

# VISHNUIAS.COM

*WE PROVIDE A PATH FOR YOUR SUCCESS*

## **ANTHROPOLOGY SNIPPET-347**



**(Welcome To Vishnu IAS online )**

(Research and Training Institute for the best civil services preparation in India)

<http://vishnuias.com/>

## Rengma Nagas Demand Autonomous District Council



The Rengma Naga Peoples' Council (RNPC) or **Rengma Nagas** have demanded an **Autonomous District Council (ADC)** in Assam.

- The Central and the State governments recently upgraded the **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)** and the **North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC)** to territorial councils like the **Bodoland Territorial Council**.
  - The '**status of territorial council**' will provide **more autonomy and financial grant** to them.
- It is alleged that the creation of these tribal councils deprived the Rengma Nagas, the "legitimate owners", of the land. Both the **KAAC** and the **NCHAC** share **boundaries with Nagaland**.

### Key Points

- **About the Rengma Naga Tribe:**
  - **Found in:**

- Rengma is a **Naga tribe** found in **Nagaland, Assam** and **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- **History:**
  - The **first official recording of the Rengma Nagas staying in Assam's Karbi Hills (then known as Mikir Hills)** was made in 1855 by Major John Butler, a British officer posted in the Northeastern region.
  - Butler recorded that the **Rengmas in Karbi Anglong had migrated there from the Naga Hills in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century**, abandoned many of their tribal customs and married within the local communities.
- **Festival:** The harvest festival of the Rengmas is called **Ngada**.
- **Autonomous District Council (ADC):**
  - **About:**
    - The **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution deals with the administration of the **tribal areas** in the four northeastern states of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
      - The special provision is **provided under Article 244 (2) and Article 275** of the Constitution.
    - The tribals have been given freedom to exercise legislative and executive powers through an **autonomous regional council and ADCs**.
  - **Composition of Autonomous Councils:**
    - Each autonomous district and regional council **consists of not more than 30 members**, of which four are nominated by the governor and the rest via elections. All of them **remain in power for a term of five years**.
    - However, the **Bodoland Territorial Council is an exception** as it can **constitute up to 46 members**.
  - **Governor's Control:**

- Despite various degrees of autonomy, the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule area **does not fall outside the executive authority of the state concerned.**
- The **governor is empowered to organise and re-organise** the autonomous districts.
- **Applicability of Central and State Laws:**
  - The **Acts passed by Parliament and state legislatures** may or may not be levied in these regions unless the **President and the governor gives her or his approval**, with or without modifications in the laws for the autonomous regions.
- **Civil and Criminal Judicial Powers:** The Councils have also been endowed with wide civil and criminal judicial powers, for example **establishing village courts** etc.
  - However, the jurisdiction of these councils is subject to the jurisdiction of the concerned High Court.
- **Existing Autonomous Councils:** The sixth schedule to the Constitution includes **10 autonomous district councils in 4 states.** These are:
  - **Assam:** Bodoland Territorial Council, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and North Cachar Hills/Dima Hasao Autonomous Council.
  - **Meghalaya:** Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council.
  - **Tripura:** Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council.
  - **Mizoram:** Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council.
- **Arguments of Rengma Naga Peoples' Council (RNPC):**
  - **Rengmas were the first tribal people in Assam to have encountered the British in 1839.**

- But the existing **Rengma Hills** was eliminated from the political map of the State and replaced with that of **Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong)** in 1951.
- The Rengmas gave shelter to the **Ahom** refugees during the Burmese invasions of Assam in 1816 and 1819.
  - The **Ahom** are an ethnic group from the Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The **Rengma Hills and Mikir Hills** were two separate entities until 1951. The **Rengma Hills** was partitioned in 1963 between Assam and Nagaland.
  - Karbis have no history in the Rengma Hills.
  - At the time of creation of Nagaland State, the **Karbis** were known as **Mikirs** till 1976.
    - They were the **indigeneous tribal people of Mikir Hills**.
- The **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)** population is around 12 lakh and the Karbis constitute only 3 lakh, the remaining are non-Karbhis, including the Rengma Nagas, whose population is around 22,000.
- **NSCN (I-M) Stand:**
  - The **National Socialist Council of Nagaland or NSCN (Isak-Muivah)** has said that the Rengma issue was one of the important agendas of the “**Indo-Naga political talks**” and no authority should go far enough to override their interests.
  - NSCN (IM) had signed a Naga Peace Accord with the Government of India in August 2015, but the final accord is yet to be finalised.
    - One of the most contentious demands of the NSCN (IM) was the **creation of a unified Naga homeland, called ‘Greater Nagalim’** by integrating the Naga-inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal with Nagaland.

VISHNU IAS