CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSIONS

The present study ‘Politics of Identity: A Case Study of Bodos in Assam’ is an attempt to understand the ethnic identity movement of the Bodos in Assam. To understand the same, an empirical investigation was made. A sample of adequate size was drawn from the members of different socio-cultural organizations and political parties including the people who can throw light in this regard. Besides, various secondary sources were also consulted to understand the genesis and development of the Bodoland movement, its support base, and its impact on the socio-political life of the Bodos. The Chapter-wise summary of the entire findings of the present study has been presented below on the basis of its objectives and hypotheses.

I

The introductory chapter (Chapter-1) provides a detailed outline of the research plan including the statement of the problem that signifies the importance and relevance of the present study. A conceptual framework of the Study has been evolved to elaborate the meaning of the key concepts like ‘identity politics’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘Bodo’ and the meaning that has been attached to them for the purpose of the present study. The chapter also includes a systematic and elaborate review of relevant literature, objectives of the Study and hypotheses. Besides, the methodology of the Study that explains the size of the sample, technique of
sampling and estimation procedure is also discussed in this chapter along with Chapterization.

II

Chapter-2 is divided into three sections. Section I deals with the profile of Assam which discusses about its geography, demography, economy and administrative divisions. Section II deals with the profile of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) comprising the geography, demography and ethno-linguistic composition of the region and section III presents the profile of the sample districts i.e. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baks and Udalguri which constitute the universe of the study.

Section I states that Assam exists in the northeastern corner of India. It lies at 88°25’ East to 96°00’ East longitudes and at 24°50’ North to 28°00’ North latitudes. The state is surrounded by Arunachal Pradesh in the East, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Bangladesh in the West, Bhutan in the North, and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura in the South. Except through a narrow corridor running along the foothills of the Himalayas that connects with the state of West Bengal, the state is isolated from the rest of India. The total land area of Assam is 78438 square kilometers. Out of its total land area, 77476.23 square kilometers constituting 98.77 percent is rural area while 961.77 square kilometers (1.23 percent) of land area is under urban settlement. For the convenience of the administration, Assam is divided into 27 districts and 56 subdivisions. The capital of the state is Dispur (Guwahati) and its official language is Assamese. The state is represented by fourteen MPs in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and seven MPs in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House). There are 126 seats in Assam Legislative Assembly.

According to the Census Report of India 2011 the total population of the state is 31169272. It constitutes 2.58 per cent of the country’s total population. Of them, 15954927 (51.18 percent) are males, while 15214345 (48.81 per cent) are
females. The rural population of the state is 26780516 (85.92 percent) while the urban population of the state is only 4388756 constituting 14.08 percent of the total population. With a population of 397 persons per square kilometer, the state has the highest population density in Northeast India. The female sex ratio of the state is 954 to every 1000 male which is higher than the national average of 940. The decadal growth rate of the state’s population during 2001 to 2011 is 16.9 percent. Literacy rate in the state, according to the Census report of India, 2011 is 73.18 per cent as compared to 74.04 percent at the national level. The male literacy rate in the state is 78.81 compared to 67.27 per cent of female literacy. Urban literacy rate in Assam is 88.88 per cent whereas the rural literacy is only 70.44 percent.

Assam is inhabited by diverse religious groups. People of all the major religions of the country are there in Assam. According to the Census report of India 2001 (Census Report 2011 on caste and religion is yet to release) the Hindu population in the state is 17296455 which constitute 64.89 percent of the total population. 30.92 percent belong to Islam and 3.70 percent belong to Christianity. Besides, followers of Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism are also there in the state. The main source of Assam’s economy is agriculture. More than 70 percent of the state’s population relies on agriculture as farmers or as agricultural labourers. The major parts of cultivable land in Assam are used to grow rice. Apart from it, wheat, corn, tea, jute, mustard seeds, sugarcane, cotton etc. are also grown in the soil of Assam. Assam is one of the biggest contributors to India’s tea export. It produces more than half of India’s tea and about 1/6 of world’s tea. Assam is also the producer of crude oil. Four oil refineries of Assam located at Noonmati, Digboi, Numaligarh and Bongaigaion have the capacity of producing seven million metric tons per annum. For the convenience of administration, Assam is divided into 27 districts and 56 sub-divisions. The number of Zilla Parishads in the state is 20, while the number of Anchalik Panchayat and Gaon Panchayats in the state are 189 and 2202 respectively. Altogether there are 6 Autonomous Councils in the state.
Section II of the chapter presents a profile of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD). BTAD was created on 10\textsuperscript{th} February, 2003 as the result of an agreement between the Government of India, Government of Assam and the leaders of the Bodo movement. The region was curved out of eight districts of Assam namely Kokrajhar, Dubhri, Bongaigaon, Borpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur. It is surrounded by Arunachal Pradesh in the East, West Bengal in the West, Bhutan in the North and by Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Nalbari, Borpeta, Kamrup and Darrang districts in the South. It exists in the Northern part of the Brahmaputra Valley and lies at 89\textdegree 54´ East to 92\textdegree 30´ East Longitudes and 26\textdegree 18´ North to 26\textdegree 54´ North Latitudes. The total land area of the BTAD is 8821.68 Square kilometers which constitutes 11.25 percent of the total land area of the state. It is divided into four districts namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. For administrative convenience, the region is further divided into 10 subdivisions and spread over 25 development blocks, 415 Village Council Development Committees (VCDC) and 2890 villages.

Total population of BTAD, according to the Census report of India 2011, is 3155359 which constitute 10.12 percent of the population of the state. Of them, 1606082 constituting 50.90 percent are males and 1549277 (49.10 percent) are females. 3015330 (95.56 percent) are rural inhabitants; while only 140029 (4.44 percent) are urban settlers. Sex ratio in the region is 965 females against every 1000 males. Population density in BTAD is 374 per square kilometer and the decadal growth rate of population during 2001-2011 is 9.35 per cent.

Population of BTAD is heterogeneous and the society is patriarchal in nature. People from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds are living in this part of the country since time immemorial and as such a number of cultures evolved in the region such as Assamese culture, Bodo culture and Nepali culture. The inhabitants of the region can broadly be divided into three categories-Tribals, non-Tribals and the Schedule Castes. Communities like Bodos, Rabhas, Garos, Sonowals, and Meches constitute the Tribal population. Non-tribal ethnic groups mainly include Asamiyas, Nepalis, Marwaris and Muslims and
communities like Baniyas, Sutradhars Dhobis and so on constitute the Schedule Caste population.

BTAD is economically a backward region. The main source of the economy of BTAD is agriculture. Over 90 percent of its population depends on agriculture. Literacy rate in BTAD is 67.12 percent which is lower than the national as well as state’s literacy rate. The male literacy rate is 74.28 percent whereas female literacy rate is only 59.70 percent.

Section III discusses the profile of the sample districts namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. It is found that among the four districts of BTAD, Baksa is the most populated district and shares 30.23 percent of the total population, followed by Kokrajhar (28.11 percent), Udalguri (26.38 percent) and Chirang (15.28 percent). As regards literacy rate, Baksa has the highest literacy rate (70.53 percent) in the region and it is followed by Kokrajhar (66.63 percent), Udalguri (66.60 percent) and Chirang (64.71) districts respectively.

Thus, BTAD is an economically backward region with complex demography. In terms of economic development and literacy, BTAD lags behind many other parts of the state. Economic backwardness, poor literacy rate and complex demographic pattern of the region are, in fact, contributing to the perpetuation of ethnic conflicts in the region. Since 1993, BTAD region has witnessed six major ethnic conflicts i.e. in 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2008 and 2012. This resulted in social disharmony which in the long run, created an atmosphere of insecurity in the region. Such a situation also has its bearing in economic underdevelopment.

III

In Chapter-3 the migration and settlement of Bodos in Northeast, the establishment of their kingdoms, the advent of the British and the marginalization of Bodos and the subsequent rise of identity politics in the region are thoroughly discussed. For the convenience of presentation, the chapter is divided into three
sections. Section I covers the mythological period, Section II covers the historical period including pre-colonial and colonial time and Section III deals with the post colonial modern period.

Section I states that in mythological period Assam was known as Pragjyotisha. At that time, Pragjyotisha included the greater part of modern Assam and the districts of Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Rangpur, parts of Pabna and also probably part of east Nepal. The inhabitants of Pragjyotisha were the Bodos of Mongoloid origin who was then known as Kiratas, Asuras, Danavas and Mlechhas. In Ahom period, they were known as Kacharis. The earliest mentioned king of Pragjyotisha was Mahiranga Danav. After Mahiranga Danav, several other kings ruled Pragjyotisha. Amongst them Narakasura and Bhagadatta were notable. Bhagadatta was a powerful king of his time and he took part in the famous battle of Kurukshetra and supported the Kauravas with his Kirata and Chinese warriors. However, after exhibiting extreme valour, Bhagadatta was defeated and killed by Arjuna in the war. Generically Bodos belong to Indo-Mongoloid group of people and migrated to the northeastern part of India at about 1000 BC from central Asia such as China, Mongolia, Tibet and Siberia. Gradually, they spread into different parts of Assam, Bengal, Meghalaya, Tripura, Bangladesh and some pockets of Nepal and Burma. They settled in and ruled over the northeastern part of India, particularly Assam for a long period of time and left the traces of their reign in the nomenclature of the physical features of the region. For instance, the Bodo word for water (di or doi) apparently forms the first syllable of the names of many of the chief rivers of the province, such as, Diputa, Dihong, Dilong, Dibri, Dihing, Dimu, Disang, Diku. The Ahoms ruled over Assam for about six hundred years, but their word for river (i.e. nam) occurs only in a few instances in the extreme east, e.g. Namrup, Namstik and Namsang. This suggests that perhaps Bodo rule in Assam lasted longer than that of Ahoms.

With regard to the section II, it may be said that the history of Bodos became comparatively clear only from the fourth century A.D. During this period, some authentic sources like Harshacharita, Nidhanpur Copperplate Grant and Doobi
Chapter 6

Copperplate Grant came to light and attracted the attention of the historians. In the famous Allahabad Rock inscription of King Samudragupta, Kamrupa was described as frontier Kingdom. Dubi Copperplate of Bhaskar Varman states Pushya Varman as the first king of Pragjyotisha and Kamrupnagar as its capital. Pushya Varman was contemporary of king Samudragupta and claimed his lineage from Bhagadatta, the famous Bodo king of the epic period. Varman dynasty of Pragjyotisha lasted for three centuries and was followed by Salastamba and Pala dynasties subsequently. Bodos were also the rulers of Kachari dynasty of Dimapur (present Nagaland) which was shifted to Maibong and Kashpur in the subsequent years. However, this dynasty completely came under British East India Company in the year 1854. The consolidation of colonial rule in Assam created new problems in the region. The migration policies during the colonial period provided the ground for large scale migration from the neighbouring states like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. Large number of migrants from the then East Bengal also entered Assam during the colonial period. This process of migration became a serious problem as it created the problem of land alienation for poor peasants and also widespread unemployment in the region. Besides, there was going on religious conversion of tribals including Bodos which also became a threat to the socio-cultural identity of the Bodos. In response to all these developments, a socio-religious reform movement was launched under the leadership of Kalicharan Brahma in the first decade of the 20th century. Educational institutions were opened and the business on timber with which father of Kalicharan Brahma was associated was also boosted. A student organization named Boro Chatra Sanmiloni was formed in 1919. With a view to protect and preserve their distinct Bodo identity, leaders of this student organization created literature in their own language and spread the message of their suffering and marginalization to their ignorant Bodo counterparts. In 1928, The Assam Kachari Juvok Sanmiloni and Dhubri Boro Juvok Sanmiloni submitted two memorandums to the Simon Commission in which they demanded that the Bodos should be identified as Kacharis in the Census Report of British India and a separate designation (Regiment) for them to be created in military service of British India. Demands were also made for
reservation of seats for the tribal people in the provincial as well as local political bodies of the state. All Assam Tribal League (AATL) was formed in 1933 with a view to bring all the tribes of mongoloid origin to a common political platform and to strengthen their voice. The Government of India Act 1935, in the meantime, on the recommendation of the Simon Commission, reserved 4 seats for the plains tribal in the Provincial Legislature. Election to the Provincial Legislature of Assam was held in 1937. In that election, AATL put their own candidates and captured all the reserved seats. General Secretary of AATL Bhimbar Deori was nominated as the member of the Legislative Council of Assam. The leaders of the League also signed a pre-independence election agreement with the Assam Congress Committee, whereby the latter, if voted to the power, agreed to make provisions for the protection of political and socio-economic interests of the tribals through democratic means. They further pledged to protect tribal land from outside encroachers and to secure constitutional safeguard to prevent political marginalization of the plains tribal.

Section III focuses on the developments of the post-colonial period. India got her independence on 15th August, 1947. Like others, Bodos of Assam also hoped that there would be a change in their socio-economic and political fate. They would secure a decent life with adequate representation in the new political dispensation of the country. But the same did not happen. The condition of the Bodos remained as deplorable as it was. Instead, it accentuated gradually as migration remained unabated and so was the problem of land alienation. There was also the pressure of homogenization of the Assamese ruling elites which created a sense of insecurity in the minds of tribal people with regard to their socio-cultural and linguistic identity. Such feeling of insecurity accompanied with economic impoverishment of the region created the ground for political mobilization of Bodos with the agenda to assert and preserve their distinct identity in the state. Thus, the second half of the 20th century witnessed the rise of Bodo identity movement in Assam.
In any ethnic movement group mobilization and identity formation forms an important aspect. The success and failure of an ethnic movement greatly depends on the techniques and strategies adopted by the leaders for the mobilization of the groups. Chapter-4 discusses the process of group mobilization and identity formation of the Bodos under various socio-cultural organizations and political parties like Boro Chatra Sanmiloni, All Bodo Students’ Union, Plains Tribal Council of Assam, Bodo Liberation Tiger Force, and National Democratic Front of Boroland.

The process of ethnic mobilization begins with the act of convincing the potential supporters or participants of the movement. Those supporters and participants are of three types or categories. The first category refers to the core activists of the movement who are committed and remain in the forefront of the movement. The second type refers to those who routinely participate in the activities like meetings, rallies, demonstrations and so on that are undertaken to keep the movement alive. The last type represents the ordinary masses who extend moral support to the movement without much understanding and involvement in the movement. The success of a movement requires the support of all the three groups. So long it is there, a movement succeeds in achieving its goals. Thus, to mobilize all the three categories of supporters or participants, the leaders of the movement have to be very careful and competent. The issues for which the movement is initiated should be interpreted in such a manner that all the members of the group get motivated. Thus, the appeal of the movement must be both pragmatic and emotional. Emotional appeal refers to identity, history or ideology, whereas practical plea calls for attention to poverty, unemployment, low representation and so on. Once, the process of mobilization is achieved successfully, the movement initiates and takes a course. The course and success of a movement thus depends, to a great extent, on the nature of mobilization also. If the goals of the movement are well defined and short term and the appeal of the movement is moderate, the movement may remain peaceful. In case of Bodos, the movement underwent different types of group mobilization,
Ethnic identity mobilization of the Bodos began in the first decade of the 20th century. During such time, the movement was peaceful, non-violent and non-political in nature. It was a socio-religious movement whose main objective was to awaken identity consciousness through spiritual and socio-economic reformation of the Bodo society. This peaceful ethnic mobilization was led by Kalicharan Brahma, a social reformer and was supported by socio-cultural and literary organizations like Boro Chatra Sonmiloni and Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

The nature of the Bodo ethnic mobilization changed in 1960s with the formation of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in 1967. By this time the movement has turned political. With the support of other tribals of the state, PTCA launched the movement for a Union Territory comprising the tribal dominated areas of the state which extends from the river Sankosh in the west to Sadiya in the east along the foothills of Bhutan on the northern part of the river Brahmaputra. Though the movement appeared to be peaceful in the initial period, later there arose differences among the leaders of PTCA when the party withdrew its demand for the union territory in the name of ‘Udayachal’ and replaced it with the demand for an autonomous region. This move of the PTCA was condemned by ABSU as well. There broke out conflicts between the PTCA and ABSU which resulted in the decline of PTCA and replacement of ABSU as the leaders of the Bodo movement.

By 1987, ethnic mobilization of the Bodos came under the leadership of ABSU. With the coming of Upendra Nath Brahma as the 8th President of All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) in 1986, a drastic change came in the nature and techniques of the Bodo movement. Under his leadership the movement for separate state of Bodoland was launched which was supported by large section of the Bodo society. As result of this movement, the Bodo Accord of 1993 was signed and Bodoland Autonomous Council was created. This movement, however, witnessed sporadic incidents of violence like burning of bridges,
destroying of government properties etc. However, on the whole, the movement was peaceful as it did not intend to resort to violence as part of the agenda.

But the Bodo Accord of 1993 could not satisfy the leaders of the Bodo movement and its supporters. The primary cause behind the failure of the agreement was the half-hearted attitude of the State and the Union Governments with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the accord. The delimitation of the boundary of the Bodoland Autonomous Council areas was also not done by the state government of Late Hiteswar Saikia who was in power during that time. Besides the police cases pending against the activists of the movement were not withdrawn and also no relief and rehabilitation was offered to the martyr’s families. By 1996, dissatisfaction and frustrations of the people over the failure of the government to implement the provisions of the Bodo Accord 1993 reached its climax and this resulted in the birth of the extremist outfit like Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF). The former members of the Bodo Militant Force were regrouped in the new outfit to achieve their goal of separate State of Bodoland along with various other demands, such as the demand for the autonomous region for the non-Karbis in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam and also autonomous region for tribals in the southern part of Brahmaputra Valley. Thus, it was out of a sense of utter frustration, the movement took a violent turn and there started kidnapping, killings and bombings of railway tracks, bridges and public places in proposed Bodoland. In 1999, the Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) declared a unilateral Ceasefire and came in negotiation with the Government of India. After several rounds of talks, another accord was signed between the BLTF, the State Government and the Government of India on 10th February 2003. Besides BLTF, NDFB was also using violent tactics to secure their demand for the sovereign Boroland which later on was degraded into demand for separate state of Boroland. NDFB remained inclined to use force since its inception in 1986. However, a section of the organization has signed a cease fire agreement in 2005 and since then negotiations are going on between the government of India and the members of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB).
Thus, both violent as well as peaceful methods were used to mobilize and garner support for the Bodo movement. Socio-cultural organizations like Boro Chatra Sonmiloni, All Bodo Students’ Union and Plains Tribal Council of Assam used peaceful methods of ethnic mobilization while the underground organizations used violent methods. The combined effect of the two is mixed. It resolved the identity question of the Bodos, to a certain extent, with incessant sufferings to the lives of common men. It is also believed that the use of force in the movement has been responsible to begin a process of negotiation between the aggrieved leaders and the government which in course of time fulfilled certain demands of the community.

V

In Chapter-5 data are analyzed, interpreted and the results of the study on the ethnic identity movement of Bodos are discussed in detail. This chapter also discusses the possible solutions of the existing problem of Bodos in Assam. The study was carried out on the basis of the following objectives:

1. To understand the genesis and development of the Bodoland movement,
2. To understand the support base of the movement, and
3. To understand the impact of the movement on the socio-political life of the Bodos.

With regard to the first objective that is outlined to understand the genesis and development of the Bodoland movement, it may be said that the process of the ethnic identity movement of the Bodos began in the colonial period. As result of the continuous flow of illegal migrants, increase in land revenue and imposition of several new taxes on the peasants like water tax (jalkar) that restricted fishing in the rivers or beels, gorkhaty and khusary that prevented free use of timber and cattle ground respectively, the people of Assam, particularly the tribals, were put to economic hardship. Besides, a large number of tribals of various communities were converting to Hinduism while a segment of them adopted Christianity from
their ancestral religion. The consequence of the process of migration was so strong that it changed the demographic pattern of the Brahmaputra valley reducing the indigenous tribal people into minority in their own land. Their economic security of the tribals was also threatened as they were unable to compete with the migrants who were better trained labourers. The large scale conversion of the tribals to Christianity and Hinduism was also a very serious threat. Being pressed from various angles, the poor and ignorant tribals of Northeast India clamoured to preserve their identity and in the process resorted to movement. The case of Bodos is just the same. With an endeavour to preserve their identity, the Bodos of Assam started movement in the early part of the 20th century. During such time, the movement was non-political in nature and its demands were confined to socio-economic issues. Such character of the movement lasted long in the post-colonial time also. It was only in 1967, the Bodo movement assumed a political character with its demand for the autonomous region of ‘Udayachal’ which was upgraded to the demand of a union territory in the subsequent period. However, major change in the course of the movement was seen in 1986 when the demand for the separate state of Bodoland was launched. The Bodo Accord of 1993 was the result of this movement only. But the provisions of this accord could not fulfill the aspirations of the Bodo people and as a result another phase of Bodo movement began in 1996 with the appearance of Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) on the scene. Under its leadership, the movement acquired a violent face. However, in 1999, BLTF declared ceasefire unilaterally and a phase of negotiation started between the Government of India and the leaders of BLTF. The result was the signing of the Bodo Accord in 2003. But the Accord failed to fulfill the aspirations of all the sections of the Bodo community. It was virulently opposed by the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB). They carried out various violent and disruptive activities to register their dissatisfaction with the Accord. However, in 2005 a faction of NDFB declared ceasefire and negotiations started between the militant outfit and the Government of India. This process of reaching a consensus through negotiations is still on and so is the problem of Bodoland. Similarly, All Bodo Students’ Union also denounced the Bodo accord of 2003 and launched
their movement for separate state of Bodoland afresh on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 2010. Thus, it may be said that the Bodo movement is a long drawn struggle. It originated in the colonial period and passed through many ups and downs to reach its present status. It still continues in the form of demand for the separate state of Bodoland.

In an attempt to fulfill the second objective of the present study which focuses on the support base of the movement, it was found that in its initial period the Bodo movement was confined only to the elite section of the Bodo community. Only a group of conscious Bodo intellectuals launched the Bodo movement during the early part of the twentieth century and it was confined only to socio-religious and economic reforms. The movement was peaceful and non-political in nature. During 1930s with the formation of All Assam Tribal League (AATL) in 1933, the movement expanded and received the support of other tribal leaders. It did further spread and got momentum during 1960s and 1970s under the leadership of Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). However, the movement turned into a mass movement only since 1987 with the active participation of All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU). Student’s participation drew the sympathy of various sections of population in the society and helped the movement to acquire a mass character. Bodo People’s Action Committee (BPAC) also played an important role in popularizing the movement and was one of the signatories of the Bodo accord of 1993. A large section of the Bodo society along with other tribals of Assam supported the movement and participated in various activities of the movement. They also received moral support from various non-tribal organizations both from within and outside the state of Assam. However, this support could not be sustained due to the suspicion that Bodos being the largest tribe might try to assert their hegemony over the other tribes. Rather, it was opposed by organizations like All Assam Students Union (AASU) and Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP). Both AASU and AJYCP opposed the movement as they were against any further bifurcation of the state of Assam. Besides, the movement had to suffer a strong opposition from the state government. It was believed that paying any heed to the demands of the Bodos will encourage other communities of Assam to make similar demands. Thus the
support base of the movement mainly remained confined to the proposed Bodoland. One of the reasons that constrained the support base of the movement is the strong opposition of the Assamese community under the leadership of AASU. The weakness of the Bodo leaders to strike a chord with other similar movements within and outside the country and poor media management of the various organizations of the movement also constrained its support base.

As regards the impact of the movement on the socio-political life of the Bodos which constitutes the third objective of the study, it may be said that the Bodo movement has brought untold sufferings to a large number of people. It included not only the Bodos but also people of other tribal and non-tribal groups. Many people lost their lives. Economic development of the region suffered seriously. There was political unrest and an atmosphere of chaos, misunderstanding and disharmony. Social life was disintegrated to a great extent and also there was insecurity. Many who joined the movement in early youth could not return to normal life and turned underground. This led to the emergence of militancy in Bodoland. Bodo Militant Force (BMF), National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) and Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) were formed as consequences of the Bodo movement. Emergence of those underground organizations resulted in unrest in the socio-political life which hindered economic development, social progress and political stability of the region. Large number of the innocent people became the victim of fake encounter while many others were beaten brutally leading to the loss of their eyes, legs, hands and so on. Thousands of the innocent people were sent to jail and tortured. There was random violation of human rights.

However, the movement has far reaching impact on the socio-economic and political life of the Bodos as well. As consequence of the movement, Bodo language was introduced as the medium of instruction in the primary schools of Bodo dominated areas since 1963 which was extended subsequently. The language had also been given the status of Associate Official Language in Bodo dominated areas of Assam in 1985. And ultimately, in December, 2003 Bodo
language was included in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution as per provision of the Bodo Accord. The movement also succeeded in securing an Autonomous Administrative Unit under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution known as Bodoland Territorial Council. As per the provision of the Bodo Accord, 2003 30 seats in the Council were made reserved for the tribals to safeguard their political interests in the region. In order to accelerate the development in the region the council received financial assistance of Rs-100 Crores annually for five years from the Government of India since 2003. The Council was also empowered with legislative, executive and financial powers on 40 subjects transferred under the accord. It was believed that decentralization of power would help in the socio-economic development of the Bodos as well as the region. On the whole, it may be said that although the Bodo movement could cut out a territorial niche for Bodos along with ensuring their identity to certain extent, yet it did not contribute to the development of the community as a whole. Bodos are as backward as they were. Economic backwardness of the region continues to be a serious problem. Educationally, the region is lagging behind the other districts of the state. Moreover, the movement has brought divisions within the community resulting into factional killings. All these in the long run, has created the ground for another phase of the Bodo movement. At present, the Bodo movement is continuing with the demand for the separate state of Bodoland under the leadership of All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU). Talks are also going on the issue of separate Boroland between National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB-Talk Faction) and the Government of India since 2005.

Thus, it may be said that the findings of the study with regard to its various objectives confirm the first hypothesis of the study which presumed that the Bodoland movement is the outcome of the socio-political and economic marginalization of Bodos. Bodos who once ruled several kingdoms in Northeast suffered economic hardship and political marginalization with the advent of the Britishers. The migration policies promoted during the colonial period accentuated the sufferings of the Tribals of Northeast in general and Bodos in particular. As consequence of continuous process of migration, Bodos had to suffer tremendous economic insecurity. Their
good old days of economic security was vanished at the face of stiff competition from migrant labourers. The imposition of several new taxes on the Tribal peasants of Assam and increase in land revenue had further deepened their economic crisis. Besides, migration had its impact on the demography of the region. Large scale migration also put the Tribal population of Assam including Bodos into minority. This precipitated the ground for political marginalization of Bodos. Losing of economic security also had its implications in social life of Bodos. A large number of people within the community started converting to Hinduism and Christianity. Under such situation, the move to preserve the distinct identity of the Bodos was initiated. It began under the leadership of Kalicharan Brahma, a social reformer, at its nascent days and was carried forward subsequently by various other organizations to become a full-fledged movement. Today, the movement continues in the form of demand for a separate state of Bodoland. Thus, Bodoland movement may be said to be the outcome of the socio-political and economic marginalization of the Bodos. With regard to the second hypothesis, it is found that the Bodo movement in its initial phase was peaceful, non-violent and non-political in nature. But such character of the movement failed to yield desired results. The movement failed to draw attention of either the state or the Central government. Instead, it was treated as ‘law and order’ problem and as such coercive forces were used by the government to bring the situation under control. Controversial Acts like Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987, Assam Disturbed Areas Act, 1955 and Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1967 and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967 were imposed to curb the Bodo movement at its early days. This resulted in a change in the character of the movement. Being fed up of government’s indifference, the movement resorted to violence. A section of leadership realized that use of force would alarm government about the demands of the movement. Accordingly, the Bodo Militant Force (BMF) and National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) were born. They carried out several unlawful and disruptive activities in the state like extortion, kidnapping, killings and demolition of public properties. In 1996, Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) was born as a reaction to the failure of the government to implement the provision of the Bodo Accord
1993. Like BMF and NDFB, BLTF also used force to secure their demand for separate state of Bodoland. This resulted in the signing of Bodo Accord, 2003 and formation of Bodoland Territorial Council. Thus, Bodo insurgency may be said to the outcome of the Bodoland Movement which confirms the fact as presumed in the second hypothesis of the present study.

As regards the future of the Bodoland movement, it may be said that the solution of the Bodo problem along the line of the development of the movement is difficult. Instead the solution is to be searched in the agenda of development and good governance. The economic development of the region should be enhanced and corruption is to be checked. The huge amount of money that the BTC receives from the Central Government annually for the development of BTAD is hardly utilized for the purpose for which it is sanctioned. Check on such leakage of fund is crucial to the solution of the problem of Bodoland. Otherwise, the movement will remain a perennial tool for extraction of money from the centre. Effective measures like updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC) should be taken to check illegal migrants and their participation in the electoral politics of the region. Tribal Belt and Blocks in the state should also be made functional to check illegal immigration and land alienation. Antagonism among the leaders of different organizations in the region must be resolved amicably. Measures should also be taken to build mutual trust among different socio-cultural groups of the region. Besides, spreading of quality education and creation of employment avenues may go a long way to solve the problem. Moreover, diplomatic negotiations instead of coercive techniques are required to calm down diverse ethnic identity movements of the Northeast.

The study has some limitations. It did not delve deep to make a comparative analysis of Bodo identity movement with other such movements of Northeast. A human rights perspective is also not used in the present study. The role of women who have made substantial contribution in the course of the movement was also not covered in the present study. Such are the limitations which leave scope for further research in this area.
To conclude it may be said that the process of the ethnic identity movement of the Bodos began in the colonial period as a result of the socio-economic and political marginalization of the Bodos. Though the movement began as a socio-economic and religious reform movement, it turned into a political movement in the post-colonial period. It was PTCA which initiated the idea of creating a separate political unit for the plains tribal of Assam and launched a movement for Udayachal. However, soon the charge of the movement shifted and it came under the leadership of ABSU in 1986. Since then, the movement passed through various phases of both violent and peaceful struggle to achieve the two accords of 1993 and 2003. But the signing of the accords could not satisfy all the sections of the Bodo society. As a result, the crisis continues and the issues for which the Bodo movement was launched could not also be resolved. In fact, the future of this long stretched struggle seems to be quite uncertain.