

## **DEVELOPMENT OF BODOLAND MOVEMENT IN ASSAM: IT'S TREND**

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### **Abstract**

Historically Bodoland Territorial council was inhabited by the Bodos or Boros. Along with other parts of Northeast India, regional aspiration in the region reached a turning point in the 1980s. The isolation of the region, its complex socio-economic character, and its backwardness compared to other parts of the country have all resulted in the complicated set of demands ranging from demand for autonomy and opposition to 'outsiders' to movements for secession. The Plains Tribes Council of Assam (PTCA) had demanded, since its inception in 1967, for a separate union territory for the Bodo or Boro and other plain tribes to be called *Udayachal*. With the failure of PTCA, The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) allied with National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive), People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland movement which is an amalgamation of over three dozen Bodo organisations and its supporters are demanding from the Government of India that a separate state be created where significant numbers of Bodo people live. On the other hand, it is also claimed as a sovereign state (Complete Independence) by the Separatist group NDFB launched the Bodo Movement in 1987 with the demand for a separate state to be called Bodoland, ending with Bodo Accord of 1993 with the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council following a further agreement, the Bodo Territorial Council was formed, with a mission to accomplish development in the area of economic, education, preservation of land right, linguistic aspiration, socio-culture and ethnic identity of the Bodos and above all to speed up the infrastructure development of communities in the Bodoland area.

Key words: bodoland, movement, ABSU, BTC, Separatist groups.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF BODOLAND MOVEMENT IN ASSAM: IT'S TREND**

The Bodo is a major plain tribe of Assam. The Bodos are one of the earliest settlers in Assam. They migrated to Assam say at about 5000 BC from central Asia such as China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Siberia. Bodos are the branch of great Mongoloid stock. According to Dr. N. N. Acharya, in his book "The History of medieval Assam" he mentioned that the Kacharis are the earliest known indigenous inhabitation of Assam. They are known under different names in different places and ages through out the North East corner of Indian sub-continent. In the Brahmaputra valley the Kacharis are called themselves as Bodo or Bodo fisa. The society of Bodo is basically a rural based agrarian society in which majority of Bodos remained as farmers and weavers. The Bodos were also known as peace lover for centuries.

The awareness among the Bodos noticed today is due to the spread of Brahma religion among them. The beginning of the 20th century is significant in this regard because of the emergence of the Bodo middle class, who had certain level of formal education. In course of time it gave birth to an elite category who contributed substantially to leadership component of the Bodos.

Following the Indian independence with the framing of the new constitution in India Bodos were given the opportunity to take advantage of scheduled Tribe (ST) status. This opportunity leads to the creation of Tribal belts and Tribal blocks. These belts and blocks are identified as protected land for farming and grazing, especially for the Bodo people.

### **Plain Tribal council of Assam (PTCA) -Demand for Udayachal:**

In the early 1960's the plain Tribal council of Assam (PTCA), a political party represented Bodos and other plain Tribal of Assam. It realized certain fact that –

- Tribal belts and blocks are gradually being acquired by rich land lords and new immigrants through illegal means.
- They had little economic aid provided by the central govt. is not sufficient for their educational and other development.
- The financial packages meant for Tribal development are diverted to other heads and misused.
- In Assam Bodo areas were very much neglected. There were hardly any roads and other communications that connected Bodo dominated area to the main cities of Assam etc.

For all these reasons in 1967 the PTCA demanded a Union Territory named Udayachal with the Territory of Assam. The proposed Udayachal map included mainly those areas known as tribal belt and blocks .By the end of 1970's it became clear for them that Bodos had a little or no influence in Indian political process.

### **All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU)-Movement for Bodoland:**

With the question of Self determination and identity issue the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), formed on Feb.15, 1967 at Tribal rest house of Kokrajhar. On March 2, 1987 the ABSU launched vigorous Bodoland movement for a separate state of Bodoland under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, the then President of ABSU. The ABSU created a political organization, the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) to spearhead the movement. The ABSU/BPAC movement began with the slogan of "Divide Assam 50-50". Since 1987 Bodoland movement is basically known as ABSU led movement. The ABSU/BPAC led movement ended with the first tripartite Bodo accord on Feb.20,1993.The Accord paved the way for the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) .The BAC come as a failed experiment as its territory was not fully demarcated. On July 1994 the ABSU launched agitation against the Accord and revived their demand for Bodoland.

### **Birth of insurgency groups –Demand for Bodoland:**

The Bodoland movement became more violent during the later part of 1990's. With the demand of separate Bodoland a number of insurgency group emerged in Bodo areas. On Oct.3, 1986 Bodo Security Force (BSF) under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary was formed. On Nov.25, 1994 BSF renamed as National Democratic Front of Bodoland(NDFB).On 30,1996 Another outfit the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary emerged.

Both the outfits began an ethnic cleansing campaign in the proposed Bodoland areas. A large number of people were killed and thousands become homeless. Moreover, they involved in various disruptive activities including road blocked, kidnapping, extortion etc. On July, 1999 BLT declared unilateral ceasefire in response to the Central Govt. appeal for peace talks and in the same year informal talks started between the BLT and the Govt. of India. Under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary the BLT laid down their weapons on Dec. 6, 2003. On Feb. 10, 2003 the BLT finally signed an Accord with the centre and the Govt of Assam to pave the way for the creation of a Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The map of Bodoland overlaps with the districts of Kokrajhar, Baska, Chirang and Udalguri. ABSU was not a signatory of the Accord but supported it. Currently the map of Bodoland includes the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) administered by Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). Kokrajhar serves as the capital of Bodoland. Hagrama Mohilary is the chief of the BTC.

However, the demand for separate Boroland is still standing among the ABSU and the other organizations of the Bodos. The reasons behind this ----

- The creation of a council is not enough to protect their identity.
- It failed to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the Bodo people.
- To them BTC failed to take effective steps for the improvement of the law and order situation in the BTC area,

- The Govt. of Assam is yet to take effective steps for the protection of the Tribal belts and blocks.
- On the development front, the ABSU alleged that adequate funds are not provided to the BTC etc.
- Adequate reservation is not fulfilled as has been mentioned in the constitution.

Thousands of Bodo people assembled on March 2, 2012 at Amingaon of Kamrup (Rural) Dist. To attend a mass rally under the banner of the ABSU, vowed to identify their struggle for the creation of a separate state of Bodoland. The students' body also brought cycle rallies and held public meetings time to time to organize the Bodo people in different parts of the state. The ethnic violence emerged in three districts of the BTC in the last July-Aug. 2012, fires the struggle more to protect their issue of identity. Veteran Bodo M.P. S.K. Bismutary has joined hands with the ABSU for the creation of Bodoland. To him the demand is just and birth right of the Bodos.

#### **NDFB and the development of Bodoland movement:**

In the development of Bodoland movement, the NDFB which was formed in 1994, first split in the year of 2005 after signing the bilateral truce with the centre. The first faction of NDFB is known as NDFB (progressive) led by Gobinda Basumatary. Remaining adamant on its demand, involved in political dialogue with the centre, raised the issue in such a mood that even if the the centre declines the state hood demand of Telengana, they will continue their movement .A faction of the NDFB led by Ranjan Daimary declared unilateral ceasefire truce in Aug. 1, 2011 On Nov.2011 Assam Govt. asked the centre to appoint an Interlocutor for peace talks with the anti-talk faction led by Ranjan Daimary. P.C.Haldar a former Director of Intelligence Bureau has been appointed as the representative of the Govt. of India to negotiate with the outfit. Meanwhile informal talks on the issue of NDFB(R) are continuing. Regarding formal talks with the NDFB(R) is depend on the release of Daimary on bail according to an official source of Assam Tribune on Feb.26, 2013 .On the other hand, talks with the NDFB (P) hit a roadblock With the outfit demanding that the next round of talks should be held at the political level and not with the Interlocutor, who has no the power to take political decision. Recently, there was a split in the NDFB (R) led by one of the trusted lieutenant, I.K.Sogbijit alias Sirsing Ingty he is known as the close to Paresh Baruah, against peace talks and adamant for sovereign Bodoland.

#### **Bodo National Conference and Bodoland movement:**

On Nov.18-19, 2010 two day open session of Bodo National Convention was held at Kokrajhar. The aim of the convention was to form a new organization, Bodo National Conference in which various political and non- political organizations involved to unite and integrate the Bodo people to meet their variety of issues including formation

of Bodoland, peace talk with the NDFB etc. It has four executive members committee, the BTC Chief, Hagrama Mohilary, the Dpty. Chief of BTC Khampa Borgairy, Anjali Daimary the President of Women's Justice Forum and Gobinda Basumatary, NDFB(P).

### **The people's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM)-Demand for Bodoland:**

The NDFB (P) backed People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) an umbrella organization of 52 Tribal and Non-Tribal organizations in the west to Sadiya in the eastern part of Assam. The PJACBM also warned the Central Govt. that if the centre creates Telengana state without curving out a separate Bodoland, the organization will restore a mass agitation in Assam. The PJACBM claimed that creation of Telengana without a similar move for Bodoland would be "discriminatory" one 9. Besides other programmes, from Feb.28, 2013 midnight, The PJACBM has been called 100- hours BTC bandh , demanding talks of the NDFB (p) at the political level with the Union Home Minister and also press for a separate Bodoland. The bandh paralyzed the normal life and number of violent incidents reported in BTAD area.

### **Conclusion:**

One of the most important factors is to why the Bodos have gone to become alienated from the main stream of Assam. From their variety of issues it is come to know that they were often been neglected by the state and the Central Govt. since independence. But when we go through the Constitution of India it is come to clear that as like the other Tribal community the Bodos are also not neglected. They have been given the equal status with certain special privileges to other Indian citizen. But it is one of the general belief of the Bodos that the majority of non- Bodo Assamese of the state have never like to accept them as the part.

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