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are 74% (calculating the respondents who able to respond on the Issue).

6:2:3 (G) Awareness about the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Councils Act, 1995:

In this Study, we have tried to assess the people's awareness regarding the Accord signed by the Tiwa and the Rabha leaders with the Government on the basis of which the Government is constituting the Autonomous Councils for the Tiwas and the Rabhas by passing Autonomous Council Acts in 1995.

To know about the people's awareness three specific questions are asked to the respondents on the Accord and the Autonomous Council Act, 1995. Following are the findings of the survey on the issue-

Table: 6:14-A Awareness about the Rabha Accord and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995:
(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
The Accord is a historic achievement for their all round development	12	55	00	00	33
The Act, inserted provisions to ensure development and protection of identity	00	21	32	07	40
The Act, gives sufficient powers to the Autonomous Councils	00	22	33	07	38

From the above table, it is clear that, majority respondents (67%) have agreed that the Rabha Accord is a historic achievement for the Rabhas. But a remarkable section of respondents (39%) have informed that the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995 do not insert all the provisions to ensure development and protection of identity of the Rabhas. A large number of respondents (40%) feel that the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council is not entrusted with sufficient powers to ensure development in the Rabha Hasong area. However, it is noteworthy that 37% of the respondents are unable to comment on the issue. This means that a large number of people are not aware about the Rabha Accord and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act.

From the table, the average of aware respondents (considering those who able to comment on the queries) regarding the Rabha Accord and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act are 63%.

The responses on the issue in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are as follows-

Table: 6:14-B Opinion about the Tiwa Accord and the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act, 1995:

(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
The Accord is a historic achievement for their all round development	28	29	01	00	42
The TAC Act, 1995 inserted provisions to ensure development and protection of identity	01	11	24	08	56
The TAC Act,1995 gives sufficient powers to the Autonomous Councils	01	25	23	08	43

In the Tiwa Autonomous Council area too, majority of the respondents (57%) feels that the Tiwa Accord of 1995, was a historic achievement for the Tiwas in Assam. Few of them (32%) are feeling that the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act 1995, did not incorporate all the provisions to ensure development in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area. Some respondents (31%) are of the opinion that the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act of 1995 is not provided sufficient powers to the Council to function for the development of the people in the Council area.

However, it is seen that there are large numbers of respondents (47% all together) who are unable to give any comments regarding the Tiwa Accord and the Tiwa Autonomous

Council Act 1995. From this we can understand that a large number of people living in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are not aware of the Tiwa Accord 1995, and the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act 1995.

From the table, the average of aware respondents (considering those who able to comment on all the queries) regarding the Tiwa Accord and the Tiwa Autonomous Council Act are 53%.

6:2:3 (H) Opinion regarding functioning of the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Councils:

In this study we have surveyed the opinion of the voters living in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area regarding the effectiveness of the Autonomous Councils to fulfill the aspirations of the people. In the study, seven inter-related questions are asked to the respondents in both the Council area. Following are the findings of the Survey-

Table: 6:15-A Opinion about the functioning of Autonomous Council in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
The Chief Councilor and other Councilors are efficient and committed	00	38	58	01	03
The Council is successful to bring economic development in Rabha Hasong area	00	28	72	00	00
The income generating schemes of the RHAC make the people self-sufficient	00	21	78	00	01
The RHAC able to bring educational development of the RHAC area	00	32	67	00	01
The RHAC able to develop communication facility and infrastructure development	00	50	50	00	00
The RHAC benefitted the people by proper utilization of funds	00	19	78	00	03
More power should be given to the RHAC for the development of the Rabha Hasong area and to protect their identity	10	46	22	00	22

Mean value of SA+A= 35.4

Mean value of DA+SDA= 50.5

Mean value of NC= 14

From the above table, the dissatisfaction of the people is clearly visible from the responses given against the queries related to the functioning of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council. From the responses, it is found that 57% respondents have responded that the Council officials are not committed and efficient.

Again 72% of the respondents have responded that the Council could not bring the socio-economic development in the Council area. On the other hand, 78% of the respondents are of the opinion that the Council could not make the people economically self-sufficient by generating income opportunities. 67% of the respondents have viewed that the Council could not bring educational development. 50% respondents viewed that the Council able to bring infra structural development in the Council area. 78% respondents have viewed that the Council authorities could not utilize the funds efficiently for which they fail to ensure development in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area.

However, 56% respondents have the opinion that more powers should be given to the Councils to ensure development in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area. But 22% respondents have failed to respond in this query.

From the responses the average of the respondents who have appreciated the role of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council are 35.4% (calculating the responses from the Strongly Agreed and Agreed responses in all the queries).

Table: 6:15-B Opinion about the functioning of Autonomous Council in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area:

(Total Count is 100)

Question	SA	A	DA	SDA	NC
The Chief Councilor and other Councilors are efficient and committed	02	39	44	04	11
The Council is successful to bring economic development in Tiwa Council area	01	36	55	02	06
The income generating schemes of the TAC make the people self-sufficient	03	15	68	02	12
The TAC able to bring educational development of the TAC area	02	53	36	02	07
The TAC able to develop communication facility and infrastructure development	02	71	22	02	03
The TAC benefitted the people by proper utilization of funds	02	30	54	03	11

More power should be given to the TAC for the development of the TAC area and to protect their identity	26	28	16	00	30
---	----	----	----	----	----

Mean value of SA+A= 40.5

Mean value of DA+SDA=37.4

Mean value of NC= 22.1

From the above responses, it is observed that the people are not satisfied with the functioning pattern of the Tiwa Autonomous Council. It is found that, 48% respondents have the opinion that the Council authorities (Leaders) are not so committed and efficient to ensure development of the People in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area. 57% respondents have the opinion that the Council could not bring economic development in the Council area. 70% respondents have responded that the Council failed to make the people living in the Council area, economically self-sufficient by adopting the income generating schemes.

However, it is remarkable that 55% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area feel that the Tiwa Autonomous Council is successful to bring educational development in the Council area. Also 73% of respondents are of the opinion that the Tiwa Autonomous Council is successful to develop the communication as well as the infrastructure facilities in the Council area.

But 57% respondents have the opinion that the Tiwa Autonomous Council authorities could not utilize the funds properly. 54% respondents feel that more power should be given to the Tiwa Autonomous Council

It is noteworthy that in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area there are significant numbers of respondents (11.4%) who have no comments on the queries. It signifies that there are some respondents who are not aware about the functioning of the Tiwa Autonomous Council.

From the responses the average of the respondents who have appreciated the role of the Tiwa Autonomous Council are 40.5% (calculating the responses from the Strongly Agreed and Agreed responses in all the queries).

6:3 Comparative analysis of the opinion of the respondents/voters of both the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area:

In the above, we have presented the findings of the opinion survey on different areas of the study separately among the Tiwas and the Rabhas. Now a comparative analysis of the findings between the Tiwas and the Rabhas is presented below:

6:3:1 Comparative analysis of the opinion on ethnic identity crisis:

In both the Council area, the people are agreed that both the Tiwa and the Rabha communities are facing the problem of ethnic identity crisis in Assam.

In the opinion survey 68% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area and 67% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area have responded in favour of the Statement (Table: 6:9). The main factors of ethnic identity crisis identified by the respondents in both the Council areas are- (Table 6:10A & 6:10B)

Table: 6:16: Factors of Ethnic Identity Crisis among the Tiwas and the Rabhas:

Rabhas	Tiwas
A) Adoption/assimilation to Assamese Culture	A) Dominance of Assamese Culture
B) Lack of awareness	B) Negligence of the Government towards the protection of the Tiwa culture and language
C) Non-practice of language, culture and traditions	C) Assimilation with the Assamese society/ assimilation through Baisnavite movement
D) Negligence of the Government	D) Lack of awareness
	E) Non practice of custom and traditions

6:3:2 Comparative analyses of opinion of the respondents on the issue of socio-economic backwardness as a factor of Autonomy Demand:

The feelings of deprivation and backwardness among the Tiwas and the Rabhas have been identified as an important factor behind the emergence of ethno-centric political demands in Assam. In the following we have compared the opinion of the respondents (From the Table: 6:12A and 6:12B) on different issues related with the factor of socio-economic backwardness:

- ❖ 96% of respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area and 99% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area have agreed that the Tiwas and the Rabhas are socially and economically backward.
- ❖ 81% of the respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area and 74% in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area have responded that they are deprived from the basic facilities like education, health, and communication etc.
- ❖ 75% of respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area and 65% of the respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area have responded about the failure of the Government to provide necessary support to make them economically self-sufficient.
- ❖ 27% respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area and 28% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are feeling that they are losing land ownership.

From all the responses, it is seen that in all the queries related to the issue of socio-economic backwardness, except the query related to loss of land ownership, majority of the respondents are aware and have expressed their backwardness. Regarding the issue related to loss of land ownership only a few respondents are responded positively in both the Council area. The average of total aware persons from all the four questions on the allegation of socio-economic backwardness in the Rabhas Hasong area is 64.2%, on the other hand, the average of total aware persons about the allegation of socio-economic backwardness in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area is 73% (the average is calculated on Aware responses in all the queries in the Table 6:12A and 6:12B). Hence, from the above figures, we can presume that in both the Council area, the peoples in both the Council areas have a feeling that they are socially and economically backward in Assam.

6:3:3 Comparative analysis of awareness of the people regarding Autonomy Demand:

In the survey, we are trying to find out how the common people of both the Council areas are aware about the autonomy demand and also what they think about the still ongoing demand for political autonomy. In the following a comparison of the opinion of the respondents (From the Table: 6:13A and 6:13B) on different issues related with the factor of Autonomy Demand is presented.

- ❖ 74% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 67% respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area are of the opinion that the Autonomy is essential for the socio-economic development and to preserve and protect the Ethnic Identity.
- ❖ 49% in Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 58% in Tiwa Autonomous Council area have expressed that all the people of their communities have not participated in the agitational programmes.
- ❖ 79% respondents in Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 74% respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area have appreciated that the leaders of the Rabha community are successful to make the people conscious about their rich Ethnic Identity.
- ❖ 25% respondents in Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 26% of respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area have failed to give comments on the issue of Autonomy Demand.

From the responses in both the Council area it is found that majority of the respondents have favoured the political autonomy to ensure socio-economic development and to preserve, protect their rich ethnic identity. In their opinion it also found that all the people of their respective communities are not participated in the agitational programmes. However, majority of the respondents have appreciated the role of their leaders to make the people aware about the demand for autonomy as well as to protect their rich ethnic identity.

The average of total aware persons from all the responses regarding the Autonomy demand in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area is 83.5%. On the other hand, the average of respondents regarding the Autonomy demand in the Tiwa Autonomous Council areas is 74% (the average is calculated from respondents who able to comment on the issue in all the queries in the Table 6:13A and 6:13B). It is worth mentioning that in both the Council areas, almost the same portion of respondents has failed to comment on the queries which means that they are not aware about the fact.

6:3:4 Comparison of awareness regarding the Accord and the Autonomous Council Act, 1995:

In the survey, we are trying to find out the awareness of the common people of both the Council areas regarding the (Tiwa/Rabha) Accord, 1995 and the (Tiwa/ Rabha Hasong) Autonomous Council Act of 1995. In the following a comparison of the opinion of the respondents (From the Table: 6:13A and 6:13B) on different issues related to the (Tiwa/Rabha) Accord of 1995 and the (Tiwa/Rabha Hasong) Autonomous Council Act of 1995 is presented.

- ❖ 67% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 57% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have agreed that the Accord is a historic achievement for their respective communities.
- ❖ 33% of respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 42% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have no comments on the Accord. This means that, they are not aware of the Accord.
- ❖ 39% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 32% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area expressed that the respective Autonomous Council Act, 1995 do not insert all the provisions to ensure development and protection of identity.
- ❖ 37% in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 47% in Tiwa Autonomous Council area have no comment on the respective Autonomous Council Act, 1995 which signifies that a large number of people in both the areas are not aware of the Act.

From the above analysis of the data it is clear that, for majority of the respondents in both the Council areas the Accord is a historic achievement. It is also remarkably noticed that a large portion of the respondents are not aware about the Accord in both the Council areas. The figure shows that the numbers of unaware respondents are more in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area than the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area.

Regarding the (Tiwa/Rabha) Autonomous Council Act 1995, some respondents in both the Councils have expressed that the Acts are not sufficient to ensure the development of the people in their respective areas. From the analysis it is observed that, a large number of

respondents are not aware about the (Tiwa/Rabha Hasong) Autonomous Council Act. Here too, the numbers of unaware respondents are more in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area than the Rabha Hasong autonomous Council area.

The average of total aware persons in all the queries about the Accord and the respective Autonomous Council Act in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are 63% and in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area are 53% (the average is calculated from respondents who able to comment on the issue in all the queries in the Table 6:14A and 6:14B). Hence from the data, it can be assumed that, more people in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area are aware about the Accord and the Autonomous Council Act over the people in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area.

6:3:5 Comparison of the opinion about the Functioning of the Autonomous Councils:

In the opinion survey we have tried to ascertain the views of the common voters regarding the functioning of the respective Autonomous Councils. In the following a comparison of the opinion of the common voters regarding the functioning of the Autonomous Councils is presented (From the Table 6:15A and 6:15B).

- ❖ 57% respondents in Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 48% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area responded that the Council officials are not committed and inefficient.
- ❖ 72% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 57% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have expressed that the Council could not bring the socio-economic development in their respective areas.
- ❖ 78% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 70% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have viewed that the Council could not make the people economically self-sufficient by generating income opportunities.
- ❖ 67% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area have viewed that the Rahba Hasong Autonomous Council could not bring educational development in their areas. But 55% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council feels that the Tiwa Autonomous Council is successful to bring educational development in the Council area.

- ❖ 50% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 73% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have viewed that their respective Council is successful to bring infra structural development in Council area.
- ❖ 78% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 57% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have expressed that the Council authorities could not utilize the funds efficiently.
- ❖ 56% respondents in Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 54% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have viewed that more power should be given to their Autonomous Councils.

From the analysis of data it is found that except in few aspects people are not satisfied with the overall functioning of both the Councils. Many respondents have expressed that the Council officials are not committed towards the development of the people and have failed to bring economic development in the Council areas. However the respondents have appreciated the role of the Tiwa Autonomous Council towards the educational development in the Council areas.

Moreover, it is seen that regarding the role of the Autonomous Councils in infrastructure development, in both the Council area the respondents have appreciated the role of their respective Councils. However, more people in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have appreciated the role of the Council than the Rabha Hasong autonomous Council.

From the analysis of the data, an average of 35.4% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 40.5% respondents in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area have appreciated the role of the respective Autonomous Council in different areas (Average is calculated from the Strongly Agreed and Agreed responses in all the queries in Table 6:15A and 6:15B). An average of 22% respondents in the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council area and 11.4% respondents in Tiwa Autonomous Council area have failed to respond to this query. This means that there are some respondents who are not aware of the role of the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council in their respective areas.

From the analysis of data it is found that, in the Rabha Hasong area the popular dissatisfaction is more than the Tiwa Autonomous Council. But in the Tiwa Autonomous Council the unaware population about the functioning of the Autonomous Council is more than the Rabha Hasong area.

A graphical presentation in comparison of the average of the responses on different issues of the study in both the Council area is presented below for the sake of the comparative understanding.

Table: 6:17 Comparison of Awareness among the respondents in the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council areas on General Political Issues, Ethnic Identity Crisis, Allegation of Socio-Economic Backwardness, Autonomy Demand, The Accord and the Autonomous Council Act. (Average is calculated from all the responses given against each query on particular issue. The total count is 100 in each query)

Areas	Average of total aware respondents	
	Rabha	Tiwa
General Political awareness	79	76.5
Ethnic Identity Crisis	67	69
Allegation of socio-economic backwardness	64.2	73
Autonomy Demand	83.7	74
About the Accord and the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act 1995.	63	53

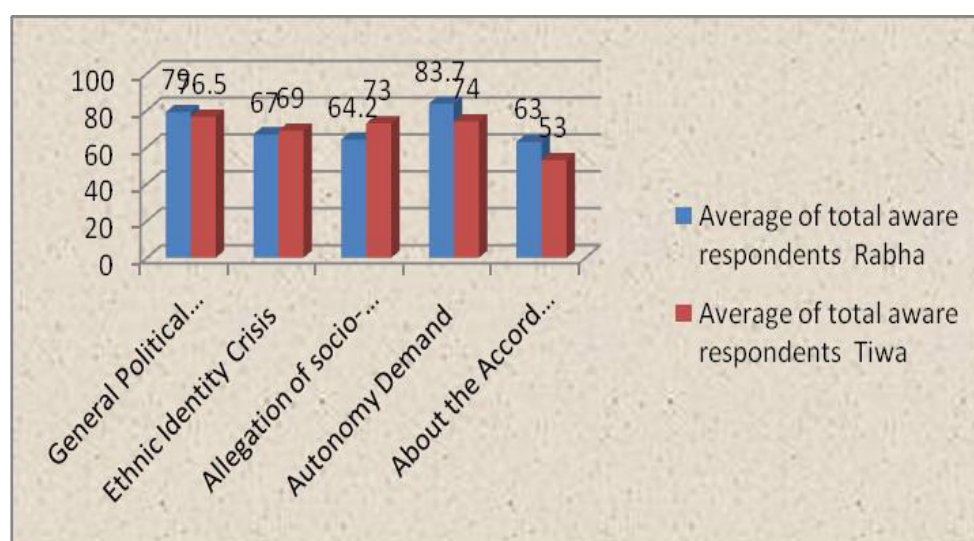


Figure : 6:1 Graphical presentation regarding awareness of the respondents on different issues.

Table: 6:18: Comparative table and graphical presentation of peoples’ opinion regarding functioning of the Autonomous Council in different areas:

The question	Number of respondents who agreed	
	Rabha	Tiwa
Role in Socio-Economic development	28	37
Role in Income Generation	21	18
Educational development	32	55
Infrastructure development	50	73
Utilization of Fund	19	32
Commitment towards Development	38	41
More powers to the Council	56	54

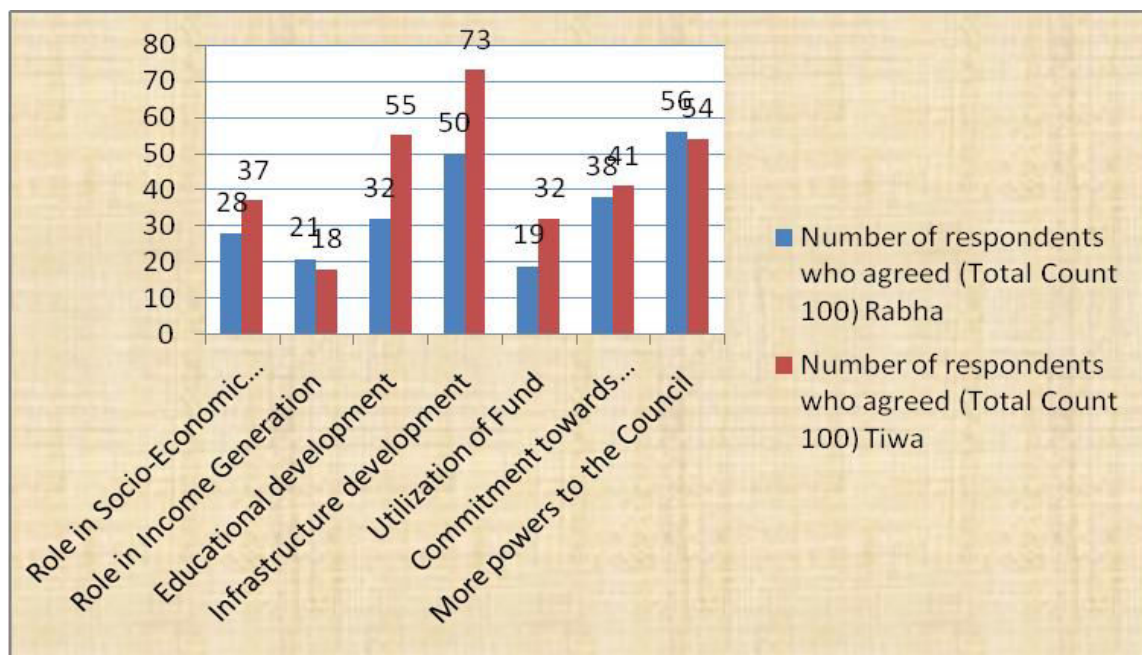


Figure: 6:2 Graphical comparison of the peoples opinion regarding functioning of the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council

6:4 Hypothesis Accepted or Rejected:

H-1 : In the study the first hypothesis is that “the ethnic mobilization of the Tiwas and the Rabhas for achieving an autonomous political authority has its root in the sense of socio-economic deprivation and backwardness.”

The hypothesis is accepted because from the analysis of the opinion of the common voters (Table No.6:11A & 6:11B) in both the Council areas it is found that a major portion of the people have agreed about the fact that their communities are socially and economically backward in Assam and have considered it as a factor for their demand for Political Autonomy in Assam. In the Table No. 6:11A, the average of the responses who have agreed the facts about the socio-economic backwardness of the Rabhas are 64.2%. On the other hand, in the Table 6:11B, the average of the responses who have agreed the facts about the socio-economic backwardness of the Tiwas are 73%. A graphical analysis of the findings on this particular factor is as follows:

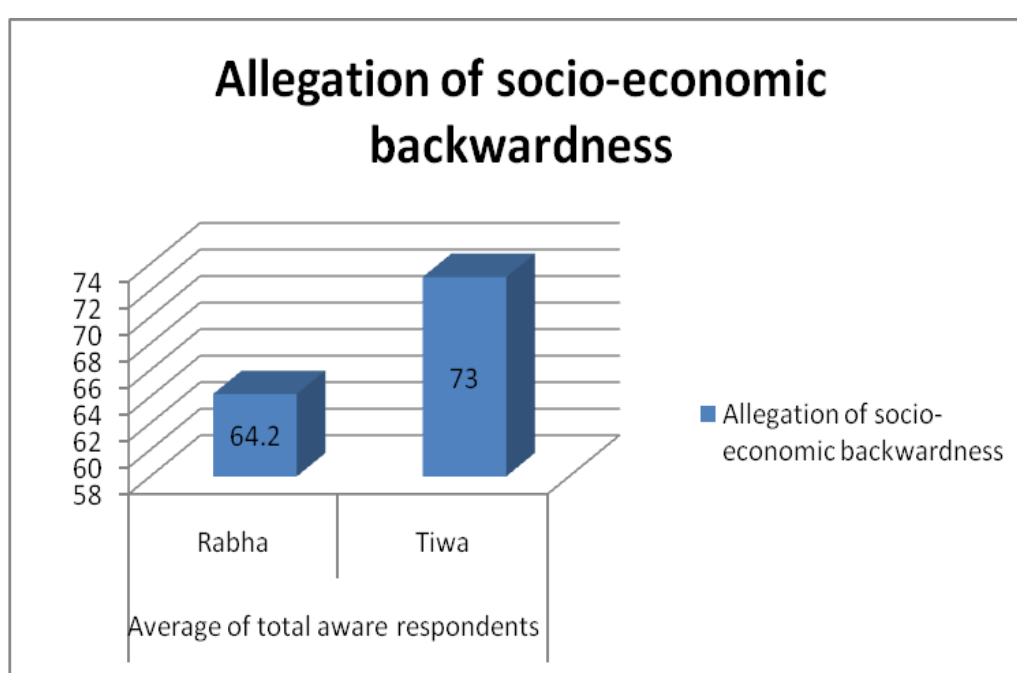


Figure 6:3: Graphical presentation of the peoples opinion regarding H-1

H-2: Another hypothesis in the study is “The Demand for an autonomous political authority for the Tiwas and the Rabhas is a political aspiration of some newly emerged leaders in these societies.”

The hypothesis stands rejected because, from the analysis of the data from the opinion survey reveals that, majority population in both the Council area have shown concern about the Autonomy Demand and have supported the causes of the Demand (Table: 6:12A & 6:12B). In the Table 6:12A an average of 74% respondents are aware and responded about various issues of autonomy demand in the Tiwa Autonomous Council area. On the other hand, in the Table:6:12B, an average of 83.5% respondents in the Rabha Hasong

Autonomous Council area are aware and responded about various issues of autonomy demand. Thus, the demand for autonomy of the Tiwas and the Rabhas cannot be called as an aspiration of the leaders but the common masses are also involved with the Demand. The findings of the opinion survey regarding awareness about the Autonomy Demand among the Voters can be shown in the following way-

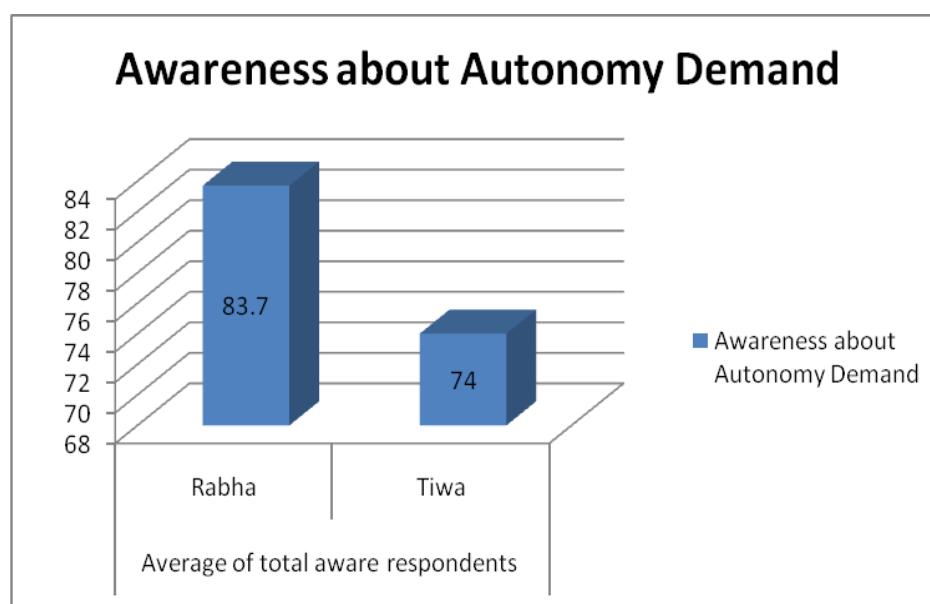


Figure: 6:4 Graphical presentation of the H-2

H-3: The third hypothesis in the study is “The political autonomy provided through the constitution of the tribe specific Autonomous Councils is not an effective solution for the socio economic and ethnic upliftment of the marginalized tribal peoples of Assam.”

The hypothesis is accepted because from the analysis of the data of opinion survey (Table No. 6:14A & 6:14B), it is clear that majority of the population in both the Autonomous Council areas are not satisfied with the functioning of the Autonomous Councils. In the Table: 6:14A an average of only 35.4% respondents have agreed about the facts related to the efficiency of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council. On the other hand in the Table:6:14B an average of 40.5% of the respondents have agreed about the facts related to the efficiency of the Tiwa Autonomous Council. The Autonomous Councils are constituted to ensure the socio-economic development as well as to protect the ethnic identity of the respective tribal ethnic groups. But from the above study it is found that, even after the long period of its constitution, the Council Authorities couldnot fulfill the aspirations of the masses living within the Council areas. A graphical analysis of the findings of popular opinion related to

the efficiency of the Tiwa and the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Councils are presented in the following way-

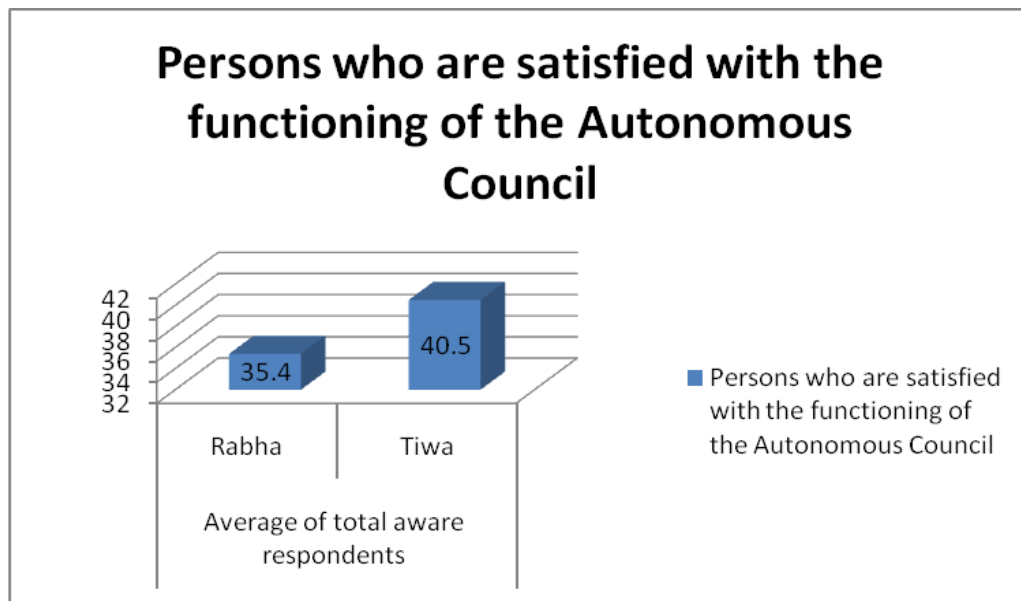


Figure: 6:5 Graphical presentation of the H-3