CHAPTER-4

GROUP MOBILISATION AND IDENTITY FORMATION OF THE BODOS

Nation building process in India with its diverse ethno-cultural and religious groups has been a very difficult task. Since the independence of the country, India had to face many challenges of disintegration. The country had to be reconfigured in linguistic lines and had to face the challenges of communalism time and again. Kashmir remained a disturbed zone ever and so also Northeast. The force of ethnicity and ethnic conflict has turned Northeast into a perennial troubled region. Several extremist groups mushroomed in the region in the name of ethnicity and ethnic identity. The government’s initiative to deal with the crisis by the technique of devolution of power and creation of new state could not arrest the spur of ethnic crisis in Northeast India. These arrangements rather have appeared to be inefficient to accommodate the claims and demands of the diverse dissident groups of Northeas. As a result, the process of ethnic mobilization and identity movement remained unabated in the region. Today, a large number of ethnic groups with different socio-cultural identities and historical backgrounds are mobilized in the region either for special constitutional arrangement or greater territorial autonomy. There is also the demand for separate state among some ethnic groups. Such ethnic mobilization in Northeast, however, is not uniform in nature. For instance, the ethnic mobilization of the Mishings in Assam remained more or less peaceful and non-violent whereas in case of Dimasas it turned
violent. Likewise, the ethnic mobilization of the tribals in Tripura, Bodos in Assam, Nagas in Nagaland and Kukis in Manipur acquired an aggressive shape while the same did not happen in case of Ahoms and Tiwas in Assam. The nature and development of an ethnic movement or for that matter any movement depends largely on the technique of mobilization. By the technique of mobilization, a peaceful movement may be turned violent. In this backdrop, it is pertinent to discuss the process of group mobilization and identity formation of the Bodo movement which has undergone many ups and downs and transformations in its long journey. The Bodo movement evolved under various socio-cultural and political organizations. Boro Chatra Sanmiloni (BCS), Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU), Bodo Peoples Action Committee (BPAC), Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), and National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) are the main organization under the aegis of which the movement evolved.

The process of ethnic mobilization begins with the act of convincing the potential supporters or participants of the movement (Saikia 2011: 44). 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 that 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. The appeal of the movement must be both pragmatic and emotional. Emotional appeal refers to identity, history or ideology, whereas practical or pragmatic 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, they underwent different types of group mobilization.

Ethnic identity movement of the Bodos was initiated by Kalicharan Brahma, a socio-religious leader of the Bodos, in the first decade of the 20th century. This movement was peaceful, non-violent and non-political in nature. It was a socio-economic and religious reform movement and its main objective was spiritual and socio-economic upliftment and reformation of the Bodo society. From the second half of the 19th century to early 20th century, the condition of the Bodos was deplorable. One of the principal causes of such plight was the continuous flow of migrants from the then East Bengal, Nepal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Rajasthan and China during the colonial rule and its affect on the socio-economic conditions of the indigenous people including Bodos. Increase in land revenue and imposition of several new taxes by colonial rulers on poor peasants further paralyzed the economic condition of the Bodos. On the other hand, there were many evil practices in the Bodo society like polygamy, marriage by forceful lifting, witch-craft, illiteracy and excessive use of alcohol which were causing an internal deterioration of the community. Out of disillusionment, a large number of members of the Bodo community were converting to Hinduism and accordingly adopting new surname, language, values and dress code. They came to be known as ‘Sarania Kocharis’. A section of Bodo people were also converting to Christianity. Such large-scale conversion of Bodos became a matter of threat to the identity of the community and brought the very existence of the community to the brink of extinction (Narzary & Mitra 2004: 2). In this critical juncture, Kalicharan Brahma came with an idea. He preached the Brahma religion propagated by Swami Shibnarayan Paramhansa to unite Bodos. Brahma religion was monolithic. God is worshiped in the form of Sun or fire. Thus, the worship of one God in the form of fire (i.e. Ahuti) formed the principal character of Brahma religion (2004: 17). With a vision of spreading Brahma religion,
Kalicharan Brahma conducted several Yogyahutis in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam and motivated the Bodos to come under the fold of Brahma religion. His appeal was responded and thousands of Bodos embraced the Brahma religion within a short span of time. ‘Brahma’ was given as surname to all the Bodo people who converted to Brahma religion. This was how ‘Brahma’ became the surname of many Bodos and also became a tool of the initiation of identity consciousness among them. Along with his religious venture, Kalicharan Brahma also worked for the promotion of business and trade among Bodos. Schools were established in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam and education was made compulsory for the Bodo children. Guardians failing to send their children to school were penalized with fines (Daimary 2005: 101). Two hostels namely ‘Brahma Boarding’ and ‘Mess Boarding’ were constructed at Dhubri for Bodo students pursuing higher education. He also launched movement for the elimination of evil social practices like polygamy, forceful marriage, witch-craft, use of alcohol and so on. Kalicharan’s sincerity to bring in change paid and youths in large number became the part of his movement. With the support of other Bodo leaders and intellectuals, Kalicharan Brahma also organized Boro Mahasanmilonis. The first Boro Mahasonmiloni was organised in 1921 at Bhaoragury under Gossaigaon police station of the then Goalpara district. A Coordination Committee of the first Boro Mahasonmiloni was formed with Rupnath Brahma as secretary and Kalicharan Brahma as chief organizer. The second and third conventions of Boro Mahasanmiloni were held in 1925 and 1929 respectively. The resolutions were adopted in each Mahasanmiloni with mainly the following objectives:

- Fostering unity and integrity in the Bodo society,
- Abolition of use of liquor in marriage and other social ceremonies,
- Abolition of animal sacrifice in religious ceremonies,
- Establishment of LP and ME schools in Bodo dominated areas, and
- Educating women with equal importance as men.
However, the above objectives of the Boro Mahasanmiloni failed to receive the
general consent of the society as a section of the society were reluctant to give up
certain old social practices like drinking, polygamy and so on. This made
Kalicharan Consequently, with the help of other Bodo leaders, an initiative was
taken for compiling a ‘Pandulipi’ (a social law book) of Bodo society which
would guide them in their day to day activities and social matters. For that
purpose three special meetings were organised where opinions of different Bodo
leaders were also taken care of. Kalicharan Brahma completed the task of
compiling Bodo Pandulipi (known as ‘Boroni Pandulipi’) in November 1934 and
placed it before the Bodo masses on the fourth convention of Boro
Mahasanmiloni in 1934. The fourth convention of Boro Mahasanmiloni accepted
the Pandulipi prepared by Kalicharan Brahma and other Bodo leaders, and since
then ‘Boroni Pandulipi’ determines the social code of conduct of the Bodo

**Coming of the Simon Commission, 1928**

Simon Commission arrived in Assam in 1928 and continued to stay up to 1929.
The main objective of the Commission was to inquire into and report on the
working of the Government of India Act 1919 (Das 2004: 8). “During its stay in
Assam the Commission received memorandums from various representative
organizations and interviewed their leaders, and recorded their views pertaining
to any subject which came under the terms of reference of the commission”
(Narzary 2010: 21).

Tribal people in Assam, particularly the Bodos welcomed the visit of the Simon
Commission. They submitted memorandums to the Commission and some of
them appeared to the interviews conducted by the commission. The Assam
Kachari Jubak Sanmiloni submitted a memorandum to the Commission on 14th
Sept, 1928 in which they declared themselves as the ruling race of a vast region
extending from Upper Assam to East Bengal with their capital at Dimapur. They
described the idea of calling them Hindu as misnomer and preferred to take a
stand independent of the Hindu society. They also appealed to the Commission that Bodos should be identified as Kacharis in the Census Report of British India and pleaded for an adequate and effective representation of the Kachari community by giving them two reserved seats in the State’s Legislature. They also expressed apprehension about the effectuality of Dyarchy or Dual Government, introduced by Government of India Act 1919 and pleaded for a provincial autonomy (Memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission by The Assam Kachari Jubak Sanmiloni 1928). The issues put forwarded by Dhubri Boro Juvok Sanmiloni before the Simon Commission demanded the creation of Bodo or Kachari Regiment, retention of Goalpara district as part and parcel of Assam instead of transferring it to the then East Bengal, special treatments from the government in matters of appointment and education of tribals (like scholarship for the tribal students and reserved seats in all grades of the Government Services) and representation in the Assam Legislative Council (Memorandum submitted to the Simon Commission by Dhubri Boro Juvok Sanmiloni 1928). A careful observation of the above memorandums reveals that for the first time a concern for political representation was felt. It was felt by the Tribal leadership that in the absence of a political platform they were unable to project and address their burning problems and grievances before the state legislature and hence a common political platform was found highly wanted. This ultimately found expression in the formation of the All Assam Tribal League (AATL), the first tribal political party in Assam on 17th April 1933 at Roha of Naowgong district (Narzary 2010: 28). The formation of the League was an important landmark in the political life and history of the tribals in Assam. The party contested in the state Legislative Assembly election 1937 and put their own candidates in four reserved seats. The League captured all the four seats they contested. The General Secretary of the League Bhimbar Deori was also nominated as the member of the Assam Legislative Council (Narzary 2010: 28). However, the role of those tribal socio-cultural organizations which have submitted the memorandums to the Simon Commission demanding socio-economic and political accommodations for the tribals cannot be undermined. It was because of their memorandums that four seats of the Legislative Assembly
were reserved for the tribals by the Government of India Act 1935 and which could be captured by AATL in 1937. In fact, the reservation of four seats for the plains tribal by the Government of India Act 1935 has opened a new vista for the Tribals and rekindled their sense of self-confidence and united them on a common political platform (2010: 28).

In echoing the voice of the Bodos, the student leaders and intellectuals also played a significant role. Bodo student leaders like Rupnath Brahma, Promod Chandra Brahma, Modaram Brahma, Darendranath Basumatary and Satish Chandra Basumatary, who were also known as popular writers, played a very crucial role in mobilizing the nationalist sentiment among Bodos with their literary creations. Those Bodo leaders formed an important students’ association known as ‘Boro Chatra Sonmiloni’ (1919) and published a magazine called ‘Bibar’ (1920) which appeared for at least eight consecutive editions. It was followed by other important magazines like Jenthoka (1925), Sansiri Musiri (1937), Alongbar (1938) and Hatorki Hala (1942). Many problems and issues of the then Bodo society were highlight in those magazines to reach the common men and thus served as the mirror of the Bodo society. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) was formed in 1952. This organisation worked to develop Bodo script and language as result of which Bodo language was recognized as medium of instruction at the primary level in schools since 1963. In 1968, it was upgraded to M.E level.

**Bodo Movement under Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)**

The Bodo movement prior to 1967 was mostly non-political in nature. Much of the activities of the movement were limited to petitions, prayers and memorandums. The emphasis of the movement was on socio-religious reforms and economic upliftment of the Bodos. Even though political aspirations of the plains tribal found expression during this period it was only for the fulfillment of some specific demand and representation in the law making bodies. However, there has come a qualitative change in the nature of movement in 1967. On 13th
January 1967 Mrs. Indira Gandhi announced the Government of India’s proposal to reorganize Assam in order to meet the demand of All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) for a separate hill state (Narzary 2010: 41). This decision of the Government of India was widely appreciated by the tribals of Assam. In response to this declaration, All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) was formed on 15th February, 1967 at Kokrajhar Tribal Rest House. Similarly, on 27th February, 1967 the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) was formed. Both ABSU and PTCA warmly welcomed the policy of reorganizing Assam. On 9th June, 1967 a five member delegation of PTCA met the President of India Dr. Zakir Husain at Rastrapati Bhawan and submitted their first memorandum dated on 20th May, 1967. In course of their meeting with the President, PTCA delegation explained the miserable plight of the plains tribals in Assam and demanded full autonomy in the tribal inhabited areas comprising the northern tracts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar district along the foothills of Bhutan and North East Frontier Tracts (present Arunachal Pradesh). On 10th June, 1967 the delegation met the Union Home Minister Mr. Y. V. Chavan and Union Industries Development Minister Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and handed over the copies of their memorandum to them. The memorandum runs,

“The Plains Tribals Council of Assam deems that full autonomy within the framework of the Indian Constitution will alone help the plains tribals grow according to their own genius and tradition. The plains tribal people of Assam have since long been demanding full autonomy comprising the predominantly tribal inhabited areas of plains Assam” (Memorandum submitted to the President of India by PTCA on 20th May, 1967). Initially, no nomenclature was given to the proposed autonomous plains tribal region. But with a view to give a rough idea about the proposed tribal region, a map was prepared by PTCA which extends from the river Sankosh in the West to Sadiya in the East along the foothills of Bhutan and the North Eastern Frontier Tracts on the northern part of river Brahmaputra (Narzary 2010: 55). Expressing their grave concerns over the problems of land alienation of the tribes in Assam PTCA remarked, “The plains tribals are essentially cultivators and agriculture is the mainstay of their economy.
Hence, land is of supreme importance to them. But there has been constant attack on tribal lands. Large number of East Bengal immigrants started to pour into tribal areas since the beginning of this century and settled therein. Apart from the East Bengal immigrants, local non-tribal traders, businessmen and money-lenders also have been onslaughting the lands belonging to the tribals. All these forces were constant menace to simple and peace loving plains tribals of Assam” (Memorandum submitted to the President of India by PTCA on 20th May, 1967).

PTCA also considered that the existing constituencies, both Parliament as well as the State Assembly were delimited in such a way that tribals have been made minority even though there was clear cut instructions in the Delimitation of Constituencies Act, 1962 to locate the reserved seats for the tribals in such area where the population of the tribals are largest. In protest of such arrangement, PTCA resolved not to participate in any election in future unless all the ST reserved constituencies, whether Parliamentary or Assembly, are redelimited as per the instructions of the Delimitation of Constituencies Act 1962. They boycotted the by-election of Kokrajhar Parliamentary Constituency held on 19th May, 1968. Thousands of unarmed Bodo people including the other tribals supported the boycott of election called by the PTCA. However, this step of PTCA had to face serious challenges because of the imposition of prohibitory orders. Thousands of PTCA volunteers, both men and women, who picketed the polling stations were arrested and sent to different jails in the state (Narzary 2010: 69).

On 7th January, 1973 the demand of proposed autonomous region was upgraded to the demand of ‘Union Territory’ in the name of ‘Udayachal’. However, by 1974, the wave of Roman script movement of Bodos broke out which temporarily slowed down the pace of Udayachal movement. The Roman script movement was launched by Bodo Sahitya Sabha for adoption of Roman Script in writing Bodo language. In this movement, thousands of Bodos participated with great enthusiasm. ABSU also strongly participated in the movement. But the movement was ruthlessly suppressed by the state government and thousands of the Bodo people were put to jail where they suffered inhuman tortures. During
this movement at least 15 supporters were shot to death by Assam Police (Narzinary 2010: 28). In the meantime, national emergency was declared in 1975 and the problem of the leaders of the movement increased. The movement for Roman script ended with a surprise outcome with the intervention of the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. After several rounds of discussion between Bodo leaders and the Government of India, Devnagri script was adopted for Alphabet of Bodos. However, the Bodos felt that Central Government along with PTCA leaders imposed Devnagri script upon the unwilling Bodo masses.

In 1978, PTCA participated jointly with the Janata Party in the Assembly Election where they put their candidates in nine Assembly Constituencies. They joined in the Coalition Ministry formed by Janata Party under the Chief Ministership of Mr. Golap Borbora (Narzary 2010: 85-88). But suddenly, a change was noticed in the nature of the demand of PTCA. On 4th April, 1977 PTCA announced that the party had renounced the demand of ‘Udayachal’, and wants go along the demand of autonomous region (ABSU 1987b: 22). This move of the PTCA leaders created differences within the party which ultimately resulted in split in the party and formation of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (Progressive) by the hardliners of the party on 22nd May, 1979 (1987b: 24). This party later on assumed the name of United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) (Daimary 2002: 4). This move of the PTCA leaders to withdraw their demand for Udayachal was also strongly condemned by ABSU who supported PTCA in their movement for the union territory of Udayachal. As the time rolled, misunderstanding and differences between the Bodo leadership, particularly between PTCA and ABSU increased and subsequently it turned violent. The violent incident started with the abduction of Kamaleswar Brahma, the then Principal of Janata College, Serfanguri under Kokrajhar district by unidentified miscreants. Kamaleswar Brahma was an ardent supporter of PTCA. PTCA leaders developed suspicion that it might be the act of ABSU leaders and hence protest demonstrations were made by PTCA leaders against the abduction of the Kamaleswar Brahma. Then there took place number of revenge killings between ABSU and PTCA which seriously disrupted peace in the region. Charan Narzary
in his book “Dream for Udayachal and the History of Plains Tribal Council of Assam” has estimated the number of death toll at 249 and said that it does not cover the names of all victims of these internal conflicts as many names of the victims could not be collected during that time (Narzary 2011: 162). These internal conflicts have also been responsible for the change of guard and decline of PTCA as the leader of the Bodo movement.

Bodo Movement under All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) - Bodo Accord 1993

By 1986, 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 in 1986, a drastic change came in the nature and technique of the Bodo movement. The All Bodo Students’ Union hitherto detached from any political agenda, under U.N. Brahma’s leadership made a decision to start a political movement for the tribals of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, particularly the Bodos. It has become a turning point in the struggle of the Bodos. A political movement was launched for the separate state of Bodoland sideling the Plains Tribal Council of Assam altogether. The ABSU under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma submitted a 92 point Charter of Demands to Sri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the then Chief of Minister Assam on 1st January, 1987. Memorandums was also placed before the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi on 22nd January, 1987 at New Delhi on their demand for separate state of Bodoland with Union Territory status for the plains tribals of Assam in the northern part of Brahmaputra Valley. Similarly, memorandums were also submitted to the then Home Minister Sri Buta Singh, and the Honourable President of India Sri. Giani Jail Singh on 24th and 30th January respectively.

The charter of demands covers multifarious issues. It covers the concerns about the socio-cultural identity of the Bodos, their economic backwardness and political marginalization. The resentment over the continuous flow of illegal migrants from Bangladesh and demand for their detection and deportation
constituted an important aspect of the charter. Amongst the 92 demands articulated in the charter, three were of principal importance. The rest 89 demands were related to the socio-economic, educational, cultural and other problems of Bodos. The three main demands were-

2. Creation of autonomous Council for the tribals living on the southern part of Brahmaputra valley; and
3. Creation of separate state with the status of Union Territory on the northern Bank of Brahmaputra River for the plains tribes of Assam.

Formally, All Bodo Students’ Union launched their movement for the separate state on the 2nd March of 1987. On that day, mass rallies were organised in all the Bodo dominated districts of Assam proclaiming their demand for separate state on the northern part of Brahmaputra Valley. Subsequently, several programmes of mass rally, hunger strike, religious prayer, cultural demonstration, black out, mass crying etc. were organised under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma. Few of them are as follows-

- **12th June, 1987**: Mass Rally was organized at Judge Field, Guwahati. Thousands of Bodo masses gathered in the mass rally. During this rally Sujit Narzary of Kokrajahr district was killed by some miscreants. He was declared as the first martyr of the Bodo movement.

- **21st July, 1987**: Mass Religious Prayer Meeting was held at district levels throughout the state. On that day oath was taken to keep on struggling until the separate state is not achieved.

- **9th September, 1987**: 24 hour Tribal areas bondh was declared. During the bondh Kabiram Basumatary and Alendra Basumatary of Darrang district were killed in police firing.
• 24th and 25th September, 1987: 36 hour Tribal areas bondh was called. During this bondh Obiram Basumatary of Kokrajhar district was killed in police firing.
• 3rd October, 1987: Protest rallies and demonstration were organized in front of DC, SDO and SDC offices against the atrocities of Assam Police throughout the state.
• 12th October, 1987: Mass Crying was organized throughout the tribal areas of Assam.
• 10th November, 1987: Mass Demonstration was staged at Boat Club, New Delhi where 1500 ABSU activists and supporters took part. A procession was performed from India Gate to Rafi Marg. On that day, they met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Lokh Sobha speaker Balaram Jakar and submitted their memorandum.
• 26th to 28th November, 1987: 48th hour Rail Rokho programme was launched.
• 4th January, 1988: Mass Rally was organized where around 150000 people gathered.
• 12th May, 1988: Gaide Basumatary and Helena Basumatry were killed by Assam police and they became the first Women martyrs of the Bodo Movement.
• 17th May, 1988: 12 Hour tribal areas bondh was declared against the police firing and killing of Bodo people.
• 29th June, 1988: Another Mass Prayer was organized where thousands of Bodo people took oath to fight for the achievement of separate state.
• 15th August, 1988: boycotted the celebration of Independence Day and observed it as a black day.
• From 16th to 20th September, 1988: programme was launched to boycott government duties in all tribal dominated areas.

The 20th Annual Conference of ABSU was held in December, 1988 at Bashbari in Dhubri district. In this conference the separate state demanded by ABSU was given the nomenclature of 'Bodoland'. Decision was also made in this conference
to drop the 89 demands related to socio-economic and cultural problems from 92 points charter of demands and to focus only on three political demands i.e. the creation of Regional Council for non-Karbi tribes in Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council, creation of Autonomous Council for the tribals living on the southern part of Brahmaputra valley and creation of separate state with the status of Union Territory on the northern part of Brahmaputra Valley for the plains tribes of Assam. In the meantime, to give a boost to the ongoing Bodo movement and to mobilize the public sentiment Bodo Peoples’ Action Committee (BPAC) was formed on 8th November 1988 at the initiative of ABSU. Under the joint initiative of the ABSU and BPAC, a number of programmes were organised. As part of the mobilizing techniques, christening of a child in meaningful Bodo word, use of traditional dress and so on were made compulsory and also revolutionary patriotic songs were distributed in the form of audio-cassettes in every Bodo household. These steps of the ABSU-BPAC generated emotional support and attached the masses to the movement far more keenly. Large number of Bodo government employees resigned from their services to join the movement. With the participation of the large section of the Bodo community and the tribal people, the movement gained momentum. The movement reached its climax during 1988-89. Few incidences of violence also occurred during this period when an extremist group known as Bodo Militant Force (BMF) was formed in retaliation of police atrocities. However, the movement went on without much response from any concerned quarter. Both the centre and the state were indifferent to the developments taking place. No attempts were made by the ruling authorities to bring the issue of Bodo movement to the negotiation table till 1988. It was only in 1989 that an attempt was made by Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) government to start a dialogue with the Bodo leaders to resolve the issue (Saikia 2011: 99). For the first time, on 17th August, 1989 ABSU received an invitation from the government of Assam for Tripartite Talk scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 28th August, 1989. As response to the invitation of the state government, a list of 51 delegates for proposed talk was submitted to the State government on 18 August, 1989. The first Round of Tripartite Talk was held at Assam Bhavan in New Delhi as per schedule and continued for several rounds.
The talks proposed for the formation of a three tier system of local self government under the provisions of the Panchayati Raj Act, 1973 (Daimary 2002: 99). However, the supporters of the movement particularly the activists of ABSU and BPAC rejected this proposal and demanded for the separate state of Bodoland. After the failure of seven rounds of talks, the Eighth Round deliberated upon devolution of maximum autonomy with legislative, administrative and financial power to the Bodos. In this connection, a ‘Three-Member Expert Committee’ was also constituted on 25th February 1991 to look into the Bodo problem in detail. Dr. Bhupendhar Singh (Retired IAS) was appointed the Chairman of the committee and Dr. K. S. Sigh, (Director General of Anthropological Survey of India) and Mr. A.M. Gokhale (Joint Secretary Department of Rural Development, Government of India) were appointed as member and member secretary respectively (2002: 38). This committee paid visit to places like Gauhati, Barama, Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hill District, Mangaldoi, Kalaigaon, Tangla, Paneri, Harisinga, Ambagaon, Udalguri, Lailangpara, Rowta, Hoograjuli and Dhekiajuli. The committee started its field visit on 31st March 1991 and completed on 30th November 1991 and submitted its report to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs on 30th March 1992 with their recommendations for resolving Bodoland Problem. A copy of the report was sent to the ABSU-BPAC leaders. But the content of the report was not up to the expectation of the leaders of the movement. They rejected the recommendations of the Three-Member Expert Committee and as sign of resentment of organized hunger strikes in different part of Assam including Dispur on June 6 1992 (2002: 53). A Mass Rally was organized at Judge Field, Gauhati on 15th July 1992. A two-day dharna was also organized at Boat Club, New Delhi on 14th and 15th September 1992. A number of peace rallies, mass crying and mass religious prayers were organized in different parts of Assam. In the meantime, the Ninth Round of Tripartite Talk was held on 7th January 1992 at Assam Bhawan in New Delhi but that went in vain.

The much talked and awaited moment of Bodos came in the early part of 1993. On the 20th day of February 1993 a Memorandum of Settlement was signed
between the ABSU-BPAC leaders, Government of India and the State Government. Mr. Sansuma Kungur Bwiswmuthiary (President, ABSU), Mr. Rabiram Brahma (Secretary, ABSU) and Mr. Subash Basmatary (President BPAC) signed on behalf of ABSU-BPAC while Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam signed for the state government. Mr. Rajesh Pilot, the then Union Minister of Internal Security represented the centre. This historic accord came to be known as 'Bodo Accord’ under which Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was created for all round development of the region which comprises the contiguous geographical areas from the river Sankosh in the west to the river Pasnoi in the east in the northern part of Brahmaputra Valley. However, the issue of boundary demarcation was left for future consultation. The accord conceded limited executive, legislative and financial powers to the Bodos. As per the conditions of the accord, there would exist a General Council of 40 members of whom 35 would be elected on the basis of adult franchise. The rest five were to be nominated by the Governor from amongst the communities which would otherwise remain unrepresented in the Council (Kundu 2010: 103). BAC was entrusted with executive powers on 38 subjects. Mr. Sansuma Kungur Bwiswmuthiary, the then President of ABSU became the first Chief Executive Member of the Council. 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 central governments with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the accord. The delimitation of the boundary of the Council areas was also not done by the state government of 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 (Brahma 2008: 276). In protest to such callousness and insensitivity of the government, Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary, the first Chief Executive member of BAC tendered his resignation. ABSU, the signatory of the BAC accord also denounced the accord and resolved to launch a fresh movement for separate state of Bodoland in its Langhin Session in Karbi Anglong in 1996. This was how the ground for another phase of Bodo movement appeared.
Bodo Movement under Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) - Bodo Accord 2003

By 1996, dissatisfaction and frustration over the provisions of the Bodo accord of 1993 and its non-implementation reached its highest peak and as a result an extremist group known as Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) appeared on the scene. The members of Bodo Militant Force (BMF) were regrouped to give birth to this new militant outfit with the objective to achieve the goal of separate state of Bodoland. They also had the additional demands like creation of regional council for non-Karbi tribes in Karbi Anglong autonomous district council and autonomous Council for the tribals living on the southern part of Brahmaputra valley. Being fed up with peaceful means, this extremist group resorted to violence and started carrying out destructive and disruptive activities like kidnapping, killing and bombings in railways, bridges and public places. On 30th Dec 1996 they blew up the Brahmaputra Mail to press their demand killing at least 33 innocent passengers (Kundu 2010: 125). However, the BLTF despite being an insurgent organization has shown great sense of responsibility and fellow feeling during the Kargil Wart. As sign of their solidarity to the rest of India during the kargil war, BLTF declared a unilateral ceasefire in July, 1999 (Banarjee & Roy 2010: 16). Government of India warmly welcomed this move of the BLTF and negotiated promptly the ‘Ground Rules for Truce’. Talks began between the Government of India, Assam government and the leaders of the BLTF in March, 2000. After several rounds of talks, a Memorandum of Settlement (Bodo Accord 2003) was signed between the BLTF, the State Government and the Government of India on 10th February 2003 and Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) was created under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. As mark of honour to the struggle which led to the signing of the accord, 2641 BLTF cadres surrendered in a public function held at Kokrajhar in presence of Governor and Chief Minister of Assam and the Deputy Prime Minister of India, Mr. L.K. Advani on 7th December 2003 (Economic and Political Weekly February 21, 2004: 784). ABSU withdrew their movement for
separate state of Bodoland. Mr. Hagrama Basumatary (now Mr. Hagrama Mahilary), former Chairman of BLTF was sworn as the first Chief Executive Member of the interim Bodoland Territorial Council on that very day. An environment of peace and harmony has blown all across Bodoland. But it did not sustain long. The problem in implementation of the accord again precipitated the crisis in Bodoland. Frustrated with the underdevelopment and the government’s attitude with regard to the implementation of the accord, All Bodo Students’ Union denounced the Bodo accord 2003 and announced to launch a fresh Bodo movement from 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 2010. A Mass Rally was organized at Kajalgaon in Chirang district. The leaders of ABSU submitted fresh memorandums to the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh and Home Minister Sri P. Chidambaram demanding a separate state of Bodoland. The total land area of the proposed Bodoland, according to the memorandum was 25000 square kilometers surrounded by river Sonkosh in the West, Sadiya in the East, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the North and Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Rural Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts of Assam in the South (Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, submitted by All Bodo Students’ Union on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 2010). A Rally was organized on 28\textsuperscript{th} October 2010 in Delhi from Ramlila Maidan to Parliament demanding a separate state of Bodoland. Apart from their demand for separate state of Bodoland, they also demanded more autonomy to Mishing Autonomous Council, Tiwa Autonomous Council, Sonowal Kochari Autonomous Council and Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council which were created under the state acts. They strongly urged upon the Government of India “to adopt a consensus policy to bring all those Autonomous Council areas of Assam under ‘More Autonomy’ concept with full fledged constitutional backing. Such more autonomy should be backed by full financial and administrative power on the line of Sixth Schedule of the constitution” (Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India, submitted by All Bodo Students’ Union on 2\textsuperscript{nd} March, 2010). Thus, the Bodo movement is still on in the form of demand for the separate state of Bodoland.
Bodo Movement under National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB)

Apart from the above discussed organizations who led the Bodo Movement, there is another underground organization that also played a distinct in the course of Bodoland movement. This underground organization, originally named as Boro Security Force (BSF) was born on 3rd October 1986 with the demand of sovereign Boroland. On 18th April 1993, this organization was rechristened as National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) (Voice of Boroland, July 2011). In its struggle for sovereign Boroland, NDFB indulged in and carried out several incidents of violence in the state. They also resorted to unlawful activities like extortions of money from businessmen, government officials and other civilians with a view to finance and execute plans for creation of sovereign Bodoland. However, the launching of the military operation named ‘Operation All Clear’ on December 15 2003 by Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) caused severe damage to NDFB. The organization lost its strength and being puzzled by the sudden assault, a section of NDFB leadership under Dhiren Boro and Gobinda Basumatary announced a unilateral ceasefire on 15th October 2004. Consequently, on May 25, 2005 NDFB signed a Cease-Fire Agreement with the Government of India which paved the way for peaceful negotiation of their demands. However, another faction of NDFB led by Ranjan Daimary is yet to the negotiation table. The talk faction of NDFB has given up their demand for sovereign Boroland and shifted their demand to separate state of Boroland within the framework of Indian constitution. The basic points of negotiation between the Government of India and NDFB are at present–

- Creation of separate state of Boroland (instead of Sovereign Boroland) within the framework of Indian constitution.
- Inclusion of all the indigenous tribal groups in Assam under sixth schedule of the Indian constitution.
• Re-enforcement of Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873 in order to check the influx of illegal migrants and encroachment of tribal lands in Assam.
• Lifting of ban imposed on NDFB to create a congenial atmosphere for political dialogues.
• Fixing of 1951 as the base year for detection, deletion and deportation of illegal migrants and updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC).
• Establishment of institutions like Central University, Agricultural University, National Law University, Medical College, IIT and IIM in Bodoland.
• Creation of an Airport.
• Creation of Boro Regiment in Indian Army.

Thus, the changing nature of the struggle was one of the important characteristics of the Bodo movement. The movement before the year 1967 was a peaceful and non-political one. The main focus of the movement during that time was on socio-economic, cultural and spiritual issues. In 1960s, some changes came in the nature of the Bodo movement. Under the leadership of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), the movement has assumed political character and to a certain extent succeeded in drawing the support of the other tribals of the state. However, the Bodo movement reached its climax only in late 1980s. Under the leadership of All Bodo Students’ Union, the movement for separate state of Bodoland was launched on 2nd March, 1987 which was supported by a large section of the Bodo society including the other tribals of the state. It was the result of this movement, the Bodo Accord 1993 was signed and Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) was created. However, the movement between 1987 and 1993 passed through both peaceful and violent mobilization. Many incidents of violence were reported and hogged headline in newspaper during this period, But by 1996, the movement parted distinctly with its peaceful tradition and followed the course of violence. The legacy of its non-violent tradition under ABSU and PTCA was overshadowed by the violent activities of BLTF. Although sounds ironic, yet
many believe that it was the change to violent course which had achieved the signing of Bodo Accord, 2003.

To conclude, it may be said that the Bodo movement passed through a number phases. It was mobilized both through peaceful and violent tactics. 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 like BLTF and NDFB chose a path of aggression. The combined effect of the two is mixed. It resolved the identity question of the Bodos, to a certain extent, but not without sufferings to the lives of common men. When it is believed that the use of force in the movement has been effective in achieving certain degree of success, it is also a fact that the costs of it was also very high amounting to the loss of human lives, under development, social disharmony and a persistent law and order problem in Bodoland.