An apex body of the scheduled tribes (STs) of Assam has resented the “snub” by the Centre while constituting a high-level committee on the implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

This clause of the Assam Accord, signed in August 1985 to end a six-year agitation for the ejection of illegal migrants from the State, says “constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people”.

The Centre had formed the 12-member committee headed by retired Gauhati High Court judge Biplab Kumar Sarma on Tuesday. None of the members belong to any of the more than 20 scheduled tribes of Assam accounting for at least 15% of the population.

“We appreciate the Centre’s move, but a panel for safeguarding the interests of the indigenous people is ridiculous without the real sons of the soil - the tribal people who have been marginalised more than any other group. The Centre has insulted us,” All Assam Tribal Sangha secretary-general Aditya Khakhleri said.

Mr. Khakhleri is a Bodo, the largest ST community in the Kachari group that is considered the earliest inhabitants of Assam.

The tribal body demanded the inclusion of a retired civil servant or any other capable person from among the tribes.