

**From Conflict to Accords: Role of Local Leadership in Peace
Processes in Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam**

A Thesis Submitted
To
Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Tamanna Sarma

Under the Supervision of
Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury (Supervisor)
and
Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar (Co-Supervisor)

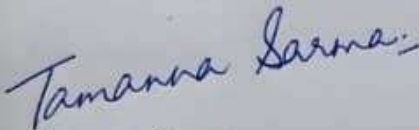
Department of Peace and Conflicts Studies and Management
School of Social Sciences

November, 2024

Date: 09/11/2024

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **"From Conflict to Accords: Role of Local Leadership in Peace Processes in Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam"** submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is my original work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.



Tamanna Sarma

Registration No.: 17/Ph.D/PCM/01

Roll No.: 17PDPC03

तदु, तदुंग -737102
कम, भारत
251212, 251415, 251656
1067
www.cus.ac.in



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong -737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax: 251067
Website: www.cus.ac.in

(भारत के संसद के अधिनियम द्वारा वर्ष 2007 में स्थापित और नैक (एनएएसी) द्वारा वर्ष 2015 में प्रत्यायित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय)
(A central university established by an Act of Parliament of India in 2007 and accredited by NAAC in 2015)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"From Conflict to Accords: Role of Local Leadership in Peace Processes in Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam"** submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** embodies the work carried out by **Tamanna Sarma** for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy** Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, School of Social Sciences. It is a record of the bonafide investigation carried out and completed by her under my guidance and supervision. She has followed the rules and regulations laid down by the University. The results are original and have not been submitted anywhere else for any other degree or diploma.

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Head of the Department

Prof. Nawal K. Paswan

Department of Peace and Conflict

Studies and Management

Sikkim University

Supervisor

Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury

HOD Political Science and

Dean of Social Sciences,

Bodoland University,

Kokrajhar, Assam

Co-Supervisor

Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar

Assistant Professor

Department of Peace and Conflict

Studies and Management

Sikkim University

सुर, तादोंग -737102
म, भारत
51212, 251415, 251656
1067
www.cus.ac.in



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong -737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax: 251067
Website: www.cus.ac.in

भारत के संसद के अधिनियम द्वारा वर्ष 2007 में स्थापित और नैक (एनएएचसी) द्वारा वर्ष 2015 में प्रमाणित केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय
(A central university established by an Act of Parliament of India in 2007 and accredited by NAAC in 2015)

Date: 09/11/2024

PLAGIARISM CHECK CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that a plagiarism check has been carried out for the following Ph.D thesis with the help of **DRILLBIT Software** and the result is 10% which is the permissible limit (within 10%) as per the norms of Sikkim University

"From Conflict to Accords: Role of Local Leadership in Peace Processes in Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam"

Submitted by **Tamanna Sarma** under the supervision of **Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury** (HOD Political Science and Dean of Social Sciences, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, Assam) and **Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar** (Assistant Professor Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management), Sikkim University.

Tamanna Sarma
(Tamanna Sarma)
Signature of the Scholar

(Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury)
(Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury)
Countersigned by Supervisor

(Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar)
(Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar)
Countersigned by Co-Supervisor

(Vetted by Librarian)
Vetted by Librarian

पुस्तकालय
LIBRARIAN
केन्द्रीय पुस्तकालय Central Library
सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of numerous people who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. It is a pleasure to thank those who made it a possibility.

I am indebted to my supervisor Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury who is presently the Head of the Department (Hod) of Political Science and also holding the office of the Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Bodoland University, Kokrajhar, Assam, for bringing the weight of her considerable experience and knowledge to this work. Her guidance and advice carried me through all the stages of writing my thesis. This Ph.D. thesis would not have developed without her considerate support, meticulous oversight and significant input about the scope and depth of the study. Her generosity has been a constant source of encouragement. I was able to move this work into the present day because of her persistent efforts to educate and revise the concepts in the right order. Having a mentor like her makes me feel really fortunate and proud.

I would like to express my gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr. Dinesh Kumar Ahirwar, Assistant Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, for his valuable advice and support. I would also like to give special thanks to Prof. Nawal K. Paswan, the present Head of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, for understanding my problems and supporting me throughout my study. I would also like to thank Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Dr. Salvin Paul and Dr. Vimal Khawas for their constructive comments and suggestions towards my work.

I cannot forget to recall Waseem bhaiya and Neeraj Da for their help and support during the initial period of the work. I am extremely thankful to Tikendra Da, Sapna Di and my friend Yograj for their ceaseless supports.

I am thankful to Bijay, Bhuma, Bhupe Da, Badal Da, Bina Bhauju, Kancha, Suman Chhetri (Juwain), Tibrata, Deba, Danu, Kunjan, Dikshita, Bhargav, Angel, Angana, Aakriti, Bidhya and Sushmita Sapkota for their immense love and support.

Last but not the least, I will always be indebted to my loving Daddy who always treated me as his son and stood by me till his last breathe. I bow down to thank my Aama (Mom) for her love, support and indubitable faith on me. I will never forget to mention my loving husband, Pankaj Nirola who was always there for me as a friend with full support. I would not have been able to move forward towards my work without the encouragement and support of Suresh Da who always stands beside me as my pillar of support. I could not have completed my work without the affection of my darling chora, Ishaan who has always been understanding and sympathetic. My heartiest thanks go to my in-laws, Buwa and Aama for their encouragement, love and faith on me.

Above all, my sincere and living gratefulness goes to the Almighty Shri Rajji, Sarkarshriji and Rajan Swamiji for their blessings...

I am unable to list all of the significant individuals who have assisted me in this effort, either directly or indirectly and I am grateful for their constant contributions.

Tamanna Sarma

CONTENTS

Title	Pages
Acknowledgments	i-ii
Lists of Tables	iii
Lists of Figures	iv
Lists of Abbreviations	v
Executive Summary	vi-xiv
 Chapter-1 Introduction	 1-16
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Survey of literature	7
1.3. Statement of the Problem	12
1.4. Rationale and Scope	12
1.5. Research Objectives	13
1.6. Research Questions	14
1.7. Research Methodology	14
1.8. Chapterisation	15
 Chapter-2 Ethnic Conflicts, Peace Accords and Leadership in Pacification: A Conceptual Framework	 17-41
2.1. Introduction	17
2.2. Ethnic Conflict	18
2.3. Ethnicity: Theoretical Understanding	19
2.3.1. Ethnicity: Major Approach	21
2.4. Ethnic Assertions and Conflicts: Underlying Approaches	21
2.5. Inequality Perception and Ethnic Conflicts	24
2.6. Ethnic Mobilizations in Northeast India	26
2.7. Steps to Resolve an Interest-based Conflict	29
2.7.1. Various steps/stages of the Conflict Resolution Progress	30
2.8. Theories of Leadership	33
2.8.1. Levels of Leadership	34
2.8.2. Leadership Grid	35
2.8.3. Style of Leadership based on comprehension	38
2.9. Conclusion: The Bodoland Movement and Leadership	38
 Chapter-3 Historical Background of the Bodos in Assam: An Analysis	 42-65
3.1. Introduction	42
3.2. Ancient Bodo Kingdom and Administration	47
3.3. Bodos during Colonial Administration	55
3.4. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Advent of Socio-cultural Reforms	58

3.5.	Bodos during Anti-Colonial Movement	59
3.6.	Independence and Aftermath	62
3.7.	Conclusion	65
Chapter 4	Bodoland Movement: Its Causes and Consequences	66-110
4.1.	Introduction	66
4.2.	Bodoland Movement	66
4.2.1.	Causes of Bodoland Movement	67
4.2.2.	Phases of Bodoland Movement	69
4.2.2.1.	First Phase: 1929-1947	69
4.2.2.2.	Second Phase: 1947-1986	73
4.2.2.2.1	Emergence of the ABSU	74
4.2.2.3.	Third Phase: 1987-1992	76
4.2.2.3.1.	First Tripartite Talk	86
4.2.2.3.2.	Second Tripartite Talk	87
4.2.2.3.3.	Third Tripartite Talk	89
4.2.2.3.4.	Fourth Tripartite Talk	89
4.2.2.3.5.	Violence amidst Talks	90
4.2.2.3.6.	Fifth Tripartite Talk	91
4.2.2.3.7.	Death of Upendra Nath Brahma	92
4.2.2.3.8.	Sixth Tripartite Talk	92
4.2.2.3.9.	Seventh Tripartite Talk	93
4.2.2.3.10.	Eight Tripartite Talk	93
4.2.2.3.11.	Fratricidal incidents within the Bodos	94
4.2.2.3.12.	Ninth Tripartite Talk	96
4.2.2.3.13.	Violence between Negotiation	97
4.2.2.3.14.	Tenth Tripartite Talk	97
4.2.2.3.15.	Hunger Strike by ABSU-BPAC	98
4.2.2.3.16.	Eleventh Tripartite Talk	99
4.2.2.4.	Creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council	101
4.2.2.5.	Fourth phase: 1993-2003	101
4.2.2.6.	Creation of Bodoland Territorial Council	107
4.2.2.7.	Creation of Bodoland Territorial Region	110
4.3.	Conclusion	110
Chapter-5	From Conflict to Accords and Leadership: Field Narratives and Analysis	111-136
5.1.	Introduction	111
5.2.	Analysis and Interpretation of data	113
5.3.	Composition of Respondents	113
5.3.1.	Structure of the Respondents on the basis of Sex	114
5.3.2.	Structure of the Respondents on the basis of Age	115
5.3.3.	Structure of the Respondents on the basis of Occupation	117

5.3.4.	Structure of the Respondents on the basis of language	118
5.3.5.	Structure of the Respondents on the basis of Religion	120
5.4.	Responses of Sample Population on the Basis of their Experiences and Opinion	121
5.5.	Multi-ethnic Society	122
5.6.	Witnessing Ethnic Conflict and Violence and its Impact	122
5.7.	Nature of Ethnic Mobilisation Witnessed	124
5.8.	Changes Brought by the Ethnic Conflicts	125
5.9.	Respondent's Perception on the Militants' Act of Terror	128
5.10.	Initiatives of Government during and after the Conflicts	130
5.11.	Transformation of Leaders	132
5.12.	Some of the Findings	135
CHAPTER-6	Conclusion	137-148
	References	149-155
	Appendices	156-201
	Photographs	202-204

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Heading	Page No.
2.1	Style of Leadership	38
5.1	Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Sex	115
5.2	Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Age	116
5.3	Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Occupation	117
5.4	Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Language	119
5.5	Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Religion	120

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Heading	Page No.
2.1	Underlying Approaches to understand Ethnic Conflicts	23
2.2	Frances Stewart's observation of inequalities	25
2.3	The Interest-Based Conflict Resolution Process	30
2.4	Levels of Leadership	35
5.1	Percentage of Respondents based on sex	115
5.2	Percentage of Respondents based on age	116
5.3	Percentage of Respondents based on occupation	118
5.4	Percentage of Respondents based on Language	119
5.5	Percentage of Respondents based on Religion	120
5.6	Sample population affected by ethnic conflicts	123

ABBREVIATIONS

AAMSU	All Assam Minorities Students' Union
AATL	All Assam Tribal League
AATWWF	All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation
ABSU	All Bodo Students' Union
ACKSA	All Cachar-Karimganj Students' Association
BAC	Bodoland Autonomous Council
BLT	Bodo Liberation Tigers
BLTF	Bodo Liberation Tigers Force
BPAC	Bodo People's Action Committee
BdSF	Boro Security Force
BTAD	Bodoland Territorial Area Districts
BTC	Bodoland Territorial Council
BTR	Bodoland Territorial Region
CCBPO	Coordination Committee for Bodoland Peoples' Organizations
CEM	Chief Executive Member
CrPC	Code of Criminal Procedure
GLFA	Gorkha Liberation Front of Assam
NDFB	National Democratic Front of Bodoland
NER	North-Eastern Region
PTCA	Plain Tribal Council of Assam
UBNLF	United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front
UTNLF	United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the start of the second half of the 20th century, conflicts pertaining to ethnicity, identity politics, and the self-other binary have been a significant issue worldwide. These disputes have evolved into intra-state politics and been more localized over time. These intra-state conflicts typically take the form of majority-minority conflicts based on language, culture and religion. Among the problematic elements of the conflicts that contemporary states encounter worldwide are ethnic division and ethno-political mobilizations that cause split among various communities. Terms like “ethnic conflict”, “ethnic group”, “ethnicity” and “ethno-political mobilization” are widely used in academics, politics, and daily life. Ethnic conflicts have drawn the attention of academics who study ethnic sensations, ethnic mobilization and other conflicts since the late 1960s, and they continue to be a major area of study in the 1990s and beyond.

The North-Eastern Region of India, which is home to numerous ethnic groups, is among the least developed regions of the nation. The area faces numerous issues at once, including poverty, inequality, ethnic conflict and armed warfare. Political and ethnic disputes have frequently been stoked by the region’s multiculturalism, polyethnicity, ethnicity and the ethno-nationalist emotions of its many populations. Various ethnic communities in this area have been fighting for either unique constitutional protections or the establishment of distinct governmental entities. The NER’s second-largest state, Assam, has long been in disarray and ferment. Since gaining independence, the state, which is home to numerous ethnic groups, has experienced internal strife. Various ethnic groups of the Brahmaputra valley were experiencing an identity crisis or identity consciousness as a result of their perception

of neglect and hardship. While militants from the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) had been calling for “Swadin Asom”, the region is also constantly tensed due to the independent demands of several ethnic groups, including the Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas, Koch-Rajbanshis, Rabha-Hajongs, Tiwas, Misings and others.

One of Assam’s most troubled regions is the Bodoland Region. It has a significant position on the ethnic conflict map of India. Feelings of identity insecurity and the incorrect policies that have been implemented since before independence are the causes of the unfortunate situation in the region. The Bodos, who make up the majority of the Assamese plain tribes, felt a sense of neglect and deprivation. They felt that their continued survival as an ethnic group would be threatened. As a result, they started demanding a separate homeland “Bodoland”. Thus, the Bodoland Movement was a result of identity insecurity and its expression.

The Movement resulted in inter-ethnic conflicts between various ethnic groups residing in the region. As a consequence, the region witnessed violence to a great extends. This movement has gone through distinct stages, and efforts have been made to resolve the disagreement throughout each of those stages. In this regard, the levels of violence have decreased because of the political leadership in transition, and signing of various accords.

Given the background of accords and the role that leadership played in sanctifying them, this study attempts to highlight the function of the leaders and their changing trajectory from conflict to peace. The study also tries to highlight the various causes that led to the emergence of Bodoland Movement, and consequences faced because of conflict and violence in the region. However, after signing of the accords, the scenario in the region changed.

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:

- 1) To map the origin and development of the Bodoland Movement in Assam.
- 2) To highlight the role played by leaders during the Bodoland Movement and understand the role of Peace Accords in pacifying ethnic conflicts.
- 3) To examine the background and issues that have transformed the leaders involved from conflict to peace leaders.

Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri districts of Bodoland Territorial Region have been chosen as the area of study because they have seen conflict and the transition of conflict leaders from unstable to conflict transformation periods. According to published research, these districts or the study area saw insurgencies, conflicts and intra-ethnic competition. This study has been qualitative and empirical. It is based on both secondary and primary analysis. Primary data was collected using both open and closed-ended questions. Random sampling and purposive sampling were used to obtain the primary data. Interviews have been conducted with different Political leaders, leaders of ABSU and other Bodo organizations, general Bodo mass, teachers and other community members and leaders. The total sample size is 250 as respondents are from each district.

The work has been divided into six chapters. **Chapter 1**, entitled as **Introduction** offers the overall framework of the study. It covers the introduction to the topic of the proposed research, its historical background, objectives, statement of the problem, rationale and scope, survey of the literature and the research questions. It also covers the methodology adopted in pursuing the research and the tentative chapterisation. Thus, the chapter is a brief overview of the proposed research.

Chapter 2 titled **Ethnic Conflicts, Peace Accords and Leadership in Peacebuilding: A Conceptual Framework** lays the theoretical orientation on various existing theories of Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict and Leadership. The chapter tries to contextualize these theories in the chosen field. It also highlights the underlying approaches such as Economic approach, psychological approach, power approach and sociological approach that assist in understanding the conflicts associated to ethnicity and beyond.

Perceptions of inequality among ethnic groups are a major factor in igniting conflict. Social, political, cultural and economic disparities among the various ethnic groups that comprise a multi-ethnic area are the root causes of conflict. Disparities between groups can lead to violent manifestation.

However, it is the task of a leader to act as a mediator to resolve an interest-based conflict. By examining various aspects including each party's interests, wants, needs and desires, the interest-based conflict resolution method seeks to get a mutually agreeable and acceptable result by going through the series of steps to provide a favourable result.

Leadership is categorized into three groups. Different activities of peacebuilding are possible at different levels of leadership. The top-leadership comprises of military, political and religious leaders in the conflict. They act as mediator in negotiating core issues of conflict and emphasizes cease-fire. The middle-range leadership includes ethnic/religious leaders, humanitarian leaders and leaders in educational sector. They are supposed to build peace infrastructure, problem-solving workshops, trainings and peace commissions. They serve as a link between the top and grassroots level. The grassroots leadership includes local leaders such as NGO

workers, refugee camp officials and health workers who have direct link with the masses. They focus on grassroots training, reduction of prejudice, psychological work etc.

Although, the chapter states various theories of leadership, the leaders of the Bodoland Movement can be clubbed under Situational Theories. The foundation of situational theories of leadership is the idea that a leader's effective style varies depending on the circumstances. Effective and successful leadership requires the ability to modify one's strategy and style in response to changing situations. When the Bodoland Movement appeared to be successful solely through protests, its leaders conducted it in a non-violent and peaceful manner; yet, when the circumstances called for forceful demonstrations, even acts of violence were carried out. Leadership Grid has also been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 titled **Historical Background of the Bodos in Assam: An Analysis** describes about the history of the Bodos. The Bodos are the earliest known inhabitants of Brahmaputra valley. The Bodos, whose population is around 1.45 million in Assam, according to the 2011 census, inhabited the plains of Assam from a very long period. They belong to Assam-Burman group of the Tibeto-Burman speaker belonging to the Sino-Tibetan speech family. The trans-Himalayan region between Tibet and China is the original homeland of the Bodos. Various scholars have proclaimed that before perforating into Assam and adjoining areas, the Bodos must have settled down along the foot hills of the Himalayas.

The Bodos, today, can now be found in almost every district of Assam. Additionally, the Bodos migrated to West Bengal, where they now reside in the districts of Cooch Behar, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri. Certain sections migrated near

the base of the Himalayas and established themselves on the north bank of the Mechi River (modern-day Nepal) and are referred to as Mech,. A few of them have also relocated and made their homes in Garo Hills, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bangladesh's Sylhet, and Mymensing districts. But, Assam is the primary habitat of the Bodos. They are seen in good number in the five districts of BTR viz., Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur.

According to ancient literature of India, Assam was ruled by Bodo kings until the arrival of Ahoms, who ruled over Assam for merely 600 years. However, when the Burmese invaded Assam, the Ahoms approached the East India Company for assistance. After the Burmese were defeated in the First Anglo-Burmese War in 1824, the Treaty of Yandaboo was signed in 1826. As a result, the British established their power in Assam. This marks the rule of the British in Assam. With this, the Bodos lost their political existence and sovereignty. The British brought immigrants to Assam, which created a significant change in the state's demographics. As a result, the Bodos began to lose their lands and were severely strained for both essential resources and a means of subsistence. However, under the guidance and leadership of various Bodo intellectuals including Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, the Bodos came to a position to become concerned about their identity and existence.

Ethno-political consciousness among the Bodos began to grow, which made them voice out for a separate state. This led to the emergence of the Bodoland Movement as they felt being forcefully deprived from their rights, and also feared that their distinct identity might be lost.

Chapter 4 titled **Bodoland Movement: Its Causes and Consequences** undertakes the study of various causes such as politics, policies and problems

associated with the ethno-mobilization of Bodos in Assam resulting in the Bodoland Movement. This chapter also deals with multiple peacebuilding measures undertaken for compressing violence in Assam, leading to the signing of various accords.

Feelings of insecurity about one's identity which had existed prior to independence gave rise to the Bodoland Movement. Factors which led to the emergence of Bodoland Movement are as follows:

- 1) Historical reason: Land Alienation and Deprivation
- 2) Assamese Chauvism
- 3) Inadequate policy

In this chapter, the Bodoland Movement has been divided into four phases:

- 1) First Phase: 1929-1947
- 2) Second Phase: 1947-1986
- 3) Third Phase: 1987-1992
- 4) Fourth phase: 1993-2003

Throughout these phases, the Bodos struggled for a separate state. Various organizations such as All Assam Tribal League (AATL), All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF), Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) etc., fought for the fulfillment of the demands of the Bodos. However, ABSU played a vital role throughout the movement. Hence, on 20th February, 1993 the first Bodo Accord was signed between the leaders of ABSU-BPAC, Government of India and Assam Government, and Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was formed.

However, the formation of BAC could not fulfill the aspirations of the Bodo mass. Hence, the ABSU along with insurgent group, NDFB, disowned the Accord, and started a fresh movement. Meanwhile, BLTF, another militant organization, also came into existence. The region started witnessing unrest and destruction to a large extent. However, after a series of talks held between the Government of India, State Government and the BLTF, an accord was signed on February 10, 2003. The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was established in Assam under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution which had authority over four districts: Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri, having jurisdictions in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). The formation of BTC gave the Bodos a wider context towards empowerment and advancement of their community.

Nevertheless, violence in the area did not appear to stop. It appeared that the BTC was unable to offer security to non-Bodos. Problems in the Bodoland region which had been continuing for several years seem to come to pause with the signing of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Agreement on January 2020 by the Government of India, Government of Assam, ABSU President, Pramod Boro (now the CEM of BTR), the then CEM of BTC, Hagrama Mohilary and the NDFB factions. With the signing of this accord, the area under the BTC jurisdiction officially came to be known as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Another new district, Tamulpur, has been formed along with four other districts. Thereafter, several initiatives have been started for the Bodoland region and quick progress is being made towards their development, which continues till date. Presently, the region seems to be peaceful and hopes to shine with all round economic and sustainable peace and development.

Chapter 5 entitled **From Conflict to Accords and Leadership: Field Narratives and Analysis** deals with the analysis and interpretation of the field survey

carried out for the study. This chapter also illustrates how political leaders coped with practical problems in a transitional society. It also examines whether the leaders maintain the support of their ‘Hardliners’ while simultaneously moving towards a more central location during the transition.

The chapter illustrates the information gathered from structured interviews and schedules. It makes an effort to determine the effects of Bodo disputes on people's lives, as well as their experiences during the Bodoland Movement, based on the variables such as sex, age, religion, occupation, and language. The chapter ends with the findings of the study.

Chapter 6 titled **Conclusion** is the concluding chapter, which is a short summary of the work done.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

India's North-Eastern Region (NER) is a beautiful and magnificent tapestry of people, events and nature. Comprising of eight states- Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Sikkim, this region is connected to the Indian mainland through a narrow corridor at Siliguri of West Bengal, and shares international borders with Bhutan, Myanmar, China and Bangladesh. The NER is one of the most underdeveloped parts of the country, inhabited by many ethnic groups (Mukherjee, 2017). The region is confronted with a large number of challenges simultaneously- armed conflict, ethnic conflict, poverty, and inequality. A multicultural, polyethnic region, ethnicity and the ethno-nationalist sentiments of the numerous communities of the region have often lent themselves towards fanning political and ethnic conflicts (Khobragade, 2010).

For more than 70 years, situation of this region has been a matter of great concern. One of the reasons for such concern is the growing assertion of various ethnic groups and their impact on region's politics. In this region, different ethnic groups have been struggling either for special constitutional safeguards or for the creation of special separate political entities (Chhetry, 2015). Assam, the second largest state of the NER has been in ferment and turmoil for a long. Inhabited by various ethnic groups, the state has witnessed internal conflict since independence. While the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) militants had been demanding "Swadin Asom", autonomous demands of different ethnic groups- Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas, Koch-Rajbanshis, Rabha-Hajongs, Tiwas, Misings etc., are also creating constant tension in the zone. A sense of neglect and deprivation had created a crisis of

identity or identity consciousness amongst different ethnic groups of the valley of the Brahmaputra (Chhetry, 2018). The major ethnic conflict in Assam is the grievances against the perceived influx of illegal immigrants, especially from Bangladesh.

The Bodoland region is one of the most disturbed areas within Assam. Bodoland, officially Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), is an autonomous territory that includes Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur. It is predominantly inhabited by the Bodo people. The region has been one of the epicentres of ethnic violence. It occupies a prominent place in the Indian map of ethnic conflict. The tragic situation in the area is the outcome of feelings of insecure identity, as well as the wrong policies pursued since pre-independence (Banerjee and Roy, 2010). It is interesting to mention that the region is the product of ‘Social Engineering’ as coined by Professor Sanjib Baruah in (Baruah, 1999).

During colonial rule, vast areas of central and western Assam were opened up for immigrants from the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The huge influx of immigrants had shaken the fabric of the tribal economy, culture and society. The massive increase in immigrant population had put tremendous pressure on tribal land because they continued to settle in the reserved forests belts and blocks which were meant for the tribal people. The tribals were evicted from their lands and as such were under severe strain for livelihood as well as necessary resources (Chhetry, 2015).

However, the Congress ministry headed by Gopinath Bordoloi initiated several measures to free the protected land from encroachers. He emphasized the Line System to prevent alienation of Tribal lands. In November 1939, Bordoloi passed “The Land Resolution” which guaranteed the protection of tribals. But things took a different turn when Syed Mohammad Saadullah came into power. The resolution

passed by the Bordoloi ministry was not executed. Saadullah formulated a policy known as the “Land Development Scheme” and settled all the landless Muslim Immigrants in the Brahmaputra valley. By then, the Muslim League became more strident and continued their demand for further opening up of grazing reserves and the abolition of the Line System (Pegu, 2004). In 1946, when the Congress came to power again, the Assam Land Revenue Regulations, Act 1886, was amended and reserved tribal belts were created in different regions. Ten tribal belts and 23 tribal blocks were constituted to check encroachment of tribal land. But because of some manipulative officials, most of the provisions were subverted and hence, continued pressure kept mounting on land held by the indigenous people because of immigration from East Pakistan (Mosahari, 2011).

In the post-colonial period, the tribals were forced to be economically and politically dependent on the Hindus, the upper ruling class. They were deprived of the benefit of industrialization and remained at the peasant economy level. This created a deep resentment within the Bodos against the Hindu Assamese. Moreover, the imposition of the Assamese language as the official language of the state made the Bodos feel unsafe and insecure about their culture and political identity (Deka, 2014). In 1967, a political organisation named the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) came into being. The PTCA demanded ‘Udayachal’, a union territory in 1973. The All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) formed in 1967 also raised the demand for creating a separate state for the Bodos. However, the demand raised by PTCA lost its political appeal among common Bodos because of their internecine conflict and brief electoral alliances with the then Assam Government. Failure of PTCA to lead the Bodo sentiment gave space to ABSU to accomplish support from the Bodo mass in

1987 to change the demand from union territory to separate state Bodoland (Mosahari, 2011).

From 1987 onwards, the movement was dominated by ABSU led by Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma. At the same time, the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) was formed to unite all sections of Bodo people irrespective of age and political affiliation. On 22nd January 1987, ABSU submitted a memorandum to the Central Government demanding a separate state. On 10th November 1987, ABSU submitted another memorandum expressing its bitter feelings against the Assamese Chauvinism as they feared that clause 6 of the Assam Accord (1985), which promises to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the 'Assamese people' might give legitimacy to the imposition of Assamese language and culture on Bodos (Guha, 1991).

The ABSU and BPAC jointly launched an agitation to redress the Bodo grievances. They organized a huge rally at Judge's field on 12th June 1987, in Guwahati where they coined the slogan "Divide Assam Fifty-Fifty". The statement of the then Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta "We will shed every drop of blood to prevent fragmentation of Assam" was reacted through mass participation in the agitation. Since then mass rallies, demonstrations, roads and rail blockades, prolonged bandhs, submission of memorandum, destruction of public properties, and disruption of communication and supply of essential goods became a daily routine. As such, the state authority promulgated section 144 CrPC to prevent public meetings and organization (Deka, 2014).

Meanwhile, the Boro Security Force (BdSF) emerged as an extremist outfit at Odal Khasibari village of Darrang district in October 1988 under the leadership of

Ranjan Daimary. Taking the path of extensive violence they started creating chaos and destruction. They aimed to liberate the Bodos from India and to make a sovereign state of Bodoland. However, the ABSU did not support the demand of the BdSF as they proclaimed that the Bodo people only wanted a separate state within India (ABSU, 1987).

Finally, after a prolonged series of talks held among the Government of India, the Government of Assam and the leaders of ABSU and BPAC, the Memorandum of Settlement popularly known as Bodo Accord was signed on 20th February 1993 by signatories such as Mr. S.K. Bwismuthiary, the then President of ABSU, Mr. Subhas Basumatary, Chairman of BPAC, Mr. K.S. Rao, the Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, Sri Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam and Sri Rajesh Pilot, the then Union Minister of the State for Home Affairs, with an agreement for the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) covering 5,186 square km on Brahmaputra valley (Memorandum of Settlement, 1993).

It is worth mentioning that the formation of BAC could not provide satisfaction among all sections of the Bodos. Rather, it gave rise to ideological conflict between the two militant outfits: BdSF which has been renamed as National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) on 25 Nov 1994 and Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF). While the NDFB demanded a 'sovereign Bodoland', the BLTF aimed for a separate state for the Bodos on the North bank of the river Brahmaputra. This ideological difference resulted in the internal killings of both militant outfits (Mosahari, 2011).

The Bodo militant organisations rejected the "Bodo Accord" (believing it to have no constitutional validity) and demanded an independent Bodoland. They started

ethnic cleansing operations in the districts of Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon. They attacked the houses of the Santhals in May-June 1996 which resulted in ethnic riots between the two communities (Barpujari, 1998). As a result of the ethnic riots, about 1000 persons were killed and 2,50,000 persons of both communities were displaced (OKDISCD, 2008). The Bodo militants, not being content with the 1996 massacre, again attacked and displaced more than 25,000 people mostly Santhals and Bengali speaking Muslims in June 1998 (Banarjee and Roy, 2010). Many Hindu Bengalis and Gorkhas too became displaced in the wake of the Bodo militants' ethnic cleansing operations. Apart from killings and displacement, extortion was another frequently occurring incident during the Bodoland Movement. Both NDFB and BLTF indulged in the extortion process. The victims of extortions were government officials, businessmen, contractors, petrol pump owners etc., all of whom belonged to non-Bodo communities (Nath, 2003).

Now, as the 'Bodo Accord' of 1993 failed to satisfy the Bodo demands, the ABSU and BPAC termed the 'Bodo Accord' as "Betrayal to the Bodos" and rejected the Accord. Rejecting the Accord, the ABSU and BPAC again declared a fresh movement demanding the creation of a separate state 'Bodoland', on 20th February 1999, in the 31st annual conference of ABSU held at Datoma (Kokrajhar). However, the ABSU took the initiative in bringing the BLTF or BLT who reached a cease-fire agreement with the Government of India on March 29, 2000, to the negotiating table with the central government to find a solution to the Bodoland issue (Mosahari, 2011). After a series of tripartite talks held between the Government of India, the Government of Assam and BLT, finally, a Memorandum of settlement was signed in New Delhi on February 10, 2003, by the signatories like Mr. Hagrama Mohilary, the BLT Chairman, Mr. RCA Jain, secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the

Government of India, Mr. P.K. Dutta, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, Sri Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam and Shri L.K. Advani, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of India. The objectives of this agreement are to create an autonomous self-governing body to be known as 'Bodoland Territorial Council' (BTC) within the state of Assam and making of four districts namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri, under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India, to abolish the Bodo accord of 1993, to fulfil economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and to speed up the infrastructural development in BTC area. The formation of BTC provided the Bodos with a wider context towards empowerment and advancement of their community (Memorandum of Settlement, 2003). During the period, the NDFB also reached a ceasefire on June 1st, 2005, and since then, the level of threat posed by the NDFB has dropped.

The BTC was a territorial council in Assam, having jurisdictions in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). The BTC had 46 executive members, with Hagrama Mohilary being the Council's Chief. The BTAD region covered an area of 8,822 square km comprising various protected tribal belts and blocks. Today, the council is known as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Pramod Boro is the Chief Executive Member of the BTR Council.

1.2. Survey of Literature

From the available literature related to ethnic conflicts, the process of pacification through accords, Bodoland Movement and BTC accords, steps taken to alleviate the conflict situation, has been thematically surveyed and reviewed. In this connection, some books, monographs and articles are brought to the purview of survey and review.

a) Ethnic Conflict and Identity

Yusuf Bangura (1994) in his article *The Search for Identity: ethnicity, religion and political violence* writes that most violent conflicts are based on ethnic dimensions and that political violence based on identity has often been destructive and uncontrollable.

Jadav Pegu (2004) in his book *Reclaiming Identity: A Discourse on Bodo History*, states that economic backwardness and protecting ethnic identity from the linguistic threat posed by the Assam Official Language policy caused the Bodo-ethnic mobilization and turned to Bodoland Movement.

Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury (2016) in her book *Women and Conflict India* writes about the causes, dynamics and impact of the ethno-political conflicts in Assam. The book portrays the role played by Mahila Shanti Sena (Women Peace Corp) towards conflict transformation.

Anuradha Prakash (2011) in her book *Ethnic Conflicts in North-East India: Its Vulnerability* portrays that almost every community of the North-Eastern region had been asking for separate political identities and special privileges leading to conflicts of unprecedented proportions. She adds that the inter-community or ethnic conflict in the area mainly takes place on the question of land acquisition, job opportunities and cultural identities.

Udayon Mishra (2012) in his article: *The Burden of History* states that the Bodos came out for ethnic clashes to keep their land and identity.

Subir Bhaumik (2010) in his article *Tools and Conflict Nuances in India's Northeast* states that the huge influx of immigrants from the neighbouring countries was seen as a threat to the distinct identity of indigenous people leading to a revolt.

Braja M. Das (1987) in his book *The People of Assam* writes that because of a large scale of immigration into Assam both from within and outside India, the Assamese faced the threat of becoming a minority in their land and hence took measures to preserve their socio-cultural identity.

Premananda Mosahari (2011) in his book *Political Identity Crisis of the Bodos and their Bodoland Movement* writes about the struggle of the Bodos for their survival with political identity in their homeland.

b) Leadership and Conflict

Leadership is the quality of behaviour whereby a person can influence others towards the desired goals. According to Cathy Gormley-Heenan (2001) in *From Protagonist to Pragmatist: Political Leadership in Societies in Transition*, leadership is directly related to conflict. She says that the transformation of a conflict can occur only when it is promoted by the leadership of conflictual positions. She also says leaders are not as flexible in their core positions as desired. Scholars working on 'Leadership and Conflict' strongly feel that transformative leaders are an essential part of the jigsaw of necessities required to make a peaceful society. The overall transformation of a conflict is sometimes said to require a change of character, a change of leadership, a change in the constituency of the leaders or the adoption of its goals, values or beliefs.

According to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict in *Essays on Leadership* (1998) negative leadership can create violent conflict in a deeply divided society.

Giacomo Chiozza and Ajin Choi (2003) in their article *Guess Who Did What: Political Leaders and the Management of Territorial Disputes 1959-1950* state that in times of conflict, the non-elected leaders are more inclined towards finding a peaceful solution whereas the elected ones are more likely go for military solution.

James McGregor Burns (1978) in his book *Leadership* writes that there are two types of leaders: transformational and transactional. Transformational leaders can go beyond the extremity of their community and work for the benefits and interests of a wider community. In contrast, transactional leaders think about the benefits and achievements of themselves and their followers.

Betty Glad (1996) in her article *Passing the Baton: Transformational Political Leadership from Gorbachev to Yeltsin from de Klerk to Mandela* states that the leadership of some historical leaders have significantly altered conflict dynamics. Their actions enable the transition from conflict to peace. These leaders belong to the philanthropic band.

Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse (1998) in *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* write that transformative leaders are essential ingredients for making peace.

According to John Darby and Roger MacGinty (2003) in *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, the primary function of leaders during peace negotiations is to deliver their people in a peace process. Assisting opponents is a secondary condition.

Bidya Sagar Narzari (2007) in his book *Upendra Nath Brahma- Life and Philosophy* writes how Bodo leaders like Upendra Nath Brahma led Bodo organizations to carry out their struggle for the upliftment of the Bodos.

c) Bodoland Movement and Accords

Sanjib Baruah (2008) in his article *Territoriality, Indigeneity and Rights in North-east India* views the Bodoland Movement as an attempt to revive the ancient glory of the Bodo-Kachari kingdom which was uncontaminated by the Assamese culture.

In the article *Bodoland Demand: Genesis of an Ethnic Conflict*, Sumit Kumar Sarma (2017) describes the Bodoland Movement as the outcome of the declining situation of the plain tribal groups. A section of Bodos felt the need to negotiate for the community's welfare. On this ground, they united the community through various socio-cultural, political and economic organisations.

Chandan Sarma (2000) in his article *The Bodoland Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class and the State* attempts to highlight the emerging role of Bodo elite groups in the Bodoland Movement. He also tries to examine the factors responsible for the Movement.

Sanjib Baruah (1999) in his book *India Against Itself* writes that the most disturbing aspect of the political violence around the question of a Bodo homeland is a pattern of violence that was better seen in the ethnic cleansing campaign. Thus, to create a separate Bodoland, the extremists started ethnic cleansing operations targeting the immigrant communities settled in the Bodo areas.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The North-Eastern Region of India has been witnessing gross conflict and violence for a few decades, particularly in the post-colonial space of the region. The perpetual conflict situations and recurring fatal violence have been hardening the positions of various ethnic groups and masses at large. Assam is one of the victims and witnesses of this vulnerability. The state witnessed several conflicts soon after the country's independence. Starting from the Assamese language movement to the anti-foreigner movement, insurgency-counterinsurgency, Bodoland Movement, Kamatapur movement, Adivasi-Santal movement for ST status, ethnic militarisation etc., have brought the state under situation of conflict and violence. In this regard, the western part of Assam, known as "Bodoland" (presently Bodoland Territorial Region) has been the epicentre of violence. The multi-layered conflicts like ethnic groups against the state, tribal against non-tribal and intra-ethnic rivalry caused gross suffering to the common people. Feelings of deprivation and marginalisation among Bodos caused the emergence and operation of the Bodoland movement. There have been noticeable phases in this movement and, in each of the phases; attempts have been made to alleviate the conflict. In this connection, due to the political leadership in transition, the levels of violence have subsided comparatively. This research work has helped to highlight the role of the leaders and their shifting trajectory from conflict to peace in light of the backdrop of accords and the role of leadership in its execution.

1.4. Rationale and Scope

In post-colonial space, India engaged in the nation-building process but soon it received challenges from the various regional and sub-nationalistic forces. The regional and the sub-national forces perceived the national agenda as a threat to the existence of the local culture, identity and other ethnic apparatuses. In this milieu,

NER has witnessed huge conflict and violence throughout the last few decades. Assam is one of the prime victims. So far, the state has seen several conflicts and violent manifestations. Particularly, in the western part of the state, the present Bodoland region has witnessed conflict situations and recurring violent manifestations at large. The overlapping conflicts caused perennial misery and victimhood to the common people. The perceived threat to the existence of the culture and identity of Bodos caused the mobilization of the Bodoland movement, and its peaceful and violent manifestation. Attempts have been made to alleviate the situation by talking with leaders in conflicts regarding executing accords. The leaders of disgruntled groups played crucial roles in reducing the intensity of conflict and violence by cementing peace accords. The accords are product of such a pacification process and leadership. Much of the literature is on ethnicity, ethnic conflicts in general and the Bodoland movement. Still, the role of accords in the pacification of conflicts and the role of leadership in executing them have rarely been brought to academia. This work may help to understand the significance of such accord and leadership in pacifying conflict situations. This work has been carried out on the backdrop of accords and the role of leadership in executing them with the following objective and research questions:

1.5. Research Objectives

- 1) To map the origin and development of the Bodoland Movement in Assam.
- 2) To highlight the role played by leaders during the Bodoland Movement and understand the role of Peace Accords in pacifying ethnic conflicts.
- 3) To examine the background and issues that have transformed the leaders involved from conflict to peace leaders.

1.6. Research Questions

- 1) What were the background and situations behind the emergence of the Bodoland Movement in Assam?
- 2) What roles were played by leaders during the Bodoland Movement and how did the peace Accords help pacify ethnic conflicts?
- 3) What were the background and issues that have transformed the leaders involved from conflict to peace leaders?

1.7. Research Methodology

Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Tamulpur and Udalguri, all 5 districts of BTR of Assam have been selected as the area of study as these districts have witnessed conflict and the transformation of conflict leaders from turbulent times to Conflict Transformation period. Existing literature shows that these districts or the area under the study witnessed recurring multiple conflicts, insurgency and intra-ethnic rivalry. This multi-ethnic space of contestation is frequently reported as the most affected conflict and violent zone. Hence, the districts are selected as the area of study.

This study has been qualitative and empirical. It is based on both secondary and primary analysis. Primary data was collected using both open and closed-ended questions. Random sampling and purposive sampling were used to obtain the primary data. Interviews have been conducted with different Political leaders, leaders of ABSU and other Bodo organizations, general Bodo mass, teachers and other community members and leaders. The total sample size is 250 as respondents are from each district.

Apart from the data collected from the respondents, secondary sources from archives and published data which include historical writings, vernacular writings,

organizational souvenirs and audio-visual records have also been consulted. Interviews were conducted in the respondents' language of preference. All the respondents were made aware of the purpose of the interview and their permission was sought before recording the interviews.

1.8. Chapterisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter offers the overall framework of the study. It covers the introduction to the topic of the proposed research, its historical background, objectives, statement of the problem, rationale and scope, survey of literature and the research questions. It also covers the methodology adopted in pursuing the research and the tentative chapterisation. Thus, the chapter is a brief overview of the proposed research.

Chapter 2: Ethnic Conflicts, Peace Accords and Leadership in Peacebuilding: A Conceptual Framework

This chapter lays the theoretical orientation on various existing theories of Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflict and Leadership. The chapter also tries to contextualize these theories in the chosen field.

Chapter 3: Historical Background of Bodos in Assam: An Analysis

This chapter focuses on the history of the Bodos in Assam to connect the historical background of the community and the area of the study. This chapter also highlights the demographic profile of Bodos in Assam.

Chapter 4: Bodoland Movement: Its Causes and Consequences

This chapter undertakes the study of the various causes such as politics, policies and problems associated with the ethno-mobilization of Bodos in Assam resulting in the Bodoland Movement. This chapter also deals with multiple peacebuilding measures

undertaken for compressing violence in Assam, leading to the signing of various accords.

Chapter 5: From Conflict to Accords and Leadership: Field Narratives and Analysis

The chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the field survey carried out for the study. This chapter also illustrates how political leaders coped with practical problems in a transitional society. It also examines whether the leaders maintain the support of their 'Hardliners' while simultaneously moving towards a more central location during the transition, besides illustrating the different types of leadership styles.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter is the conclusion of the total research work done.

CHAPTER-2

ETHNIC CONFLICTS, PEACE ACCORDS AND LEADERSHIP IN PEACEBUILDING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

In post World War II epoch, the major challenges which the states in global context are pre-dominantly witnessing, since the beginning of the second half of twentieth century, are intra-state conflicts. Such intra-state conflict(s) are mostly in the guise of majority-minority conflict based on religion, culture, language and ethnicity. Most of the peaceful as well as disastrous conflicts, the modern state faces globally, are in the form of ethnic division and Ethno-political mobilisations (Chhetry, 2018). It is a visible fact under the present context that modern states are made up of a number of minority groups. India is also a multi-ethnic society like many countries; its diversity is unmatched with the world in terms of its distinctiveness and extent. Distinctiveness of India's diversity lies in the fact that there are numerous groups which are minority in nature. Such minorities are based on religion, culture, language and region. In this backdrop, time and again, it is noticeable that some minority groups raise issues pertaining to the sense of deprivation and alienation in relation to majority groups. In this context, the Bodos, the Gorkhas and other ethnic groups and majority communities sometimes float similar sense of insecurity and raise similar issues and concerns. Apparently, worries of minorities in the form of religion, culture, language, culture and so forth are found to cause discomfort to majority. Consequently, the discourse regarding the issues of rights to minorities attracts enthusiastic importance (Chhetry, 2018).

When ethnic groups are in conflict through ethno-political mobilization, ethnic competition or ethnic contestations, the leadership leading such conflict plays a vital

role. Mostly the violence ends with the disastrous result. However, the timely intervention and thought shift of leaders bring the progressive changes and the futurist development by changing the course of conflict and violence (Chiozza and Choi, 2003). In this backdrop, this chapter deals with the nature and traits of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, the peace accords which deals with the ethnic conflicts and the involvement of leaders in pacification of conflicts.

2.2. Ethnic Conflict

Roots of ethnic conflicts in identity politics causes the violent manifestation between state and the groups of people who do not belong to the same identity groups within a multi-ethnic state. Ethnic conflicts takes place when there is absence of tolerance about cultural diversity, inequality in distribution of available resources, social benefits and opportunities between distinct ethnic groups and political exclusion of some ethnic groups from the policy framework of state. These fundamental reasons trigger violence (Abhilas, cited in Chhetry, 2018). According to Martijn Roessingh, cultural incompatibilities between groups and an abrupt increase in self-awareness regarding another ethnic group are the causes of “Ethnic Conflict”. At least one of the parties to the dispute will characterize its objectives in terms of ethnicity; that is, it will assert that it lacks the ability to retain, express and develop its unique ethnic identity (Roessingh, 1996).

2.3. Ethnicity: Theoretical Understanding

It is a persisting fact of history excavated by historians or social scientists that the Westphalia Treaty of 1648¹ inspired the materialization of some nations into a geo-political invention called nation-states. With the emergence of nation states, the imaginary socio-political lines started to be drawn on the geographical surface. The Westphalian Nation-state modernity and the discourse of nationalism empower the larger groups in term of religion, language and culture to dominate over the group of inhabitants of the same geo-space having different religion language and culture, and having smaller numerical strength. Mobility and relations between people starts to get fragmented in different socio-political and cultural sets as well as in different sovereign political territories. On one hand, the pre-existing relations of people become dependable on the relation and national policy of such sovereign units; while on the other hand, the essence of ruling by the larger group creates the space to feel the sense of insecurity among the sets of people with different religion, language and culture in nature of minorities. It also becomes a source of the sense of discrimination among constitutional citizens in the form of majority and minority relation, pertaining to lingo-cultural or ethnic identity (Raymond, 2005).

Words like ‘ethnic group’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘ethnic conflict’ have become quite common terms in English language, and they keep cropping up in press, in TV news, in political programmes and in casual conversations (Eriksen, 1993). There has been

¹The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 ended the Thirty year’s War, a complex struggle that began in 1618 as a religious conflict within the Holy Roman Empire between the ruling Catholic Hapsburg dynasty and their Protestant subjects in Bohemia. Over the next three decades, the war evolved through a series of phases into a wider political conflict, pitting the Austrian and Spanish branches of the Hapsburgs together with their allies among the Catholic German princes against Denmark, Sweden, France and their allies among the Protestant German princes. During the exhausting conflict, much of central Europe was devastated. At least 500,000 troops had died in combat and civilian casualties were even greater, especially in Germany where most of the fighting occurred. Some writers estimate the loss of life at almost one quarter of Germany’s population, with others numbering such losses as constituting as much as two thirds.

explosion in the growth of scholarly publications on ethnicity and nationalism, particularly in the fields of political science, history, sociology and social anthropology. Ethnic mobilization and conflict have been matter of engrossment since late 1960s and it has remained the focal point for research in the 1990s, until today. Since the intra state conflicts started in the form of ethnic conflict(s), a good number of studies have been done in this field. For the understanding of cases of ethno-political mobilization and conflicts, issues of Alban and Serbs of Kosovo, Hutu-Tutsi of Rwanda, the Tamils vs Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, Asian origins in Uganda, the east Timorist of Indonesia may be brought into light.

‘Ethnic groups’ and ‘Ethnicity’ are loaded terms. Number of definitions and concepts has been put forwarded by different schools variously. So, scholars of ethnic study could not come with collective definition of ethnic groups and ethnicity. In this regards, plurality of the definition augments debate in the contemporary political sociology. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan are known to point the appearance of the word ‘Ethnicity’ in 1972 in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Eriksen, 1993). David Reisman is regarded as the first person to use the term ‘Ethnicity’ in 1953. However, the concept was neither new nor was the phenomenon new or unorganized (Subba, 1992). The term ‘Ethnicity’ is much older. The term ‘Ethnicity’ derives from the Greek word “ethnos” which originally meant ‘heathen’ or ‘pagan’. It was used in English from the mid-fourteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, when it gradually began to refer to ‘racial’ characteristics. In united states ‘Ethnics’ came to be used around the second World war as a polite term referring to Jew, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent. Eriksen states that none of the founding fathers of sociology and social anthropology,

with partial exception of Max Weber, granted much attention to 'Ethnicity' (Eriksen, 1993).

2.3.1. Ethnicity: Major Approach

Primordialism

The Primordial method advances globally in comprehending ethnicity, in the midst of most approaches and schools in related topic. 'Ethnicity' is seen by primordialists as a 'natural' and 'given' phenomena. Every person carries with him certain attachments that are derived from his birthplace, familial ties, religion, language and social customs. These attachments are inherent to him, spiritual in nature and they establish a basis for an easy affection with people of a similar background (Brass, 1999). Ethnicity is fundamentally based on these kinds of connections. Primordialists hold that an ethnic group's membership has an objective foundation derived from shared ancestry among its members. Likewise, members of a group are essentially an endogamous historical-cultural community and this serves as the foundation of ethnicity. Primordialists further contend that dominant emotional attachments and allegiances are caused by basic blood links. Since ethnicity is provided and not based on personal preference or inclination, it is attributed. Everyone is born into a group and it is one of the group's properties. Thus, these blood linkages account for the intensity of ethnic affiliation and associated emotions in the contemporary environment (Leoussi, 2001). The writings of Clifford Geertz, Steven Krosby and Edward Shils contain some of these postulates (Golay, 2004).

2.4. Ethnic Assertions and Conflicts: Underlying Approaches

There is no dearth of approaches to understand the causes of ethnic conflicts. However, economic approach, psychological approach, power approach and

sociological approach are mostly referred and are common. These approaches enormously assist in understanding the conflicts associated to ethnicity and beyond.

Economic Approach

Ethnic conflicts arise from differences in economic interests, such as jobs and business prospects, within the same market. Some scenarios that come to mind are those of Fiji and Kenya, where a portion of the economy is controlled by Indian traders and where the native populations of those countries seek increased access to resources. When native Africans from Fiji and Kenya came to power, the Indian community attempted to lessen the impact of Indian ancestry on their national economies (Thatal, 2015).

Psychological Approach

According to Donald Horowitz, ethnic tension and disputes between various groups can also be caused by group comparison. Members of one ethnic group assess their own abilities in relation to those of another ethnic group, as well as how opportunities, social benefits and resources are distributed among various ethnic groups. When members of a particular ethnic community compare themselves to other ethnic groups and discover that they are not as well represented in the system, suspicions start to grow. These misgivings are directed at the privileged classes and the sense of deprivation they experience. A strong stance is taken in such cases, demanding equal access to social goods and other advantages enjoyed by other privileged ethnic groups (Horowitz, 1985).

Political Power Approach

The interest in advancing and defining the interests of ethnic communities is greatly heightened by politics. Different ethnic groups assert legitimacy in order to uphold

claims over diverse resources in a heterogeneous or ethnically split social space. Ethnic politics emerge from the collision of such conflicting claims of legitimacy. When ethnic politics are typified by disagreements over who represents the majority and how, they explode into violent ethnic clash (Chhetry, 2018).

Sociological Approach

In extreme cases of ethnic assertion, ethnic studies discern certain shared practices among ethnic groupings. The terms ‘Ethnocentrism’ and ‘Group Closure’ are frequently used to explain these activities in relation to ethnic conflict. In a multiethnic social context, these activities deepen the horizontal divisions between ethnic groups, setting one ethnic group apart from another and fostering violent (Chakma cited in Chhetry, 2018).

Figure 2.1: Underlying Approaches to understand Ethnic Conflicts

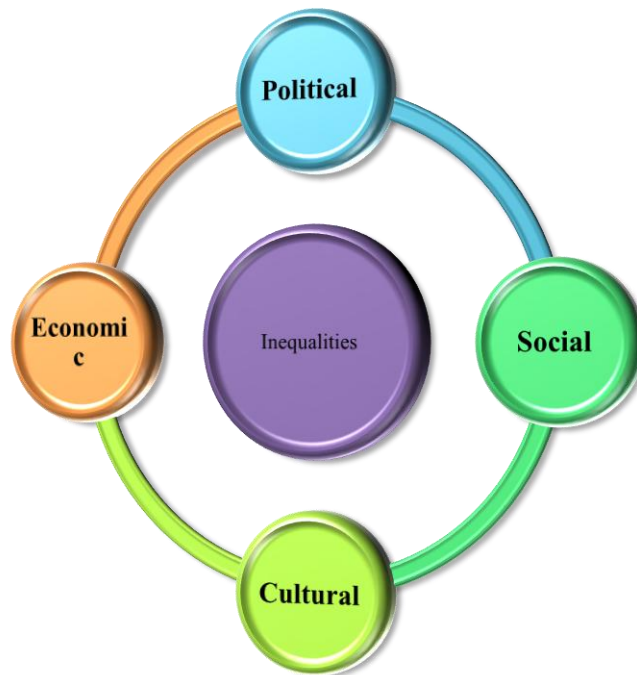


Source: Chhetry, Tikendra Kumar (2018), *Ethno-Political Mobilisation and its Impact on Minorities: A Case Study of Gorkhas in Assam*, a thesis submitted for partial fulfillment of requirement for awards of degree of Master of Philosophy at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University.

2.5. Inequality Perception and Ethnic Conflicts

It has also been discovered that ethnic group perceptions of inequity play a critical role in stoking conflict and catastrophic violence. ‘Vertical inequalities’ refers to income disparities that affect a Nation’s whole population and are the root cause of ethnic conflict. Deep-seated animosity can lead to violent manifestation when there are disparities between groups, especially when it comes to culture, politics and the economy. One of the most notable examples of this relationship is the bloodshed and strife between Hutu and Tutsi groups in Burundi. Similar examples of how the impression of disparities between areas and ethnic groups is expressed are the Kenyan election crisis of 2007 (Stewart, 1985). Conflict is caused by social, political and cultural injustices as well as economic injustices among the different ethnic groups that make up a multiethnic area (Stewart, 1985). Frances Stewart’s theory of inequalities in relation to ethnic division which may be understood through a diagram (figure: 2) placed below.

Figure 2.2: Frances Stewart's observation of inequalities



Source: Self compiled by the researcher on the basis of the idea depicted from Chhetry, Tikendra Kumar (2018), *Ethno-Political Mobilisation and its Impact on Minorities: A Case Study of Gorkhas in Assam*, a thesis submitted for partial fulfillment of requirement for awards of degree of Master of Philosophy at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University.

Frances Stewart notes that disparities exist among those who own financial, human and natural resources in addition to social resources. These refer to economic inequalities. They also include the disparities in access to different income and employment options. Stewart notes that social disparities may arise from differences in access to resources such as housing, healthcare and education. Similar to this, Stewart classifies political inequality as the distribution of political power and opportunities, control over local, regional and national institutions of governance, the army and police and differences in the acceptance and standing of various groups' languages, religions, customs, norms and practices. Cultural inequalities include

disparities in the recognition and standing of the language, religion, customs, norms and practices of different groups (Stewart cited in Thatal, 2015).

2.6. Ethnic Mobilizations in Northeast India

Northeast India represents many shattered dreams of history owing to the long standing and untransformed political conflicts. Often described as ‘conflict zone’, North-Eastern states have taken head on with the centre and its politics of integration (Nath, 2014). But, in course of time its multi-ethnic societies have clashed, while securitizing respective interests and aspirations. Conflict in India’s NER resumed along with Indian independence in 1947, when the Nagas demanded for separate homeland and called the proposed homeland as ‘Nagalim’ cutting across the boundaries of Assam, Arunachal, Mizoram and a significant portion of Manipur and fifth portion in Myanmar.

It was the Naga National Council (NNC) who for the first time in history of North-East put forward the demand for independence. However, centre was willing only to provide limited autonomy. The movement for independence passes on along with the expanded aspirations of the Nagas. In 1959, the Naga People’s Convention adopted a resolution for the formation of a separate state which came into being in 1974 but the pro-freedom fraction continued its struggle under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo. Phizo formed the National Socialist Council of Nagas (NSCN) in 1980. But it split in two fractions: National Socialist Council of Nagas- Issac Muivah (NSCN–IM) and Socialist Council of Nagas-Khaplang (NSCN-K). It was NSCN-IM which was capable of establishing itself at the centre of Naga politics. Both these fractions entered into cease-fire agreement with the government of India in 1997 and 2001 respectively. The Naga demand for ‘Nagalim’, however, still remains short of reality loaded with additional complexities. The Naga conflict, as such, demonstrated certain

specific trends- the first line of conflict is between the Indian state and the dominant Naga groups and the second and more devastating conflict is among various Naga fractions. Yet another line of conflict is perceived between ethnic Naga tribes and other contesting tribes of Northeast, generated by the demand of greater Nagaland, that is the 'Nagalim' (Singh 2010).

According to Amarjeet Singh, the initial reaction to the conflict should be treated as a case of non implementation of rules, that is, as a law and order problem. This helped the rebels tap the discontent that emerged from the alleged human rights abuses by the security forces. The dissatisfaction on the ground was compounded by the inability of the successive governments to meet the growing aspirations of its people (Singh, 2010).

The situation is even more vulnerable in Manipur; one of the most disturbed state of Indian Union. Like Nagaland, Manipur has also witnessed demands for independence, and violence has taken place between the security forces and the armed insurgents. Here as well, conflicts have operated on different levels and among different parties, basically between the security forces and Manipuri insurgents, and other level of conflict is among the numerous tribal fractions within Manipur. Manipur, one of the most militarised zones of India, has witnessed fratricidal clashes among different tribes, and between tribes and the state security forces. Conflict in Manipur has historical roots, which came immediately after it is merged with the Indian Union. The grievances against the merging along with the delay in conferring statehood alienated the Manipuris and laid the foundation for the emergence of a separatist movement. The state's population composition is itself a bigger challenge. It has a significant population of the Naga, Kuki, Manipuri Maitees, Hmar, among others. The state cut across by the proposed greater Nagaland; i.e. Nagalim as four

districts of Manipur namely Tamenglong, Senapati, Ukhrul and Chandel, features within the proposed Nagaland. The Kuki tribe also demands a separate Kuki space in administration from within Manipur. They also tend to contend for control over the border trade in the Moreh-Tamu sector in Manipur. The major issues which brought Manipur into conflict are the ways in which it was integrated with the Indian Union. This undermined the independent nature of the state, raising identity crisis within the state and its people. The second most vital irritant in the politics of Manipur was the imposition of Arms Force Special Power Act (AFSPA-1958) in the state in the year 1980 (Nath, 2015).

Imposition of the AFSPA has converted the state into one of the most militarized regions in India, perhaps in the world, limiting citizen's fundamental rights by an iron cage of the state armed forces. The demand of Nagalim made inter-ethnic confrontation between the Manipuri and the Nagas quite on the cards. Demand for extended Nagaland created apprehension in the minds of the Manipuri people that Nagas are trying to destroy their state. The crucial aspect in the politics of North-east India is that, here is tremendous lack of 'solidarity' among the states. Inter-ethnic rivalry has led to violent manifestation and fratricidal clashes have become feature of the politics in the state. Thus, dual securitization is done by various ethnic groups in Manipur. The first instance of securitization is against the centre and its armed forces which are over powered, in fact, brutalized by the imposition of the AFSPA. And the second, multi facet securitization has taken place against the Nagas and the Kukis, and all contesting ethnic Manipuri armed groups, having significant man power and armed groups to protect respective community interest (Singh, 2010).

This form of double securitization took place in Assam as well. Politics in Assam also has a history of conflict. After two language movements in 1960

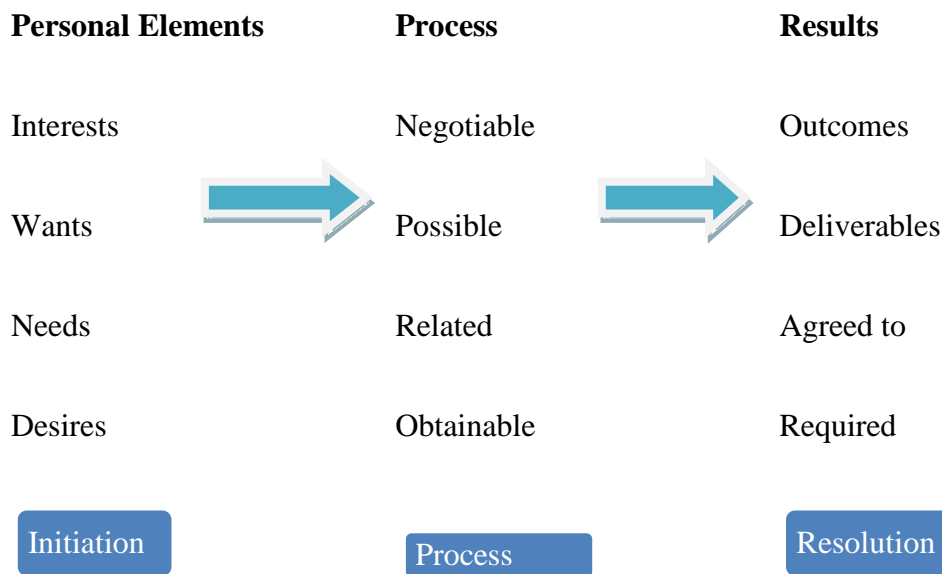
(movement for Assamese as official language) and in 1972 (movement for Assamese as medium instruction in higher education), Assam again witnessed a massive mass mobilization in 1979 to 1985 till the signing of the Assam Accord. Such mobilizations were actually outcome of the long term popular grievances against the state (Baruah, 1999). On 7th July 1979, the ULFA was formed for an independent Assam. Thousands of people lost their lives and Assamese nationalism started prevailing upon the Indian nationalism. But the results of political unrest in Assam had different consequences, as too much concern for Assamese identity alienated the smaller nationalities from the dominant Assamese culture. Movement for separate Bodoland emerged with unprecedented violence in the 1990s, killing hundreds of people by extremist groups like Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) and National Democratic Force of Boroland (NDFB). The Bodo Movement for independence then again alienated the Adivasis in Assam, the Muslims and other smaller ethnic groups getting them securitize respective identity and culture. So, in the case of Assam, conflict has two different dimensions, firstly, Assamese identity countering the Indian identity and secondly, it is the assertion of Assamese identity that actually threatens the smaller identities within Assam and violence starts among various sub-regional groups viz-a-vis the Assamese chauvinism. Ethnic solidarity thereby becomes a big concern in Assam like some other states of India's Northeast (Barbora, 2005).

2.7. Steps to Resolve an Interest-based Conflict

In order to resolve an interest-based conflict, it is the task of a leader to act as a mediator. The resolution of such conflict includes several steps, and hence the mediator should keep track of each steps of the process so that the process moves steadily. By examining various aspects including each party's interests, wants, needs and desires, the interest-based conflict resolution method seeks to get a mutually

agreeable and acceptable result by going through the series of steps to provide a favourable result. For instance, in order to accommodate each party's interests, negotiation should be conducted, as this will result in mutual acceptance and a favourable outcome.

Figure 2.3: The Interest-Based Conflict Resolution Process



Source: The flowchart is prepared by the researcher on the basis of available theoretical concept.

2.7.1. Various steps/stages of the Conflict Resolution Progress

The conflict resolution process by mediator is enumerated as follows:

a) Establishing the Initial Relationship

The first task of the mediator is to set up credibility with the parties and introduce them to the process. The parties must understand and agree to the components of the resolution process.

b) Developing Strategies to Guide the Progress

The mediator needs to discuss approaches, processes and the rules of engagement with the parties.

c) Constructing the Initial Database

As the mediator becomes familiar with the parties and issues, he should gather histories and experiences as well as perspectives of the parties for deciding an approach. He should verify the accuracy of the data collected and then sort out inaccurate data. Hence, the mediator can obtain personal views of the parties and can adjust the approach accordingly.

d) Organising the Plan for Mediation

Now, the mediator contemplates the approach and structures it for the mediation. He constructs a framework considering both contingent and non-contingent factors which would be suitable for the participants that they can be closer to agreement.

e) Building Trust and Communication

The mediator should build trust between the parties and also parties' trust in him. A safe space needs to be created so that the parties trust the process and as well as develop effective communication and as such obtain the best result from the process.

f) Beginning the Resolution Process

The mediator, now, clarifies the rules of engagement which include guidelines for meet and express their emotions, ensuring that the participants understand what they expect and how they can proceed. He also explains the area of focus and the mechanism to be used in the process of resolution. Familiarizing everyone is the most important component in the process so that everyone is flexible including the mediator himself.

g) Defining Concerns and Setting Priorities

Now, the mediator allows the parties to explain their perceptions on the issues of conflict and what their expectations are and how. The parties give their agreement on their understanding of the issues. Tactics to move beyond the issues are developed.

h) Looking for Hidden Information, Agendas and Interests

The mediator focuses on real issues and points out opportunities for the parties by digging out the problems and agendas that are needed to be solved. The parties start moving forward towards resolution by working together, sometimes apart or along with the mediator.

i) Finding Potential Solutions and Determining Their Value to the Parties

The parties move closer to the agreement. The mediator helps the parties to communicate points of agreement between them, estimate applicability of potential solutions to the issues, determine acceptability of the parties and do everything necessary for the solution.

j) Formalizing the Agreement

The mediator and the parties, now, prepare an official agreement that is acceptable to all the parties. Documentation is prepared that shapes the agreement and forms the foundation to carry out the solutions. Once, when both the parties are satisfied, the procedure of implementation of the agreement takes place, which is accepted by both the parties.

2.8. Theories of Leadership

There are various theories of leadership. They are as follows:

The Great Man Theory of Leadership

According to Thomas Carlyle, great leaders are not created; they are born. These leaders are able to get to the top because they have particular qualities and attributes. This idea holds that charisma, a commanding and convincing personality, a high degree of intuition and judgment, boldness, intelligence, aggression and an action-oriented mindset are all characteristics of outstanding leaders. Genes transmit traits associated with leadership. Natural born leaders include Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Mao Tse Tung and Mahatma Gandhi (Northouse, 2019).

Trait Theory of Leadership

The Great Man hypothesis of Leadership has been modified to create this hypothesis. This approach emphasizes characteristics or attributes that set leaders apart from non-leaders. This idea contends that a person becomes a leader due to a combination of innate or inborn characteristics, much to the Great Man idea of Leadership. According to this view, success of an organisation is largely dependent on its leader and his characteristics (Verawati and Hartono, 2020).

Situational Theory of Leadership

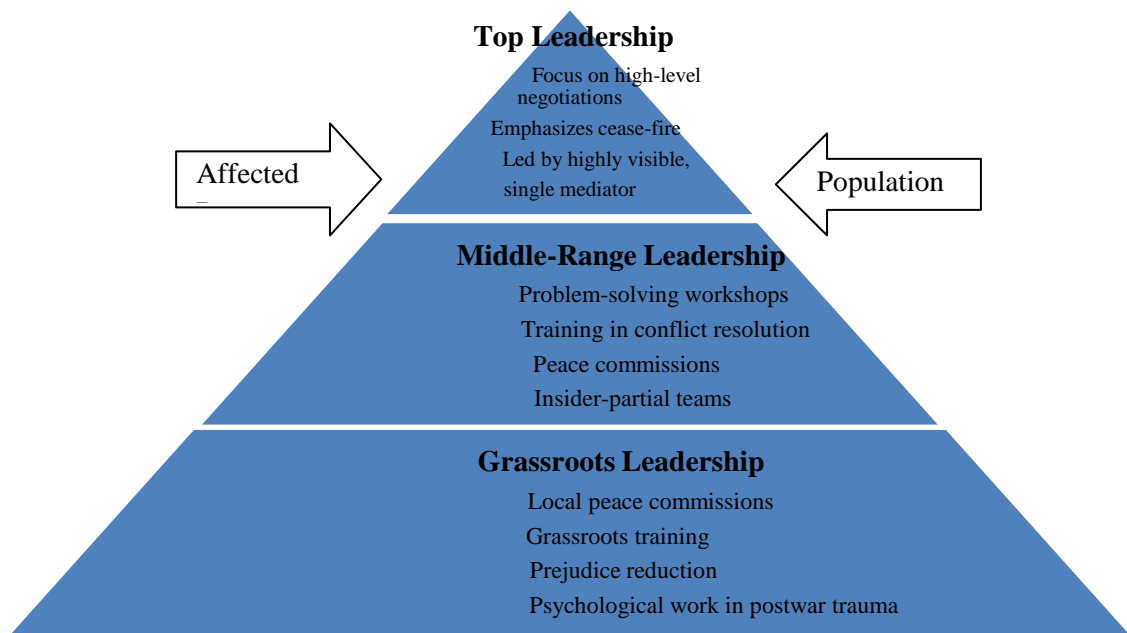
This study has found that as opposed to the Great Man Theory of Leadership or the Trait Theory of Leadership, the leaders of the Bodoland Movement can be clubbed under Situational Theories. The foundation of situational theories of leadership is the idea that a leader's effective style varies depending on the circumstances. Effective and successful leadership requires the ability to modify one's strategy and style in response to changing situations (Sethuraman, 2014). When the Bodoland Movement

appeared to be successful solely through protests, its leaders conducted it in a non-violent and peaceful manner; yet, when the circumstances called for forceful demonstrations, even acts of violence were carried out. For instance, the ABSU leaders simply protested through rallies, hunger strikes and demonstrations when the Government of Assam and the Government of India appeared to be concerned about the Bodo issues. However, when both governments were ignoring the situation, a volunteer force was born, which eventually evolved into an extremist organization that caused chaos, destruction and the loss of lives and property in the area.

2.8.1. Levels of Leadership

According to John Paul Lederach, there are three levels of actors acting as leaders in building peace. These levels are characterized on account of certain common features. The top-leadership comprises of military, political and religious leaders in the conflict. These leaders are highly visible because they primarily represent their constituencies. They act as mediator in negotiating core issues of conflict and emphasizes cease-fire. The middle-range leadership includes ethnic/ religious leaders, humanitarian leaders and leaders in educational sector. These leaders are not necessarily connected with the government. They are supposed to build peace infrastructure, problem-solving workshops, trainings and peace commissions. They serve as a link between the top and grassroots level. The grassroots leadership includes local leaders such as NGO workers, refugee camp officials and health workers who have direct link with the masses. They focus on grassroots training, reduction of prejudice, psychological work etc. Different activities of peace-building are possible at different levels of leadership (Lederach, 1997).

Figure 2.4: Levels of Leadership



Source: Lederach, John Paul (1997), Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.

Throughout the Bodoland Movement, the Central ABSU-BPAC leaders, the BLTF and NDFB leaders, the Government of India and the State Government are the top leaders. They were the main actors playing potent role during the movement. They portrayed as mediators in negotiating core issues which led to the commencement of the Movement. In order to come to a win-win situation, the insurgents BLTF and NDFB also went for ceasefire so that their demands would be fulfilled. The middle-range leaders include the ABSU District leaders, BLTF and NDFB District Commanders and Bodo intellectuals. The grassroot leaders include the ABSU leaders from Anchalic, BLTF and NDFB cadres.

2.8.2. Leadership Grid

The Managerial Grid Model, often called the Blake Mouton Grid, is a framework that was created in the early 1960s by theorists Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. It is

employed to ascertain the behavioral type of a leader (Tauceana, 2016). This model is predicated on two aspects of behavior:

- 1) Concern for People: When determining the best way to complete a task, a leader takes into consideration the requirements, interests and opportunities for growth of each team member.
- 2) Concern for Results: A leader, while choosing how to carry out a task, emphasizes specific goals, organizational effectiveness and high production.

Blake and Mouton has defined five styles of leadership. They are as follows-

1) Impoverished Management:

The main reason why impoverished management is unproductive is that the leaders who employ it care little about the outcomes or the people. This makes people unhappy, creates an unbalanced work atmosphere and is ineffective at resolving disputes within the team.

2) Produce-or-Perish Management:

This kind of leadership places a high value on outcomes and a low value on people. They are sometimes referred to be autocratic since they are authoritarian. Strict guidelines and punitive measures may at first seem to provide amazing results, but they may also lower team morale and motivation, which will impair people's performance.

3) Middle-of-the-Road-Management:

This approach implies that the leader cares about the group and the outcome equally. Unfortunately, this approach backfires when the leader tries to strike a balance between the two and is unable to prioritize either, which could result in subpar work.

4) Country Club Management:

This kind of leadership places a greater emphasis on people than on results. They aim to make people happy and satisfied because they think that contented people would work hard and provide good outcomes. However, the results are inadequate since there is a belief that individuals can manage themselves without adequate guidance and coaching.

5) Team Management:

Blake-Mouton asserts that the most successful leadership approach is team management. This leadership style is characterized by a strong commitment to both people and outcomes. They are fully committed to fostering a positive work environment for those they collaborate with, treating them with respect and inspiring them to put in their best effort in order to produce outstanding outcomes. Consequently, favorable outcomes for the company may be produced.

Additional Management Styles:

In addition to the five styles of leadership, Blake later on identified two more styles:

1) Paternalistic Management:

This type of leader is encouraging and supportive, but they are also self-conscious about their authority and position.

2) Opportunistic Management:

The needs of the group and the organization are subordinated to the needs of an opportunistic leader. To get what they want, they are even capable of manipulating and exploiting other people.

2.8.3. Style of Leadership based on comprehension

There can be three types of styles of leadership. They are:

1. Basic Style
2. Less Effective Style
3. More Effective Style.

Table 2.1: Style of Leadership

BASIC STYLE	LESS EFFECTIVE STYLE	MORE EFFECTIVE STYLE
Integrated	Compromise	Executive
Dedicated	Autocrat	Benevolent Autocrat
Related	Missionary	Developer
Separated	Deserter	Bureaucrat

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on conceptual understanding

2.9. Conclusion: The Bodoland Movement and Leadership

The Bodos started movement for a separate state for protection of their land, language, culture and political identity from pre and post independence period. The ABSU (All Bodo Students Union) always took the leadership of the Bodos in Bodo politics. The Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), a regional tribal political party of plains Assam demanded a union territory for the tribal people (Narzary, 2011). The PTCA leaders demanded to amend some provisions of chapter-X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1886 to ensure protection of tribal belts and blocks meant for tribals (Narzary, 2011). Another Bodo organization the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) steered the Bodo movement for the separate state (Kundo, 2010). When the movement took a serious turn for achieving their goals, the government took initiative to solve the Bodo problems and created a cordial

environment for talk. As a result, the first round of tripartite talk between the Central Government, State Government and the leaders of ABSU-BPAC held on 28th August, 1989 in New Delhi (Mosahari, 2011). The talks continued and ultimately, after several rounds of tripartite talks, the famous Bodo Accord was signed between the Central Government, State Government and ABSU-BPAC on 20th February, 1993 (Mosahari, 2011). The Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), a body of self-rule for the Bodos on the northern banks of the Brahmaputra was created under the act of the Government of Assam. The area of BAC was 5186 square km. The Indo-Bhutan border was excluded in it. Most of the Bodo population was found settled in Indo-Bhutan border. For the security region in borderland 10 kilometres stretch inside from the Indo-Bhutan border was kept outside the purview of Council administration. As the area was highly populace of Bodo community, the Council administration under the chairmanship of Sansuma Khungur Bwisumuthiary constantly maintained the demand for the inclusion of said area. The relationship between Government of Assam started to be hostile with BAC administration. Being tired of unheard of the demand, the BAC authority started to raise the demand of separate state again. Reacting over CEM of BAC, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the then Chief Minister (CM) of state said that he would shed his blood till the last drop but would not allow the division of state. The reaction of CM caused huge outrage in the Bodo dominated area in northern bank of Brahmaputra. Similarly, the issue of land Patta to people of region added another bone of contention. Assam Government took the decision of issuing land holding to the landless people those were living in “Khas” land since generations. The BAC authority considered the move of the state as the agenda to depopulate the Bodo community of the region allowing the land certificate and permanent resident to the non-bodo communities in the areas of proposed Bodoland.

On this backdrop, in the year 1994, the ABSU activists again started movement for separate Bodoland as the Government failed to implement the provisions of the Bodo Accord and it could not satisfy the wishes of the Bodo people. Both Bodoland Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), the Bodo extremist groups were very active in tribal dominated area of Assam from the year 1996. There was a conflict on ideological matter between BLTF and NDFB. There arose a law and order problem due to the violent activities of the extremist groups in the Bodo dominated areas. Even the neighboring countries, Bhutan, Myanmar etc. were affected by the activities of the extremist group. The BLTF leaders made a declaration of cease fire for one year from their side in response to the wishes to the Bodo people in July 1999. A cordial environment for discussion on Bodo problem began in the year 2000 between Governments and the extremist group. Both Bodo MPs representing Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha sincerely tried to convince the extremist group and politically pressurize the government for talk. The peace process was stranded for a period of time after the new Government was formed in centre under the prime ministership of Atal Bihari Bajpayee. On this backdrop, a multi organizational group called Coordination Committee for Bodoland Peoples' Organizations (CCBPO) was formed under the leadership of ABSU to put pressure on Government in centre and State for an early solution of BLTF issue and amicable solution of Bodoland movement. CCBPO was not only the conglomeration of Bodo organizations but also the congregation of many ethnic groups like Gorkha, Adivasi, Rajbangsi, Bengali and religious minorities. The CCBPO organized statewide procession, demonstrations, strikes and many other democratic means of protest against the lackadaisical attitude of Governments. Several protest rallies and demonstrations were conducted in Delhi outside the parliament and Jantar mantar by

the members of CCBPO. After a large scale protest and democratic movement, the final Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between BLT, Central government of India and State government of Assam on February 10, 2003. As a result of MoU, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was created under the sixth schedule of Indian constitution.

Nevertheless, violence in the area did not appear to stop despite these measures. 2008 saw an outbreak of violence centered on the ‘insider’ vs. ‘outsider’ debate. However, problems in the Bodoland region which had been continuing for several years seem to come to pause with the signing of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Agreement in January 2020 by the Government of India, Government of Assam, ABSU President Pramod Boro (now the CEM of BTR), the then CEM of BTC, Hagrama Mohilary and the NDFB factions. Bodo ethnic groups, Bodo ethnic assertion, associated conflicts and turns of Bodo rebels to peace leadership will be elaborated in preceding chapters in details.

CHAPTER-3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BODOS IN ASSAM: AN ANALYSIS

3.1. Introduction

Assam, a state in North-East India, is a homeland of different races with their composite culture and diverse identity. The Bodos, who number around 1.45 million in Assam according to the 2011 census, are important part of the culturally diverse state, Assam. They are the largest group among Assam's plain tribes. Rev. Sidney Endle claims the Bodos (another name for Kacharis) as the autochons of Assam (Endle, 1911). According to Edward Albert Gait, the Bodos are the earliest known inhabitants of Brahmaputra Valley (Gait, 1906). With reference to 'Korosa Aris', the Bodos call themselves as Koros. The word 'Aris' means 'the first born people' or 'the earliest settlers' of the region. In Bodo language, 'Koro' means 'head' and 'Sa' means 'child'. Hence, the Bodos claim to be the first born child/people or the earliest settlers of the region (Basumatary, 2021). According to Rai Bahadur K.L. Barua, the Bodo tribes inhabited the plains of Assam from a very long period and represented the large part of the population in the Assam valley during the war of Mahabharata (Kurukshetra war) or even earlier (Barua, 2014). This revealed the fact that the Bodos inhabited the Brahmaputra valley from time immemorial.

The Bodos are from Tibeto-Burman family, an Indo-Mongoloid ethnic group migrating from South West China. According to G.A. Gierson, the Bodos belong to Assam-Burman group of the Tibeto-Burman speaker belonging to the Sino-Tibetan speech family (Gierson, 1967). Rev. Sidney Endle remarks that the Bodos are very close to the Mongolian stock on the basis of their features and general appearances (Endle, 1997). Their language has been derived from the Assam Burmese branch of Tibeto Burman sub-family. There are various communities in North East India who

belong to the same linguistic family. They are Dimasa, Rabha, Kachari, Deori, Lalung, Tiwa, Mech, Saraniya, Mishing, Garo, Sonowal, Chutiya, Moran, Hajong, Tippera, Mahalia, Koch or Rajbangshi etc. (Chaudhuri, 2004), who comprise the greater Bodo race. In his book, “The Kacharis”, Rev. Sidney Endle incorporates all these branches within the “Kachari” race. Hence, it can be acknowledged that most of the Mongoloid population of Assam belong to the Bodo stock of the Indo-Mongoloid race. In different places, the Bodos are known by different names. In Goalpara and North Bengal, they are known as Mech, in North Cachar Hills as Dimasa (Chaklader, 2004). In this context, Sir Edward Gait says, “In Brahmaputra Valley, the Kacharis call themselves Bodo or Bodo fisa (sons of the Bodo)” (Bhuyan, 2007). According to S.K. Chatterjee, the Bodos acquired the name ‘Kachari’ from the present Cachar district of Assam after they moved there (Chatterjee, 1974).

According to Ajoy Roy, the term “Bodo” has been derived from the term “Bod”, which is now known as Tibet (Roy, 1995). The term Bodo, for the first time, was used by B.H. Hodgson referring to the Meches of Darjeeling District. Since then, the term Bodo has been used as a generic term to refer to different branches of the Bodo speaking group. Today, in socio-political terminology, “Bodo” refers to the plain tribes of the Brahmaputra valley who were earlier known as Bodo-Kachari. According to Sidney Endle, the trans-Himalayan region between Tibet and China is the original homeland of the Bodos (Endle, 1997). S.K. Chatterjee identifies the north-western China between Huang-Ho and Yang-Tsze Kiang rivers as the early home of the Bodos (Chatterjee, 1974). The Imperial Gazetteer of India affirms that the upper courses of the rivers Huang-Ho and Yang-Tsze Kiang were the original home of the Tibeto-Burman races.

There are physiognomic and temperamental similarities between the Kham tribes of Tibet and the Bodos. Moreover, the language of the Bodos with its half pronounced vowels and preponderance of words ending in 'ng' belongs to the Chinese group of languages. These evidences try to bring the fact that the Bodos originally lived in some region between Tibet and Western China (Pegu, 2004). Based on different evidences, it can be consummately stated that the Bodos are originally from the "Bod"¹ country, from where they acquired the name "Bodo".

Various scholars have proclaimed that the Bodos must have settled down along the foot hills of the Himalayas before perforating into Assam and adjoining areas. According to S.K. Chatterjee, the Bodo tribes are the descendants of the Kiratas of Mongoloid origin and the Kiratas were the frontier dwellers of the Himalayas. Gierson states that a section of Tibeto-Burmans ensconced on the southern side of the Himalayan range right along from Assam in the east to the Punjab in the west. N.N. Vasu opines that the 'Kacharis' settled down spreading over the Eastern frontiers of India and called them Lohitic² (cited in Mosahary, 2011). S.K. Chatterjee holds the idea that the Bodos inhabited the areas covered by the river Lohit³. According to R.M. Nath, the Bodos initially settled at the foot hills of the Himalayas where various chieftains evolved and gradually moved towards the south, establishing small kingdoms. Depending on the views of different scholars, it can be postulated that in quest of lands for settlement, the Bodos initially settled along the foot hills to the south of the Himalayas before penetrating into Assam.

¹ Bod country, presently, is the Tibetan region which lies in the Central part of East Asia.

² The Lohit region today comprises the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh and adjacent areas of Tibet and Burma. The Kacharis (Bodos) were called Lohitic probably of the fact that they inhabited the Lohit region before entering into Assam.

³ Lohit river flows in the Indian state Arunachal Pradesh.

According to Chatterjee, the Bodos migrated to Eastern India in second millennium B.C. (Chatterjee, 1974). Sidney Endle states that the Bodos made their way towards the Brahmaputra valley in two possible clusters. One cluster entered North-east Bengal and Western Assam through the valleys of Teesta, Dharla, Sankosh etc. and founded the powerful Kamarupa kingdom. The other cluster made its way through the valleys of Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong into Eastern Assam and laid the foundation of Chutiya kingdom (Endle, 1997). E.A. Gait is of the opinion that the Bodos penetrated into the Assam valley cutting across various mountain passes and river courses from the North. A group of the western migrants settled in the Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar districts of West Bengal, while another faction came and settled down in Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Goalpara districts of Assam (Gait, 1906). The group further spread out in Barpeta, Nalbari, Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam. Gierson states that the Bodos entered Assam through the courses of Brahmaputra, Chindwin, Mekong and the mountain passes of India and Burma through the north east and south east (Gierson, 1967). According to Imperial Gazetteers of India, the north eastern route was used by the Mikir, Lalungs and the Boro (Kachari).

Jadav Pegu opines that after the earliest Bodos settled in Assam, as the land was fertile because of regular rainfall and irrigated due to seasonal floods, they seemed to have practiced mono cropping which is still seen in the plain tribes of Assam. But, with the arrival of new people in the land and growth in the number of their population, many of the Bodos moved away to settle in North Bengal, North Cachar Hills, Cachar Plains and the Tripura Hills and plains. Some also moved towards the foothills region of present Bangladesh adjoining Tripura (Pegu, 2004).

According to Jadav Pegu, with the passage of time, the scattered groups lost abut with their kinsmen and adopted variation in their language, custom and culture. Some of these groups also had physical changes because of inter-marriages with other inhabitants. Segregation from the original relatives resulted in obtaining new names from the lands they settled. As a consequence, the Great Bodo race became fragmented and various tribes of this Bodo family consider themselves as peculiar from each other. However, the detachment of various tribes of Bodo family also took place because of other factors. The Dimasas who were residing on the Brahmaputra valley were forced to settle in North Cachar Hills after they were defeated by the Ahom rulers. The Koches were floated from the original Bodo stock because of the conversion into Hinduism. As the Koches were Hinduised, they intermixed and had marriage relations with Aryans and Dravidians settlers of Western Assam (Pegu, 2004).

In his monograph, "The Kacharis", Sidney Endle opines that the Kacharis (Bodos) were the dominant race in Assam in earlier days. It is apparent from the Bodo word "Di" (meaning water) in the names of many rivers such as Diputa, Dibong, Dihong, Dibru, Dimu, Dihing, Desang, Dikrang, Diku, Diphu, Digaru etc. He describes that the Bodos have distributed widely within Assam, North-east Bengal and Hill Tippera (Tripura), as it was evident from the language of the people. Endle has divided the Kachari (Bodo) race into two sections: Northern and Southern groups. The Brahmaputra was been kept as the dividing line. The Northern group consisted of the Kacharis of the plains such as Bara (Bodo), Rabha, Mech, dhima, Koch, Solanimiyas, Mahaliyas, Phulgariyas and Saraniyas. The Southern group consisted of the Hill Kacharis such as Dimasa, Hojais, Lalungs, Garos, Haijongs and Tippera.

Apart from the above mentioned communities, Endle also have talked about the Morans and the Chutiyas to be parts of the Kachari race (Endle, 1997).

Today, the Bodos are seen in almost all the districts of Assam. The Bodos also moved to West Bengal and reached Cooch Behar, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri districts. Some sections moved towards the foot of the Himalayas and settled on the north bank of the river Mechi (present day Nepal) and are known as Mech. Some of them also moved and have settled in the Garo Hills, Tripura, Nagaland, and Sylhet and Mymensing districts of Bangladesh. However, the main habitat of the Bodos is Assam. They are seen more concentrated in the northern bank of river Brahmaputra. Nevertheless, they can also be seen in good number in the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra.

Starting from Dhubri and Kokrajhar districts of North Assam, Goalpara district in the west upto Dhemaji district in the east, the Bodos have settled in almost all districts of Assam. They are seen in good number in the five districts viz., Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur of present Assam.

3.2. Ancient Bodo Kingdom and Administration

The earliest literature of ancient India refers to the great Bodo race. In the age of Mahabharata, Assam was known as Pragjyotishpur. It was known as the land of the Mlechchas (uncivilised people), Asuras (inhuman beings), Danavas (giants) or Rakshasas (demons) etc. The land was called a non-Aryan country. According to Kalika-Purana and Vishnu-Purana, Pragjyotishpur came to be known as Kamrup with the area of four hundred fifty miles to the extent to four directions from the centre of Kamakhya temple (Dutta, 1981). Kamrup included the then Assam, East Bengal and Bhutan. Later on, according to Jogini-Tantra, Kamrup comprised the whole of the

Brahmaputra valley, Bhutan, Rangpur district (presently in Bangladesh), Cooch Behar, part of Mymensing district (Bangladesh) and also Garo Hills (Dutta, 1981).

According to Mahabharata, 'Mairang' as Aryanised into 'Mahiranga Danava' ruled the ancient kingdom of Pragjyotisa (Dutta, 1981). 'Mairang' is a Bodo word meaning paddy or rice (Das, 1974). The name of the king was 'Mairong-dao' (dao means hero) and the original Bodo name was Sanskritised into 'Mahiranga Danava'. King Mahiranga was a Kirata or Mongolian and belonged to the great Bodo race (Das, 1974).

Mahirang is a Bodo name and the people of this race who then inhabited the country were called Kiratas and Mlechchas as they were Mongolian immigrants (Barua, 2014). Mairong-dao or Mahiranga Danava was succeeded by his descendants- Hatakasura, Sambarasura, Ratnasura and Ghatakasura. Ghatakasura or Ghataka-dao was succeeded by Barkha-dao. According to Bihuram Boro, the name of Barkha was 'Barkha Basumathari' (Boro, 1976). He belonged to the 'Basumathari' dynasty which was known as 'Hasuma' dynasty (Bhattacharya, 1993).

It is believed that King Barkha had two queens. Both the queens conceived and were quarelling for the claim of succeeding the throne of Pragjyotisa. As, the older queen could win the favour of the king, the younger was driven out of the palace. The younger queen was given shelter by a non-Bodo king and in a while, she gave birth to a son who was named as Narkho Basumathari. On the other hand, the older queen gave birth to a daughter. So, king Barkha became saddened at this. So, he expected his younger queen to return to the palace. With the arrival of his younger queen and son, the king became delighted and offered his throne to Narkho Basumathari (Boro, 1976). The great epic Mahabharata and the Harivamsa Puran state

Naraka as the 'Bhauma', meaning the son of 'Bhumi' (the earth). In the Visnu Purana, there is a painting of Lord Visnu with his Varaha (Boar) incarnation which depicts him as the progenitor of Naraka. In the copper plate land grants of early kings of Kamrupa (from 7th century to 12th century), Naraka has been stated as the 'son of Visnu' (Mosahari, 2003).

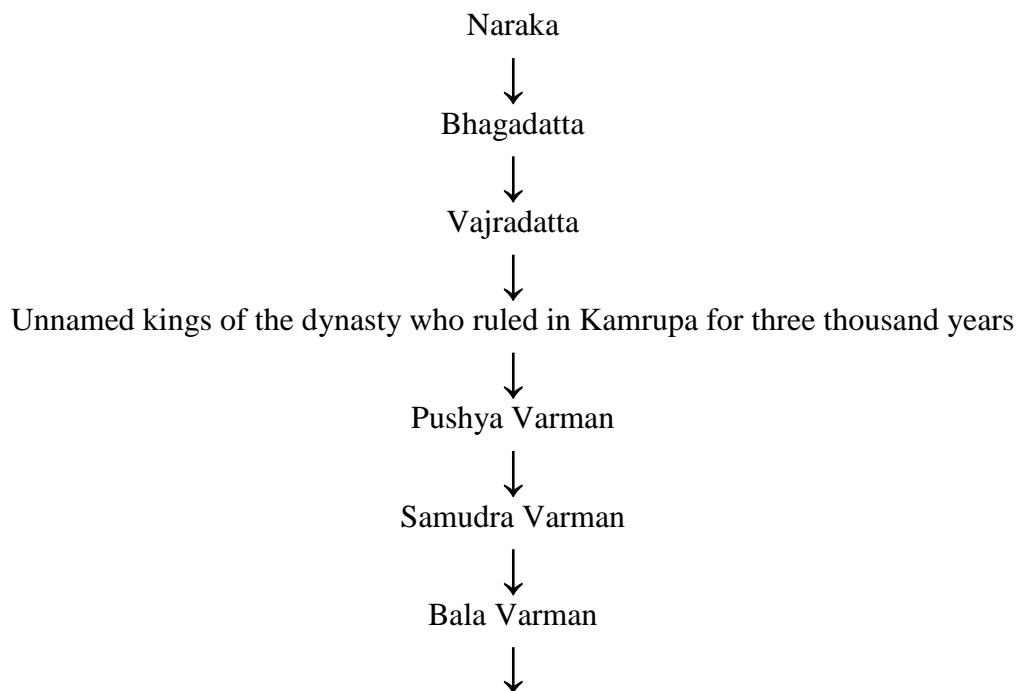
In Bodo, 'Narkho' means stout and strong. Narkho-dao was disliked by his royal officers and subjects owing to his non-Bodo practices. He realised this while he came in close contact with King Bangra (King Bana of Sonitpur, contemporary of King Narkho-dao) and converted himself to Bathouism or Saivism (Mosahari, 2003). This dissatisfied the Aryans and hence, king Narkho-dao was killed and his son Brog-dao was made the king of Pragjyotisa. 'Brog' means 'Borog' or 'Borok' (Boro). Brog-dao was renamed as Bhagadatta and was Hinduised. In Mahabharata, Bhagadatta has been described as a Mlechcha or Indo-Mongoloid king of Pragjyotisa (later Kamarupa) (Chatterjee, 1974). After Bhagadatta, his brother (or son according to some writers) Burjadao (Bajradatta) ascended the throne of Pragjyotisa (Barua, 2014).

It is believed that Subahu was the twentieth king from the dynasty of Naraka who was succeeded by his son Suparua. It is to be mentioned that besides Pragjyotisa there were some other kingdoms such as Kadali (to the east of the present Kathiatuli of Nagaon), Davaka (in the Jamuna-Kapili valley of Nagaon), Hirimba or Dimapur, Tripura, Manipur Kingdom of Bangra (King Bana), Bidarbha kingdom etc., which belonged to the different dynasties of the great Bodo race who ruled with their supremacy over the whole of ancient Assam (Dutta, 1981). Even after Suparua, many other kings belonging to the dynasty of Narkho-Brogdao (Naraka-Bhagadatta) ruled the kingdom of Pragjyotisa or Kamarupa upto the rising and foundation of the

Varman dynasty by Pushya Varman in 355 A.D. who claimed lineage from Narkho-brogdao (Dutta, 1981).

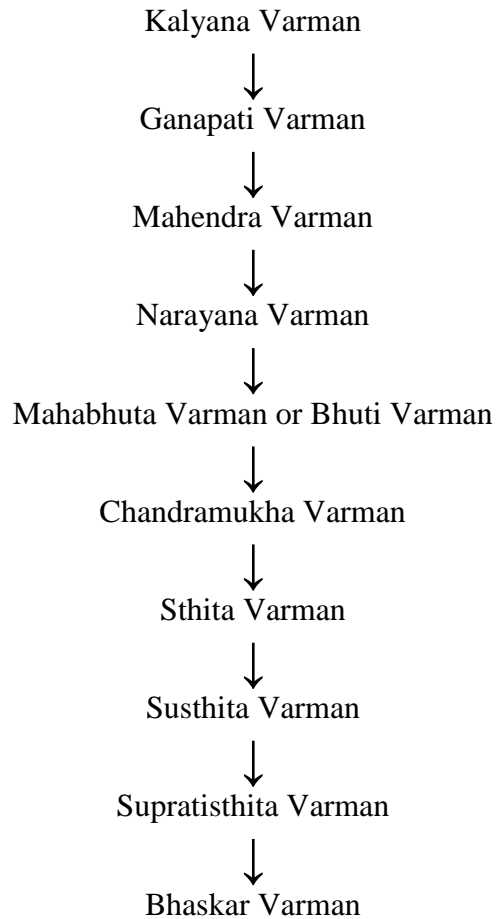
The royal Bodo families started taking the Aryan title ‘Varman’ as they came under the influence of Hinduism. According to Edward Gait, “Varman (armour or defence) was a common Kshatriya title and, as such, was frequently appropriated by aboriginal converts to Hinduism of high rank...”

The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta mentions about the Kamrupa kingdom. Pushya Varman was contemporary to Samudragupta. The dynastic line from Pushya Varman appears in Dubi⁴ and Nidhanpur⁵ copper-plate inscriptions made by Bhaskar Varman. In these inscriptions, Bhaskar Varman claims himself to be a descendant of Narakasur, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. In the Nidhanpur copper-plate inscription, the genealogy of the Kamrupa kings has been mentioned as follows:



⁴Dubi is a village about 3 miles from Pathsala Railway Station in Kamrup district, Assam. The Dubi copper-plate inscription is the earliest of all copper-plate grants issued by Kamrupa kings.

⁵It was discovered in 1912. Nidhanpur village is in Panchakhanda near Sylhet.



The six copper-plate inscriptions that have been recovered provide the information that the land was granted to around two hundred and five Brahmans for settlement. The inscriptions depict the renewal of constant revenue free land grant by king Bhaskar Varman. The original grant was made by his forefather (Maharaja Mahabhuta Varman). The donated land called 'Mayurasalama' was in Chandrapuri Vishaya of Panchakhanda Pargana of Shylet district. In the late 5th and 6th century CE, Chandrapuri Vishaya was under the rule of the successive Bhauma-Naraka rulers from Mahabhuta Varman to Bhaskar Varman (Sen, 2013).

Bhaskar Varman was one of the great and remarkable rulers of his time. He was a contemporary of king Harshavardhana and Hiuen Tsang. He was one of the most illustrious of the monarchs of ancient kingdom of Kamrupa. The Chinese traveller Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) who visited the court of king Bhaskar Varman

mentions him as 'Kumara' (Barua, 2003), probably due to his early accession to the throne. His father Susthita Varman had two sons, Supratisthita Varman and Bhaskar Varman. Due to the premature death of Supratisthita Varman who reigned for a very short period, Bhaskar Varman ascended the throne of Kamrupa at an early age who reigned for more than 50 years. He was not only the greatest king of his dynasty but also a remarkable king of ancient India. During his time, the kingdom of Kamrupa was one of the most advanced kingdoms in India (Barua, 2003).

Bhaskar Varman was succeeded by Avanti Varman, one of the kins of Bhaskar Varman, who adopted a new name of Salastambha. Bala Varman was the last king of this dynasty. After Bala Varman, Brahmapala ascended the throne and formed another new dynasty of Pala. Indrapala was the last king of this dynasty who ruled till the middle of the 12th century. By this time many Bodo chiefs were ruling in different parts of this vast region, bordering from river Karatoya in the west to the present north-east region of India in the east, when the Mughals undertook an expedition upto Tibet along the territory of Kamrupa after annexing Bengal. However, it is worth mentioning that the kings of Kamrupa were much strong (Mosahari, 2011).

According to Rai Bahadur Kanaklal Barua, there was no Hindu dynasty in Northern India that ruled continually for eight hundred years like the dynasty of Pushya Varman. Various conquerors like Samudra Gupta, Yasodharman, Mahasena Gupta etc., could not include the Kamrupa kingdom within their territories. When the Muslim invaders repeatedly tried to invade the Kamrupa kingdom, they were repulsed by the kings of Kamrupa (Baruah, 2020). The Mughal chroniclers described Kamrupa as a land of witchcraft and most probably for this reason, according to them, the Mughals could not inflict and out defeat the Kirata Bodo kings of this region (Mosahari, 2011). In 1228 A.D., the Ahoms led by Sukapha entered into this region

along the Patkai mountains and made good friendship with the Bodo kings of Bodousa of Moran dynasty and Thakumpha of Boro or Borahi dynasty. But, later on, Sukapha fought with them and defeated them, but treated them as equals with a view of welding them into Tai Ahom nation (Mosahari, 2011).

After aforementioned legendary Bodo kings, many other Bodo kings also ruled Kamarupa until the last part of the 15th century with the rule of a Bodo chief of Mech dynasty named Haju Mech. He had two daughters Hira and Jira. Hira Mech, son of Dambambu Mech, a resident of Chiknagram in Khuntaghat of the then Goalpara district, married these two princesses. Hira gave birth to Bisu and Jira gave birth to Sisu. Bisu ascended the throne of his sonless grandfather Haju Mech by the name of Biswa Singh in 1515 A.D. and extended his territory as far as the river Karatoya in the west to the Barnadi in the east. Biswa Singh is said to have been the forbear of the Koch kings. The Mech king Bisu of the great Mongoloid stock seemed to have discarded his tribal identity after becoming Hinduised and adopted the title 'Koch' and assumed the Hindu name Biswa Singh and his brother was known as Sib Singh. Consequently, many of the king's followers discarded their tribal designation and called themselves Rajbonsis. He shifted his capital from Chiknagram to Koch Bihar. King Biswa Singh imported numerous Brahmans from Kanauj, Banaras and other centres of learning, in order to make solid foundation of Hindu base in his kingdom (Gait, 1906).

The earliest history delineates that under the name 'Chutiyas', the Kacharis had established a powerful kingdom in the eastern corner of modern Sadiya. This kingdom engaged in a prolonged struggle with the Ahoms, but was defeated massively by the Ahoms. The Ahoms drove their opponents to take refuge in Dimapur at the foot of the Naga Hills. However, the Ahoms followed the Kachari king and

succeeded in capturing Dimapur too. The Kachari king moved his court to Maibong where the dynasty maintained to survive for around two centuries. But, because of an attack by the Jaintia king, the Kachari monarch withdrew from Maibong to Khaspur in Kachar (approximately 1750 A.D.). In effect of much Hindu influence, the Kachari king of that period Krishna Chandra and his brother Govinda Chandra publicly announced the practice of Brahminism. The Brahmins declared them to be Hindus of the Kshatriya caste and ancestor of Bhima of Mahabharata (Mosahari, 2011).

After the death of king Krishna Chandra, his brother Govinda Chandra ascended the throne. During his reign, the Burmese attacked and hence the king was forced to take refuge in the adjoining British district of Sylhet. However, he was reinstated in power by the help of East India Company's troops in 1826, but he was killed some four years later. Hence, his kingdom became a part of the British dominion. His commander-in-chief, Tularam Senapati who was ruling in the hills of North Cachar was also compelled to give up Central Cachar in 1834. With his death in 1854, the portion of the old Kachari Raj was formally annexed to the district of Nowgong (Nagaon) and the land of the Kacharis came under the Britishers (Mosahari, 2003).

As History depicts, after the Kachari king Krishna Chandra migrated from Maibong to Khaspur, the movement was a very limited one. Great majority of his people remained in the hills where they retained their language, religion and customs to a great extent whereas the ones living in the rich valley of Assam came in terms with their conquerors (Ahoms) and gradually became amalgated with them. However, it can be noted that owing to the engulfing process of conversion to Hinduism, many Kachari kings changed their original identity from ranks of Mech, Kachari, Lalung,

Mikir and other tribes and hence, formed section of the non-Aryan peoples of Assam (Mosahari, 2003).

3.3. Bodos during Colonial Administration

Before the treaty of Yandaboo (1826), which was signed between the East India Company and Burmese, the Ahoms ruled over Assam for merely 600 years. The Ahoms successfully established a well-integrated administrative system in Assam. In the first three hundred years of the Ahom rule, the Bodos gradually disappeared from political activities. One by one, the Bodo principalities submitted to the Ahom rule. This process continued till 1536 A.D., when the entire Kachari kingdom was occupied by the Ahoms (Basumatary, 2012).

In the 18th century, when the Ahom kingdom reached its zenith, problems arose within the kingdom when it lost power to rebels of the Moamoria rebellion (revolt by the Moamarias or Matakas who were the adherents of the Moamara Sattra). Though the Ahoms were able to recapture power, they were encompassed with problems (Guha, 1991), which led to the Burmese invansion of Assam in the 19th century (Baruah, 1993). As such, the Ahoms seeked help from East India Company. In 1824, the First Anglo-Burmese War broke out and the Burmese were defeated, and the Treaty of Yandaboo was signed which led to the renouncing of power by the Burmese. Thus, the British became the soul masters of Brahmaputra valley and started consolidating their power in whole of Assam. After king Govindachandra was assassinated, his kingdom was included in the British Empire in 1832. Although, Tularam Senapati, a Bodo chief was leading as an independent chief in the hills of North Cachar, he too was coerced to give up. With his death, the entire kingdom was lost to the British in 1854. Subsequently, the whole lands of the Bodos were occupied

by the Britishers and the Bodos became the subjects of the Britishers (Sonowal, 2013).

After the annexation of whole of Assam by Britishers, the ruling class and aristocracy among the Bodos dissipated into the un-classed sections of people. They returned to practice their old system of living. They continued practicing shifting cultivation. In words of Sanjib Baruah, “the Bodos were erratic cultivators of the wilds. They never cultivated the same land beyond the second year nor remain in the same neighbourhood”⁶. In this process, the Bodos faced a great blow in socio-economic conditions as the British introduced the system of recorded land rights. Problems sparkled more when the British encouraged immigration to fill up the vacant lands. According to the new land revenue system, the Bodos had to pay the taxes in cash because of which they had to face hardships. The Bodo cultivators became indebted to traders and as such, their land alienation started off. With the passage of time, they lost their significance in the region (Baruah, 2008).

The Bodos lost their political existence and sovereignty after coming under British annexation. The Bodos were becoming more and more backward with their old mode of economy. In the early 20th century, the Britishers encouraged immigration from the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in order to undertake development and cultivation of wastelands. The colonial administration also imported a large number of landless to work in the tea plantation, road construction, oil mines and coalmines. The huge influx of immigrants became a great barrier to tribal economy, culture and society. The immigrant muslim population started forming a

⁶ Sanjib Baruah is of the opinion that the earliest Bodos did not stay in one place for longer. Once they cultivated a land, they would leave the neighbourhood, allowing the jungle to grow and the land to resume its productiveness and return only after four or five years. Then they used to start their cultivation process. But in this process, they lost their original sites of settlement.

significant portion of the population in all the districts of Brahmaputra valley (Chhetry, 2015).

The massive increase in immigrant population had put tremendous pressure on tribal land because they continued to settle in the reserved forests belts and blocks which were meant for the tribal people. The tribals were evicted from their own lands and as such were under severe strain for livelihood as well as necessary resources. There arose a period of darkness for the Bodo people. However, Gopinath Bordoloi (first Chief Minister of Assam) undertook various measures to free the protected land from encroachers. He gave emphasis on Line System to prevent alienation of Tribal lands. On November 1939, CM Bordoloi passed “The Land Resolution” that guaranteed the protection to tribals. On the contrary things seemed to be disappointing after Syed Saadullah became the Chief Minister of Assam. The level of damage was out of imagination. The motive of the Britishers “grow more food” was subverted to “grow more muslims” as more and more muslim migrants from East Bengal were welcomed. The limit of damage was something that has never been before (Pegu, 2004).

The resolution passed by Bordoloi ministry was not executed. Saadullah formulated a policy known as the “Land Development Scheme” and settled all the landless Muslim immigrants in the Brahmaputra valley. By then, the Muslim League became more strident and continued their demand for further opening up of grazing reserves and the abolition of the Line System. In 1946, when the Congress came to power again, the Assam Land Revenue Regulations (1886) was amended and reserved tribal belts were created in different regions. Ten tribal belts and 23 tribal blocks were constituted to check encroachment of tribal land. But because of some manipulative officials, most of the provisions were subverted and hence, continued pressure kept

mounting on land held by the indigenous people because of immigration from East Pakistan (Mosahari, 2011).

3.4. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and Advent of Socio-cultural Reforms

With the coming of herds of immigrants, the demographic scene of Assam was transformed drastically. The areas inhabited by the Bodos had already been over crowded by the migrants. Even the Assamese speaking non-Mongoloids were not concerned about the plight of the Bodos. Most of them were interested only in converting the Bodos into Hindus and Assamese speaking non-entities. However, under the guidance and leadership of the Bodo leader Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, the Bodos found a direction of self consciousness. They came to a position to become concerned about their identity and existence (Pegu, 2004).

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma was a leading social reformer who founded the Brahma Dharma religion of the Bodos. He realized that the Bodo community was disintegrating and this was perhaps due to lack of common religion as most of the Bodos practiced Hinduism and many got converted into Christianity. He was even against the *Bathou* religion as it encourages consumption of *Jou* (rice-beer) and animal sacrifices which was not appropriate for the development of the society at that time. So, he decided to bring a change in the society. He felt that the Bodos needed to be educated and the whole socio-economic and political conditions needed to be transformed. In this condition, he felt that the Brahma Dharma religion would save the Bodo society. So, he started organizing *yajna* in different Bodo villages and his co-workers and disciples assisted him in preaching the religion in different parts of Assam and Bengal. Slowly and gradually, the Brahma Dharma started to replace the traditional *Bathou* religion and it checked further conversion of Bodos into Christianity (Mosahari, 2011).

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma could realize that the Bodos were socio-culturally backward in societal context. Therefore, improvement of the existing society was needed and it could be brought through modern education and reform movement. During those days, there were no schools in Bodo villages. Hence, Gurudev Kalicharan met Mr. A.J. Laine, the then Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara District who guided him to meet Mr. Archdale Earle, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam. The Chief Commissioner granted some amount to establish an M.E. School at Tipkai along with two vocational courses. In 1912, the first school was established. In 1913, with the help of Mr. Laine, another school was sanctioned. Gradually, schools were established in different Bodo villages which helped in the conferment of education to both boys and girls. Gurudev Kalicharan also established Brahma boarding at Dhubri (Basumatary and Daimary, 2018).

The positive initiatives of Gurudev Kalicharan initiated mass awareness among the Bodo people and paved way for the development of Bodo nationality. They culminated the thought of self-identity and national integrity.

3.5. Bodos during Anti-Colonial Movement

It is worth mentioning that the year 1915 brought an awakening ray amongst the Bodos of the Southern bank of the Brahmaputra. In 1912, a socio-religious organisation 'Habraghat Boro Sanmiloni' was born in the Goalpara district which published a book in 1915 with different articles of Bodo language, culture, social system and customs, religion etc. This inflamed a sense of awakening. In 1915, some educated Bodo youths namely Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma, Modaram Brahma, Iswan Ch. Basumatary and a few more came forward and collaborated with Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma and founded Goalpara Zila Bodo Chatra Sanmiloni, a students' organisation. In 1918, another literary organisation

‘Dakshinkul Boro Sahitya Sanmiloni’ took its birth on the same bank of the Brahmaputra. It helped to revive their language and literature. In 1919, Goalpara Zila Bodo Chatra Sanmiloni was renamed as ‘Boro Satra Sanmiloni’. Sobharam Brahma was its president and Satish Chandra Basumatary was its secretary. This organisation elevated intense literary revolutions among the Bodos by publishing many magazines, books, dramas etc. (Mosahari, 2011).

From 1920s onwards, there has been political consciousness among the tribal communities of Assam including the Bodos. Through the initiatives of the educated middle class, the Bodos and other tribal communities made progress in incorporating the politics of rights, representation and emancipation. In order to locate themselves in the socio-political milieu of the colonial state and uplift the conditions of the tribes, various measures were taken by the emerging leaders to find out the reasons of their backwardness. They could sense it out that they have been deprived in their own land. As the tribals were regarded to follow Hinduism, the ‘Assam Kachari Jubok Sanmilan’ submitted a memorandum suggesting that the “Kacharis were never a part of the caste-divided Hindu society and were independent by virtue of not being bound to the chariot wheels of the Hindu community”. Hence, the distinctiveness of tribal culture became an important part of ‘Tribal identity’. In 1933, ‘All Assam Tribal League’ (AATL) was formed under the presidentship of Jadav Chandra Khaklary and Bhimbar Deuri was its General Secretary. Some of the other eminent tribal leaders were Kalicharan Brahma, Rupnath Brahma, Rabichandra Kochari, Mohi Chandra Miri, Khorsing Terang, Dhirsing Deuri, Rev. Nicholsroy, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Modaram Brahma, Karka Chandra Dolei Miri and so on. Thus, with the formation of AATL, the political movement of the Bodos gained momentum (Deka, 2014).

Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma came out to be a dynamic leader (reformer) who was able to bring a trenching awareness amongst the Bodos. He inspired the Bodo people to achieve freedom from the British rule. Following the path shown by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, Rupnath Brahma worked towards the development of Bodos and other tribal groups. He took up various social welfare activities for the Bodos and other backward communities. When the Simon Commission arrived in Assam in 1928, Rupnath Brahma alongwith Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, Rabichandra Kachari and other intellectuals met the Commission and submitted a memorandum on behalf of the Bodo community of Assam. The memorandum urged the Government to provide a separate electorate for the Bodo Community, both in Assembly and Local Board Elections; to provide compulsory free primary education to the students of the community; and retain the transfer of Assam to Bengal province (Mosahari, 2011).

On the meantime, when the Government of India Act (1935) provided reservation of six seats in the Provincial Assembly for the Plain Tribes, Rupnath Brahma decided to work towards the upliftment of the depressed Bodos and other tribal communities. Hence, in the General Election of 1937, he won from Sidli Constituency on the ticket of the Tribal League. In the Assam Legislative Assembly Proceedings (ALAP) of 5th August 1937, Rupnath Brahma raised the issue of preserving the 'Line System' citing the example of how tribal people of Goalpara had to leave their houses and settle somewhere else. He was well aware of the hypocritical intentions of the Muslim League related to the 'Line System'. The Tribal League played an appropriate role to throw away the Government of Assam (Muslim League), which in turned helped the Indian Congress party to form the Government led by Gopinath Bordoloi (Sonowal, 2013).

3.6. Independence and Aftermath

In the post colonial period, the Bodos were defined as Scheduled Tribe Plains by the Indian Consitution. Being placed under the ‘Tribal’ category and ‘Backward’ class made them upset as they were being deprived poltically, socially, economically, linguistically, culturally and ethnically. Even though they were the ruling race till the eve of independence, they became victims of force subjugation without least consideration of giving due status in the state administration (Deka, 2014).

The Bodos felt that they were being treated as the second class citizens in their own soil (Pegu, 2004). Being inspired by their glorious history and legends, they even took part in the National Movement for the independence of India. Many Bodos such as Lerela Kachari, Ratan Kachari, Moniram Boro, Raotaram Boro, Madan Boro, Hem Chandra Patar, Jetuki Sonowal, Bamuni Kachari, Khahuli Kachari, Maila Kachari, Bhatiram Kachari, Khargeswar Kachari etc., also sacrificed their lives fighting for the nation (Mosahari, 2011). Still they were thunderstruck by the treatment of the state administration. They felt being exploited by the so-called Assamese culture and people. The Bodos could realise that they were forced to be dependent economically and politically to the Hindus, upper ruling class. There had been attempts to subsume the Bodos under the umbrella of Assamese Nationalism. They were also deprived of the benefit of industrialization and remained at the level of peasant economy. This created a deep sense of resentment within the Bodos against the Hindu Assamese (Deka, 2014).

In 1967, two strong organizations were formed. The All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) and a political organisation named as Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) came into existence. The idea of demanding ‘Autonomous Region’ was developed by PTCA and it received a high degree of mass movement in 1972. But the Indian

Government stood with a short sighted dimension towards the demand of the PTCA. In such a myopic outlook of the Government, the PTCA demanded 'Udayachal', a union territory in lieu of 'Autonomous Region' in 1973. The stand of PTCA was initially supported by different plain tribal organizations. In the meantime, the demand of PTCA was shoved back as the National Emergency was declared in 1975-76 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (Mosahari, 2011).

Meanwhile, the Government became strict on agitators (leaders) and arrested in a large scale. As such, the PTCA postponed its demand for the time being. After the emergency was held in abeyance, anti-congress sentiment was raised in India including Assam. As a result, an agreement was signed between Janata Party and PTCA in Assam before the general election in India in 1977. Hence, for the first time in Assam a non-Congress Government was formed. The Janata Party came in power and a ministry was formed which included ministers from PTCA also. Although the PTCA again came back to its demand, the ABSU felt that the leaders of PTCA started neglecting their demand after joining hands with Janata Party (Basumatary, 2014).

By the time, the tribal people also became fed up by the activities of the various leaders of PTCA. Even discordance arose within the organization. This led to the split of the PTCA into PTCA and PTCA (Progressive) in May 22, 1979. The PTCA (Progressive) was formed by Benai Khungur Basumatary to fight for the demand of Udayachal for the plain tribals of Assam. The ABSU extended its support to the PTCA (Progressive). The PTCA (Progressive) established alliance with Mishing tribe in order to pursue the demand of creation of 'Mishing Bodoland'⁷, a Union Territory in 1980. But the demand could not get support from the common

⁷ The demand for Mishing Bodoland was raised for a separate homeland for the Mising and Bodos of Assam. The Mishing were the second largest tribe of the region.

mass of both the tribes. As such, the PTCA (Progressive) also started losing its hold over the common people (ABSU, 1987).

At this stage, attempt was made by ABSU to reunite the leaders of PTCA and PTCA (Progressive). A convention was held at Harisinga (presently in Udalguri district) in April 17-19, 1984 by the ABSU where leaders of both PTCA and PTCA (Progressive) and other tribal organizations were invited. But the effort of the ABSU to unify the two groups went in vain. As a result, a new organization named as United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) was formed. However, the organization could not be influential because of ideological differences between the leaders of PTCA and PTCA (Progressive). The differences among the leaders regarding the proposed area of autonomy and its nature made them unpopular among the masses. Failure of PTCA to lead the Bodo sentiment gave a space to All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) to accomplish support from the Bodo mass in 1987 to chance the demand from union territory to separate state Bodoland, following Assam Reorganization and North-Eastern Area (Reorganization) Act 1979. From 1987 onwards, the movement was totally dominated by ABSU led by Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma (Guha, 1991).

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma was the eighth President of ABSU. Under his dynamic leadership, the quest for political identity with separate entity for the Bodos took a new shape. Understanding the fact that the Bodos were being deprived in their own soil, Brahma firmly determined to reclaim the rights of his people (Narzari, 2007).

3.7. Conclusion

The legendary accounts as well as the ethnographical studies have proved that Assam was a land of Mongoloid people referred to as 'Kiratas', Asuras, Danavas and Rakshasas. The legendary kings like Mahiranga Danava, Narakasura, Bhagadatta, Banasura etc., have been described as the Bodo kings who were the sons of the soil of Assam. But with the arrival of the Ahoms in 1228 A.D., the existing Bodo kingdoms were inclosed with the Ahom kingdom. However, when the Burmese attacked the Ahom kingdoms and invaded them, the Ahoms had no option but to invite the British-Raj. After the Yandaboo treaty was signed, the Ahoms lost their supremacy. All the Ahom kingdoms were annexed to the British empire.

Until the eve of India's independence, the Bodos who were the sons of the soil of Assam remained as the subjects of the British-Raj and after independence they became the citizens of India. But after the independence of the country, the Bodos felt as being treated as a step-son by the Government of the Indian Union. Eventhough they have equally contributed for the independence of the country, they felt as being forcefully deprived from their rights. They had struggled for their political rights and for safeguarding their distinct identity and overall development of the region. Hence, they waged a movement, both over-ground and under-ground, to achieve their supreme political aspiration. The movement will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER-4

BODOLAND MOVEMENT: ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the study on the various causes of ethnic-mobilization of the Bodos such as politics, policies and problems resulting in Bodoland Movement. The chapter will also highlight the aftermath situation of Bodoland Movement.

The communities belonging to the Bodo race believed themselves to be the earliest inhabitants of Assam. The story of the present day Bodo people is a story about how they strived to retain their language and culture amidst accepting Assamese language and culture. Although they merged themselves with the civilization of Assam, they were thunderstruck when the Indian Constitution defined them under 'Tribal' category, depriving them of their genuine and real identity. Hence, ethnicity and identity have been the main issues of mobilization in Assam resulting into Bodoland Movement.

4.2. Bodoland Movement

The Bodo leaders perceived that they were ethnically different from the rest of the people of Assam. As the condition of the plains tribal groups was declining, some educated Bodos realised that they should unite and negotiate for socio-cultural, economic, linguistics and political rights of the Bodos (Mosahari, 2011). They felt that their existence as an ethnic community would be threatened with the passage of time. Thus, the Bodoland Movement is a product of feelings of insecure identity and its manifestation.

4.2.1. Causes of Bodoland Movement

a) Historical reason: Land Alienation and Deprivation

The Bodos are among the indigenous people of Assam. According to Anderson and Gait, the Bodos are earliest known inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley. But, during the colonial rule, vast areas of central and western Assam were opened up for the immigrants from the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The huge influx of immigrants had shaken the fabric of tribal economy, culture and society. The massive increase in immigrant population had put tremendous pressure on tribal land because they continued to settle in the reserved forests belts and blocks which were meant for the tribal people. The tribals were evicted from their own lands and as such were under severe strain for livelihood as well as necessary resources (Chhetry, 2015).

However, the Congress ministry headed by Gopinath Bordoloi initiated several measures in order to free the protected land from encroachers. He gave emphasis on Line System to prevent alienation of Tribal lands. On November 1939, Bordoloi passed “The Land Resolution” which guaranteed the protection to tribals. But things took a different turn when Syed Mohammad Saadullah came into power. The resolution passed by Bordoloi ministry was not executed. Saadullah formulated a policy known as the “Land Development Scheme” and settled all the landless Muslim immigrants in the Brahmaputra valley. By then, the Muslim League became more strident and continued their demand for further opening up of grazing reserves and the abolition of the Line System. In 1946, when the Congress came to power again, the Assam Land Revenue Regulations (1886) was amended and reserved tribal belts were created in different regions. Ten tribal belts and 23 tribal blocks were constituted to check encroachment of tribal land. But because of some manipulative officials, most of the provisions were subverted and hence, continued pressure kept mounting on

land held by the indigenous people because of immigration from East Pakistan (Nath, 2003).

b) Assamese Chauvism

In the post colonial period, the tribals were forced to be dependent economically and politically upon the Hindus, upper ruling class. They were also deprived of the benefit of industrialization and remained at the level of peasant economy. This created a deep sense of resentment within the Bodos against the Hindu Assamese. Moreover, the imposition of Assamese language as the official language of the state made the Bodos feel unsafe and insecure about their culture and political identity. Moreover, clause 6 of the Assam Accord (1985), which promises to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the 'Assamese people' brought a bitter feelings within the Bodos as they thought the clause might give legitimacy to the imposition of Assamese language and culture on Bodos (Mosahari, 2011).

c) Inadequate Policy

The absence of adequate policy to address the issues of the Bodos led them to revolt. The Bodos became conscious about their identity and existence because of the Government's inattention on protection and promotion of Bodo community. The colonial administration allotted special administrative mechanism to the hill tribes of the region. This continued even after independence from the colonial rule. Although the Constituent Assembly of India granted maximum autonomy to the tribes of the region in order to manage their local issues, the hill tribes of the region were given special power. This hurted the sentiments of the plain tribes as they felt neglected. They felt insecure about their existence.

The government's failure to deal with the issues of evicted tribal lands and providing pattas to non-tribes in the tribal reserved areas led to dissatisfaction among tribal people. The government's inability to engrain development of Bodo language, culture and tradition made the Bodos to voice for them. As the Central Government was not familiar with the state and status of the Bodos, it was not able to provide adequate policy to deal with the structural issues of the Bodos. Thus, because of the Government's foil to implement appropriate policies to ensure the issues of identity of the Bodos and their existence led them to rise against the Government (Pegu, 2004).

4.2.2. Phases of Bodoland Movement

4.2.2.1. First Phase: 1929-1947

The history of political activism of Bodos began with the submission of memorandum to the Simon Commission. Establishment of distinct ethnic identity was the prime motive of the Bodos from beginning of political consciousness. Bodos, the largest group among Assam's plain tribes, began to unite and raise voice for themselves prior to independence. During the colonial rule, it was Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma who initiated mass awareness among the Bodo people and made them conscious about their identity. It was in the year 1929 that a team led by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma under the banner of Goalpara District Bodo Association met the Simon Commission and submitted a memorandum (Basumatary and Daimary, 2018). The most important points among the twelve point memorandum were:

- a) Firstly, providing compulsory free primary education and special scholarship to Bodo students for higher education.
- b) Secondly, providing four seats in the Central Legislature for Assam, three for non-Muslims and one for Muslims. Of the three non-Muslims seats, one should be reserved for the Bodos of Assam.

- c) Thirdly, providing a separate Regiment named as the Bodo Regiment for the Bodos of Assam.

This submission of the memorandum was the first positive sign that the Bodos were now aware to ensure their identity. The demand for separate electorate for the Bodos highlighted their consciousness for identity.

The formation of the All Assam Tribal League (AATL) was the second step in the political journey of the Bodos. The League demanded all the backward tribes and communities to be considered as one unified group, and atleast seven seats to be allocated to them in the Assam Legislative Assembly. The Government of India Act (1935) provided them a golden opportunity. It destined separate electorates on the basis of the recommendations of the Simon Commission. Four seats were reserved for them in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Bhimbor Deori was the spokesperson of the tribals. In 1937, the AATL participated in the general election and was successful in securing all the four reserved seats. This marked the beginning of their involvement in state politics (Deka, 2014).

Under the Government of India Act (1935), a bicameral legislature was established with a Legislative Assembly and a Legislative Council. The Premier (Prime Minister) of Assam was the head of the Government and leader of the Legislative Assembly of Assam province. In 1937, during provincial elections in Assam, the Indian National Congress emerged as the single largest party. However, it did not form Government due to its pan-Indian policy of boycotting Constitutional Government under the British Raj. Hence, the Muslim League led by Sir Syed Muhammad Saadulla was given the opportunity of forming the Government by the then Governor of Assam in April 1937. Now, as the main objective of Tribal League

was to serve the interests of Plain Tribes, they gave their full support to the Muslim League. But when Saadulla ministry collapsed in September 1938, the Tribal League shifted their support to Congress with an agreement to protect tribal interests (Mosahari, 2011).

By this agreement, imaginary lines were drawn which divided the areas occupied by tribals from the non-tribals, and the immigrants from East Bengal were prohibited from settling in the tribal areas. As such, in order to protect the tribal interests, the Line System came into being. When the Congress leaders including Gopinath Bordoloi were arrested in 1939 for following the Nationwide Satyagraha, the Muslim League again formed the Government with the support of the Tribal League. An agreement was signed between the Tribal League and the Saadullah ministry which proposed all the tribal people to be introduced as Tribals in the census of 1941, irrespective of their religion. Hence, the tribal population was 28,24,133 according to 1941 census whereas it was only 9.92 lakhs in the Census Report of 1931. This increase in the Tribal population was perhaps because of the agreement made between the Tribal League and the Saadullah ministry (Sarma, 2000).

Now, although the tribal people wanted to maintain separate identity, the Tribal leaders were against the regrouping scheme of the British Government. At this juncture, there had been large influx of immigrants from Mymensing district which was always supported by the Saadullah Government. Hence, the Muslim League proposed that Assam should be grouped with Bengal. The Tribal League opposed this. In December 1944, an All Party Conference was organised by the Saadullah ministry in order to solve land issues. Rabichandra Kachari represented the Tribal League. But, the outcome of the conference did not promulgate fruitful results for the Tribal people. As a result, the leaders of the Tribal League started losing trust with the

Saadullah ministry. In 1946, after the Congress leaders were released from the jail, they tried to take advantage of this crack in faith and started political regeneration to win the faith of the plain tribes. However, the leaders of the Tribal League were suspicious of Congress activities as the latter viewed the growth in tribal population as a threat for the Hindus. Nevertheless, the Tribal League endorsed the Congress accepting joint electorates with reservation of seats. Bhimbor Deori was placed in the Cabinet (Deka, 2014).

In May 1946, Grouping Plan for India was declared by the Cabinet Mission and Assam was placed under 'Group C' along with Bengal. The Congress protested against the declaration as it created stir in Assam. The Tribal League came out in support of Congress for the greater interest of Assam and its people (Dutta, 1981).

At the initial phase of the Bodoland Movement, it was the Tribal League which provided platform to the Bodos to articulate their political aspirations. It took part in electorate politics, protecting the interests of Plain Tribes. On the other hand, it backed off from agitational politics and also remained away from the Nationalist Movement of that time. However, many Bodos individually participated in the Nationalist Movement against colonialism. They came into agreements with both the Congress and the Muslim League at different point of time to abide by the Line System but their endeavours could not bring desired results. It was in December 1947 that the Tribal League succeeded in its efforts when the Bordoloi ministry created 33 Tribal belts and blocks based on 'Line System' by amending the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1986 in order to prevent alienation of tribal land (Guha, 1991).

After the independence of India, the problems of the Bodos became more formidable. The successive Governments were unable to fulfill the expectations of the Tribal people. The magnitude of inequality, deprivation and underdevelopment did not change. The Bodos had to depend politically and economically upon the Hindu Upper caste or ruling class in the post colonial period. Even the Tribal leaders battled amongst themselves for power. In the political history of Plain Tribes of Assam, this post colonial period seemed to be a curse (Banarjee & Roy 2010).

4.2.2.2. Second Phase: 1947-1986

In the years following independence of the country, socio-economic conditions of the Plain Tribes became poor. The suppression by the Hindu class as well as the presence of Muslim immigrants created botheration for the Plain Tribes. Moreover, with the creation of Bangladesh, influx of immigrants became a continual process. This proved to be noxious for the tribal people, particularly to their land interests. The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1947 which was enacted in order to protect tribal land alienation and encroachment by outsiders seemed to be scant. Besides, the Plain Tribes could not benefit from Constitutional safeguards under the provision of 5th and 6th Schedules of the Indian Constitution as the Hill Tribes enjoyed, as the Hill Tribals were accredited as entirely different people in the plains whereas the Plain Tribes were acknowledged as part of Assamese society (Nath, 2003).

During the 1960s, there arose tension in the state because of the Language Movement. The making of Assamese as the official language of the state was not accepted by the Tribals. Different linguistic groups demanded recognition to their languages by introducing as medium of instruction in schools in tribal areas. Meanwhile, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha which was established in the year 1952 made the

Bodo people more conscious. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha played an important role in manifesting the demand for safeguarding the Bodo identity and culture. In 1953, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha submitted a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam Bishnuram Medhi for the introduction of Bodo Medium Schools in Assam. Thereafter, Bodo language was introduced as the medium of instruction in schools in Bodo dominated areas in Assam in 1963 (Deka, 2014).

Gradually, the need to politically unite all plain tribes of Assam was realised and hence, Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), a political party, was formed in the year 1967. The main objective of PTCA was to demand an autonomous territory for the plain tribes of Assam under the name of ‘Udayachal’. In the same year (15th February, 1967), a student body of the Bodo students named as All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) was formed, realizing the importance of youth and students in the movement (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.2.1: Emergence of the ABSU

Although PTCA and its demand ‘Udayachal’, a union territory was initially supported by the Bodo people, the split of PTCA into two- PTCA and PTCA (Progressive), and its deviation from the mainstream of Bodo politics provided the substratum for the arrival of ABSU to articulate the demands. ABSU, the youth organisation played an important role for assertion of Bodo identity. The All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) was formed at Kokrajhar on 15th February 1967 with the mission to “work with the purity of heart, solemnly resolve to unite the students of Bodo groups living in different parts of the world into an organization for the better and mutual understandings of their selves to safeguard and develop the socio-economy, education, culture, tradition, language and literature of the great Bodo Nationality” (ABSU, 1987).

The ABSU extended its full support to the Bodo Language Movement which was launched by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in the year 1973-74, demanding Roman script for Bodo Language. Both the Central and State Governments rejected the demand. Later on, because of the protest, Devanagari script was imposed on Bodos by the Union Government. This escalated the issue of insecure identity in the minds of the Bodos. Meanwhile, split of the PTCA into PTCA and PTCA (Progressive) barred the support from the common mass. As a result, the PTCA started losing its hold over the common people. At this stage, the ABSU sprang up and started playing active role. It could realise that proper representation of issues of plain tribes including the Bodos was missing. Hence, they felt that it was very much important to reunite all plains of Assam. The ABSU tried to bring unification between the leaders of PTCA and PTCA (Progressive). In the convention held at Harisinga (presently in Udalguri district) in the year 1984, the ABSU called both the factions of PTCA. But, the effort of the ABSU came in vain. Thus, with the support of the general mass the ABSU emerged as a strong union body representing the hopes and aspirations of the Bodo tribes (Mosahari, 2011).

In the six years long movement led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) in 1979-1985 against illegal immigrants, the ABSU rendered support. The illegal immigrants from Bangladesh were one of the main causes of alienation of tribal lands. So, the ABSU joined hands with the AASU in the movement. But, when the Assam Accord was signed, the clause 6 was detrimental to the indigenous tribal people of Assam. The clause 6 of the Assam Accord stated about the legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote "the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people". The ABSU understood that

the AASU tried to continue with the Assamese chauvinism over tribal people by incorporating such provision in the Accord (Deka, 2014).

By this time, most of the tribal leaders and Bodo Sahitya Sabha too along with common mass were dissatisfied by the moves of the PTCA. Hence, the ABSU took the opportunity and a delegation met the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on 10th July 1985, and submitted a memorandum requesting for the creation of a separate state for the Bodos. On 8th August 1985, the ABSU delegation again met the Home Minister S.B. Chavan with a plea to create a separate state and solve the issues of foreign nationals (ABSU, 1987).

A new Era dawned in the political lives of the Bodos when Upendra Nath Brahma was elected as the eighth President of the ABSU on 31st May, 1986 at the 18th Annual Conference held in Rowta (presently in Udalguri district) of Assam. Under the dynamic leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, the quest for identity began to take a new shape. Immediately after taking the charge of the President of the ABSU, U.N. Brahma firmly determined to reclaim the rights of his people. From then onwards, all the issues and problems of the Bodos has been taken by the ABSU which continues till today (Guha, 1991).

4.2.2.3. Third Phase: 1987-1992

Upendra Nath Brahma was well aware of the glorious past of the Bodos and he decided to lift the Bodos at the top of the world. Hence, under his leadership, the ABSU submitted a 92 Points Charter of Demands to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta on January 1, 1987. As the Bodos were facing problems on language, literary, economy, land, education, development etc., apart from the basic problems of identity crisis, question of survival and political security,

the ABSU felt the necessity of reflecting the various problems and grievances of the Bodos and other plains tribals through these 92 demands (Mosahari, 2011).

On 22 January, 1987 an ABSU delegation led by its President U.N. Brahma met the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and submitted a memorandum which dealt in detailed the demand for a separate state with the Union Territory Status for the Plains Tribals of Assam in the northern tract of Brahmaputra valley. The delegation team also submitted memorandum to the Union Home Minister Buta Singh on the same issue on 24th January, 1987 and to the then President of India Giani Zail Singh on 30th January, 1987 (Chhetry, 2018).

Observing the outlook of both the Central and State Government in regards to the demands, the ABSU realised that social mobilization was necessary. Hence, it began its mass mobilization programme through circulation of pamphlets against Assamese Chauvinism. They submitted multiple memoranda to the Government and warned the Government about launching a democratic mass movement if their demands were not fulfilled. But, when the ABSU realized that the Government of Assam did not care the grievances and problems of the Bodos, it started its mass movement on 2nd March, 1987 for a separate state by holding mass rallies in all district headquarters and important places of Assam. The BPAC, along with the ABSU, jointly launched agitation for the obviating of the Bodo grievances. A huge rally was organised at Judge's field on 12th June 1987, in Guwahati where they started to remonstrate with slogans "Divide Assam Fifty-Fifty" and "No State, No Rest" (Mosahari, 2011).

By the end of the day, when all the participants of the public meeting were returning back to their houses, a section of ralliers were attacked by a group of anti-

Bodo near Tihu Chowk. Consequently, many were injured badly. Because of the showering of stones and lathis, the front glasses of buses were broken down. Amidst this situation, the injured people reached Patacharkuchi and requested the then Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police for necessary help. The injured persons were given immediate treatment by local doctors while three badly injured persons- Sujit Narzary, Subhash Basumatary and one Bus driver were taken to Barpeta Civil Hospital. But due to serious injury on his head, Sujit Narzary a student of Class IX of Kokrajhar Government Higher Secondary School succumbed to death on 13th June, 1987. On that very day, the other two patients Subhash Basumatary and the Bus driver were shifted to Gauhati Medical College. Sujit Narzary was declared as the first martyr of the Bodoland Movement by ABSU President U.N. Brahma and on 13th June, 1987 a 'Protest Day' was observed in protest of the killing to Sujit Narzary in all Bodo populated areas. From then onwards, '12th June' is being observed as 'Martyr Day' by the ABSU to remise the killing of their first martyr (ABSU, 1987).

As time passed, various persistent organising works were done by ABSU in Bodo villages. The ABSU requested all the Bodos to participate in a mass protest held on July 2, 1987. The non-violent mass demonstration was enacted in front of the Janata Bhawan, Dispur. The ABSU submitted a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam. For the fulfillment of the 92 point demands, the ABSU organised mass religious prayers on 21st July, 1987 in all Bodo dominated villages. The people who gathered in the mass prayers took oaths to continue their mass movements vigorously even if they had to sacrifice their lives (Guha, 1991).

On August 10, 1987 the ABSU organized hunger strikes in front of the offices of D.C., S.D.O. and S.D.C. in all Bodo dominated areas. Many ABSU leaders were arrested for this hunger strike movement at Dhubri. Hence, looking at the attitude of

the Government, the ABSU called on a 12 hours bandh in all tribal dominated areas on 27th August, 1987. This was the first bandh called by the ABSU in its separate state movement (Guha, 1991).

On September 9, 1987 the ABSU called 24 hours National Highways bandh. Thousands of Bodos were seen picketing on National Highways. The police interrupted and tried to stop the picketers. The police personnels started blank firing on the crowd. Two persons Kabiram Basumatary and Alendra Basumatary were shot dead at NH 52 that ran through Lailangpara near Rowta Chariali of present Udalguri district. A person named Sabin Goyary lost an eye on the firing. During the bandh, the ABSU volunteers were attacked at Gohpur by non-Bodo persons. On the same day, the bandh was also obstructed at Bongaigaon. The Darrang District Committee of ABSU called 12 hours bandh of Darrang District in protest of brutal killing of the two persons at Lailangpara (Mosahari, 2011).

The movement started to turn to vigorous stage. The ABSU enhanced the hours of bandh in its next phases of the movement. From 24-25th September, the ABSU organised 36 hours Tribal area bandh. But, because of lathi charge and firing by police, Abiram Mosahari was shot dead on NH 31 at Serphangguri and many were seriously injured. Many ABSU volunteers were taken into custody. It was obvious that the Government of Assam was trying to dominate the Mass Movement. Hence, the ABSU organised rallies against the killings and arrest of its volunteers in front of the offices of D.C., S.D.O. and S.D.C. of all the Bodo dominated districts on October 30, 1987. The District Administrators declared section 144 of Cr.P.C. But, sentiments of the Bodos could not be suppressed and the ABSU activists continued the rallies despite of the 144 declaration (Deka, 2014).

Despite suppression by the State Government, the ABSU did not slow down their activities. Hence, the year 1987 witnessed various programmes but the government made no attempts to solve the issues of the Plain Tribals of Assam. Consequently, the year 1988 started off with more programmes to sharpen the course of the movement. On January 4, 1988 a mass rally was organised at Kokrajhar by the ABSU where more than one lakh public were present. Rallies were also carried on in district headquarters of the state. In the meantime, ADC Lakshminath Tamuli was transferred to Kokrajhar from Karbi Anglong. The ABSU called for Kokrajhar District bandh for 12 hours on January 11, 1988, demanding the transfer of the ADC as he had manifested anti-tribal feelings earlier. During the bandh hours, a person named Sarkha Narzary was shot dead by the police at Kasikhotra. On the same day, a student named Ganesh Narzary was poisoned at Tezpur by anti-Bodo group (ABSU, 1987).

At this juncture, a delegation team headed by U.N. Brahma met the President of India Ramaswami Venkataraman on 18 January, 1988 and submitted a memorandum demanding the creation of a Union Territory for the tribal people on the northern part of river Brahmaputra, District Councils on the southern part of Brahmaputra in the tribal dominated areas and inclusion of the Bodos living in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam (Mosahari, 2011).

By this time, the All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF) which was formed on July 14, 1986 became active. It organised a mass rally of women at Kokrajhar in protest of the atrocities by the Police forces. The security personnels raped 11 women in their own homes at night at Bhumka village in Kokrajhar. Hence, on 3rd February, the AATWWF submitted a memorandum to the

Home Minister of India requesting protection for Bodo women from inhuman persecution including gang rape by the state police forces (Chaudhuri, 2004).

As the situation was deteriorating, the United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on 3rd May 1988, urging the Prime Minister to help the creation of a Union Territory as a Homeland for the Scheduled Tribes (Plains). They criticized the policies of the AGP Government and also condemned the breach of trust committed by the PTCA leaders (Basumatary, 2014).

On 27 April 1988, the ABSU declared a 72 hour Assam bandh. The bandh switched into a violent one. The State Government as well as the Assam Police was accused of committing inhumane behaviour as hundreds of ABSU supporters were arrested and were being tortured by the Assam Police. Hence, the ABSU observed 9th May, 1988 as 'Black Day' as a protest against the cruelty of police forces. On the same day, the Assam Police raided a village named Sonal Serfang in Udalguri. In the police firing, a 16 year boy named Purna Daimary was killed and many others were injured. The ABSU demanded judicial inquiry and punishment to the main culprits. On 16 May, a team of four MLAs visited the Sonal Serfang village in order to inquire about the matter and situation of the village. The group reported to the then Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta that the village should not have been raided as they found no reason for the raid. Hence, it requested the Government to take necessary step and action for restoration of normalcy. However, the ABSU called on 12 hours bandh in the tribal areas of Assam on 17th May as a protest against police repression and killings of innocent people (Deka, 2014).

The entire movement of the ABSU had always been against the step-brotherhoodness (which they felt) by the AGP Government and Assamese hegemonism. Hence, in protest against the Government's policies, the ABSU called in a "100 hours Rail cum Rasta Roko" from 22 to 26th May in order to draw attention from the Central Government. Gaining no attention and response from the Government, the ABSU went for another "100 hours Rail Roko and Road Blockade" from 4th June to 8th June, 1988 (Guha, 1991).

Now, as the Government remained deaf at the requests and activities of the ABSU, it organised a mass prayer on 29th June seeking blessing for a Homeland, wherein the ABSU activists promised to either die or get their separate state. On the other hand, the Kokrajhar District Administration declared 144 of Cr.P.C. in order to make the programme a failure. However, the ABSU activists as well as the Bodo mass were least bothered by the section 144 as they believed that they did not take up any violent activities but just prayed to their God. The ABSU did not lose hope inspite of the suppression by the Government and continued its movement in a more vigorous manner. It declared 100 hours bandh from 11th July to 15th July. But, the movement started to turn into a rebellion owing to the response by the Government (Mosahari, 2011).

On the 42nd Independence Day of India, that is 15th August, 1988, the ABSU observed 12 hours Black Day and declared five days bandh of all the Government Offices in the tribal areas from 16th August to 20th August. All this while, as the Bodo Sahitya Sabha had always stayed unseen during the ABSU Movement, it came forward and on 30th August, it submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister referring to Bodo language. During this phase, other ethnic organisations such as Gorkha Liberation Front of Assam (GLFA), All Cachar-Karimganj Students'

Association (ACKSA), All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU) etc., also gave their full moral support to the movement led by the ABSU. Thereafter, the ABSU called seven days bandh from 6th September to 12th September. However, rails were exempted from this bandh (Guha, 1991).

On 3rd October, 1988, three persons namely Phukan Chandra Boro, Chairman of the ABSU Volunteer Force, Anchula Gwra Bodosa, Convener and Assistant General Secretary and Haliram Boro were arrested at Dudhnoi without warrant. Henceforth, the ABSU declared a 12 hour bandh on 11 October demanding the release of the arrested fellow beings as the ABSU believed that the Volunteer Force structured for a peaceful, systematic and well-organized democratic mass movement (Deka, 2014).

Meanwhile, the ABSU adjourned its movement upto its 20th Annual Conference in order to build a favorable environment. This conference was held at Bashbari, Dhubri from 19th December to 22nd December, 1988. In this conference, the ABSU suspended 89 non-political demands out of 92, withholding only three political demands. These demands are as follows:

- 1) Creation of a separate state for the Bodos on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra,
- 2) Creation of Autonomous District Councils for the Bodos and other tribal people on the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra,
- 3) Inclusion of the Bodos living in the Karbi Anglong District into ST (Hills) list of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

In this conference, Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) was formed in order to gain support and participation of the Bodos irrespective of their political

affiliations. The BPAC supported the decision taken by the ABSU in its 20th Conference. It requested the Central Government to initiate negotiation with the ABSU. The United Bodo Nationalist Liberation Front (UBNLF) also extended support for a separate state. The State Government held an informal talk with the ABSU on 11th January, 1989 but no satisfactory conclusion could be sought. Thereafter, the UBNLF met the then Governor of Assam and Meghalaya Bhisma Narayan Singh on 29th January, 1989 and submitted a memorandum demanding separate Bodoland for the Bodos. They also requested that the Central Government should soon negotiate with the ABSU and UBNLF. As no formal negotiation was initiated by the State Government, the ABSU declared a 120 hours Assam bandh from 16th to 21st of February. The cold mass movement started to convert into violent mass movement by now. The revolutionary Boro volunteers destructed wooden bridges, Government buildings and schools were burnt, 19 bombs were exploded and police and CRPF were attacked. As a result, the police also started firing killing nine Boro youths (ABSU, 1987).

By 1989, Kokrajhar district witnessed tremendous terrorist activities. The State Home Minister Bhriku Kumar Phukan visited Kokrajhar and passed strict instructions to maintain law and order. In order to maintain normal life during the Assam bandh on 16th February, special arrangements were made. Police security and Army security was tightened. Eventually, Bhriku Kumar Phukan called the ABSU for negotiation on 28th February. He encouraged them to call off their movement and create congenial atmosphere for discussion. The ABSU denied to sit for the talk as it wanted representation from the Central Government (Deka, 2014).

ABSU and BPAC jointly declared another 175 hours bandh from 2nd March to 9th March, 1989. They warned the Government that they would start agitational

programmes if proper initiatives were not taken up. The then Chief Minister of Assam Prafulla Kumar Mahanta called the ABSU and BPAC for a talk on 11th March. But the ABSU rejected the invitation. On 14th March, a team of BPAC delegates went to Delhi to meet R. Venkataraman, the then President of India and Buta Singh, the then Union Minister and submitted a memorandum regarding the issues of the Bodos. They also met various ministers and discussed with them. The visit of the delegation team to Delhi turned out to be fruitful. During the session of both the houses of Parliament, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, problems of Bodos in Assam were raised. Hence, the news of Bodo issues started spreading in National level. On the other hand, violence continued in Assam. AATWWF called 48 hours Assam bandh on 20-21st March. During this bandh, that is on 20th of March, a bomb was exploded at Kokrajhar where two CRPF jawans lost their lives. On 21st March, sixteen trucks were burnt while going from Kachugaon to Gossaigaon. The situation in Assam started to be worsened. On 23rd March, a bomb was exploded in Sessapani Railway Station because of which eight compartments of a train were derailed by Bodo revolutionaries. Even the police forces did not lack behind in showing toughness towards Bodo people (Mosahari, 2011).

Tension and violence escalated as the movement progressed. Clashes between the ABSU and AGP or PTCA activists evolved communal or inter-tribal violence in the state. Because of the differences between AASU, AGP and ABSU, communal feelings arose and began to spread among different ethnic groups. As such, on 17th April, 1989, the ABSU was invited for a talk by the Home Minister of the state. But the ABSU rejected the invitation. Again, on 29th June, the Chief Minister of Assam invited the ABSU to negotiate on its demand. However, the Government gave the condition that during the tripartite talk between the State Government, Central

Government and the ABSU, the issue of division of Assam should not be mentioned. This proposal was taken by the ABSU as negligence of both the Governments in solving the Bodo issue. Hence, the movement continued in a more vigorous manner. Large number of Bodo people joined the movement. Many Government employees resigned from their jobs in order to join the movement. The movement gained momentum (Deka, 2014).

4.2.2.3.1. First Tripartite Talk

However, it was only on 28th August, 1989 that the ABSU showed interest in joining the tripartite talk. The AASU and PTCA too postulated their participation in the talk. In this regard, the suitability of the presence of AASU in the negotiation was strongly questioned by ABSU-BPAC. On the other hand, animosity had already risen between ABSU and PTCA. Hence, existence of PTCA in the talk would sophisticate the atmosphere. Thus, the first tripartite talk was held on 28th August in Assam Bhawan of New Delhi. ABSU President U.N. Brahma participated in the talk along with 40 members. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the then Chief Minister of Assam and Dr. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, the Labour and Social Welfare Minister of India were present in the talk (ABSU, 1987).

The talk continued in a cordial and friendly manner. The Chief Minister of Assam supplicated the ABSU to stop all forms of violence and create a peaceful atmosphere in the state. Dr. Rajendra Kumari Bajpai also stressed that violence should be stopped and peaceful climate should be created. U.N. Brahma agreed to work for the creation of congenial atmosphere and implore all the ABSU members to work towards the direction. The meeting ended as a casual understanding. No written agreement was signed. Hence, violence again flared up in the state (Deka, 2014).

On September 2, 1989, a Bodo girl, Gaubuthi Boro (8 years) of Hasra village, Darrang was raped by police persons. On the 3rd of September, Lalita Boro (7 years) was again raped by police persons. On the same day, Sabita Brahma (19 years) of Phutkibari village and Riju Narzary (12 years) of Dihira village of Dhubri district were also raped by police persons. On 7th September, Hokhri Boro, a 60 years aged woman was again raped by police persons. As execrable and inhumane incidents were taking place in the State, the ABSU requested the Central Government to withdraw the TADA and Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act to restore immediate normalcy in the state. Nevertheless, deploying police and armies continued. The month of September witnessed agony and violence at its height. Bomb blasting by Bodo revolutionaries at Kumarikata of present Tamulpur district on 6th of September killed three persons, injuring another five which resulted into communal clashes. On 9th September, encounter bechanced between the police force and revolutionaries at Bokajuli of present Tamulpur district where communal clash again occurred. On the 10th of September, 28 people were killed at Bokajuli by Bodo revolutionaries and many were injured. The state witnessed another heinous incident at Bahmalla village of Darrang district on 21st September where a girl named Nobomi Boro (9 years) was raped by police personnels (ABSU, 1987).

By now, the ABSU realised that the second Tripartite Talk was being delayed and hence, it raised its voice on September 22. In response to it, the Central Government announced that the date of the second Tripartite Talk which would be held on 5th of October (Guha, 1991).

4.2.2.3.2. Second Tripartite Talk

The second Tripartite Talk was held on 5th October, 1989 in New Delhi. The ABSU-BPAC recapitulated their demand of creating Bodoland for the Bodos in Assam. But

this statement was interrupted by Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bajpai by stating that further division of states in India was against the policy of the Government of India. The discussion continued for several hours. The Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Mahanta also stated that the Government of Assam would discuss on proper legal, political and administrative arrangements for all sections of people within the state. It was decided that the next tripartite talk would be held in the first part of November.

In November, 1989 the Lok Sabha election was held in which the Congress (I) could not gain absolute power. None of the political party got absolute majority. Hence, National Front Government, a coalition Government was formed on 2nd December, 1989. Vishwanath Pratap Singh became the Prime Minister. After the change in the Central Government, Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta visited New Delhi and met the new Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal and Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and discussed about the Bodo Movement, appealing the Government to send 18 companies of Armed Forces to liquidate the Bodo Movement (Deka, 2014).

By now, the ABSU-BPAC leaders could smell the plan of the Chief Minister, Mahanta. So, they made new strategies to approach the newly formed Government. On 2nd January, 1990 when Prime Minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh visited Assam, the ABSU-BPAC leaders met him in Guwahati and submitted a memorandum, making him aware of the previous two Tripartite Talks and informing about the predicament of the Bodos under the AGP led Government. This step of ABSU-BPAC helped in bringing positive response from the Central Government (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.3.3. Third Tripartite Talk

On 11th January, 1990, the third Tripartite Talk was held in Assam Bhawan, New Delhi between ABSU, BPAC, AATWWF, ABEF, Government of Assam and Government of India. Ram Vilas Paswan, the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister represented the Union Government. In this talk, Mr. Paswan stated that the Government would find out solutions to the problems of the Plain Tribes and the Bodos, in particular, as soon as possible. The delegates from ABSU, BPAC, AATWWF and ABEF reiterated the demand of a separate state of Bodoland. However, the Chief Minister of Assam clearly mentioned that division of Assam cannot be made, but proposed that any legal, political and administrative arrangements would be considered which would be acceptable by all sections of people within the state. The Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister, Mr. Paswan suggested that grievances of the Bodos should be considered, and therefore, representatives from ABSU, BPAC, AATWWF, ABEF and Government of Assam should set a group to discuss on various demands and build concrete measures. The ABSU President Upendra Nath Brahma accepted the suggestion. Hence, the third Tripartite Talk ended with a hope for the Bodos. Further talks would be continued in the next round in February (Guha, 1991).

4.2.2.3.4. Fourth Tripartite Talk

The fourth Tripartite Talk was held on 9th March, 1990 in New Delhi. But the president of ABSU could not attend it due to illness. The ABSU-BPAC was led by Rabiram Boro, the General Secretary of ABSU. In the meet, the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister, Mr. Paswan stated that necessary measures would be taken to solve the issues of the Bodos. He suggested that four representatives of ABSU, four from State Government and two from the Government of India should round up to

create a committee to look into the problems and find effective solutions keeping in view the State and National perspectives. The Chief Minister of Assam embraced the suggestion of the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister. He mentioned that steps were already initiated for the all round development of the tribals in Assam. But the ABSU-BPAC delegates restated their demand for separate Bodoland state, creation of autonomous districts in the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, recognition of Bodo-Kachari of Karbi Anglong as a Scheduled tribe and other demands mentioned in the memorandum dated 28th August, 1989 (ABSU, 1987).

The talk ended with the proposal of the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister to visit the trouble-ruptured areas of Assam in April with a team including the Chief Minister of Assam. But the ABSU-BPAC opposed the inclusion of Chief Minister of Assam. They would co-operate with the Union Minister if he agreed to their suggestion. The next round of discussion was to be held on 18th April, 1990 (ABSU, 1987).

4.2.2.3.5. Violence amidst Talks

On 12th April, 1990, a bomb was exploded between Bengtol and Kajigaon which blew a bus carrying passengers. Seven people died and many were injured. Bodo revolutionaries were suspected to be involved in the explosion by the police and as such neighbouring Bodo villages were raided. On 13th April, encounter took place between the police forces and Bodo revolutionaries on the National Highway near Karigaon of Kokrajhar district. The Bodo revolutionaries scraped the rail line of Sessapani Railway Station because of which five compartments of a running train were derailed. 21 passengers lost their lives and several others were injured. The violence by the Bodo revolutionaries proved that they were not satisfied by the results of the tripartite talks (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.3.6. Fifth Tripartite Talk

The fifth Tripartite Talk was held on 18th April, 1990 in New Delhi. The ABSU President, U.N. Brahma reiterated the three demands: creation of a separate state, creation of autonomous districts in the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, inclusion of Bodo-Kachari of Karbi Anglong into Scheduled tribe (Hills) list. Ram Vilas Paswan, the Union Minister clearly expressed that creation of a separate state was not possible. He, rather suggested that a committee could be formed comprising of representatives from the three parties to plan and devise an administrative, political and legal arrangement for decentralisation of powers which would be acceptable to all sections of people living in Assam. The Chief Minister of Assam stated that creation of autonomous districts in the southern bank of the Brahmaputra was not acceptable, but inclusion of Bodo-Kacharis of Karbi Anglong District into Scheduled tribe (Hills) list of the Indian Constitution was within the jurisdiction of the Government of India (Guha, 1991).

The suggestion by the Union Minister was accepted and a committee was constituted named as “Committee on Bodo Issues”. The Secretary, Welfare, Government of India was the convener of the committee, Joint Secretary (North-East), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India became the co-convener. Special Commissioner (Home & Political), Commissioner and Secretary (WPT & BC), Secretary (Home & Political) represented the Government of Assam. Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary, Adviser of ABSU and Chief Convener of BPAC, Rabiram Brahma, General Secretary of ABSU and Satyendra Nath Brahma Choudhury, Legal Adviser of BPAC represented the ABSU-BPAC. This committee was consigned to suggest suitable and acceptable solutions to the political and developmental problems of the Bodos and other Plain Tribes of Assam within the framework of Indian

Constitution and submit its report on the next Tripartite Talk to be held on 2nd July 1990 (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.3.7. Death of Upendra Nath Brahma

It was on 1st May, 1990 when the Great Revolutionary soul, Upendra Nath Brahma breathed for the last time. He was suffering from Malignant Neoplasms of the testis and was hospitalised in Tata Memorial Cancer Institute, Mumbai. The revolutionary soul guided his colleagues even from the hospital. It was a great loss to the Bodo community as their great leader left this materialistic world with a heavy heart filled with the dream of Bodoland. His death at the age of 34 was a lesion to the fate of the Bodos. After his death, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary was made the President of the ABSU (Narzari, 2007).

4.2.2.3.8. Sixth Tripartite Talk

The Sixth Tripartite Talk was held on 2nd July, 1990 in New Delhi. Shri P.S. Krishnan, Secretary, Welfare (Government of India) and Convener of “Committee on Bodo Issues” presented the report and explained its salient features. Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister, Mr. Paswan stated that although the report mentioned about the problems of land, employment, language and solutions of them but it did not mention any concrete solution to the political demands. He asserted that the Government of India and the Government of Assam had to go through the report again and draw up their views. The new president of ABSU, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary affirmed that separate state of Bodoland would be achieved anyhow for the security and survival of Bodo identity. He also requested the Government of India to develop a just solution to the political and other issues of Bodoland. The next round of talk was fixed for 3rd August, 1990 to continue the discussion (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.3.9. Seventh Tripartite Talk

The Seventh Tripartite Talk which was supposed to be held on 3rd August, 1990 could not be carried on the said date. It was postponed to 8th August. The Chief Minister of Assam stated that decisions regarding the problems as reported by the “Committee on Bodo Issues” were taken by the State Government and Panchayati Raj could be pondered in all Plains Districts of Assam so that powers could be decentralised and devoluted with special provision for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, granting them scope to deal with developmental matters. Although the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister agreed to the suggestions of the Chief Minister of Assam, the President of ABSU denied it. He stressed on the three political points. The ABSU-BPAC representatives stated that they were not interested to continue their discussion with the Government of Assam anymore as it showed little interest in solving their political demands. Rather, it urged the Central Government to deal with their problems. Hence, another round of talk was scheduled to be conducted on 11th September, 1990 (Deka, 2014).

4.2.2.3.10. Eight Tripartite Talk

The eight Tripartite Talk was held on 11 September, 1990 in the Assam House, New Delhi. As the ABSU-BPAC rejected the proposal of the Assam Government, the Union Minister suggested separate discussion with the ABSU-BPAC and the State Government. Hence, the meeting was postponed to 13th September, 1990.

After, separate negotiations with the ABSU-BPAC and the State Government, the Union Minister gave a proposal to which both the parties agreed. However, the ABSU-BPAC mentioned that the areas to be included within “Bodoland” should be taken into account and preferences should be given to political autonomy in order to safeguard the cultural, linguistic, political and self-determination rights. Hence, the

Government of India suggested the creation of a Three Member Committee of Experts to adjudicate the areas of the Bodos and other Plain Tribes on the north bank of river Brahmaputra and suggest about the autonomy, legislative, administrative and financial powers to be empowered to them. The report by the Three Member Committee of Experts was to be submitted within forty-five days after consulting with people of every ethnic group residing in the region. The proposal of the Union Minister was accepted by the State Government as well as the representatives of ABSU-BPAC (Guha, 1991).

4.2.2.3.11. Fratricidal incidents within the Bodos

Unpredicted incidents took place within the Bodo community on 20th September, 1990. Thobra, a supporter of PTCA was killed by some evil persons. This created a feeling of revenge amongst PTCA supporters. Hence, they attacked a bus filled with passengers at Ramphalbl Tiniali, Kokrajhar and cut the passengers with a knife, killing eight of them and leaving many injured. On 27th September, Bihuram Boro, the then General Secretary of Bodo Sahitya Sabha was shot dead by some miscreants. The feeling of hate and grudge among the Bodos resulted in the death of many social and innocent people. This arose concern among the Bodo leaders about their fate in the coming days. Consequently, the ABSU-BPAC sat for remonstrance at Boat Club, New Delhi insisting the Government to solve the Bodo issues as soon as possible (ABSU, 1987).

On 21st October, the Union Labour and Social Welfare Minister, Ram Vilas Paswan visited the unrest areas of the Bodos along with his wife, Rina Paswan. Despite of this visit, no solid result could be achieved. Hence, a demonstration was again scheduled by the ABSU-BPAC on 3rd January, 1991. A huge number of Bodo people participated in this protest, squeaking for a separate state of Bodoland.

Meanwhile, the “Three Member Committee of Experts” on Bodo issues was formed by the Government of India on 25th February, 1991. Dr. Bhupendra Singh (IAS, Retd.) was the Chairman. Dr. K.S. Singh (Director General, Anthropological Survey of India) was the member and Shri A.M. Gokhale (Joint Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of India) was the member secretary. The members of the Committee visited Kokrajhar on 8th April, 1991 to investigate the situation and problems of the Bodo people (Mosahari, 2011).

In contrast to it, violence did not seem to stop in the region. On 26th August, Samar Brahma Choudhury, a distinguished Bodo politician was shot to dead by some malefactors along with his son, Horagdao. On 1st November, a person named Makhanlal Das was killed. Another three men and two women were also killed. As a consequence, the army entered suspected Bodo villages in search of the miscreants. Bipin Basumatary of Janali Laphakhongkor village and Subhas Basumatary of Soraibil village were arrested. Few were also arrested from Kochugaon, Raikhunbari and Boirali villages (Mosahari, 2011).

As the situation on the proposed Bodoland region was worsening, the ABSU-BPAC leaders visited New Delhi on 10th November, 1991 and met the Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao to discuss about the “Three Member Committee of Experts” on Bodo issues. On the other hand, the leaders of Bodoland Legislative Party (BLP) met the Governor of Assam, Loknath Mishra on 11th November regarding the turmoil situation in the region. They urged the Governor to withdraw the Operation Rhino installed in Kokrajhar. They threatened to stay on a hunger strike if Operation Rhino was not withdrawn immediately (Deka, 2014).

The “Three Member Committee of Experts” visited Assam to understand and investigate the Bodo issues. The experts reached Tezpur on 24th November, Dhemaji on 25th November, Lakhimpur on 26th November and Jonai on 27th November. They returned back to New Delhi on 28th November. The ABSU-BPAC again met the Prime Minister of India again on 7th December, 1991 to talk about the problems faced by the Bodos. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao insured them to solve the issues as fast as possible (Deka, 2014).

4.2.2.3.12. Nineth Tripartite Talk

The Nineth Tripartite Talk was held on 7th January 1992 in Assam Bhawan, New Delhi. This was the first meet after P.V. Narasimha Rao became the Prime Minister of India and Hiteswas Saikia the Chief Minister of Assam. M.M. Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home represented the Cental Government whereas the Chief Minister of Assam, Hiteswar Saikia represented the State Government. ABSU President, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary along with other leaders was present on behalf of ABSU-BPAC. The ABSU President repeated their three political demands and demanded its solution by 31st January, 1992. At this, M.M. Jacob, Union Minister of State for Home urged the ABSU-BPAC leaders to have patience until the submission of the report by “Three Member Committee of Experts”. Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary, the ABSU President requested the Union Government to step forward with firm proposal within 31st January that could be discussed in the tenth round of talk. He also requested and expected the presence of the Prime Minister, Union Home Minister and Union Minister of State for Home in the next talk (Guha, 1991).

4.2.2.3.13. Violence between Negotiation

Amidst the talk and negotiation between the State Government, Central Government and ABSU-BPAC, violence did not seem to come to a full stop. On 24th February, 1992, some malefactors shot six persons in the proposed Bodoland region. On 14th March, the General Secretary of Darrang District ABSU, Kamal Kumar Basumatary was killed. The ABSU-BPAC reprovved such incident and requested the Government to punish the culprits (Mosahari, 2011).

By this time, the “Three Member Committee of Experts” on Bodo issues submitted their report on 30th March, 1992. However, tension continued. On 12th April, 1992 the Panbari village was burnt to ashes. The Bodo Legislative Party visited the homeless people and requested the Government of Assam to provide necessary assistance as soon as possible. On 6th May, ABSU activist Roma Boro was shot down. On 9th May, a person from Serphangguri village, Kokrajhar was killed. Seeing these incidences, the ABSU-BPAC urged the State Government to find the culprits and punish them. They voiced out through Press Conference that Assam could never be a place of serenity until Bodo issues were solved.

The burning situation of Assam attracted the eyes of all political parties of Assam. On 20th May, 1992 All Political Parties Meet was held in Guwahati to discuss about the intensity of violence and find immediate solutions to the Bodo problems (Deka, 2014).

4.2.2.3.14. Tenth Tripartite Talk

The Tenth Tripartite Talk was held on 23rd May, 1992 in New Delhi. The Central Government gave a period of one month to the Government of Assam to endow the well defined picture of Bodo areas on the north bank of Brahmaputra. As the

Government of Assam was not ready to accept the proposal, the ABSU-BPAC presented the list of Bodo villages within the demanded area and stood for self-rule autonomy with political and financial powers. Thereafter, the State Government had no option but to take a one month time to go through the proposal of the Central Government (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.3.15. Hunger Strike by ABSU-BPAC

The ABSU-BPAC sat on a Hunger Strike in front of the Assam Legislative Assembly from 6th June to 9th June, 1992. Bodo organisations from all the districts of Assam took part in the strike. It was a non-violent, democratic protest due to the delay actions of the State and Central Government.

The ABSU-BPAC met the Prime Minister of India in Guwahati on 3rd July, 1992 on his visit to Assam. They speculated that the Government of Assam was not showing any interest to solve the problems of the Bodos and hence, requested the Prime Minister to take initiatives under his guidance. On 14th July, a team of eleven members of ABSU-BPAC again met the Prime Minister in New Delhi and appealed him to take rapid steps towards the solution of Bodo problems. On 28th July, the ABSU-BPAC organized another Hunger Strike at District and sub-divisional levels manifesting resentment against the delay in solving the issues of the Bodos and protested against the deployment of Army in Bodo areas (ABSU, 1987).

On 15th August, 1992 after the hoisting of the National Flag, the Chief Minister of Assam, Hiteswar Saikia spoke about the demand of the Bodo people. He stated that out of 4443 Bodo villages, 730 villages would not be included in the proposed Bodoland. On 18th August, the Chief Minister sat with the leaders of ABSU-BPAC and discussed about the map of Bodoland. On 21st August, he announced that

along with 730 villages, 109 Tea Estates would be excluded from the proposed Bodoland area (Guha, 1991).

As the ABSU-BPAC leaders felt that the State Government was fluctuating from their demands, they staged demonstration at Boat Club, New Delhi on 14th and 15th September. This programme was attended by large number of people. They protested against the stupefying action of the State Government and demanded the solution of their problems as fast as possible.

In the mean time, when the leaders of ABSU-BPAC were busy in stating their demands in a non-violent manner, the Bodo outfits showered bullets on police personnels at Sesapani and Dangtol Railway Station on 4th October, 1992, killing five of them. The extremists also took away the weapons of the police personnels. This business of the extremists continued. They snatched guns from two Assam Battallion Cops at Kasikhotra, Kokrajhar. Another two guns were pounced from Forest Battallions of Barbadha Forest Range Office (Deka, 2014).

4.2.2.3.16. Eleventh Tripartite Talk

The Eleventh Tripartite Talk was held on 19th October, 1992 in New Delhi. On behalf of the State Government, Tapan Lal Barua along with other high level officials attended the talk. From the Central Government's side, neither the Prime Minister nor other Ministers were present. Even the Chief Minister of Assam was not to be seen. The talk resulted fruitless (Mosahari, 2011).

Seeing the negligence of Central Government and State Government, a Peace Rally was organised by the ABSU-BPAC on the National highways on 28th October, 1992. On 11th November, in the meeting of North East Region Consultative Committee, the Union Home Minister, Shankarrao Bhavrao Chavan stated that there

would be no division of Assam anymore. This statement of the Home Minister escalated disconcertment among the Bodo people. On that very day, powerful bombs blasted in Guwahati, one near Paltan Bazaar Police Station and other in the campus of the MLA Hostel (old hostel) of Dispur, leading to the death of 25 people and many injured (Basumatary, 2014).

On 17th November, the ABSU-BPAC called a 12 hours Assam Bandh in protest against the short-sightedness of the Government of Assam. On the other hand, the situation in the state worsened with the statement of the Chief Minister of Assam that out of 4443 villages, 1500 villages would not be included in the proposed Bodoland. He further stated that instead of Bodoland state, an Autonomous Region would be given to the Bodos. This resulted into the declaration of 1001 hours bandh by ABSU-BPAC with effect from 21st November, 1992. Large scale violence broke out during the bandh. Looking at the dreary situation, Shankarrao Bhavrao Chavan, the Union Home Minister called upon the ABSU-BPAC leaders to end up the bandh, assuring them to solve the Bodo problems with appropriate measures (ABSU, 1987).

In the interim, when ABSU-BPAC leaders were working in a peaceful manner, listening to the proposals of the Government, three MLAs- Parmeswar Brahma, Tajendra Narzary and Pramila Rani Brahma were arrested pertaining to the bomb blasts in the campus of the MLA Hostel, Dispur. Hagrama Mohilary (former Chief Executive Member of BTC) who was studying in Shillong was also arrested. The police persons arrested many other people suspecting them to have link in the bomb blasts (Basumatary, 2014).

4.2.2.4. Creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council

The intensity of the Bodoland agitation brought miseries to the common people of the region. However, after prolonged series of talks held among Government of India, Government of Assam and the leaders of ABSU and BPAC, the Memorandum of Settlement popularly known as Bodo Accord was signed on 20th February 1993 by signatories such as Mr. Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary¹, Mr. Rabiram Boro², Mr. Subhas Basumatary³, Mr. K.S. Rao⁴, Sri Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam and Sri Rajesh Pilot, the then Union Minister of the State for Home Affairs, with an agreement for the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary was appointed as the Chief of the interim council of the newly formed BAC under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution (Memorandum of Settlement, 1993).

4.2.2.5. Fourth phase: 1993-2003

The objective of the Memorandum of Settlement (Bodo Accord) was to provide maximum autonomy within the framework of the Constitution to the Bodos for social, economic, educational, ethnic and cultural advancement (Memorandum of Settlement, 1993). However, it is worth mentioning that the formation of BAC could not provide satisfaction among all sections of the Bodos as it did not seem to fulfil the aspirations of the Bodos. It could not demarcate clear-cut boundary. Moreover, non-withdrawal of cases, no rehabilitation to the victims and no compensation to the martyr's families was provided by the State Government. Hence, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary resigned from the Council on 16th November, 1993. Prem Singh Brahma was

¹ Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary was the then President of ABSU.

² Rabiram Boro was the then General Secretary of ABSU.

³ Subhas Basumatary was the Chairman of BPAC.

⁴ K.S. Rao was the Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

appointed as the Chief of the BAC by the State Government on 20th November, 1993 (Mosahari, 2011).

On 10th December, 1993, a Notification regarding the demarcation of the boundary of the BAC area was issued by the Government of Assam. The villages to be included in the BAC were published via Notification No. TAD/BAC/26/93/18. Total 2570 villages extending from Western border of Kokrajhar upto Eastern border of Majbat Constituency⁵ of Darrang District and covering an area of 5186 square kilometers were included in the Council (Prakash, 2007). Villages with 50 percent tribal population, villages with less than 50 percent tribal population, 25 Tea Gardens and Reserved Forests were also included in the BAC for the purpose of providing contiguous area (Memorandum of Settlement, 1993). The ABSU demanded inclusion of five hundred more villages in the BAC. They also wanted the inclusion of Sonitpur, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur districts. Hence, the demarcation did not satisfy the Bodo leaders and revolutionaries which caused lots of violence in the post accord era (Brahma, 2013).

Although, the common masses expected that the creation of Council would restore peace and non-violence in the region, violence once again showed up its face in the BAC region. The insurgent group of the Bodos known as Boro Security Force (Bd.SF), which was later renamed as NDFB⁶ started to create unrest in the state of Assam. It was formed under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary in October 3, 1986. It aimed to free the Bodo people from the domination and suppression of the Indian Government by creating a Sovereign Boroland (Bodoland) in the areas of north of the Brahmaputra river. The organisation denounced the Accord and started creating chaos

⁵ Presently, Majbat Constituency falls in the District of Udalguri.

⁶ Bd.SF rechristened itself as National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) on November 25, 1994.

and destruction taking the path of extensive violence. Its main targets were the supporters of the Bodo Accord. It also targeted non-Bodos of the region (Mosahari, 2011).

The Bodos, by now, started to feel insecure about their identity and survival. This resulted into a massive ethnic conflict in the western part of the northern bank of Brahmaputra Valley. It was on July 1994 that an ethnic riot broke out between Bodo and Bengali speaking Muslims rendering the deaths of over hundred (officially 68) and internal displacement of 70,000 people. The BAC administration and the State Government failed to maintain law and order in the BAC region. As a result, the region again witnessed violence at its height (Barpujari, 1998).

On the 27th Annual Conference of the ABSU held at Kokrajhar from 2nd-4th July, 1995, Swmbla Basumatary became the President of ABSU. It is to be mentioned that after the Bodo Accord was signed and Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary became the Chief of the interim Council, Garla Batha Basumatary was selected as the President of ABSU. By now, it has already been more than two years since the signing of the accord, but a clear-cut demarcation of the BAC boundary was not formulated. Furthermore, various clauses and aspects of the Accord were not fulfilled. There also arose issue of the transfer of tribal land patta to illegal immigrants by the government. Hence, in the 28th Annual Conference of the ABSU held at Langhin Tiniali (Karbi Anglong) from 3rd to 5th March, 1996, the ABSU disowned the accord and decided to re-start the movement for a separate state of Bodoland (Guha, 1991).

In the month of May 1996, three beheaded bodies were recovered dressed in *Dokhowna*⁷ girls near an Adivasi⁸ dominated village in Kokrajhar district, resulting in Bodo-Santhal ethnic riot. This riot caused loss of huge number of lives and properties of both the communities. It also led to the displacement of 42,214 families (OKDISCD, 2008).

On 18 June, 1996, when ideological differences was going on between the ABSU and the NDFB, the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) came into existence as another insurgent outfit with the demand of a separate state of Bodoland within Indian Territory. They indulged in bombing, extortion, destruction of railway tracks and many other unlawful activities. The ideological differences between different Bodo organisations led to fragmentation within Bodos and fratricidal conflict resulting in the internal killings of both the militant outfits and causing murder of prominent Bodo figures including Swmbla Basumatary, the then President of ABSU, Bineswar Brahma, the then President of Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1996 (Banarjee and Roy, 2010).

After the death of Swmbla Basumatary, Bipin Goyary⁹ was selected as the President in charge of the ABSU on 31st July, 1996. Later on, Urkhao Gwra Brahma became the President of ABSU. Then onwards, Urkhao Gwra Brahma led the Movement for the separate state in a efficient manner.

On 15th August, 1996, when H.D. Dev Gowda, the then Prime Minister of India, made a statement on the occasion of Independence Day in favour of creating three states namely Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttarakhand, the ABSU saw a ray of

⁷Traditional dress of Bodo women.

⁸A term used to identify Santhal, Oraon and Munda communities.

⁹Bipin Goyary was the Vice President of the ABSU at the time when Swmbla Basumatary was the President.

hope on the fulfillment of their demand. They met the Prime Minister on his visit to Guwahati on 25th October and submitted a memorandum demanding a separate state of Bodoland. A delegation team of ABSU also met Ram Vilas Paswan, the then Union Railway Minister and requested him to extend his support in solving the Bodoland issue (Mosahari, 2011).

With the passage of time, when nothing was done by the Government, the Bodo extremists embarked into violent activities. Several bridges on Highways and on railway tracts were blown. A powerful bomb-blast was made in the Brahmaputra Passenger Mail on 30th December, 1996. Extreme violence addled the north valley of Brahmaputra in Assam. The Bodo militants began an ethnic cleansing campaign in the valley. Large number of people were killed and many were homeless (Nath, 2003). According to United Nations' High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) and Human Rights Feature (HRF) report March 16, 2001, there were two lakh internally displaced people living in 78 relief camps in Kokrajhar district.

With the ongoing violence in the Bodoland region, extremist outfits like the Adivasi Cobra Militants of Assam (ACMA) and Birsa Munda emerged from the Adivasi community protesting the policies of Bodoland movement and in demand of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and autonomy for the Adivasi community (Chhetry, 2015). The Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), a militia outfit from Koch-Rajbonshi community began to demand a separate Kamatapur state. The Minority United Liberation Tiger of Assam (MULTA), an extremist outfit endeavoured its strength for the protection of Bengali-speaking Muslim. Similarly, the Bengali Liberation Tiger Force (BeLT) also sprang out for the Bengali Hindu community. Hence, the Bodoland region became one of the epicentres of ethnic violence (Chhetry, 2018).

At one end, violence shook the region whereas on the other end, the ABSU leaders were trying hard to solve their problems in a non-violent way. On January 18, 1997, a team of ABSU went to New Delhi and met the Union Home Minister, Indrajit Gupta, requesting him to solve the Bodo problems. On 20th February, they met Atal Bihari Bajpayee¹⁰ and discussed with him the various problems of the Bodos, urging him to find a policy to sort out their problems.

Violent activities by the militant groups kept on crawling in the region. In the month of May, 1997, many Gorkhas were killed by the NDFB militants as a kind of retaliation against non-Bodos, settled in the BAC area. They were gunned down when they failed to pay ransom as demanded by the outfit. Apart from this, in Nalbari (presently Baksa), many women were also killed in the attacks of bullets as a result of inter-ethnic clash in Baraliapar village (Choudhury, 2020).

It was on 23rd August, 1997, a talk was held between the ABSU and K. Padmana Bhaiya, the Secretary, Home Affairs of the Central Government at Dispur. This talk resulted to pave way towards a tripartite talk between the ABSU, Government of Assam and Government of India on September 18, 1997 in New Delhi.

By the time when the ABSU was leaving no stone unturned to solve its issues, another extreme violent riot between the Bodos and Santhals occurred on May 1998, which caused more loss of lives and properties than before. NDFB attacked the Adivasi villages in Sapakata and as a result of which the Adivasi miscreants killed three Bodo people on September 15, 1998. By this time, Kokrajhar became the hub of violence (Deka, 2014).

¹⁰When H.D. Dev Gowda was the Prime Minister of India, Bajpayee was the opposition leader. After hearing the issues of the Bodos, he affirmed to help them in future.

Under such tense situation, the ABSU recreated the Bodo People's Committee (BPAC) with the vision of carrying out the Movement vigorously¹¹. On 13 November, 1998, a tripartite negotiation took place between the ABSU-BPAC, the Central Government and the State. When both the Governments did not seem to bring solution to Bodo problems, the ABSU threatened to resume the movement.

With no response from Government authorities, the ABSU started the movement again for homeland and organized events like Bandhs, rally, hunger strike in Assam. Now, as the NDFB and BLT had different ideological views for the creation of Bodoland, the Bodo youths as well as the mass supported the BLT as the latter was struggling for the creation of Bodoland within India. They believed that the armed struggle by the BLT was the only alternative to achieve their goal. Therefore, the movement leaped to extreme violence under the complete control of the BLT. Because of violence, the law and order situation in BAC was paralyzed (Mosahari, 2011).

4.2.2.6. Creation of Bodoland Territorial Council

In the year 1999, the BLT declared ceasefire letting the Central and State Governments to take decisions over the issue of Bodoland. But NDFB remained adamant. Hence, in order to prevent clashes between different communities and stop the violence in Assam, the Governments held a meeting involving both tribal and non-tribal organisations of Assam on 6 and 7 December, 2001. The Bodo Council demanded the extension of the sixth schedule for the solution of the Bodo problems. Thereafter, on December 30, 2001, the State Government declared the extension of

¹¹After the signing of the Bodo Accord, BPAC was dissolved. The BPAC played the vital role of mobilizing the general mass, leading them to raise their voices and fight for a separate state of Bodoland until the signing of the Bodo Accord. Hence, the ABSU felt the need of reforming the BPAC to carry out the Movement.

the sixth schedule to the BAC with protection to non-tribal groups by January, 2002. But, the inclusion of 93 additional villages and demand for the reservation of 30 seats for the Tribals out of 40 seats and 10 seats open for the non-Bodos in the Council became an obstacle for the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), for which the Bodos were struggling. Therefore, the creation of BTC was barricaded as the State Government was not able to convince the All Party¹² Meet to include 93 more villages along with 3070 villages (Deka, 2014).

On 20 January, a round of tripartite talk was held between the Central Government, State Government and the BLT in New Delhi. In the talk, 20 villages out of 93 villages were included in the proposed Bodoland area. Regarding the allocation of seats in the proposed Council, the Government proposed two options:

- a) Thirty seats for tribals and ten seats for non-tribals or
- b) Thirty seats for tribals, five seats for non-tribals, five seats for general communities and six members to be nominated by State Government.

The BLT went with the second option after mutual understanding with the State Cabinet. This unlocked the way towards the formation of Bodo Council. Thus, after six years of cogent arms struggle of the BLT, a series of talks held between the Government of India, State Government and the BLT came to a climax on February 10, 2003 with an accord through the signing of a Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) in New Delhi by the signatories like Mr. Hagrama Mohilary, the BLT Chairman, Mr. R.C.A. Jain, secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India, Mr. P.K. Dutta, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, Sri Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam and Shri L.K. Advani, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of

¹² Major Political Parties of Assam such as AGP, Congress, CPI and CPM.

India. As a result, the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was created under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution within the state of Assam with jurisdiction over four new districts namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri (Memorandum of Settlement, 2003).

The formation of BTC provided the Bodos wider context towards empowerment and advancement of their community as the accord committed to fulfil economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and to speed up the infrastructural development in BTC area (Mosahari, 2011).

In spite of these provisions, violence did not seem to come to an end in the region. The violence grounded to the question of ‘insider’ vs. ‘outsiders’ sparked out in 2008. The riot between the Bodos and Bengali Speaking Muslims killed 100 and displaced 2,00,000 people. The BTC seemed failed to provide security to non-Bodos as same scenario was visible in the year 2012. The riots of July and August 2012 left around 96 dead and more than 4,00,000 were displaced (Goswami, 2012).

On May 1, 2014, three persons were gunned down in Baksa district and two children were injured. A reporter of Dainik Janashadharan, Dhananjay Nath was fired at and was injured in Kokrajhar. In Gossaigaon, eight people were killed and three persons were seriously injured in the firing. On May 2, miscreants attacked the village named Kanke Khagrabari comprising of 65 families. The village existed near Narayanguri village opposite to Beki river. When shooting, arsoning and killing started, some people jumped into the Beki river but the miscreants fired there too. Even women and children were not spared. Hence, the area was surrounded with grief

and pain. It is believed that the cause of the violence was voting for a non-Bodo candidate in the Loksabha election 2014 (Choudhury, 2014).

4.2.2.7. Creation of Bodoland Territorial Region

The problems in the Bodoland region which had been continuing for several years seem to come to pause with the signing of the Bodoland Territorial Region Agreement in January 2020 by the Government of India, Government of Assam, ABSU President Pramod Boro (now the CEM of BTR), Hagrama Mohilary, the then CEM of BTC, and the NDFB factions. With the signing of this accord, the area under the BTC jurisdiction officially came to be known as Bodoland Territorial Region. On the first anniversary of the accord, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah said that a number of projects have been initiated for the Bodo region and efforts are being made promptly for their development. Hereof, the region hopes to shine with all round economic and sustainable peace and development.

4.3. Conclusion

The Bodoland region has been an epicentre of ethnic violence in the Indian map of ethnic-conflict. The feeling of discrimination and a deep sense of insecurity led to such violence in the region. The problem of insurgency and ethnic conflicts has led to the internal displacement and migration of many communities from the region. Even after the BAC and BTC accords were signed, violence did not come to a full stop in the region. Conflicts between various ethnic communities brought gloominess and darkness in the region. The violent ethno-mobilisation and conflicts have greatly damaged the economic and social lives of the people of the Bodoland region. However, with the signing of the BTR Accord, the region looks forward to irradiate with peace and development.

CHAPTER-5

FROM CONFLICT TO ACCORDS AND LEADERSHIP: FIELD NARRATIVES AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

People are prompted and motivated to turn to agitation and frequently political and radical fueled by the concept of self-determination. Thus, the rise of ethno-nationalism among the Bodo people was the cause of the violence in Bodoland. The Bodo community in Assam felt discrimination, deprivation and injustice; these sentiments served as the inspiration for the Bodoland Movement. The Movement was driven by the fear of losing one's ethnic identity. The Movement passed through several stages.

The Bodoland Movement was organized using both non violent and aggressive tactics. While the PTCA and ABSU employed non-violent means of ethnic mobilization, militant groups such as NDFB and BLTF opted for aggressive strategies. While the concerns of Bodos were partially resolved by the combined effects of violence and peace, the region's normalcy was upset, resulting in the destruction of common people's property and lives. The Bodos were forced to relinquish their lands to the immigrants prior to the 1993 Bodo Accord. The Bodos, who identify themselves as the 'sons of the soil' began to have doubts about their identity and existence. Furthermore, they realized that their language and culture were in danger and would vanish as a result of the declaration of Assamese as the official language of Assam. In light of this, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was primarily responsible for sending a memorandum to Assam Government, which ultimately had positive results and allowed for the introduction of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in areas dominated by the Bodo people.

Under ABSU and PTCA leadership, the drive for linguistic identity made significant progress towards the demand for a Union Territory. However, the ABSU stopped supporting the PTCA when it did not meet the expectations of the Bodos and eventually broke up into two separate organizations. But after BPAC was established, the ABSU gained momentum and succeeded in creating the first Bodo Accord in 1993, with the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) within Assam. Still, Bodo people's desire was not fulfilled by the establishment of BAC. Thus, ABSU-BPAC revived the Movement by organizing the general public and staging many protests, yearning for the satisfaction of their demands that remained unfulfilled even after the Bodo Accord (1993) was signed. However, violent tactics were employed by extreme organizations like the BLT and NDFB to pressurize the government into granting their demands. Following multiple discussions, a new Bodo Accord was ultimately signed in 2003, establishing BTC as a territorial council in the state of Assam with jurisdiction over the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). At first, the region consisted of four districts; but, as of late, it has included an additional district.

The Bodos had to pay a great deal for the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council, despite the fact that it caused them to feel contempt. Throughout the Movement, not only the Bodos but also the non-Bodos suffered. Along with their livelihood, many people lost their lives. Several families were compelled to relocate from their birthplaces. In addition to Government facilities, private properties were reduced to rubble. The entire time frame appears to be a horrifying incident when compared to the plight of the majority. The creation of BTC did not appear to stop violence, harm to the economy, to human resources, or to society at large.

5.2. Analysis and Interpretation of data

The goal of the current study is to comprehend how people perceive and make decisions depending on their understanding of and familiarity with Bodo conflicts (Bodoland Movement). Based on information gathered from structured interviews and schedules, this attempt is being made. Variables including sex, age, religion, occupation, language and place of residence(s) were used to collect data. Similar to this, some important factors include respondents' opinions on ethnic relations in their communities, the quantity of ethnic conflicts they have witnessed and their experiences, whether they are directly or indirectly affected, during these conflicts. An effort is made to determine whether the ethnic conflicts have changed anything, particularly in the social, political and economic spheres of the lives of those who live in the area. Additionally, an attempt has been made to comprehend the actions of militants, the function of the Government and its agencies, such as the army and police, as well as the contribution made by ABSU and other student organizations to Bodoland region. Therefore, this chapter has made an effort to determine, based on the variables, the effects of Bodo disputes on people's lives, as well as their experiences during the Bodoland Movement and the circumstances following the signature of numerous Accords.

5.3. Composition of Respondents

There were 300 interviewees in total, however only 250 samples could be used because the remaining 50 interviews could not be conducted owing to unavoidable circumstances. A variety of criteria are taken into consideration while preparing the sample size selection, including the number of male and female (sex), age, religion, occupation and language. The Bodoland Region's five districts produced the responders. However, due to time constraints and the size of the territory, it was not

possible to cover every part of the five districts. However, extra attention was paid to include respondents from areas affected by violence created, ranging from ethnic conflict(s), militancy, to crimes committed by army and police forces, in addition to those from the easy-to-reach area. Speakers from various groups, including Bodo, Assamese, Bengali, Gorkhali/Nepali and Hindi, were included as respondents throughout the field work to get their perceptions and opinions regarding their own experiences and remarks on the current circumstances. The following areas are covered: Runikhata, Garubhasa, Bengthol, Kajalgaon, Deusure (Chirang); Mushalpur, Subankhata, Nikasi (Baksa); Debargaon, Serfanguri, Kokrajhar town (Kokrajhar); Dhansirighat, Rowta, Udalguri, Harisingha, Tangla, Paneri, Hatigarh, Dimakuchi, Suklai, Khagrabri (Udalguri district); Tamulpur, Sashipur, Pahadhpur and Kumarikata (Tamulpur district). A small number of employees from several organizations, including the Surrendered United Gorkha Peoples' Organization, Assam Adivasi Students' Association, Assam Gorkha Sammelan, All Bodo Students' Union, Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Assam Gorkha Students' Union were interviewed during the survey. Leaders in politics and former militants who entered politics after surrendering were also interviewed.

5.3.1. Structure of the respondents on the basis of Sex

The sample population consists of 78 female and 172 male members. Putting emphasis on sex, their way of understanding and their experiences in various contexts are considered to be significant. The disparity in perception between male and female respondents was clearly visible. The female members were frequently hesitant to answer the questions. To participate in the interview, the female members were persuaded to do so by the male members. In fact, there were occasions when both male and female respondents were hesitant to speak up because they still feel the

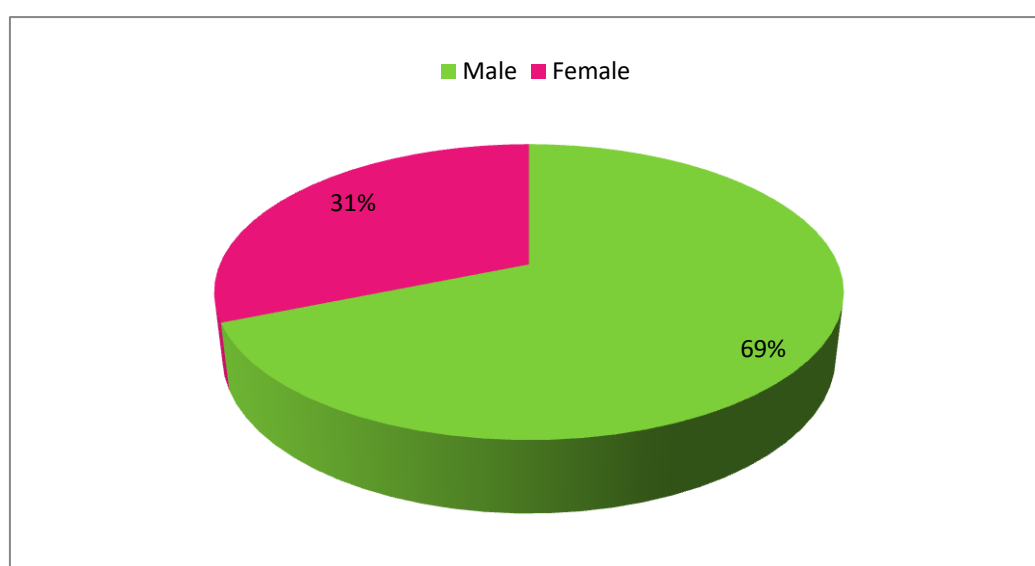
movement as something like a horror novel. Nonetheless, the work may provide some insightful perspectives for the situation's analysis.

Table 5.1: Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Sex

Sex	Number of Respondents
Male	172
Female	78
Total	250

Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.1: Percentage of Respondents based on sex



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.1 shows that around 31% of the total respondents comprised the females, whereas around 69% of the sample size consisted of male respondents. Absolute numbers of male and female respondents are presented in Table 5.1.

5.3.2. Structure of the respondents on the basis of Age

The age of the respondents was diverse. A greater emphasis was placed on responders who were older than fifty. When examining the age categories, respondents who are

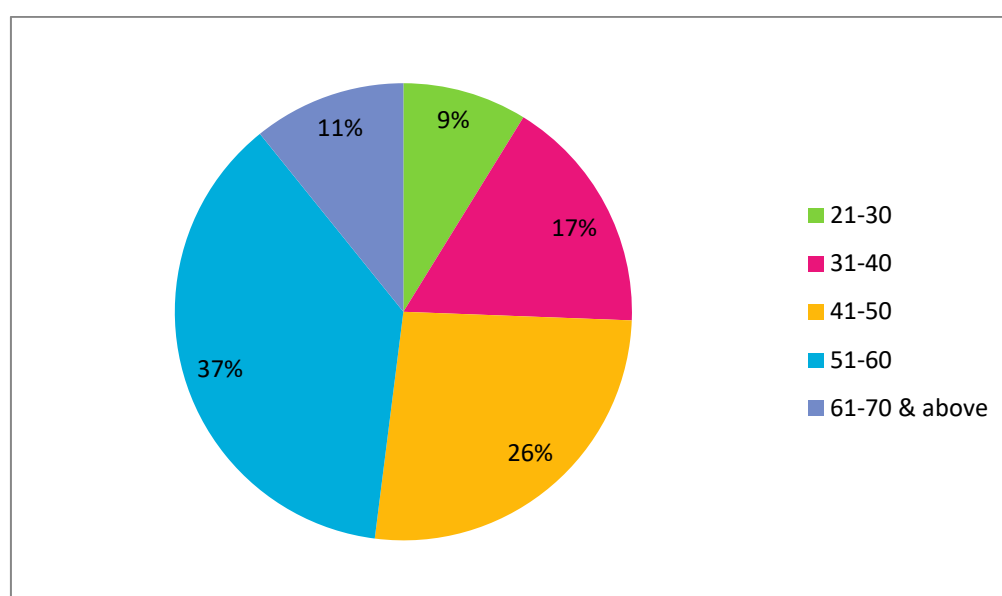
21 years old are placed in the lower limit of the table with a 10-year interval. The lowest interval column is where respondents who are older than 61 are tallied.

Table 5.2: Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Age

Age Groups	Number of Respondents
21-30	22
31-40	42
41-50	66
51-60	93
61-70 and above	27
Total	250

Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.2: Percentage of Respondents based on age



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.2 illustrates that from the total sample population, 9% are within the age groups of 21-30, 17% are within 31-40 years of age, 26% falls within 41-50, 37% are within 51-60 years and 11% falls within 61-70 years of age.

5.3.3. Structure of the respondents on the basis of Occupation

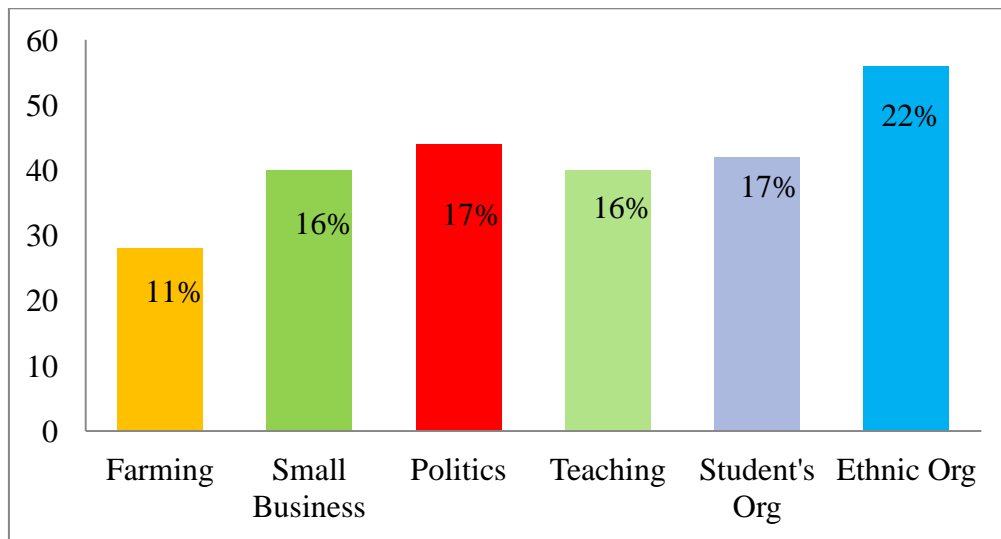
Out of the total respondents, twenty-eight were determined to be involved in agriculture. Forty of the responders worked as teachers. Ten of them worked as elementary school teachers, ten as upper elementary school teachers, ten as high school teachers, five as lecturers at Government College and the remaining five had already retired. Forty four respondents were involved in politics. Of all the respondents, forty ran tiny businesses, such as tea stalls, stationary shops, vegetable vendors in daily and weekly markets and a small number of milkmen. Of the respondents, fifty-six were from ethnic organizations and forty-two were from student organizations.

Table 5.3: Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Occupation

Types of Occupation	Number of Respondents
Farming	28
Small Business	40
Politics	44
Teaching	40
Student's Organisations	42
Ethnic Organisations	56
Total	250
N=250	

Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.3: Percentage of Respondents based on occupation



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.3 depicts that 11% of the total respondents are engaged in farming, 16% in small business, 17% in politics, 16% in teaching, 17% are from Student's Organisation and 22% are from Ethnic Organisations.

5.3.4. Structure of the respondents on the basis of language

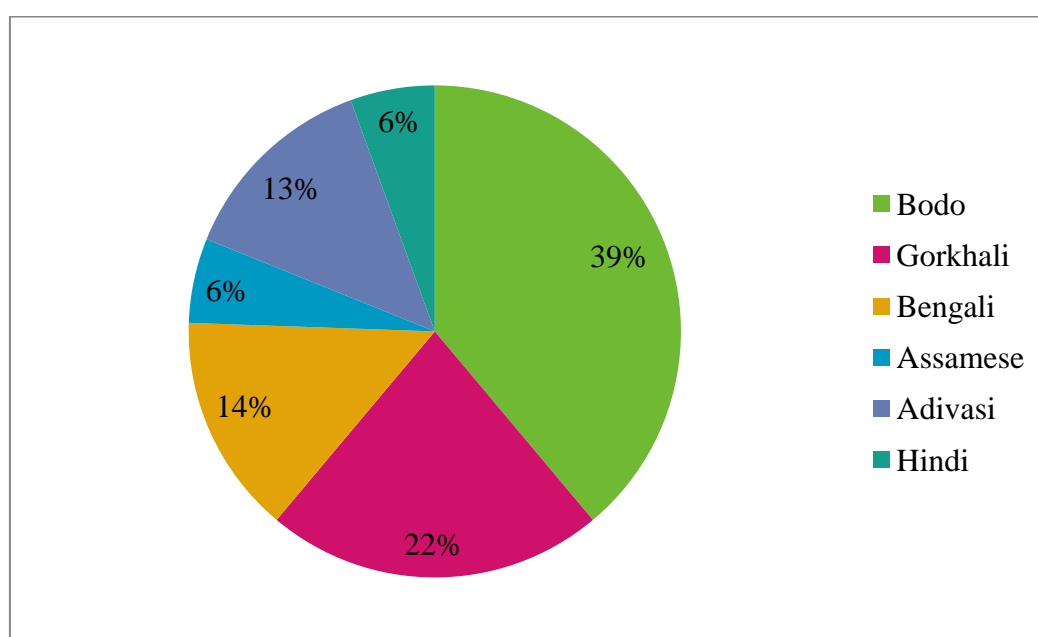
The categories of people who speak different languages have been used to split the respondents. They speak Hindi, Adivasi, Bengali, Gorkhali, Assamese and Bodo. Every speaker was attempted to participate in an in-depth interview utilizing both open and close ended questions of the questionnaire. People's roles and positions during ethnic conflicts, as well as their suffering from militant acts, militarization and police atrocities, were all documented. Equal attention was placed on interviewing members of the Muslim, Adivasi, Bodo and Bengali-speaking communities as well as the Gorkha community.

Table 5.4: Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Language

Language of the respondents	Number of Respondents
Bodo	97
Gorkhali	55
Bengali	36
Assamese	14
Adivasi	34
Hindi	14
Total	250
N=250	

Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.4: Percentage of Respondents based on Language



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.4 shows that 39% of the total sample size speaks Bodo, 22% Gorkhali/Nepali, 14% Bengali, 6% Assamese, 13% Adivasi and rest 6% speak Hindi languages.

5.3.5. Structure of the respondents on the basis of Religion

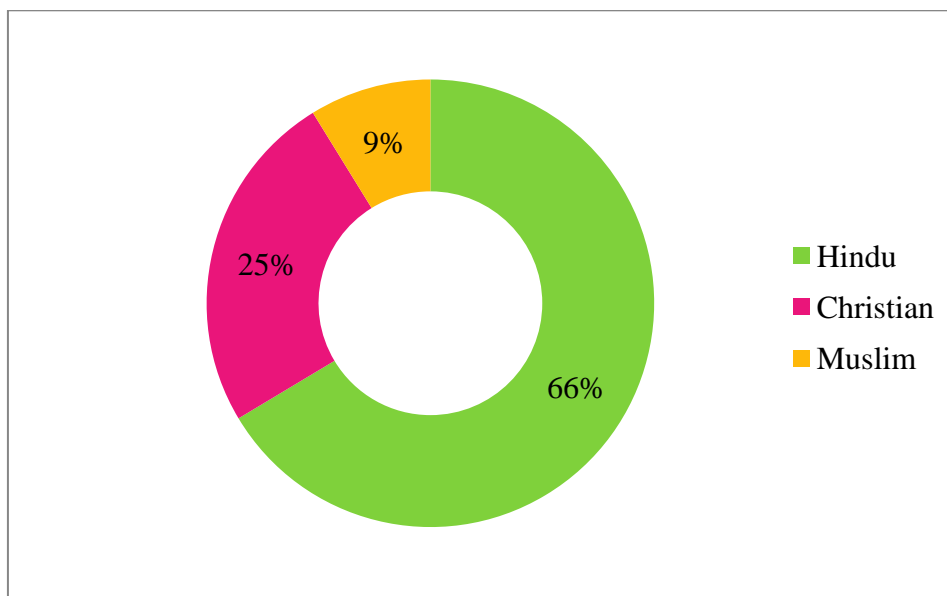
There are three main religious groupings that comprise the responses. Ten percent of respondents were identified as Christians, 2.5 percent as Muslims and 87.50 percent of respondents overall practiced Hinduism. Religion was not taken into consideration while choosing the sample size during the interview. However, the categorization is accepted as typical.

Table 5.5: Categorisation of the respondents on the basis of Religion

Religion	Number of Respondents
Hindu	166
Christian	62
Muslim	22
Total	250

Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.5: Percentage of Respondents based on Religion



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Figure 5.5 portrays that 66% of total respondents practice Hinduism, 25% follow Christianity and remaining 9% are Muslims.

5.4. Responses of Sample Population on the Basis of their Experiences and Opinion

Three categories have been established for the sample population:

- 1) Political figures who formerly belonged to rebellious groups or student organisations,
- 2) Scholars and Proficient persons,
- 3) Local Student Organization Leaders, the general public impacted by the Movement, either directly or indirectly.

An effort has been made to ascertain respondents' opinions of the current state of relations between the ethnic groups in the study area using the sample size classified above. To find out if the respondents had encountered ethnic conflicts in the area and how many of them they had seen, related variables have been used. Respondents' opinions regarding the effects of ethnic conflicts are reflected in one of the subunits' variables. In a similar vein, the core variable focuses on the respondent's understanding of the function of Government as well as the cultural, economic, social and demographic changes they had noticed as a result of the conflict in the area.

In addition to the previously mentioned concerns, one of the core variables focuses on respondent's involvement, if any, in mediating the conflict and their perception of their potential to repeat the same actions in the future. The majority of the respondents' opinions were qualitative in character.

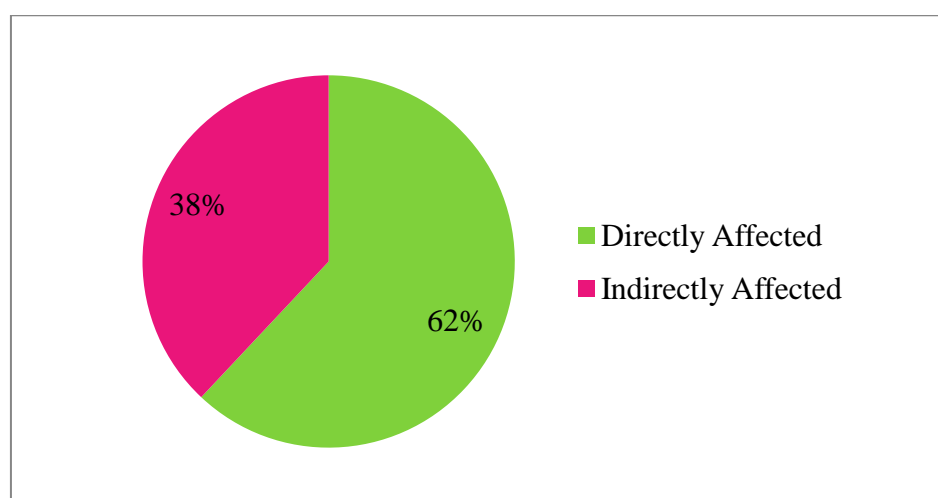
5.5. Multi-ethnic Society

The entire sample population lives in a multiethnic society, despite the fact that there are differences among the various ethnic communities. Assamese, Bodos, Santal and tea tribes, Rajbongshis, Hindu Bengalis, Bengali speaking Muslims, Biharis, Marwaris and the Gorkha population were among the major communities studied in this area. There were differences in the ethnic composition of rural and urban areas. Assamese, Bodos, Gorkhas, Santals and Tea tribes, Rajbonshis and Bengali Muslims made up the majority of the ethnic communities in villages, whereas Biharis, Marowaris, Punjabis and other commercial communities made up the ethnic mix in urban regions. There were instances where the villages were completely divided into distinct communities. These villages comprised the entirety or dominion of a single community. Against this background, it was discovered that certain villages were known as Santal Basti (Santal village), Gorkha or Nepali basti (Nepali village), Bodo basti (Bodo village), or villages named after the community, even though these settlements also go by other official names. Numerous communities were combined with the other group of villages.

5.6. Witnessing Ethnic Conflict and Violence and its Impact

In the operation area, ethnic conflicts are a common occurrence that affects most of the population. In every district, the vast majority of people believe that they have either directly or indirectly participated in ethnic clashes and violence. Conflicts of this nature have frequently had a direct effect on the people living in all the regions. Among the most frequent occurrences that many people witnessed during the Bodoland Movement were killings, extortion, burning of properties and threats against life.

Figure 5.6: Sample population affected by ethnic conflicts



Source: Fieldwork, August-December, 2023

Sixty-two percent of the respondents in the sample as a whole said that the conflicts had a direct impact on them. In response, thirty-eight percent of the participants stated that they have been impacted by the conflicts, albeit indirectly. Sharing incidences of violence a respondent from Santhal community of Chirang district recalls, *I and my friends used to go to collect woods but we never knew whether we would get back home safe or not because the Bodo insurgents burnt our village and we were afraid that they would kill us too.* Another respondent from the same community recounts, *Me with three of my friends went for fishing but while we were busy in the work we got the news that a group of unknown persons entered our village and started hitting our fathers and uncles and other elderly persons.*

While asked what kind of impact the conflict had, a respondent from Kokrajhar district replied *I had to stay away from home in fear of being killed by militants of either of the two insurgent groups BLT or NDFB, as both of the groups used to come to our houses for food and we had no option but to co-operate with them. Since, these groups saw each other as enemies they threatened to kill me if I helped the vice versa group in any way. Moreover, the police also came and*

threatened my family members. Similar type of response was recorded from a female respondent of Baksa district. She stated *My son and husband could never stay at house because their lives were in risk.*

Instances when respondents stated that, though not directly, ethnic conflicts harmed their livelihoods were also noted during the field visit. A respondent from Udalguri district recalls *I was just 8 years old when I heard my parents saying that the situation is not good, so we should not go out of our houses till the situation becomes normal. Hence, my father stopped going for his job and I too did not attend my classes.* A respondent states that the police forces also created terror in the village apart from insurgents. He states, *while searching for insurgent, the police shot an innocent visitor in their village which created chaos and fear among the villagers.*

In comparison to the other two districts, Baksa and Tamulpur, there are more respondents in Udalguri, Chirang and Kokrajhar who have been directly impacted by ethnic conflicts.

5.7. Nature of Ethnic Mobilisation witnessed

Both violent and non-violent forms of ethno-political mobilization have been identified. On numerous occasions, violent agitations have begun and ended non-violently and other times, conflict phases have appeared peaceful at first but ended fatally. Inter-ethnic confrontations resulted from ethno-mobilization and those were the most agonizing situations. These disputes frequently had a destructive and quickly spreading aspect. Respondents who observed the confrontations related to ethno-mobilization about the Bodoland Movement stated that they saw conflict in both violent and non-violent forms, as well as a mix of the two.

5.8. Changes brought by the Ethnic Conflicts

The inhabitants residing in the area saw numerous transformations as a result of the numerous ethnic conflicts.

a) Socio-Cultural Changes

Sixty percent of the respondents overall claimed that their social lives had changed noticeably. These changes were brought about by the hostilities and violence brought on by opposing ethno-political mobilization. Thirty percent of the total respondents believe that socio-cultural characteristics have not changed, while the remaining ten percent were unable to determine whether or not changes had occurred.

Fear as a result of ethnic strife led to both internal and external migration. *Prior to the Bodo-Santhal Conflicts, we lived in Deusure village in the present-day Chirang district, but our native village was forced to relocate to Borangajuli in the present-day Udalguri district due to the ongoing conflict and fear for our lives.* This was stated by one of the respondents from the Santhal community. A small number of Gorkha respondents from the districts of Chirang and Udalguri stated that many of their neighbours had moved to other locations where there was a concentration of Gorkhas, such as Darjeeling, Sikkim and Doars. Many also fled to the neighbouring country Nepal after being subjected to economic and physical abuse by extremists. During the field visit, it was also observed that there had been changes in religion. Due to financial assistance from Christian missionaries, a large number of Bodos and Santhals converted from Hinduism to Christianity.

b) Economic Changes

Nearly all of the participants have encountered the effects of ethnic strife on economic matters. Respondents have critically cited changes in income sources as one of the

most important economic elements. These conflicts had an impact on people's daily lives since they made it more difficult for them to earn a living. Shopkeepers were forced to close their establishments, vegetable vendors stopped traveling to the market and farmers were refrained from working on their farms. As a kind of extortion, government personnel were forced to divide their monthly salaries among different ethnic insurgents, which had an influence on their financial lives as well. According to their statement, it was challenging for them to give the amount of money to multiple extremist groups and to save a sizeable portion of their pay for them. One respondent stated that there were two methods in which ransoms for teachers had to be paid: either individually or by the rebel organizations taking money straight out of their salaries. Furthermore, few respondents claimed that their only source of income was the yearly yield from betel-nut trees. The extreme organizations tallied each betel nut tree and determined the annual extortion fee based on the quantity of betel nut trees. The market price was never calculated by the extremists.

c) Political Changes

100 respondents of the total have the opinion that they have been experiencing the political changes persistence of Ethno-Political mobilisation and conflicts. This set of respondents falls within educated section of the society. They feel that the increased Ethno-Political assertion by other ethnic groups have drastically alienated the community that they have sense of belongingness. They share their experiences as repeatedly surfacing ethno contestations and related conflicts for cultural hegemony has sidelined and uprooted their deep rooted history.

Due to the burning situations in the region, different ethnic groups were left with demand from sustaining distinct identity to political assertion for self determination. It appears that many respondents lost their hopes in the existing

political authority governing the State and later the BTAD as well. They stated that their rights and properties became insecure and for which they felt the need for change in the governance. A respondent states that *the representatives from the region voice nothing strong on the floor of the Parliament or the State Assembly. Further, he argued that one political representative is not enough for any change and, therefore, building a peaceful society lies also in the hands of people from different communities working together and understanding the problems of cross sections.*

During the ‘anti-foreigners’ movement in 1985, questions of ‘outsiders’ and ‘foreigners’ were being arised. Gorkhas along with alleged ‘Bangladeshi infiltrators’ were alleged as ‘outsiders’ or the ‘foreign nationals. Respondents also explain that the spontaneity of ‘anti-foreigners’ upsurge called Assam movement provided a fillip to the Bodo identity movement, paving the way for Bodoland movement. With the rise of separate state of Bodolnd movement, suddenly the Gorkhas have been tagged with foreigners suffix by some Bodo leaders (not all) of the Bodoland movement leading to large scale violence against the community. Respondents of Udalguri district refer the case of pamphlets distributed by some self designed Bodo leaders mentioning Gorkhas as foreigners in the eyes of Bodos.

One of the bigger political problems found to be faced by the Bengali speaking Muslims and the Gorkha community is that respondents were ‘D voters’. Respondents those who were suffering from this problem opined that they were suddenly tagged as ‘D voter’ with ‘D’ suffix to their name in electoral rolls despite their forefathers casting votes since many yester years. Even though respondents produced valid relative documents to prove the validity of their bona fide right to voting they were not allowed to cast vote. With the tag of ‘D voter’ in electoral rolls, the victims were often harassed by police in the name of seeking authenticity of their

citizenship. However, today because of efforts by Assam Gorkha Sammelan and Surrendered United Gorkha People's Organisation, the Government has removed this 'D' suffix from many Gorkha voters.

5.9. Respondent's Perception on the Militants' Act of Terror

No denying the fact that the North East India has witnessed the acts of terror created by different insurgent groups in the area. The Bodoland region has been the home to many insurgent groups belonging to different ethnic communities and representing ideological differences. The common logic to argue about any insurgent or terrorist group is that they may, at any time, opt means attempting to achieve their demands, even if their ends (demands) are of never possible. The whole world community has had the bitter experiences of inhuman acts and havoc left and created by them. In the context, therefore, attempt has been made to identify and understand the extent of rights violation generated by the insurgent groups in the Bodoland region. This attempt is sought to be understood from people's point and experiences to their undemocratic and violent activities. Of the total respondents, 180 from different surveyed places had strongly and critically put to blame the acts of different insurgency groups. Of these 180, 150 respondents had the chance to experience the bitter treatment meted by the insurgent groups. One respondent of age around sixty from Bodo community says, *the future of any community cannot rest on any insurgent groups and on their acts which are always anti-human. Our community experienced the widest setback since there were killing and counter killings amongst BLTF and NDFB, targeted the counter supporters in the 90s of the 20th century. They involved in the killings of different innocent Bodo intellectuals. Now on what basis do you think to justify the acts of killings carried by the insurgents?"*

Another respondent who was a contractor says *“no development and peace is possible until presence of militants is resisted and roots out from the society. Because of the militants contractors were unable to involve in any developmental tasks of contract like building bridge(s), roads, etc. They came up with a demand note and until the payment was made they kept our lives under the threat of killing. Life-threatening made us pay but, in turn, became security threats from the State forces as regard why we paid. So what to do, the option left with us was either to save our lives or to give up our tasks of contracts. We could not even think of giving up since we had to think for little earning for the betterment of our children.*

Participating as respondent, who happened to be non-Bodo had argued the injustice done to their neighbour who had the demand of extortion. At the same time, he opined that although non-Bodos and Bodos shared same roads, rivers and paddy field, only non- Bodos had to face problems of extortion. Another woman respondent had her exposition, *extremist groups, their extortions, and threats to lives traumatised us and innocents. Our children often used to hear about killings, bloodshed, and view tears shed by parents, which affected them psychologically.* Another respondent, from Tamulpur district had narrated the case of 14 year boy who was killed by NDFB on the mere suspect of being acting spy of the army. The respondent (to his knowledge) claimed the boy as innocent. Even he narrated the story of a school going teenager from his neighbouring village who was killed just on the mere suspect of being a spy.

Few respondents also took to narrate the incidents of 2014 killings in Ultapani and Serfanguri of Kokrajhar. Adivasis were the ones who lost their lives to the bullets of NDFB. A respondent says that these incidents not only took the lives of innocent women and children, but also rejuvenated the bygone days of strains relation between Adivasi and the Bodos. It is also, however, very significant when one respondent who

himself was a former militant, now the mainstream, argues that it is very complex to identify who is the real culprit, acting behind the bullet and killings the innocents. He cited the example of the incident of May 2012 where two innocent Muslims were killed, and the killer was not known until administrator of Kamatapur Liberation Organisation admitted. It thus appears so from the respondents' sensitivity that militancy not only manifested the act of terror, violating and taking the rights of the common people in Bodoland Region, but also caused deep psychological distress amongst the normal youths.

5.10. Initiatives of Government during and after the Conflicts

In regards to governmental procedure in dealing with the issues those faced by the ethnic groups in the centre of ethno contestations and conflicts, there have been variations on respondent's opinion. The majority of respondents felt that during and after the ethnic clashes, government machinery had left them with unwarranted anxieties. However, a few respondents felt that they were not marginalized and some were unable to comment on how the government was treating them.

According to the respondents, who felt excluded from government policy during ethnic contestations and conflicts, the official apparatus was failing to address their concerns. They believed that everytime there was a conflict, there was a complete breakdown in the system of communication and transportation and the markets were shut down as a result of blockades and bandhs. The necessities of everyday existence were inadequate. In such situations, they attempted to get government attention but did not succeed. In the absence of security assurances, respondents claimed they occasionally had to deal with hiding away in safer locations during disturbances. They were unable to bear the risk of remaining in their homes and villages during the major ethnic counterparts' conflicts. Fearing for their lives, they were forced to spend a few

days in relief camps or other safer places until things could return to normal. Despite these facts, the official apparatus did not view them as victims or population affected by violence.

The respondents who felt that they were marginalized claim that no one has ever seen their concerns. They have been marginalized as a result of the problem's invisibility. Attention and recompense were given to the ethnic groups directly involved in the hostilities. Respondents claimed that stories of the communities to which they belong differ. For those who were personally impacted by losing their homes and belongings during the violence, questions would not come up while they were asking the Government for help. But individuals who were impacted indirectly had to deal with serious issues as they looked for support and protection even if they had proof of losing their homes and belongings. Their issues were not treated as serious as those of the individuals who were impacted directly.

According to some of the respondents, they were forced to seek security assistance and take refuge in safer locations. They had nothing to eat while they were living in relief camps. Until the arrival of governmental and other humanitarian assistance, they felt hopeless and frustrated. Still, the Government apparatus gave priority to the victims of conflicts right away rather than addressing any indirect issues that the conflict(s) may have produced. A respondent from Udalguri district states, *when an ethnic conflict between the Bengali Muslims and Bodo arose in 2008–09, it caused a lot of problems in this village. Numerous homes caught fire. Individuals from both the communities were forced to seek refuge in relief camps. Since we Gorkhas were the minority in the village, we were unable to remain in our homes. We fled the area, scared for our life, along with the Gorkhas from other nearby villages, just like these two communities did. The government assistance team*

visited the relief camps for Bengali Muslims and Bodos and brought supplies needed for daily living. However, they failed to show up to look into the issue we were having. Afterwards, a few of our seniors went to see the department in concern. When we requested assistance, government representatives turned us down. If security personnels were stationed in our village, we wanted to go back to our houses. The response to our demands was, 'We do not have access to care the communities who are not reported as affected community', and we were not given any thought.

Respondents who did not experience marginalization acknowledged that they received all the supplies like food, sleeping kits, clothing, etc., that were given to victims of parties in direct conflict. Similar to this, when they had to return home, they were given roof sheets and a flat sum payment to rebuild their homes like all of the affected victims of conflict. Ex-gratia payments were made to the deceased's family as part of the Government's humanitarian aid program for victims of conflict.

In an effort to address the Bodo issue, the state government and the Indian government met with ABSU and BPAC in 1993 and established the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), a local administrative body. Respondents stated that BAC was dissolved and the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was established in 2003 in order to find a peaceful solution to the problems brought out by BLTF. They went on to say that community halls, beneficiary systems, and other developmental initiatives were granted by government to communities and populations.

5.11. Transformation of Leaders

During the ethnic conflicts, many extremists and Student Organisation's leaders come front to postulate violence and threaten the Government. After the Government call them and sit for negotiation, these leaders sign the agreements and thereafter, get

involved in politics. In case of the Bodoland region, the leaders of ABSU, BLTF and NDFB have involved in many violent activities. After the signing of various accords, these leaders have joined politics and have come up with development initiatives.

Although the BAC Accord, could not bring satisfaction to the Bodo masses, but after the signing of BTC accord, the leaders came up with various development schemes. After the BTC was formed, many BLTF leaders joined politics. The Bodo People's Progressive Front (BPPF) was formed which was later renamed as Bodo People's Front (BPF). Under the BPF Government, education, irrigation, roads, agriculture etc., saw steps of development. Various educational institutions like the Bodoland University in Kokrajhar, Central Institute of Technology (Kokrajhar), Medical College (Kokrajhar) and various colleges came into existence. But mention should be made that although the BTC Government laid the foundation of development in the region, the two districts Udalguri and Baksa did not experience much development in comparison to other two districts: Kokrajhar and Chirang.

However, after the UPPL Government came into power and signed the BTR Accord, the region seems to flourish much under the leadership of Pramod Bodo. An ABSU leader who joined politics to bring peace and prosperity in the region appears to be the hero of the mass. The once insurgency-hit region seems to achieve a remarkable transformation towards peace and development. In the UPPL Government, there are NDFB leaders also who are actively involved in politics. This Government has brought many schemes which have been able to bring development to a great extent.

The Bodoland Happiness Mission, which aims at bringing peace and happiness in the region, provides counselling and healing efforts, helping to build

brotherhood within different communities. The foundation stone of International School of Peace and Happiness has been laid in the Chirang district. The curriculum of the school would help in fostering peace and happiness. The Government has also given emphasis in making the Bodoland a region of natural beauty. The Bodoland Green Mission targets the plantation of one crore saplings which has been fulfilled to great extent. The first Bodoland International Knowledge Festival was organised on February 2023, partnering with Bodoland University at Kokrajhar in order to create, foster and promote knowledge exchange, solution sharing and partnership building for achievement of social development priorities and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 in contemporary BTR and the world. It aimed to enhance scientific temperament for creation of “Peaceful, Green and Smart Bodoland” in the light of the Bodo Peace Accord 2020. It provided the platform for thought leaders, educators, researchers and practitioners to engage with constituents of Higher Education Institutions in BTR through participation in interactive and collaborative workshops, discussions and presentations. Hence, the Bodoland International Knowledge Festival played vital role in promoting intellectual growth and excellence in Assam.

‘Mission Bwiswmuthi’ has been initiated in order to digitize the land records of all the revenue villages of the region and bring centricity and transparency in providing various land and revenue related services. The Government has also initiated the Mainao Swrang Bithangki, a scheme that aims at strengthening women’s power in the region. With the aim of making the BTR as the ‘Sports Hub’ of North-East India, a sports complex has been built at Mazbat of Udalguri district. Apart from the mentioned schemes, a Medical College and Veterinary College is being constructed respectively at Kachubari and Kumarikata (Tamulpur) and many colleges have been provincialized.

5.12. Some of the Findings

- a) The Bodos felt that they were deprived and their existence would be in danger in future.
- b) During the movement, both violent as well as non-violent steps were taken.
- c) Various organisations from other ethnic communities also supported the Bodoland Movement.
- d) Daily-life, trade and commerce, education of the people were hampered.
- e) Many innocent lost their lives in the hands of police and army.
- f) People from various professions joined the movement, and after the signing of accords they continued their professions.
- g) The two insurgent groups BLT and NDFB saw each other as enemies and because of it the general people had to suffer.
- h) Extortion was carried by both insurgent groups.
- i) The affected people moved from their original homelands.
- j) The lands were captured legally or illegally.
- k) After the BAC accord was signed, there was no development in the region. Violence continued.
- l) After the BTC accord was signed, various roads, educational institutions, offices were constructed. The agriculture and irrigation systems also developed. Still peace did not seem to show up fully.
- m) After the BTR accord was signed, a number of projects have been initiated for the Bodoland region and efforts are being made promptly for their development. The first Bodo International Knowledge Festival was organised. Many colleges have been provincialised. Schemes for women development and free coaching for APSC aspirants have been initiated.

The researcher highlighted the positive role played by local leadership towards conflict transformation and peace processes in BTC.

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, there have been several challenges facing the post-World War II era. One of the primary problems is internal conflict among states. These intra-state conflicts are mainly the result of disputes between the majority and minority over issues of religion, culture, language and ethnicity. In this specific context, the existence of many minority groups has led to ethnic conflicts in India, a multiethnic society. Some minority groups raise concerns about feeling alone and excluded in relation to dominant groups. The Bodos, who make up the majority of Assamese plain tribes, expressed anxieties and sense of uneasiness under this situation. Thus, the Bodoland Movement has placed a strong emphasis on identity and ethnicity.

Identity politics holds that violent expression stems from ethnic disputes between the state and groups of people who do not share the same identity within a multiethnic state. Lack of acceptance of cultural diversity, unequal opportunity, resource and social advantage distribution among different ethnic groups, and the political exclusion of some ethnic groups from state policy frameworks are the main causes of ethnic conflicts. The Primordialists argue that ethnicity is a natural and inherent phenomenon in this regard. Each individual possesses some “attachments derived from his place of birth, kinship relationship, religion, language and social practices which are natural, spiritual and that serve as a foundation for an easy affinity with other people who share that background”. With relation to the Bodoland Movement, leaders’ prompt action and shift in perspective turned the conflict from peaceful to violent. But following a number of actions, the violence came to a stop with a successful outcome.

The Bodos, a substantial portion of Assam's population, are of Tibeto-Burman descent. The Bodos are members of the Assam-Burman group of the Tibeto-Burman speaker group, which is a member of the Sino-Tibetan speech family, according to G.A. Gierson. Rev. Sidney Endle notes that based on their characteristics and overall appearance, the Bodos are remarkably similar to the Mongolian stock. Their language is descended from the Tibeto Burman sub-family's Assam Burmese branch. It is believed that the Mongoloid Bodos known as "Kiratas" originated in "Bod". The Bodos must have first settled along the foothills of the Himalayas and surrounding areas before encroaching into Assam. R.M. Nath states that the Bodos first settled at the foothills of the Himalayas where different chieftains evolved and gradually moved towards the south, establishing small kingdoms. Gierson states that a section of Tibeto-Burmans ensconced on the southern side of the Himalayan range right along from Assam in the east to the Punjab in the west. The Bodo tribes are descended from the Kiratas of Mongoloid origin and according to S.K. Chatterjee, the Kiratas were the Himalayan frontier dwellers. Various researchers have proposed alternative theories, but one possibility is that the Bodos first settled along the foothills south of the Himalayas before encroaching into Assam, searching for land. The Bodos crossed numerous mountain passes and river channels to enter the Assam lowlands. The Bodos can now be found in practically every Assamese district. The Bodos have taken up residence in practically every district of Assam, ranging from the districts of Dhubri and Kokrajhar in the north to Goalpara in the west and Dhemaji in the east. They can be found in large numbers in the current Assamese districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Udalguri and Tamulpur. The 2011 census places the population of Bodo in Assam at about 1.45 million.

The early Assamese monarchs have been mentioned in ancient Indian literature. The first Kamrupa or Pragjyotisa king was Maniranga Danava. Hatakasura, the successor of Mahiranga Danava, was followed by a long line of warriors, among them the formidable and fabled Narakasura. The Bodo monarchs are claimed to have ruled for several generations in this manner. The Ahoms ruled over Assam for only 600 years after they arrived. During the first 300 years of the Ahom dynasty, the Bodos progressively withdrew from political life. The Bodo principalities acceded to the Ahom power one by one. When the Burmese invaded Assam in the 1800s, the Ahoms turned to the East India Company for assistance. Following their triumph in the First Anglo-Burmese War and the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo, the British established themselves as the soul masters of Brahmaputra valley and began to consolidate their authority throughout the entirety of Assam. Up until that point, Tularam Senapati, a Bodo chief, was ruling the hills of North Cachar on his own, but he was also forced to concede. Following his passing, the British seized control of the entire territory of Bodos and made them their subjects.

The colonial administration brought in a huge number of landless people to labor in coal mines, oil mines, tea plantations and road construction. The massive immigration wave created a significant obstacle to the tribal community, economy and culture. Due to their forced removal from their own territories, the tribal people faced significant challenges in obtaining essential resources and a means of subsistence. As a result, the Bodos assimilated into the general populace under British authority. They commenced leading solitary lives apart from the area they had previously ruled. By then, the common Bodos had to revert to their previous way of life. They engaged in shifting agriculture. But the Bodos had to endure a period of economic decline, uprooting and land alienation following the British implementation

of a new land revenue system. Nonetheless, Gopinath Bordoloi, the first Chief Minister of Assam, took a number of actions to rid the protected area of intruders. Bordoloi enacted “The Land Resolution”, which provided protection to tribals. But the damage was unimaginable once Syed Saadullah was appointed Assam’s Chief Minister. He created the “Land Development Scheme”, a scheme that resulted in the settlement of all Muslim immigrants without land in the Brahmaputra valley. Even though the Congress retook power and modified the Assam Land Revenue Regulations (1886), creating reserved tribal belts in several areas, pressure on the land held by the indigenous people grew as a result of immigration from East Pakistan.

Nevertheless, it was under the guidance and leadership of the Bodo leader Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, the Bodos found a direction of self consciousness. They reached a point where they started to worry about their existence and identity. The Bodo peoples’ general consciousness was raised by Gurudev Kalicharan’s numerous initiatives, which also cleared the path for the Bodo nationality to flourish. Following that, a number of social groups were established, leading to the development of political consciousness among Assamese indigenous communities, especially the Bodos. The All Assam Tribal League was established in 1933 and as a result, Bodos’ political activity gained impetus. When the Simon Commission arrived in Assam, Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma along with Rupnath Brahma and other intellectuals met the Commission and submitted a memorandum on behalf of the Bodo community of Assam.

During the post-colonial era, the Indian Constitution designated the Bodos as Scheduled Tribe Plains. They were incensed at being classified as ‘Tribal’ and as belonging to the Backward class since they were being denied rights in terms of politics, society, economy, language, culture and ethnicity. The Bodos became deeply

resentful as a result of this. Feelings of insecurity about one's identity that had existed since before independence gave rise to the Bodoland Movement. One way to summarize the causes of this movement is as follows:

- a) Historical reason: Land Alienation and Deprivation
- b) Assamese Chauvinism
- c) Inadequate policy by the Government

Even though generated before Independence of India, the Movement gained momentum after 1967. In 1967, two strong organizations the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and a political organisation named as Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) came into existence. The idea of demanding 'Autonomous Region' was developed by PTCA and it received a high degree of mass movement in 1972. However, the PTCA started losing its hold over the common people. Failure of PTCA to lead the Bodo sentiment gave a space to All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) to accomplish support from the Bodo mass in 1987 to change the demand from union territory to separate state Bodoland. From 1987 onwards, the movement was totally dominated by ABSU led by Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma. Under the leadership of U.N. Brahma, the ABSU submitted a 92 Points Charter of Demands to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta on January 1, 1987.

In the six years long movement led by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) in 1979-1985 against illegal immigrants, the ABSU rendered support. But, when the Assam Accord was signed, the clause 6 was detrimental to the indigenous tribal people of Assam. The ABSU understood that the AASU tried to continue with the Assamese chauvinism over tribal people by incorporating such provision in the Accord. Hence, the ABSU leaders met various Government authorities to address

their problems. However, observing the outlook of both the Central and State Government in regards to the demands, the ABSU began its mass mobilization programme through circulation of pamphlets against Assamese Chauvinism. It started its mass movement on for a separate state by holding mass rallies in all district headquarters and important places of Assam. However, looking at the attitude of the Government, the movement of the ABSU started to turn to vigorous stage. Thereafter, rallies, protests and bandhs became almost the regular routine.

The entire movement of the ABSU had always been against the step-brotherhoodness (which they felt) by the AGP Government and Assamese hegemonism. As the Government remained deaf at the requests and activities of the ABSU, the ABSU did not lose hope but continued its movement in a more vigorous manner. But, the movement started to turn into a rebellion owing to no response by the Government.

On 15th August, 1988, the ABSU observed 12 hours Black Day and declared five days bandh of all the Government Offices in the tribal areas from 16th August to 20th August. During this phase, other ethnic organisations such as Gorkha Liberation Front of Assam (GLFA), All Cachar-Karimganj Students' Association (ACKSA), All Assam Minorities Students' Union (AAMSU) etc., also gave their full moral support to the movement led by the ABSU.

In its 20th Annual Conference held at Bashbari, Dhubri from 19 December to 22 December 1988, the ABSU suspended 89 non-political demands out of 92, withholding only three political demands. These demands are:

1. Creation of a separate state for the Bodos on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra,

2. Creation of Autonomous District Councils for the Bodos and other tribal people on the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra,
3. Inclusion of the Bodos living in the Karbi Anglong District into ST (Hills) list of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) was established during this convention. On January 11, 1989, the State Government and the ABSU had a casual discussion, but no mutually agreeable resolution could be reached. The chilly mass movement had by now begun to give way to a violent mass movement. The revolutionary Boro volunteers set fire to government buildings and schools, destroyed wooden bridges, detonated 19 bombs and attacked the CRPF and police. The police then opened fire, killing nine Bodo teenagers in the process. By 1989, there had been a great deal of terrorist activity in the Kokrajhar district, which led to widespread bloodshed throughout the state of Assam. Things began to deteriorate in Assam. When it came to being severe on Bodo people, even the police forces did not fall short.

The state's home minister sent an invitation for a talk to the ABSU on April 17, 1989. But the invitation was turned down by ABSU. The Chief Minister of Assam once more extended an invitation to the ABSU to negotiate about their demand on June 29. Eleven tripartite discussions between the Central Government, ABSU-BPAC and the Government of Assam followed. By the time when 10 tripartite negotiations had failed to produce any positive outcomes, ABSU-BPAC went on a hunger strike in protest of the presence of Army in Bodo areas and to express their dissatisfaction at the slow pace at which the problems of Bodos were being resolved.

Following the raising of the national flag on August 15, 1992, Chief Minister of Assam, Hiteswar Saikia, gave a speech regarding the demands of the Bodo people. He said that 730 of the 4443 Bodo villages will not be a part of the projected Bodoland. On August 21st, he said that 109 Tea Estates will not be included in the proposed Bodoland area, in addition to 730 communities. The ABSU-BPAC leaders conducted a rally at the Boat Club in New Delhi on September 14 and 15, believing that the State Government was not adhering to their demands. On October 4, 1992, when the leaders of ABSU-BPAC were occupied with articulating their demands in a nonviolent way, the Bodo groups carried out violent acts.

The Eleventh Tripartite Talk took place in New Delhi on October 19, 1992. The conversation was futile. On October 28, 1992, the ABSU-BPAC organized a peace rally on the national roads in response to the disregard shown by both the Central Government and State Government.

In the interim, while ABSU-BPAC leaders were operating in a non-violent manner, the intensity of the Bodoland agitation caused suffering for the ordinary people in the area. However, the Bodo Accord, also known as the Memorandum of Settlement, was signed on February 20, 1993, with an agreement for the establishment of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), following an extensive series of discussions between the leaders of ABSU and BPAC, the Government of Assam and the Government of India. In accordance with the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary was made the Chief of the interim council of the BAC.

The Memorandum of Settlement (Bodo Accord) sought to provide the Bodos as much autonomy as possible for social, economic, educational, ethnic and cultural

advancement—all within the bounds of the Constitution. However, it is important to note that not all Bodo groups found satisfaction in the creation of BAC, since it did not appear to meet their expectations. It was unable to draw a precise border. On November 16, 1993, Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary tendered his resignation from the Council. On November 20, 1993, Prem Singh Brahma was made the Chief of the BAC by the State Government.

By this point, the Boros rebel group known as the Boro Security Force (Bd.S.F.) had begun wreaking havoc and destroying everything by using a lot of violence. The supporters of Bodo Accord were its primary objectives. It also went after the non-Bodos of the region. In the western portion of the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra, a major ethnic war broke out. An ethnic disturbance between Bodo and Bengali-speaking Muslims occurred in July 1994.

Three beheaded bodies of girls dressed in Dokhowna were found in May 1996 close to an Adivasi-dominated village in the Kokrajhar district, resulting in Bodo-Santhal ethnic. With the desire for a separate state of Bodoland within Indian Territory, the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) was formed on June 18, 1996, during a period of ideological conflict between the NDFB and the ABSU. They engaged in a number of illegal actions, including bombing, extortion and destroying railroad rails. Moreover, ideological differences between NDFB and BLTF led to fragmentation within Bodos and fratricidal conflict resulting in the internal killings of both the militant outfits, and also many Bodo intellectuals.

With the passage of time, when nothing was done by the Government, Bodo hardline insurgents started an ethnic cleansing campaign in the valley. Many people lost their homes and numerous numbers of people were killed. On one hand, the

region was rocked by violence, while on the other, the leaders of ABSU were making a concerted effort to find peaceful solutions to their concerns. As a sort of reprisal against non-Bodos who resided in the BAC area, NDFB militants killed a large number of Gorkhas in May 1997. In addition, numerous women in Nalbari (now Baksa) perished from gunshot wounds sustained during the interethnic conflict in Baraliapar village. In May 1998, there was another extremely violent riot between the Bodos and Santhals, which resulted in a greater loss of lives and property damage than the previous one. Three Bodo villagers were slain by Adivasi miscreants when the NDFB stormed the Adivasi villages in Sapakata. Kokrajhar became the center of violence.

Nonetheless, a tripartite discussion between the State, the Central Government and ABSU-BPAC was held on November 13, 1998. The ABSU threatened to restart the movement when it appeared that neither government could resolve the Bodo issues. When government officials did not respond, the ABSU reignited the movement and planned demonstrations, bandhs and hunger strikes. Since, the BLT was fighting for the creation of Bodoland within India, both Bodo youths and general public supported them. In the year 1999, the BLT declared ceasefire letting the Central and State Governments to take decisions over the issue of Bodoland.

On December 6 and 7, 2001, the governments of Assam convened a meeting with representatives from both tribal and non-tribal organizations with the aim of averting conflicts between various populations and ending the bloodshed in the region. In order to address the Bodo issues, the Bodo Council insisted for an extension of the sixth schedule. The State Government announced on December 30, 2001, that the sixth schedule would be extended to the BAC by January 2002, providing security to non-tribal groups. However, the Bodos had difficulties in creating the Bodoland

Territorial Council (BTC) due to the inclusion of 93 more villages and the insistence that 30 of the 40 seats in the Council be reserved for Tribals, with the remaining 10 seats being open to non-Bodos.

A round of tripartite talks involving the Central Government, State Government and the BLT took place in New Delhi on January 20, 2003. Out of the 93 settlements discussed, 20 were included in the planned Bodoland region. The Government put out two possibilities for the distribution of seats in the proposed Council:

1. Thirty seats for tribals and ten seats for non-tribals or
2. Thirty seats for tribals, five seats for non-tribals, five seats for general communities and six members to be nominated by State Government.

After reaching a common understanding with the State Cabinet, the BLT chose the second alternative. Consequently, on February 10, 2003, an agreement was reached with the signing of a Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) in New Delhi, capping a six-year-long and persuasive armed conflict between the BLT and the Indian government. Under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution, the state of Assam established the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), which had authority over four additional districts: Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. As the accord committed to fulfill economic, educational and linguistic aspirations, preservation of land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and to speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area, the formation of BTC gave the Bodos a wider context towards empowerment and advancement of their community.

Nevertheless, violence in the area did not appear to stop despite these measures. 2008 saw an outbreak of violence centered on the ‘insider’ vs ‘outsider’

debate. It appeared that the BTC was unable to offer security to non-Bodos, as evidenced by the similar situation in 2012. There were around 4,000,00,000 people displaced and about 96 people killed during July and August, 2012 riots. In the Baksa district, three people were shot dead and two children were hurt on May 1, 2014. On May 2, a group of miscreants assaulted the 65-family village of Kanke Khagrabari.

However, the Bodoland Territorial Region Agreement, signed on January 2020 by the Government of India, the Government of Assam, ABSU President Pramod Boro (currently the CEM of BTR), Hagrama Mohilary, the then-CEM of BTC and the NDFB factions, appears to have put an end to the long-running problems in the region. The region under BTC authority was formally dubbed into the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) with the signing of this agreement. Another new district, Tamulpur, has been formed along with four other districts. Several initiatives have been started for the Bodoland region and quick progress is being made towards their development. In light of this, the region aspires to prosper through all-encompassing economic, sustainable peace and development. Under the leadership of Pramod Boro, numerous programs that have been started have been quite successful in promoting all round development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABSU. (1987). *Why separate state of Bodoland: Demand and justifications*. Central Committee ABSU.
- Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1886. (1984). *Regulation 1 of 1886 [As amended]* (Vide Government Notification No: RD281/47/43, dated 24th August 1984). Chapter IX rules framed under section 171 of Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue.
- Banarjee, A.C., & Roy, S.S. (2010). *Problems and prospects of Bodoland*. Mittal Publications.
- Bangura, Y. (1994). *The search for identity: Ethnicity, religion and political violence* (UNRISD Occasional Paper: World Summit for Social Development, No. 6). United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).
- Barbora, S. (2005). Autonomy in the North East: The frontiers of challenged politics. In R. Samaddar (Ed.), *The politics of autonomy: Indian experiences* (pp. 83-102). Sage Publications.
- Barpujari, H.K. (1998). *North-East India: Problems, policies and prospects*. Spectrum Publications.
- Barua, K. (2020). *Early history of Kamrupa*. LBS Publications.
- Barua, K.L. (2014). *Early history of Kamarupa*. Bhabani Publication.
- Baruah, S. (1999). *India against itself: Assam and the politics of nationality*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Baruah, S. (2008). Territoriality, indigeneity, and rights in North-East India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(12), 15-19.
- Baruah, S.L. (1993). *Last days of Ahom monarchy*. Oxford University Press.

- Basumatary, B.K. (2021). Origin of Bodo: A historical overview. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovation Research*, 8(2).
- Basumatary, J. (2014). *Quest for peace in Assam: A study of the Bodoland movement*. KW Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Basumatary, K. (2012). *Political economy of Bodo movement: A human development perspective*. Akansha Publishing House.
- Bhattacharya, J.B. (1993). *Kachari Rajya-Unthan Aru Poton*. [Publisher not specified].
- Bhaumik, S. (2010). Journalism in a conflict zone: A view from India's Northeast. In W. Hussain (Ed.), *Peace tools and conflict nuances in India's Northeast* (pp. 117-140). Centre for Development and Peace Studies.
- Brahma, A. (2013). *The ethnic identity movement in North-East India*. Vicky Publications.
- Brass, P.R. (1999). *Ethnicity and nationalism: Theory and comparison*. Sage Publications.
- Burns, M.J. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Chaklader, S. (2004). *Sub-regional movement in India with reference to Bodoland and Gorkhaland*. K.P. Bagchi and Co.
- Chatterjee, S.K. (1974). *Kirata Jana Kriti*. Asiatic Society.
- Chaudhuri, K. (2004). *New history of modern India and the world*. Oriental Book Company.
- Chaudhuri, S. S. (2004). *The Bodo movement: Women's participation*. Mittal Publications.
- Chhetry, T.K. (2015). Buffer ethnic group(s): Understanding the existentiality of Gorkha community in the multi-ethnic contestation(s) of Chirang District, Assam. In L.S. Gassah & C.J. Thomas (Eds.), *Democracy and development in India's North-East: Challenges and opportunities* (pp. 132-148). Bookwell.

- Chhetry, T.K. (2018). *Ethno-political mobilization and its impact on minorities: A case study of Gorkhas in Assam* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Sikkim University.
- Chiozza, G., & Choi, A. (2003). Guess who did what: Political leaders and the management of territorial disputes, 1959-1990. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 47(3), 251-278.
- Choudhury, R. (2014). A report on BTAD violence in Assam. *The Milli Gazette*.
- Choudhury, S. (2016). *Women and conflict in India*. Routledge.
- Choudhury, T. (2015). Bodoland movement: A study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies*, 1(4), 102-111.
- Darby, J., & MacGinty, R. (2003). *Contemporary peacemaking: Conflict, violence, and peace processes*. Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Das, B. (1974). Janagosthit Prajatiya Upadan. In *Asamiya Jatir Itivritta*.
- Das, B.M. (1987). *The people of Assam*. Gyan Publishing House.
- Deka, A.K. (2012, September 1). Understanding conflict in BTAD of Assam. *Mainstream*, VOL L(No 37).
- Deka, H.M. (2014). *Politics of identity and the Bodo movement in Assam*. Scholars World.
- Dutta, P.N. (1962, reprint 1981). *Glimpses into the history of Assam*. Edward Gait.
- Endle, S. (1911). *The Kacharis*. Macmillan and Co.
- Endle, S. (1997). *The Kacharis*. Low Price Publication.
- Erikson, T.H. (1993). *Ethnicity and nationalism: Anthropological perspectives*. Pluto Press.
- Gait, E.A. (1906). *A history of Assam*. Thacker, Spink & Co.
- Gierson, G.A. (1967, reprint). *Linguistic survey of India*. New Delhi.

- Glad, B. (1996). Passing the baton: Transformational political leadership from Gorbachev to Yeltsin and from de Klerk to Mandela. *Political Psychology*, 17(1), 1-28.
- Gohain, H. (1985). *Assam: A burning question*. Spectrum Publication.
- Golay, B. (2004). *Nepali identity and sub-ethnic assertion in Darjeeling* (Unpublished M. Phil dissertation). Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi.
- Gormley-Heenan, C. (2001). From protagonist to pragmatist: Political leadership in societies in transition. INCORE.
- Goswami, N. (2012). Violence in Bodo areas: The risks of conceding 'exclusive' ethnic homelands. Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis.
- Guha, A. (1991). *Medieval and early colonial Assam*. K.P. Bagchi.
- History in Glimpse: All Bodo Students' Union (1967-2017); A Journey of Struggle. (2021, September 5). Retrieved from PIB.
- Horowitz, D.L. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. University of California Press.
- Hussain, A. (2017). Origin and development of Bodoland movement in Assam. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science*, 5(8D), 1024-1028.
- Hussain, M. (1995). *The Assam movement: Class, ideology, and identity*. Manas Publication.
- Khobragade, V. (2010). Ethnicity, insurgency and self-determination: A dilemma of multi-ethnic state: A case of North-East India. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 71(4).
- Lederach, J.P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Leoussi, A.S. (2001). *Encyclopaedia of nationalism*. Transaction Publishers.

- Memorandum of Settlement between All Bodo Students' Union, Bodo Peoples Action Committee, Government of Assam and Government of India. (1993, February 20).
- Memorandum of Settlement between All Bodo Students' Union, National Democratic Front of Bodoland, Government of BTC, Government of Assam and Government of India. (2020, January 27).
- Memorandum of Settlement between Bodo Liberation Tiger Force, Government of Assam and Government of India. (2003, February 10).
- Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O., & Woodhouse, T. (1998). *Contemporary conflict resolution*. Oxford Polity Press.
- Mishra, U. (2012). Bodoland: The burden of history. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(37).
- Mosahari, P. (2003). *Bodoforni Jarimin* (The History of the Bodos). [Publisher not specified].
- Mosahari, P. (2011). *Political identity crisis of the Bodos and their Bodoland movement*. N.L. Publications.
- Mukerjee, K. (2017). *Insurgency and peace building in the Northeast Indian state of Manipur*. Taylor and Francis Ltd.
- Narzari, B.S. (2007). *Upendra Nath Brahma: Life and philosophy*. Chirang Publication Board.
- Nath, D. (2014). Socio-economic development of North East India and beyond: A study of the Look-East Policy (Unpublished dissertation). Sikkim University.
- Nath, M.K. (2003). *Bodo insurgency in Assam: New accord and new problems*. Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
- Northouse, P.G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage Publications.

- OKDISCD. (2008). *An initiative for peaceful co-existence: A look into the conflict profile in the Bodo heartland and capacity building needs among the displaced populace in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts*. OKDISCD.
- Pegu, J. (2004). *Reclaiming identity: A discourse on Bodo history*. Jatinga Printer.
- Prakash, A. (2011). *Ethnic conflicts in North-East India: Its vulnerability*. Surendra Publications.
- Prakash, V. (2008). *Terrorism in India's North-East: A gathering storm*. Kalpaz Publishers.
- Raymond, G.A. (2005). Westphalia. In M. Griffiths (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of International Relations and Global Politics*. Routledge.
- Roessingh, M.A. (1996). *Ethnonationalism and political systems in Europe: A state of tension*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Roy, A. (1995). *The Boro imbroglio*. Spectrum.
- Saha, S. (2022). *ABSU and its struggle for Bodoland*. Notion Press.
- Saikia, P. (Ed.). (2011). *Ethnic mobilization and violence in Northeast India*. Routledge.
- Sarma, C. (2000). *The Bodoland movement: A preliminary enquiry into the role of the middle class*. South Asian Publishers.
- Sarma, S. (2017). The Bodoland demand: Genesis of an ethnic conflict. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(1).
- Sarma, S.K. (2017). The Bodoland demand: Genesis of an ethnic conflict. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(1), 32-36.
- Sen, K. (2013). Nidhanpur Copper Plate Inscription: A study of the earliest epigraphic evidence of Sylhet-Cachar. *The Echo*, 2(1).

- Sethuraman, K. (2014). Effective leadership styles. *International Business Research*, 7(9).
- Siiger, H. (2015). The Bodo of Assam: Revisiting a classical study from 1950. In P.B. Andersen & S. Santosh K. (Eds.), *Nordic Institute of Asian Studies*.
- Singh, A.M. (2010). *Conflict in Manipur*. National Institute of Advanced Studies.
- Singha, K., & Singh, M.A. (Eds.). (2016). *Identity, contestation, and development in Northeast India*. Routledge.
- Sonowal, K. (2013). *Why Bodoland movement?* EBH Publishers.
- Subba, T.B. (2012). *The Nepali Diaspora in India's North East Hill Region in the Current Context*.
- Talukdar, S. (2021). Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR): Prospects and challenges. *Natural Volatiles & Essential Oils*, 8(5), 12594-12599.
- Tauceana, I.M. (2016). Study on management styles and managerial power types for a large organization. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*.
- Thatal, N. (2015). Dynamics of identity politics: A case study of old settlers in Sikkim. (Unpublished M.Phil dissertation). Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Sikkim University.
- Verawati, D.M., & Hartono, B. (2020). Effective leadership: From the perspective of trait theory and behavior theory. *Jurnal Riset Ekonomi Manajemen*, 4(1)

APPENDIX-I
MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT (BODO ACCORD)
(Signed in Guwahati, Assam on 20th February, 1993)

1. Preamble

- (i) Both the Government of India and the Government of Assam have been making earnest efforts to bring about an amicable solution to the problems of the Bodos and other Plains Tribals living in the north bank of river Brahmaputra within Assam.
- (ii) Towards this end, the Government of India held a series of meetings with the State government as well as with leaders of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC). The State Government has also separately held discussions with the Bodo leaders. As a result, it has been considered necessary to set-up an administrative authority within the State of Assam under a scheme, the details of which are outlined in the succeeding paragraphs:

2. Objective

The objective of this scheme is to provide maximum autonomy within the framework of the Constitution to the Bodos for social, economic, educational, ethnic and cultural advancement.

3. (a) Name: Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC)

There shall be formed, by an Act of Assam Legislative Assembly, a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) within the State of Assam comprising contiguous geographical areas between river Sankosh and Mazbat/river Pasnoi. The land records authority of the State will scrutinize the list of villages furnished by ABSU /BP AC

having 50% and more of tribal population which shall be included in the BAC. For the purpose of providing a contiguous area, even the villages having less than 50% tribal population shall be included. BAC will also include Reserve Forests as per the guidelines laid by Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, not otherwise required by the Government for manning the international border and tea gardens located completely within the BAC contiguous area.

(b) Powers

The BAC will comprise of a General Council comprising 40 members, 35 elected on the basis of adult suffrage and having a life of five years. The Government will have powers to nominate 5 members to the Council, particularly from groups which could not otherwise be represented. This Council will have powers to make bye-laws, rules and orders for application within the BAC area on the subjects enumerated in Schedule 'A'.

(c) The Executive Authority of the BAC would be exercised in its Executive Body to be known as Bodoland Executive Council (BEC). The BEC will be responsible for implementation within the BAC area of the laws on subjects enumerated in Schedule 'A'.

(d) The General Council and the BEC will hold office during the pleasure of the Governor of Assam. Consultation with the State Law Department of Government of Assam would be necessary if the Governor proposed to dissolve either the General Council or the BEC before the expiry of its term in accordance with the provisions of law. The executive authority of the BEC will be exercised by the party enjoying a simple majority in the General Council. On completion of

elections, the Governor would invite the leader of the majority party to constitute the BEC.

4. Finances

- (i) (a) The finances for the BAC will be earmarked under a separate subhead within the State budget, in keeping with the guidelines laid down by the Government of India from time to time. The government of Assam would have no powers to divert this earmarked allocation to other heads/areas except in exigencies when there is unavoidable overall Budget cut.
- (b) The provisions made in 4 (i) (a) regarding allocation of funds should be in line with the spirit of the Constitution (seventy second) and (seventy third) amendment.
- (ii) The BAC would also receive grant-in-aid from time to time within the principles and policies enunciated by the Government of India.
- (iii) The General Council will have powers to raise finances from levies/fees/taxes etc., on subjects mentioned in Schedule 'A' subject to Constitutional amendment mentioned above.
- (iv) The finances for the BAC will be managed exclusively by its General Council and the statement of its annual audited accounts will be laid on the table of the State Assembly.

5. Powers of appointments

The Bodoland Executive Committee would have powers to appoint Class III and Class IV staff within its jurisdiction for implementation of schemes connected with the subjects enumerated in Schedule 'A'.

6. Reservation of Seats

The Election Commission of India will be requested by the BAC to consider seat reservation and delimitation of constituencies, both Lok Sabha and State Assembly, within the BAC area to the extent permitted by the Constitution and the law.

7. Special provisions for the BAC area

The General Council shall be consulted and its views shall be given due regard before any law made on the following subjects, is implemented in the BAC area:

- i) The religious or social practice of the Bodos;
- ii) The Bodo customary laws and procedures; and
- iii) The ownership and transfer of land within the BAC area.

8. Special status for the Bodoland Autonomous Council

The BAC shall, within the laws of the land, take steps to protect the demographic complexion of the areas falling within its jurisdiction.

9. Special Courts

Action will be taken in consultation with the Guwahati High Court to set up within BAC area Special Courts as specified below to try suits and cases between parties all of whom belong to Scheduled Tribe or Tribes in accordance with the tribal customary law and procedure, if any.

- (a) Village Courts.
- (b) Subordinate District Customary Law Courts within a civil Sub Divisional Territory, and
- (c) District Customary Law Court.

10. Appointment in the Central Bodies

The claims of the Bodos shall be considered for appointment to the North Eastern Council.

11. Official Language

The General Council can lay down policy with regard to use of Bodo language as medium of official correspondence within the BAC area. However, while corresponding with offices outside the BAC area, correspondence will have to be in bilingual form in accordance with the Article 345 of the Constitution and the provision of law in this behalf.

12. Changes in Geographical Boundary

The geographical area of the Bodoland Autonomous Council as agreed upon can be changed with the mutual consent of the BAC and the Government of Assam.

13. Revision of List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The scheduling and de-scheduling of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes residing within the Bodo areas will be done as per the Commission appointed by the Government of India under the Constitution.

14. Trade and Commerce

The General Council will have powers to regulate trade and commerce within its jurisdiction in accordance with the existing law. For this purpose, it can issue permits and licences to individuals within the BAC area. The Government of Assam and the Union Government while considering allotment of permits to people residing within the BAC area will give preference to the Bodos.

15. Employment opportunities

The BAC will have powers to reserve jobs for Scheduled Tribes within its jurisdiction. However, exercise of such powers shall be in accordance with the existing constitutional and legal provisions.

16. Civil and Police Services

- (i) The Government of Assam may from time to time post officers of the rank of Class II and above to posts within the BAC in accordance with the exigencies. While making these postings due regard will be given to, views of BAC about officers being so posted.
- (ii) The officers posted to the BAC area will be accountable to the BAC for their performance and the assessment of their work recorded by the BEC authorities, will be incorporated to their ACRs by the State Government.
- (iii) The Central Government, while making recruitments from the State of Assam to the Army, para military forces and police units, will hold special recruitment drives within the BAC area.

17. Appointment of Interim Bodoland Executive Council

The Government of Assam will take steps for the formation of an Interim Bodoland Executive Council for the BAC from amongst the leaders of the present Bodoland movement who are signatories to this settlement, during the transition period, that is prior to the holding of election. Such Interim Council would be formed before a prescribed date mutually agreed between the Central and State Governments.

18. Relief and Rehabilitation

- (i) ABSU - BPAC leaders will take immediate steps to bring overground and deposit with the District authorities all arms, ammunition and explosives in the possession of their own supporters and will cooperate with the administration in bringing overground all Bodo militants along with their arms and ammunition etc., within one month of the formation of the Interim BEC. In order to ensure the smooth return to civil life of the cadre and to assist in the quick restoration of peace and normalcy, such surrenders made voluntarily will not attract prosecution.
- (ii) The Government of Assam will consider sympathetically the withdrawal of all cases against persons connected with the Bodoland Movement excluding those relating to heinous crimes.
- (iii) The Government of India will initiate steps for review of action against the Bodo employees of Government of India and subordinate offices as well as in respect of Central Government Undertakings. Similar action would be taken by the Government of Assam.
- (iv) The Government of Assam will initiate immediate steps for suitable rehabilitation of the Bodo militants coming overground as a result of this settlement. Similarly, the Government will organise ex-gratia payments as per rules to next of the kins killed during the Bodo agitation.

19. Share in collection of excise duty on tea

The Government of Assam will deposit in the BAC Fund revenue collected from the tea gardens falling within the BAC area.

20. Protection of rights of non-tribals

The Government of Assam and the BAC will jointly ensure that all rights and interests of the non-tribals as on date living in BAC area in matters pertaining to land as well as their language are protected.

21. Ad-hoc Central grant for launching the BAC

After the signing of this settlement, an ad-hoc Budget on reasonable basis will be prepared by Interim BEC and discussed with the State and Central Governments for necessary financial support.

Signatories:

- i) S.K. Bwiswamutiary, President, ABSU.
- ii) Rabi Ram Brahma, General Secretary, ABSU.
- iii) Subhash Basumatari, Chairman, BPAC.
- iv) K.S. RAO, Add. Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam.

In the presence of

- i) Rajesh Pilot, Minister or State (Internal Security) Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- ii) Hiteswar Saikia, Chief Minister of Assam State Govt. of Assam.

List of subjects and Departments over which BAC will have control within the BAC area

- 1. Cottage Industry.
- 2. Animal Husbandry and Veterinary.
- 3. Forests.
- 4. Agriculture.
- 5. P.W.D.

6. Sericulture.
7. Education.
 - (a) Adult Education.
 - (b) Primary Education.
 - (c) Upto Higher Secondary including Vocational training.
8. Cultural Affairs.
9. Soil Conservation.
10. Co-operation.
11. Fisheries.
12. Panchayat and Rural Development.
13. Handloom and Textiles.
14. Health and Family Welfare.
15. Public Health Engineering.
16. Irrigation.
17. Social Welfare.
18. Flood Control schemes for protection of villages (not of highly technical nature).
19. Sports and Youth Welfare.
20. Weights and Measures.
21. Library Services.
22. Museums and Archaeology.
23. Urban Development - Town and Country Planning.
24. Tribal Research Institute.
25. College Education (General).
26. Land and Revenue.

27. Publicity/Public Relations.
28. Printing and Stationary.
29. Tourism.
30. Transport.
31. Any other matter connected with development.
32. Municipal Corporation, Improvement Trusts, District Boards and other local authorities.
33. Tribal Welfare.
34. Markets and Fairs.
35. Lotteries, Theatres, Dramatic Performances and Cinemas.
36. Vital statistics including registrations of birth and deaths.
37. Food and Civil Supply.
38. Intoxicating liquors, opium and derivatives etc.

APPENDIX-II
MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT
(Signed on 10th February, 2003)

1. The Government of India and the Government of Assam have been making concerted efforts to fulfil the aspirations of the Bodo people relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development. Towards this end, a series of talks were held between Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) since March, 2000. As a result, it is agreed to create a self-governing body for the Bodo Areas in the State of Assam as follows:

2. Objectives

The objectives of the agreement are: to create an Autonomous self governing body to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the State of Assam and to provide constitutional protection under Sixth Schedule to the said Autonomous Body; to fulfil economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area.

3. Area

- 3.1. The area of proposed BTC shall comprise all the 3082 villages and areas to be so notified by the State Government. The above mentioned villages and areas shall be divided into 4 contiguous districts after reorganisation of the existing districts of Assam within a period of 6 months of the signing of the agreement on the lines of the proposal given by BLT subject to clearance of the Delimitation Commission.

3.2 A committee comprising one representative each from Governments of India & Assam and BLT will decide by consensus on the inclusion of additional villages and areas in the BTC from out of 95 villages and areas on the basis of the criteria of tribal population being not less than 50%, contiguity or any other agreed relevant criteria within a period of three months of signing of this MoS.

4. Status of Bodoland Territorial Council

The provision of the Sixth schedule and other relevant Articles of the Constitution of India will apply to BTC, mutatis mutandis in terms of this agreement. The safeguards/modifications for the non-tribals in BTC area, inter-alia, will include the following:

4.1. Provision of para 1(2) of Sixth Schedule regarding Autonomous Regions will not be applicable to BTC.

4.2. A provision will be made in para 2(1) of the Sixth Schedule for increasing the number of members for BTC up to 46 out of which 30 will be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities and 6 to be nominated by Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities for BTC area of which atleast two should be women. Nominated members will have the same rights and privileges as other members, including voting rights. Election from the 40 constituencies of BTC shall be on the basis of adult franchise. The term of the elected members of BTC shall be for 5 years.

4.3. Safeguards for the settlement rights, transfer and inheritance of property etc. of non-tribals will be suitably incorporated in para 3 of the Sixth Schedule. Any such law as may be made by the BTC in this regard will not, in particular:

- (a) Extinguish the rights and privileges enjoyed by an citizen of India in respect of their land at the commencement of BTC, and
 - (b) Bar any citizen from acquiring land either by way of inheritance, allotment, settlement or by way of transfer if such citizens were eligible for such bonafide acquisition of land within the BTC area.
- 4.4. Provision will be added in para 6 of Sixth Schedule that in BTC area, language and medium of instruction in educational institutions will not be changed without approval of the State Government.
- 4.5. Provision of para 8 of Sixth Schedule regarding power to assess and collect land revenue and impose taxes shall be applicable to BTC.
- 4.6. Para 10 of the Sixth Schedule will not be applicable to BTC area.
- 4.7. Provision of Article 332(6) of the Constitution will be so modified that the existing status of representation of BTC area in the State Assembly is kept intact. After the creation of BTC, the Parliamentary & Assembly Constituencies shall be delimited by the Delimitation Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
- 4.8. In the event, Panchayati Raj system ceases to be in force in the council area, the powers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in such matters shall be vested with the Council.

The Amendments to the Sixth Schedule shall include provisions in such a manner that non-tribals are not disadvantaged in relation to the rights enjoyed by them at the commencement of BTC and their rights and privileges including land rights are fully protected.

5. Power and Functions

5.1. The Council shall have legislative powers in respect to subjects transferred to it as enumerated below. All laws made under this paragraph shall be submitted forthwith to the Governor and until assented to by him, shall have no effect. The BTC shall have executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of subjects transferred to it.

Subjects to be entrusted to BTC by Assam Government

1. Small, Cottage and Rural Industry;
2. Animal Husbandry & Veterinary;
3. Forest;
4. Agriculture;
5. PWD;
6. Sericulture;
7. Education (Primary Education, Higher Secondary Including vocational training, Adult Education, College Education (General);
8. Cultural Affairs;
9. Soil Conservation;
10. Co-operation;
11. Fisheries;
12. Panchayat and Rural Development;
13. Handloom and Textile;
14. Health & Family Welfare;
15. Public Health Engineering;
16. Irrigation;
17. Social Welfare;

18. Flood Control;
19. Sports & Youth Welfare;
20. Weights and Measures;
21. Library Services;
22. Museum & Archaeology;
23. Urban Development – Town and Country Planning;
24. Tribal Research Institute;
25. Land & Revenue;
26. Publicity/Public Relations;
27. Printing & Stationery;
28. Tourism;
29. Transport;
30. Planning and Development;
31. Municipal Corporation, Improvement Trust, District Boards and other local authorities;
32. Welfare of Plan Tribes and Backward Classes;
33. Markets and fairs;
34. Lotteries, Theatres, Dramatic performance and cinema;
35. Statistics;
36. Food and Civil supply;
37. Intoxicating liquors, opium and derivatives etc.;
38. Labour and employment;
39. Relief and Rehabilitation;
40. Registration of Births and Deaths.

- 5.2. There shall be an Executive Council comprising of not more than 12 Executive Members, one of whom shall be the Chief and another one the Deputy Chief of the said Executive Council. There shall be adequate representation for the non-tribal members in the Executive Council. The Chief and the Deputy Chief of the Council shall have the status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the other Executive Members equivalent to the Minister of the State of Assam for protocol purposes in BTC area.
- 5.3. The BTC shall have the full control over the officers and staff connected with the delegated subjects working in the BTC area and shall be competent to transfer officers and staff within the BTC area. ACRs of these officers shall also be written by the appropriated BTC authority.
- 5.4. BTC shall also be competent to make appointments for all posts under its control in accordance with the rules of appointment followed by the Government of Assam. However, the posts, where recruitment is made on the recommendation of APSC, shall not be covered under this provision. The Council may constitute a Selection Board for appointments to be made by it and may also make rules, with the approval of the Governor of Assam to regulate appointments and to ensure adequate representation for all communities living in the Council area.
- 5.5. No posts shall be created by BTC without concurrence of the Government of Assam and it shall also abide by the decision of the Government of Assam in respect of abolition of/temporarily keeping vacant any post.
- 5.6. Development functions and bodies within the competence of BTC shall be transferred to BTC. In respect of DRDA, concurrence of Government of India will be obtained.

- 5.7. The offices of the Dy. Commissioner and Superintendent of Police will be outside the superintendence and control of BTC.
- 5.8. The State Government would provide an amount, to be decided every year on population ratio basis, as grants-in-aid in two equal installments to the BTC for executing development works. The proportionate share for the BTC shall be calculated on the basis of the plan funds available after setting aside the funds required for earmarked sectors and the salary. This amount may be reduced proportionately if the state plan allocation is reduced or there is plan cut due to resource problem. In addition, the Council will be paid a suitable amount of plan funds and non-plan funds to cover the office expenses and the salaries of the staff working under their control. The BTC shall disburse the salaries of the staff under their control and would ensure strict economy in the matter.
- 5.9. BTC authority shall prepare a plan with the amounts likely to be available for development works, both under State share and Central share, covering any or all the activities of the departments under their control. The Council shall have full discretion in selecting the activities and choosing the amount for the investment under the same in any year covering all groups of people in a fair and equitable manner. This plan will be a sub set of the State plan and would be treated as its integral part. Once the plan of the State, including BTC plan, gets the approval of the Planning Commission the BTC authority will start execution of their plan in the BTC area. Modifications, if any, made by the Planning Commission in the BTC proposal, shall be binding on the BTC authority. The State Government shall not divert the funds allocated to the BTC to other heads and also ensure its timely release. BTC may have Planning Department to prepare the plans for BTC area to be submitted to Planning Commission through the Government of Assam.

5.10. The executive functions of the BTC shall be exercised through its Principal Secretary who shall be an officer of the rank not below of Commissioner/Secretary to Government of Assam. The sanctioning powers of the Government of Assam shall be vested with the Principal Secretary of BTC and sanctioning powers of head(s) of the Department(s) including for technical sanction shall be conferred on the senior most officer of that Department preferably not below the rank of Additional Director, who may be designated as Director of BTC for that department. The Principal Secretary and other officers shall exercise their powers under the overall guidance and supervision of BTC.

6. Law and Order

To strengthen the Police Administration, Government of Assam shall appoint an IGP for 4 districts of BTC and the jurisdiction of the DIG Kokrajhar shall also be modified to cover these 4 districts.

7. Revision of list of ST

Consequent to the inclusion of BTC area into the Sixth Schedule, the list of ST for the State of Assam shall be so modified so as to ensure that the tribal status of Bodos and other tribals living outside the BTC are does not get affected adversely.

8. Grant of ST status of Bodo Kacharis of Karbi Anglong and NC Hills districts

The Government of India agrees to consider sympathetically the inclusion of the Bodo Kacharis living in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills Autonomous Council area in the ST (Hill) List of State of Assam.

9. Development of Bodo Language

9.1. The Government of India agrees to consider favourably the inclusion of Bodo Language in Devnagri Script in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

9.2. Bodo language shall be the official language of BTC subject to the condition that Assamese and English shall also continue to be used for official purposes.

10. Additional Development Package for BTC

10.1. The State Government, within the limitation of financial and other constraints, may offer or allow the Council to offer, possible and sustainable additional incentives for attracting private investment in the Council area and would also support projects for external funding.

10.2. In order to accelerate the development of the region and to meet the aspirations of the people, the Government of India will provide financial assistance of Rs 100 crores per annum for 5 years for projects to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in BTC areas over and above the normal plan assistance to the State of Assam. The size of the Corpus will be reviewed after a period of 5 years. Suitable mechanism will be built in the system to ensure that the funds are transferred to BTC in time and at regular intervals. An illustrative list of projects which may be considered to be taken up in BTC given below:

List of projects:

1. To establish a centre for development and research of Bodo language;
2. Upgradation of existing educational infrastructure by way of renovation/ addition of buildings, providing modern facilities for teaching such as computers, science laboratories etc. from primary level to college level in BTC area;

3. A cultural complex to be established at Kokrajhar to promote and develop Bodo tradition and cultural heritage;
 4. To establish a super-speciality hospital with all modern facilities at Kokrajhar
Government Hospitals shall be established in all district, sub-divisional and block headquarter;
 5. To establish sports complexes in all the district headquarters;
 6. Food processing plants and cold storage facilities at Kokrajhar, Kajolgaon, Udalguri and Tamulpur;
 7. Construction of a bridge over river Aai to connect Koilamoila, Amguri etc. with the rest of the district;
 8. To build a Bodoland Bhawan in Delhi;
 9. To set up integrated agro-processing park and textile-cum-apparel park;
 10. Revitalisation of Kokilabari Agricultural Farm;
 11. To develop adequate infrastructure to promote Manas sanctuary as an international tourist spot;
 12. To complete Champa, Suklai and Dhansiri irrigation projects;
 13. To construct a highway on the Indo-Bhutan border from Jamduar to Bhairabkunda to connect remote places located adjacent to the border;
 14. To set up model dairy, fishery, horticulture and poultry farms/training centres at different places in all the 4 districts to encourage youth for self-employment;
 15. To enhance the existing facilities in veterinary hospitals in BTC area.
- 10.3. Government of India will provide necessary one time financial assistance required for development of administrative infrastructure in the newly created

district headquarters, sub-divisional headquarters and block headquarters, besides the BTC Secretariat Complex at Kokrajhar

11. Centrally funded University

11.1. A centrally funded Central Institute of Technology (CIT) will be set up to impart education in various technological/vocational disciplines such as Information Technology, Bio-Technology, Food Processing, Rural Industries, Business Management, etc.

11.2. The CIT will be subsequently upgraded to a Centrally funded State University with technical and non-technical disciplines to be run by the BTC.

12. Relief & Rehabilitation

12.1. The BLT would join the national mainstream and shun the path of violence in the interest of peace and development. After the formation of the interim council of BTC, BLT will dissolve itself as an organisation and surrender with arms within a week of swearing-in of the interim council. The State Government would provide full support to relief and rehabilitation of the members of BLT who would surrender with arms in this process in accordance with the existing policy of the State. Financial support in such cases, however shall be limited to be provisions of the scheme prepared and funded by the Government of India. Withdrawal of cases against such persons and those related to overground Bodo movement since 1987 shall be considered according to the existing policy of the State of Assam.

12.2. The Government of India will initiate steps for review of action against the Bodo employees of Government of India and subordinate officers as well as in

respect of Central Government Undertakings. Similar action would be taken by the Government of Assam.

12.3. Bodo youth will be considered for recruitment in Police, Army and Paramilitary forces to increase their representation in these forces.

13. Special Rehabilitation Programme for the people affected by ethnic disturbances

The Special Rehabilitation Programme (SRP) for the people affected by ethnic disturbances in Assam, who are at present living at relief camps in Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon etc. shall be completed by the Government of Assam with active support of BTC. Necessary funds for their rehabilitation shall be provided by the Government of India and lands which are free from all encumbrances required for such rehabilitation shall be made available by the BTC.

14. Interim Council

Immediately after signing of the agreement, Interim Executive Council for BTC shall be formed by Governor of Assam from amongst the leaders of the present Bodo movement, including the signatories to this settlement, and shall include adequate representation to the non-tribal communities in BTC area. The Interim Council shall not continue for a period beyond 6 months during which period election to the Council shall be held. Government of Assam shall dissolve the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) and repeal the BAC Act.

15. Government of Assam will consider inclusion of all tribals including Bodos in RHAC/MAC/LAC in consultation with leaders of these Councils.

16. The Implementation of the provision of the Memorandum of Settlement shall be periodically reviewed by a Committee comprising representatives of Government of India, Government of Assam and BTC.

Signed on 10th February, 2003 at New Delhi in the presence of Shri L.K. Advani, Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister of India and Shri Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam.

(Hagrama Mohilary)
Chairman, Bodo
Liberation Tigers Force

(P K Dutta)
Chief Secretary, Govt. of
Assam

(R C A Jain)
Secretary (BM) Ministry
of Home Affairs
Government of India

APPENDIX-III
MEMORANDUM OF SETTLEMENT
(Signed on 27th January, 2020)

1. The Government of India and Government of Assam have been making concerted efforts to fulfill the political, economic, social, cultural and identity related aspirations of Bodo people. Tripartite agreements in 1993 and 2003 were signed leading to creation of Bodoland Autonomous and Bodoland Territorial Councils under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution for Bodo inhabited areas in Assam. ABSU and its associated organizations as well as various factions of NDFB continued with the demand for separate Statehood. Negotiations were held with Bodo organizations for a comprehensive and final solution to their demands while keeping intact the territorial integrity of the State of Assam.

2. Objectives of the MoS

- i. To augment area and powers of BTC and streamline its functioning;
- ii. To address issues relating to Bodos residing outside BTAD;
- iii. To promote and protect social, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities of Bodos;
- iv. To provide legislative safeguards for land rights of tribals;
- v. To ensure accelerated development of tribal areas; and
- vi. To rehabilitate members of NDFB factions.

3. Alteration of Area of BTAD

3.1. A commission will be appointed under Paragraph 14 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution soon after signing of the MoS to examine and recommend on the following:-

- i. Inclusion of villages contiguous to BTAD and having majority tribal population, as demanded by Bodo organisations.
 - ii. Exclusion of villages currently under BTAD which are contiguous to nonSixth Schedule areas and have majority non tribal population.
 - iii. Increase in constituencies of BTC upto the maximum of 60 seats after alteration in the area, without adversely affecting the existing percentage of reservation for tribals.
- 3.2. The Commission will include representatives of the State Government as well as other stakeholders including ABSU and BTC as its members. It will submit its recommendation within six months from the date of notification.
- 3.3. The existing Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) shall be renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region comprising area covered under BTAD.
- 3.4. Government of Assam may consider reorganizing the districts consequent to alteration of area of BTAD on administrative considerations.

4. Review of Powers and Functions of BTC

- 4.1. The process of BTC to have more legislative, executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of additional subjects as enumerated at Annexure I will be initiated within 90 days.
- 4.2. Principal Secretary, BTC will have monitoring powers of Registration Department within BTAD area.
- 4.3. Amendments to Article 280 and the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution as per the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Amendment) Bill, 2019 to improve

the financial resources and administrative powers of BTC has been initiated. The Constitution Amendment Bill was introduced in the Parliament in January, 2019.

4.4. Executive functions of BTC shall be exercised through its Chief Executive Officer not below the rank of Principal Secretary to Government of Assam. Senior most officers of various Departments of BTC shall not be below the rank of Addl. Secretary to Government of Assam.

4.5. Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of the districts within BTAD will be posted normally in consultation with Chief Executive Member of BTC.

4.6. Deputy Commissioners in BTAD will report to Chief Executive Member of BTC through Chief Executive Officer in respect of all developmental activities in their districts with regard to the responsibilities assigned to them by BTC.

4.7. A tripartite mechanism, headed by the Cabinet Minister of Government of Assam looking after BTC affairs, and with Chief Executive Member of BTC and a representative of MHA as members, shall be set up to periodically review (not less than once in six months) the status of all laws/regulations passed by BTC and sent to the State Government for assent of Governor of Assam.

4.8. A tripartite mechanism headed by the Chief Secretary of Government of Assam and having Chief Executive Officer of BTC and a representative of MHA as members, shall be set up to periodically review (not less than once in six months) status of all proposals of BTC pending with the State Government relating to creation of new posts and posting of officers to the vacant posts.

5. Provisions for Bodos outside BTAD

- 5.1. Government of Assam shall set up a Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council for focussed development of Bodo villages outside BTAD in the lines of other existing Councils for Plains Tribes. State Government will consult Bodo organisations and existing Councils before notifying areas to be included in the proposed Bodo-Kachari Council.
- 5.2. An Advisory Committee comprising representatives of Government of Assam, BTC and Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council shall be set up to identify specific developmental needs of Bodo villages outside BTAD and advise the State Government.
- 5.3. Government of Assam shall take effective measures to confer rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 on tribals living in the forest areas outside BTAD in accordance with prescribed procedure under the Act.

6. Issues relating to identity, language, education, etc.

- 6.1. Government of India will implement the commitment made in the earlier agreement in 2003 to include Bodo-Kacharis living in Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao Districts in the ST (Hill) list of Assam in a time-bound manner.
- 6.2. Government of Assam will notify Bodo language in Devanagri script as an associate official language in the State.
- 6.3. Government of Assam will initiate measures to provincialise (i) schools and colleges established in BTAD, and (ii) Bodo medium schools outside BTAD, as per special need and requirement. The State Govt. will also take measures to

appoint lecturers in Bodo Departments in colleges outside BTAD as a special consideration.

6.4. Government of Assam will establish a separate Directorate for Bodo medium schools in the State.

6.5. A Cultural Complex-cum-Centre of Excellence in the name of Bodofa Upendranath Brahma will be established at Thulunghapuri (Kokrajhar District). The Centre will study and recommend measures for protection and promotion of language, culture, identity, etc. of Bodos residing in Assam as well as other States of India. The Centre will be managed by BTC with financial assistance from both Central and the State Governments.

7. Issues related to Land Rights

7.1. Government of Assam may consider enacting a special legislation to provide adequate safeguards to land rights of STs living outside tribal Belts and Blocks in areas outside BTAD.

7.2. Government of Assam will take effective measures to protect khas land, grazing land and water bodies from illegal encroachment.

8. Special steps to be taken by Government of Assam

8.1. Government of Assam will create a separate Department to deal with matters relating to Councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution including BTC.

8.2. Government of Assam will create one post of DIG in BTAD in addition to the existing post of IG.

8.3. An Administrative Staff College will be established under BTC administration.

8.4. Government of Assam will provide financial compensation of Rs. 5 lakhs to each of next of kin of persons who lost their lives in agitations for separate State.

9. Settlement with NDFB factions

9.1. All NDFB factions under SoO shall abjure path of violence, surrender their weapons and disband their armed organisations within one month of signing of this MoS.

9.2. Government of India and Government of Assam will take necessary measures to rehabilitate the cadres in consultation with NDFB factions. Such measures may inter alia include (i) lump sum payment of ex-gratia, (ii) funding economic activities through existing Government schemes relating to fisheries, piggery, organic farming, poultry farming, etc., (iii) trade/vocational training based on locally available resources, and (iv) recruitment in appropriate Govt. jobs as per eligibility.

9.3. A committee headed by IGP, Special Branch, Assam with representatives of other Departments as members will make an assessment of rehabilitation needs of the cadres based on age profile, educational qualification, general area of residence, etc. The Committee may also involve successful entrepreneurs/NGOs in this effort.

9.4. Criminal cases registered against members of NDFB factions for non-heinous crimes shall be withdrawn by Government of Assam as per procedure established by law. Criminal cases registered in connection with heinous 5 crimes shall be reviewed case by case according to the existing policy on the subject.

10. Special Developmental Package

10.1. Government of Assam may earmark a sum of Rs. 250 crores per annum for a period of three years for development of area under BTC. GoI may contribute an additional amount of Rs. 250 Crores per annum for the same period. Illustrative lists of specific projects to be taken up on priority under the Special Development Package are appended at Annexure- II, III & IV.

10.2. Bodo youth will be considered for recruitment in Army, Paramilitary forces and Police to increase their representation in the forces. Pre-recruitment training rallies will be organized by the agencies to facilitate the process.

11. Joint Monitoring Committee

A Joint Monitoring Committee shall be constituted with representatives from MHA, Government of Assam, BTC and Bodo organisations to monitor implementation of this MoS.

The above Agreement is signed on January 27, 2020 at New Delhi in the presence of Hon'ble Union Home Minister of India, Shri Amit Shah.

Signatories:

- i) Pramod Boro, President ABSU.
- ii) Lawrence Islary, General Secretary, ABSU.
- iii) Ranjan Daimari, NDFB.
- iv) Gobinda Basumatary, NDFB.
- v) B. Saoraigwra, NDFB.
- vi) Dhirendra Boro, NDFB.
- vii) Mihineswar Basumatary, President, UBPO.
- viii) Kumar Sanjay Krishna, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam.
- ix) Satyendra Garg, Joint Secretary (NE), MHA.

Signing of the agreement is witnessed by:-

- i) Hangrama Mohilary, CEM, BTC.
- ii) Himanta Biswa Sarma, Cabinet Minister, Assam.
- iii) Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister, Assam.

Annexure – I
List of additional Subjects

1. Implementation of schemes under rural electrification, non-conventional energy sources, solar energy, renewable energy and mini-hydel projects.
2. Welfare and Development of Minority communities/Indigenous faith.
3. Trade and Commerce within BTC subject to the provisions of entry 33 of List III of Schedule VII of Constitution.
4. ‘Medium industry’ to be added to ‘Small, Cottage and Rural Industry subject to the provisions of entries 7 and 52 of List I of the Seventh schedule.’
5. ‘Education’ to be added to ‘Animal husbandry and veterinary that is to say preservation, protection and improvement of stock and prevention of animal diseases, veterinary training and practice, cattle pounds.’
6. ‘Technical nature’ to be added to ‘Flood Control for protection of village, paddy fields, markets and towns.’
7. ‘Vocational education’ to be added to ‘Education that is to say primary education, higher secondary including vocational training, adult education, college education (general)’.
8. ‘Protection of wildlife’ to be added to ‘Forests (other than reserved forests)’.

Annexure – II
Educational and Other important Institutions
GoI

1. Upendra Nath Brahma Central University at Barama (Baksa District).
2. National Sports University.
3. Sports Authority of India centres at Udalguri, Baksa and Chirang.
4. Institute of Livelihood Management at Tangla (District Udalguri).
5. North-East Regional Institute of Medical Science at Rwomari (Chirang District).
6. Hotel & Tourism Management Institute.
7. Regional campus of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University at Bhairabkunda (Udalguri District).
8. Bodoland Movement Memorial Museum at Salibari (Baksa District).
9. National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Udalguri.
10. Additional Navodaya Vidyalaya in each district of BTAD.

Government of Assam

11. Bodoland Institute of Rural Development at Gossaigaon (Kokrajhar District).
12. Polytechnic and Vocational Training Institute at Singlimari, Horsinga, Basbari and Gabardhana.
13. Organic University at Rowta.
14. Veterinary College/Hospital at Kumarikata.
15. Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Sciences.
16. Provincialisation of College of Music and Fine Arts at Kokrajhar.
17. Birsa Munda Cultural Complex.

18. Swami Vivekananda Youth Centre.
19. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Memorial multi-purpose Cultural Auditorium.
20. Gorkha Bhawan at Chirang.
21. Kheraishali Centre for Bodo Art and Culture with Tribal Art Gallery cum
Museum at Bhergaon.
22. Bathou Harimaphuri at Kumarikata.

Annexure – III
Industries and Employment generation projects
GoI

1. Development of Industrial Estates at Ramphalbill (Kokrajhar District) and Kokilaribari (Baksa District) for setting up small/medium industries.
2. Food processing plants with cold storage facilities at identified centers.
3. Training, production and marketing centres for Handloom and Textile products at identified locations.
4. Bamboo Nursery cum production and Processing Centre
5. Promotion of Eco Tourism in (a) Manas National Park (b) Bornadi Wild Life Sanctuary (c) Chakrasila Wild Life Sanctuary (d) Bhairabkunda (e) Kalamati (f) Bagamati (g) Ullapani (h) Kachugaon (h) Jam Duar (i) Diplai Lake (j) Dheer Lake (k) Saraichar lake, and (l) Daranga Mela
6. Mother Dairy plants at identified locations.
7. Railway Coach Factory in BTAD

Government of Assam

8. Formulation of suitable Industrial Policy for BTAD
9. Farm machinery bank at identified centers with infrastructure to support livelihood and agricultural development.
10. Organic Horticultural Park.
11. Animal Feed plants at identified centers
12. Centres for fish breeding, training and farming at identified centers in BTAD
13. Organic manure production centre at Jharaguri
14. Indigenous Food Park at identified locations
15. Emporium for tribal women to showcase handicrafts
16. Vir Chilarai Rural Resource Centre

Annexure – IV
New Infrastructure in Bodoland
GoI

1. Construction of a Highway in the name of Banasur from Majbat to Holongi (Sonitpur District).
2. Construction of bridges on river Sankosh (Kokrajhar District) and Dhansiri at Bhairabkunda (Udalguri District).
3. National Stadium for both indoor and outdoor events at Udalguri.
4. Comprehensive drinking water scheme for villages near Indo-Bhutan border.
5. Cancer Hospital and Medical College at Tamulpur.
6. Flyovers at railway crossings at Goreswar, Tangla and Udalguri.
7. Overbridge on NH-31 at Chapaguri (Chirang District)

Government of Assam

8. Construction of embankments to protect erosion and inundation by floods under river management project.
9. Upgradation of District Hospitals/sub-Health Centers/Veterinary Hospitals
10. Bodoland Guest House in Mumbai.

APPENDIX-IV

THE ASSAM LAND AND REVENUE REGULATION, 1886 REGULATION 1 OF 1886 [As amended]

(Vide Government Notification No. RD281/47/43, dated 24th August/1984)

CHAPTER IX RULES FRAMED UNDER SECTION 171 OF CHAPTER X OF THE ASSAM LAND AND REVENUE

REGULATION FOR DISPOSAL OF LAND WITHIN THE TRIBAL BELTS OR BLOCKS

1. The disposal of land within the Tribal belts or blocks constituted under the provisions of section 161 of the regulation shall be made in accordance with the provisions of those rules. Settlement of waste land shall be made only with the classes of people, notified under section 160(2) and specified in section 163(2) of the Regulation.

[All powers of the Deputy Commissioner under these rules shall be exercised subject to any general or special orders issued from time to time by the State Government.]

2. In these rules —

[An annual lease means a lease granted for one year only and confers no right in the soil beyond a right of user for the year for which it is given. It confers no right of inheritance beyond the year of issue. It confers no “right of transfer or sub-letting and shall be liable to cancellation for any transfer or sub-letting even during the year of issue. Provided that the State Government may waive their right to cancel an annual lease and may allow its renewal till such time as the State Government may direct in

those cases in which the land is mortgaged to Government or to a State sponsored Co-operative Society”.

A periodic lease, except in the case of town land, means a lease granted for a period longer than one year, and in the case of town land, a lease for a period longer than three years Subject to and so far as is consistent with any restrictions, conditions and limitations contained therein, a periodic lease, the term of which is not less than ten years conveys to the lessee the rights of a landholder as defined in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.]

(Cultivators pertaining to the following classes namely plains tribals, hill tribals, tea garden tribals, Santals, Nepali cultivator-graziers and Scheduled Castes have since been notified as persons entitled to protection, vide Notification No. RD69/46/19, dated the 5 th December, 1947) Person entitled, means persons notified under section 160(2). Waste land means land at the disposal of the Government which the Government has not disposed of by lease, grant or otherwise, and which is not included in a forest reserve, or in a forest proposed to be reserved under section 5 of the Assam Forest Regulation, VII of 1891, or in a protected forest constituted under the rules made under the said Regulation, and has not been allotted as a grazing ground under rules framed under section 13 of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

3. Settlement of land under these rules will be only on written application to be made to the Deputy Commissioner, or the Officer empowered in this behalf under section 168 of the Regulation, or any officer specially authorised by the Deputy Commissioner to entertain applications on his behalf. (Deleted vide Notification No. RSS.351/64/97, dated 18th May 1967)

4. On receipt of the application the Deputy Commissioner or an officer deputed by him or the officer empowered in his behalf will enquire into the availability of the land and the claims of the persons entitled to obtain settlement.

5. (Substituted vide Notification No. RSS.351/64/97, dated 18th May 1967)

(1) In making settlement of land the Provisions of Section 163(2) shall be strictly followed and settlement shall be made for each class of people in compact blocks as far as possible. Where compact blocks of 50 bighas or more are available settlement shall be made ordinarily with registered Co-operative Societies formed by actual landless cultivators belonging to the classes of persons notified under section 160 (2) or mentioned in Section 163(2).

(2) When settlement has to be given to individuals, the area shall ordinarily be limited to a bighas to 12 bighas per family according to the fertility of the soil. In given to individuals, preference shall be given in the following order:

(a) Settlement holders belonging to classes of persons notified under Section 160(2) or mentioned in section 163(2) who have been rendered landless due to flood, erosion or earthquake or due requisition or acquisition of their lands by Government for public purposes.

(b) Landless cultivators belonging to classes of persons notified under Section 160(2) or mentioned in Section 163(2).

(c) Cultivator of the classes mentioned above having landless than 8bighas.

Note – (1) A person who holds land less than 8 bighas in his name or in the name of any member of his family shall be eligible to get settlement of only so much of land

as shall, together with his existing holding, not exceed 8 or 12 bighas, as the case may be.

Note – (2) In case of tribal communities who live in community house according to tribal customs‘ all the residents in such community house or Chang need not necessarily be treated as one family, and for the purpose or calculation of the number of families, every five member of the Chang shall be treated as forming one family]

6. All settlement shall in the first instance be on annual lease; the land should be cleared and brought under cultivation except such areas as are required for growing thatch and sun grass for bonafide use of the family or for the grazing of cattle. No annual lease shall be renewed unless this condition is complied with, provided that the Deputy Commissioner may exempt from the operation of this rule case in which he is satisfied that the failure on the para of the settlement holder is due to circumstances beyond his control.

7. Land settled on annual lease may be converted into periodic lease when the conditions prescribed in rule 105 of the Land Records Manual are fulfilled, [and the requisite premium, if any, fixed by the State Government has been paid].

8. No, land held under annual lease shall be transferred or sublet. If any such land in transferred or sublet in contravention of this rule the settlement shall forthwith be terminated. Provided that if the settlement holder dies during the currency of the lease the heirs of the deceased will inherit for the remainder of the term [Provided further that the State Government may waive their right to cancel an annual lease and may allow its renewal till such time as the State Government may direct in those cases in which the land is mortgaged to Government or to a State-sponsored Co-operative Society].

9. Except in the case of estates mentioned in section 162(3), lands held under periodic lease may be transferred subject to the following condition:

A land holder may transfer or sublet his holding or any part of it within the belts or blocks only to persons belonging to the class of people notified under section 160(2) or those mentioned in Section 163(2) (i) (b) and (c), [or mortgage the whole or a part of his holding within such belt or block to Government or to a State-sponsored Cooperative Society functioning within such belt or block] If any transfer is made in contravention of this rule the lease shall be cancelled forthwith with the approval of Government and the land holder will forfeit his right and status in respect of the land so transferred.

10. If any person is found in occupation of any annual land otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of these rules he will be liable to eviction forthwith. If any person other than a person belonging to the classes of persons notified under section 160(2) or mentioned in section 163(2) (a) (b) and (c) is found in occupation of any waste land he will be evicted forthwith. In the case mentioned above the Deputy Commissioner or officer empowered in this behalf will make a summary enquiry and if he is satisfied that the occupation is unauthorised he will proceed to evict the encroachee forthwith and any structure or crops found on the land will be liable to forfeiture to Government.

11. If any person belonging to the classes of people notified under section 160(2) or mentioned in section 163(2) (a), (b) and (c) is found in occupation of any waste land otherwise than in accordance with these rules he shall be evicted: provided that the Deputy Commissioner or Officer empowered in this behalf may after satisfying himself as to the eligibility of the claim, the bonafide of the occupant

and availability of the land, offer settlement of the land in accordance with these rules after realising the back revenue to be assessed from the date of occupation. When evicting a person under this rule the Deputy Commissioner will serve a notice requiring the encroacher to vacate the land within a specified time, and he may, in his discretion, allow or disallow him to remove the structure and harvest the crops within the time so specified.

12. If any person is found in occupation of any land held under a periodic lease otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of these rules he shall be evicted there from. For the purpose of eviction the Deputy Commissioner will serve a notice requiring the occupant to vacate the land and to remove all structure or crops standing thereon within such period not exceeding one month as he may think fit. Such notice will be served on one or all of the occupants or if the occupants cannot be found it will be sufficient for the purpose of this rule if the notice is served by hanging at the last place of residence and pasted on the Gaonbura's notice Board and on the land in question. If the occupant fails to vacate the land or remove the structures or crops as required in the notice the Deputy Commissioner may forcibly enter into and take possession of the land and destroy the structures or crops found thereon. Any disobedience of orders will be dealt with under section 188, Indian Penal Code.
13. All other matters which are not covered by the above rules will be governed by the relevant rules under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

APPENDIX-V

Questionnaire

To be filled by respondents

Part: I

Name of the respondent.....
Sex.....
Age.....
Address:
Village/Town.....
District.....
Occupation.....
Educational Qualification.....
Marital status.....
Religion.....
Number of family members.....

Part: II

Please fill with the tick mark wherever necessary

- 1) Is your locality a multi-ethnic society?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Cannot say
- 2) If yes, how many ethnic groups are there in your locality?
 - a) 1
 - b) 2
 - c) 3
 - d) 4
 - e) More than above
- 3) Have you seen any ethnic conflict in your locality?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Cannot say

- 4) If yes, what was the nature of conflict?
- a) Violent
 - b) Non-violent
 - c) Both violent and non-violent
 - d) Any other.....
- 5) What are the factors that promote such conflicts?
- a) Feeling of deprivation
 - b) Political consciousness
 - c) Competitiveness among ethnic groups
 - d) Any other.....
- 6) Were you a victim of Bodo conflicts?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Cannot say
- 7) If yes, how were you affected?
- a) Directly
 - b) Indirectly
 - c) Falling in crossfire
 - d) Any other.....
- 8) What was the impact of such conflict in your life and family?
- a) Loss of residence and property
 - b) Scarcity of daily necessities
 - c) Fear
 - d) Any other.....
- 9) Did you receive any kind of support from the government during the conflict?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Cannot say

10) How is the present relation between various ethnic groups in your locality?

- a) Amicable
- b) Hazardous
- c) Suspicious
- d) Cannot say

11) Do you think the consequence of the Bodoland Movement is a fruitful one?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Cannot say

12) What was the percentage of female involvement in the movement?

- a) 10%-30%
- b) 30%-50%
- c) 50%-70%
- d) 70%-90%

Part: III

13) What were the factors that cultivated a sense that the Bodos should fight for their rights?

.....

14) How were the people mobilised for the movement?

.....

15) What were the problems faced when the Bodoland Movement was at its peak?

.....

16) How was the behaviour of the state government towards the Bodo ethnic group?

.....

17) What was the impact of the conflict between the two insurgent groups NDFB and BLTF?

.....

18) Were the common people troubled by insurgents during the movement? If yes, how?

.....

- 19) What was the impact of the Bodoland Movement on the lives of the common mass?
.....
- 20) How did the creation of BAC Accord help the people?
.....
- 21) How did the creation of BTC Accord help the people?
.....
- 22) Why do you think that the BAC Accord was not a successful one?
.....
- 23) What kind of economic changes have been there in your locality because of the ethnic conflicts?
.....
- 24) What kind of changes have been there in the political lives in your locality?
.....
- 25) Have there been demographic changes in your locality? If yes, what kind is the change?
.....
- 26) What should be the initiatives by the government to maintain peace and cordial relationship between various ethnic groups?
.....
- 27) Do you think the new BTR Accord will help in the development of the region? If yes, how?
.....

PHOTOGRAPHS
(Taken During Field Work)



Mr. Pramod Boro, CEM, BTR



Mr. Hagrama Mohilary, Former CEM,
BTC



Mr. Gobinda Basumatary,
Surrendered NDFB Militant,
Deputy CEM, BTR



Mr. Sushil Das, Former President
All Assam Bengali Federation



Mr. Suresh Ghemeray, Chairman,
Surrendered United Gorkha People's
Organisation



Mr. Badal Tudu, EM, Adivasi
Autonomous Council



Mr. Ansuma Basumatary, Ex.
MCLA, BTC



Mr. Madhab Choudhury, Ex. ULFA
Militant



Mr. Ranjit Basumatary,
Surrendered NDFB Militant,
EM, BTR



Mr. Khampa Borgoyari, ex
BLTF Militant, Former Deputy
CEM, BTC



Mr. Balaram Boro, Bodo
Revolutionary Activist



Mr. Arjun Chetry, Vice
President, Assam Gorkha
Sammelan



With My Supervisor Prof. Sanghamitra Choudhury,
HOD Political Science and Dean of Social Science,
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar