CHAPTER VII
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

North Eastern Region is a mosaic of different tribes having own custom, religion, tradition, habits, practices, values, moral standards etc. who have been inhabiting since time immemorial. The Bodos are one of those tribes who are known as one of the most aborigines and older than Vedic Aryan. They are different from the great mass Hindu caste society in their appearance, habits and culture and have maintained cultural continuity with their past up to the present time. British Missionaries and administrations designated them as 'tribe' and now they are given status of scheduled tribe plains in Assam under the provision of the constitution of India.

But there is not a distinct definition of the term ‘tribe’ what exactly it means. The commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, in its report for 1952 has listed eight features of tribal groups in India. These are:-

1. They live away from the civilised world in the accessible part of the forests and hills.
2. They belong to one of the three stocks—Negroid, Austroloids or Mongoloids.
3. They speak the same tribal dialect.
4. They profess primitive religion known as ‘animism’ in which they worship ‘ghosts’, spirits as the most important element.
5. They follow primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest products.
6. They are largely carnivorous or flesh and meat eaters.
7. They are either naked or semi-naked using tree barks or leaves for cloths.
8. They have nomadic habits and are fond of drinking and dancing.

Although all those attributes do not define the whole aspects of traditional tribal culture and values, it substantially indicates that tribal life has a distinct entity of its own compared to caste society. Their traditional socio-political institutions are
Although all those attributes do not define the whole aspects of traditional tribal culture and values, it substantially indicates that tribal life has a distinct entity of its own compared to caste society. Their traditional socio-political institutions are regulated by customs, usages, taboos, tradition, ritual and habit and practices though these were not like the institutional framework of the present time. These were strong force in maintaining solidarity and peace in their domestic and social life. Traditional Bodo customary laws were guided by ethics and morality which was based on 'good' and 'bad' actions of man. Application of Bodo customary laws, known as 'baad' comprising five categories like Daokhibaad, Ogorbaad, Khoulobobaad, Laokharbaad and Phongslobbaad were mainly concerned with preservation of sanctity in the society. If we go back to the ancient thought of Plato and Aristotle on politics or socio-political institutions it reveals the elements of such traditional values. If one would consider socio-political institutions ethically one would agree with Plato and Aristotle that it is a mean to attain a 'good' and 'just' life.

At present the Bodos are the prominent among those Scheduled Tribes of Assam who are accorded with the self Governing Autonomous Body known as Bodoland Territorial Council under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the constitution.

The constitution does not clearly or precisely define the term tribe. The fact has left the question open as to who the tribals are expect where, by specific notification under Article 342, the President specially declared certain areas and certain people as Scheduled areas and Scheduled Tribes, i.e. the tribes and tribal communities or parts of group within the tribal or tribal communities. So to an ordinary man, the word suggests simple folk loving in hills and forests; to an administrator it means a group of citizens who are the special responsibility of the president of India, to an anthropologist it indicates as special for study of a social phenomenon.

If the tribe in India had to be understood and recognised in terms of sociology and anthropology or mode of production then probably the natural process of detribalization would have been reflected in the number of tribes and instead of increasing the total number would have been decreasing over the years. But the
tribes of India are basically a politico-administrative category with certain special protection to be enjoyed.

Relationship of the Bodos with political institution is germinated from their long standing problems causing unrest and discontent in their lives. The main factors such as, unrest and discontent can be analysed as follows:-

(1) Lethargic, indifference, and lack of sympathy from administrator and bureaucrat.  
(2) Lack of legislation to prevent the passing of tribal lands into the hands of non-tribal.  
(3) Ineffective government measures to rehabilitate tribal population.  
(4) Lack of interest and dynamism among the political elite to solve tribal problem.  
(5) Discrimination in implementation of reformatory measures.  
(6) Harshness of forest laws and regulation.

Tribal people are generally calm and quite and they want to remain in seclusion from unknown society. They remain contend with the surrounding gift of the nature. In early time there were no people to penetrate in their area. But during the colonial era due to the British policy of ‘opening up’ large number of immigrant entered into the tribal areas and they have settled down there permanently. The flow of immigrant influx started in the early decades of the 20th Century which later followed by ‘grow more food policy’ during the time of Shadulla Ministry which let to flow more immigrants into soil of Assam. Due to the large number of immigrant influx from Eastern Bengal (Bangladesh) and their settlement into the tribal lands are alienated. Thus the administration could not protect the tribal lands as per expectation. Again it was amended for three times in 1964, 1981 and 1990. But even tribal lands have not protected so far, instead tribal lands are sold, leased, mortgaged or gifted to the non-tribals. It has become beyond reconcilable task even for the Government at present time.
Thus the total effect of land alienation has devastating the fragile tribal economy. Moreover the massive inward migration of non-tribals has also changed the ownership of land in the Schedule Areas to the devastating to Scheduled Tribes.

Under the increasing pressure of population many outsiders also started settling in the tribal areas, with their money power they offered credit facilities at doorstep. Initially it provided relief to tribals but the system gradually become exploitative. Newly established courts of law became helpful to the exploiters. The economic, and later social and cultural exploitation aroused the tribal leaders to mobilise fellow tribals and start agitation.

During the colonial era Britishers adopted the policy of “isolation” and “indirect rule” policy with regard to the tribals. Tribal welfare in pre-independence era remained in the periphery of the priorities. Rather the maintenance of peace, administrative order and systematic collection of revenues were the prime functions of the administration and isolationist and indirect rule approaches best suited those purposes. However, during this period welfare activities by Christian Missionaries in the North East particularly in health education sector were comparatively significant. Later Dhebar Committee enunciated the approach of Tribal sub-plan which came into operation into fifth year plan during 1974-75. Again 74th constitution amendment for decentralisation of power was extended the system of Panchayati Raj to the tribal areas authoring Gram Sabha with power to preserve, the culture, traditions, community resources and village judicial system in area of their jurisdiction in North Eastern areas. Since independence a number of such programmes have been launched in India for the promotion of the tribal community. But still the tribal communities continued to be underdeveloped and exploited.

After independence compromising the two views i.e. V. Elwin’s concept on tribal development with “own potentiality and ability” and Ghurbe’s ‘Complete assimilation’, the concept of tribal development was accepted basing on Nehru’s five Principles which enunciated that—
(a) Tribals should be developed along the lines of their potential and any kind of imposition should be avoided. Effort should be made to encourage and promote their traditional lifestyle and occupation.

(b) Tribal rights in lands and forests should be respected.

(c) Efforts should be built up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed, especially in the beginning. But too many outsiders into tribal territory to be avoided.

(d) Care should be taken not to unduly interfere in the administration. Rather emphasis must be on doing work through social and non Governmental institution.

(e) The results must not be judged by the statistics or the amount of money be spent, but quality of human character that is evolved.

The first major effort for tribal welfare was made by introducing Tribal Development Block under the Community Development Programme in 1952. But the program could not ameliorate the socio-economic status of the tribal communities due to various factors, like uneven methods of resource allocation, large scale destabilization of tribal communities because of development works like formation of dam, lack of suitable rehabilitation, under utilization of human resources, in adequate infrastructural development and large scale migration of tribal communities and so on. Concept of tribal development enunciated by Nehru is remaining only as vision for practical life.5

Kalicharan Gurudev was the first person who made an attempt to institutionalize the political element among the Bodo society. His social reformation through ‘Braham Movement’ and spreading of education brought self realisation among the Bodos and later created a new generation of educated Bodo youths. It resulted into a refined Bodo society who later carried out activities for the upward movement of their society at per with other developed communities. The birth of Bodo Chatra Sonmiloni in 1919 and Tribal League in 1933 were the fruitful result of his venture who later undertook Socio-political activities for the uplifftment of their society.
The formal political relationship of the Bodo reflected first in the memorandum submitted to the Simonon Commission in the year 1929, at Shillong by Gurudev Kalicharan along with his counterpart organisation, Kochari Youth Association and Goalpara District Bodo Association. The memorandum including more of the political demands like separate category in the census for the Bodo, separate, electorate, reservation of seats in the legislature, separated regiment named as "Bodo Regiment". Although all of those demands were not acceptable to the British Government, later they conceded some of those demands which worked as a source of inspiration to the Bodos in the field of political future.

The Tribal League is the first political front (common platform) for the tribal people of Assam and it represented in the provincial legislature on behalf of the tribal people under the provision of the reservation seats for the plain tribal of Assam, provided by the Government of India Act of 1935. The Tribal League fought constantly for the protection of tribal interests, like the protection of tribal land, immigration influx, reservation of seats and other facilities concerning to socio-economic and socio-cultural development of the tribal people of Assam. It made alliances with both the Muslim league and Congress party Ministries only in pursuance of solution of the tribal problems and protection their interest which was assured by those ministries. Later it merged with Congress party in 1946 an assurance given to it for the protection of the tribal interest and people. Most of the people think that such merger with political party is a sacrifice of the tribal safeguard and interest on behalf of Congress party and the selfish interest of the leaders. In that movement the spirit of the nationalism was evolving on the perception that Indian nation should be built on the basis of the principal of strong "nation state" against imperialism which narrowed down the further fragmentation of unity, as the British concept of the ‘tribal’ itself was understood to create division between tribal and non tribal Indians. In the meantime Morley Mito Reform had already sown the seed of communal feeling by introducing the system of separate electorate on the basis of communal and special interest. This fact justifies that the instigation of the British to alienate the tribal from non tribal was working in the domain of imperialism. Even after independence Bordoloi Committee did not recommend the sixth schedule as more ethnic assertions of varied ethnic groups might create detrimental force to the national mainstream.
It is very hard to make a concrete separation of the elements of politics from society in terms of human relationship. It can be justified from the viewpoint of Aristotle that man is both the social and political animal. The attributes of politics are found in most of the social institutions like ‘Nokhor’ (family) ‘Gami’ village, status of man and woman, ritual etc. which enshrined in their social life. So, political aspect is inseparable part of social life.

“Politics is widely observed phenomenon, whether one likes it or not, one finds oneself in politics, directly or indirectly knowingly or unknowingly; willingly or unwillingly. To attribute any activity to be ‘political’ is not, therefore, astonishing. In fact it has become almost a fashion, if not a habit, to address any simple human activity as ‘Political’.” No wonder, if there are references like the ‘University politics’ ‘Church Politics’ ‘Politics of sports’ ‘Congress Politics’. So excessive has been the use of the word ‘Politics’ that it has lost its real meaning. Now-a-days these Political elements are found in human activities in various forms. A man of social institution is also a man of political institution or a man of religion is a man of politics or vise versa. Whatever we mean by politics it is an indispensable part in our social system.

Originally tribal societies have not social or political apparatus or institutional frame work like the present politico-administrative system. Their tradition, religion custom and usages, taboos, etc. are only means for regulating their social system. Various affairs of their traditional institutions like Nokhor(family), Gami(Village), Haba(Marriage), and other economic institutions are being regulated and managed by those instruments. Although those customary laws have been changed due to various socio-cultural forces, still such features are prevalent in the society. The institution, of village ‘Dokhora Affat’ (Local council), ‘Hadungora’ (Judge), ‘Hasungra’(Judge or Jurist) are their vibrant institution for administration of Justice in the field of social, economic, religion and other affairs of life. These institutions are reflection of political element which existed in their traditional society. Although the modern political system like democracy, introduction of Panchayatraj system, and growth of other socio-political institution has loosened their entity it has got important role in maintaining solidarity and peace in their
society. 'Bodo Somaj Affaf' a social institution of the present time reveals the character of continuity of such traditional institution.

In early days there was not any institutional framework of socio-political institution in the Bodo society like of the present time. Bodo people remained secluded living amidst the forest or jungle where there was easy access of their livelihood within the gift of nature, having seldom contact with the so-called civilized society. Their society was regulated by religion, custom, usages, taboos etc. which were strong force of means of social control and they maintained peace and solidarity with those instrument. Their economic institutions were completely based on agriculture with traditional method which did not require any theoretical knowledge. During the period of twentieth century Bodo society underwent tremendous change due to various change agents and socio-cultural forces like trend of modernisation, Acculturation, spread of education, development of science and technology and other allied factors. In the meantime process of Sanskritisation has already crept into their society which brought about subsequent transformation of their society in various aspects. During this time some welfare activities of the Christian Missionaries and British administration also brought forth awareness among their society.

**Language politics and the Bodos:**
Language politics of Assam, got its manifestation through two successive of language movements - movement for Official Language in 1960 and Movement for declaration of Assamese as medium of instruction in 1970, was not the reflection of declaration of Hindi as national language. It was rather the product of Bengali and Assamese Chauvinism. Unlike the language movements of south, the language movement of Assam did not give birth any political party.

Language policy is legacy of colonial Assam. The establishment of Bengali court language by the colonial ruler created discontent among the Assamese people. Consequently the newly emerged middle class of colonial period tried to develop linguistic consciousness with the following motto—"Develop language is the sign of develop nation". Literary organisations magazines and newspaper contributed in upholding sentiment among the people.
After the partition of India Sylhet was transferred to Pakistan and the demographic composition of Assam affected as Assamese people emerged as dominant language group (60.89% in 1971). This numerical strength also provided a logic for majority Assamese for introduction of Assamese as official language and medium of instruction.

If there could be any single factor for endangering serious dissatisfaction amongst not only the Bodos, but all the tribal people of Assam plains as well as Hills, then the certainly was the language problem in Assamese speaking people in general and Assam Government in particular. The Assam official Language and the efforts by Assamese to impose the language on all the people of Assam including the Bodos has driven wedge between two communities. Tribal people both in the hills and the plains took it a policy of submerging their culture and ethnic identity through the process of assimilation. It was so acute to the hill tribes that they could not reconcile the declaration of Assamese as an official language. As a result all the leaders of the hill tribes formed a political party called All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) for demanding creation of hill states. On August 1960 the All party Hill Leaders Conference submitted memorandum to the president of India for creation of separate hill states. They also met the Prime Minister of India, Nehru in November 1960 and urged to create Eastern Frontier states to fulfill the interest of the hill tribes. The Prime Minister, Nehru assured that the Assamese would not be imposed. There would be Bengali, English and Hindi in the state legislature of Assam besides Assamese. Later the demand for the creation of the hill states was consolidated and for the first time Nagaland was created in 1960 followed by Meghalaya in 1963, Manipur and Tripura in 1974 and Mizoram in 1987. Although language policy was not only a factor for alienation of hill tribes it played major role in bringing separatist element among the people which also vehemently reacted on the tribal people of plains in Assam.

The Assam Official Language Act of 1960 was the direct result of the perception of nation building that India should be built on the linguistic and cultural basis. The organisation of states on the basis of language gave an impetus to regionalism in the country. The primary of Assamese in Assam was formalised by the state
legislature in 1960, but in an area so diverse that it only aggravated existing misgivings concerning suggestions to have a single Assam covering the entire north eastern region. This was indeed unfortunate as over the years the Assamese plainsmen, had acted as the torch bearers of ideas in north east and spread the Ramayana, Mahabharata tradition in the region through Assamese language.

The introduction of Assamese as official language of Assam not only brought about repercussion in the hills but it also faced vehement protest by the plain tribes in Assam.

In 1960 Jogendra Basumatary, the then secretary of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha made through a printed circulation opposing the introduction Assamese Language and supporting Hindi in lieu of it. The official language of Assam basing on the following points:

(1) The biggest linguistic group in the state is that of Assamese which can claim only 54.4%. According to the opinion of the S.R.C. a language should have a seventy percent or more to be recognized as an official language of a state. Looking from this viewpoint the declaration of Assamese would mean imposition on the people of other Linguistic Groups.

(2) Adoption of Hindi as the official language would place every linguistic group in the state on the same footing. The whole of India is to adopt Hindi as the common official language of every state of India and treat any other language as vernacular.

(3) Children must be given education in their own mother tongue to maintain separate identity and to develop themselves most speedily. This will not be possible if Assamese will be recognised as the official language of Assam, for in that case Assamese will be an extra language that Bodo students will have to learn putting thereby an extra burden on them and placing them at a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis the Assamese speaking students.

The reaction of Language policy of 1960 first started among upper echelon society; between Assamese and Bengali which inflicted negative result to the Bodos.

In 1970 Gauhati University took the decision for introducing Assamese as medium of instruction in the college. When Gauhati University took decision to introduce English and Assamese as a medium of instruction in 1972-73 it created discontent among the Bengali people and they demanded the inclusion of the Bengali as a medium of instruction. As a result Academic council of Gauhati University came out with a circular according to which English was to be retained as the medium of instruction and students were to be allowed to answer their examination questions in Assamese, English and Bengali. The decision of the academic council permitting to write in Bengali was vehemently opposed by the Assamese speaking
people and they started agitating against it. As a result the council had to revise its decision on 12th June 1972 which included Assamese as a medium of instruction and English to continue as an alternative medium of instruction, and permitting the students to write answer either in Assamese and English. This revised circular created discontent among the Bengali Speaking people and as a result Govt. has to establish a separate University for the people of Barak valley.

In 1972, Assamese was made the medium of instruction in the collage under the Dibrugarh and Gauhati University in place of English. Under the circumstances, Bodo students who have passed the matriculation with the Bodo medium faced serious problem as they have to receive education with Assamese. With Assamese which was unknown to them. It was opposed by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha along with ABSU later on June 1972, Academic Council came out with its revised decision which included the provision of retaining English as an alternative medium of instruction and ensuring option to the students to answer either in Assamese or English in University examination. Assamese remained the medium of instruction in all colleges under Guwahati University.13 Again when the A.G.P. Government came to power Assamese Language was made compulsory third language in the secondary school through the circulation given by the Secondary Education Board of Assam on the 28th February 1986. It was opposed by the tribal students and Assam Linguistic Minority Right Committee and other Bodo organisations like Bodo Sahitya Sabha, ABSU by announcement of a programme of agitation at last the Government compelled to suspend the same.

It created frustration to the Bodos as they would be deprived of getting job opportunity under the Govt. as they were to be recruited through the written or oral test with Assamese who are lacking of proficiency in it.

Thus the language policy of 1960 has not only brought about rift between Bengali and Assamese but also it created dissention between the Assamese and the Bodos who have been living harmoniously since the time immemorial.

But language is not only dominant issue or for of the tribal dissatisfaction and the quest for the political power. The real issue is now the economic and political
independence from Assam or the desire of every tribe to manage their affairs without any dictation of or interference from the Government of Assam which is now seen a totally indifferent and unsympathetic towards the tribal interest in general and the Bodo interest in particular. Dimension of demand for self autonomy and letter demand for more Autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the constitution reveals that all the tribes are to be ensured with separate autonomy more and more. In the long process the newer groups of people, later not included in the list are also raising their voice mobilising in favor of their inclusion in the list of Scheduled tribe. Academically this process of detrivalisation may appear to a retrograde step but when one look in to the character of the Indian states and essence of its unequal and unethical distribution wealth and privilege, even this retrograde step appears to neutral and just one.

Political activities are closely related with social activities. This relationship is manifested in both the social and political institution. These relationships between social and political are visible in both the traditional and modern social institutions and organizations

**Family and political institution**

Family is the basic unit of the social institution of the Bodos. It is also so within a polity. A family is described as “a group of people usually related as same particular kind of kindred, who may live in one household and whose unity resides, in patterning of rights and duties, sentiment and authority. So a family is concerned with the activities of management, control, administration, economy etc. which is fundamental requirement of the process of Government. In this sense family is not only a social institution but also a political institution. As the political institutions exist for the welfare and progress of society family also exist for the same which differs only in their intrinsic values. So the family is indispensable part of political life, specially in a democracy.

Politics is outcome, rather than the cause of social change. A new Prime Minister, new parliament often marks epoch in politics, but seldom life of the people. Now a day, participation in political system of the nation is basic responsibility of every citizen. So every individual or family member is the parts of the political system in a country where they are living. such democratic values deserve when every
countrymen oblige its principle in practical life. But negative aspects of politics are prevalent in our society which is distorting the basis of democratic values and its spirit. These negative aspects of politics have not remained unaffected to the social institutions of the Bodo society.

Generally a family has nothing to do with so-called politics as we take it in our time. But the wind of negative aspects has also not remained untouched to the family. Family is a part of the society which is bound to adjust or adopt in political environment where it is living. In such circumstances a Bodo family is bound to oblige the decision of their own community, even against own will. It represents dominance of community over the liberty of the family. However, such attitude has been undertaken as a sense of sacrifice for the greater interest of the community by some section of the Bodo people.

In early time Bodo society was based on clan, family and village in managing their all familial and societal affairs. Modern political system and administration has brought about change in this regards.

Universal adult franchise and election based authority right form the national parliament to the Zilla parishad or gram Panchayat provided to the common man in the country for the first time, a democratic political structure in which he has some says. The Govt. of India act of 1935 provided for reservation of seats in the provincial legislature, under this provision Bodo people and other tribes got first opportunity to elect the representatives from their own community in provincial legislature. After independent Rural Panchayati Raj Act of 1948 was enacted to provide the scope for exercising Adult franchise in Assam, Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurating the conference of the Ministers on local self Government of the states in 1948 remarked; “Local self-government is and must be the basis of any true system of democracy”. The act was amended in 1959, 1972 and 1986. Finally Assam Panchayati Raj Act of 1994 was enacted which came into force with effect from 5th May 1994. After independence the first election of Assembly was held in 1951-52 in India and Bodo people along with other citizen of India could participate in the democratic process. Thus the concept of citizenship, adult
franchise, fundamental right, electoral process etc. has brought the knowledge of political life of the people.

The Village and political institutions:
Bodo society is primarily village society. It is this social institution which covers almost all the section of the Bodo people. So any affairs relating to society, economy, politics etc. are primarily concerned with the general people of the community.

Nowadays no social institutions have remained untouched to the politics as it is the part and parcel of our system of Governance. The whole affairs relating to policy making, implementing, administration, finance, etc. are concerned with politics which are mainly related with the all round development and welfare of the people and progress of the nation. But the relationships of the political and social institutions of the Bodos have not been able to create congenial environment of the people in all time. Often it has brought about retardation distorting the socio-economic life of the people.

Whenever any wave of politics arises it first touches the core village society as it is the basic institution for mass mobilization, political unit of Assembly constituency or political parties or organisations of the community. Whenever any agitational programmes of political party or organisation are adopted the village people have to take the responsibility without the knowledge of their consequences. General people are unable to understand about the policy lying behind the political party for which they became easy prey to the selfish interest of the political party. They only want peace and prosperity. So, the Bodo villagers have to pass various storms and stresses with a long series of agitational programmes and movements facing innumerable incidents, internal clashes, communal riots, police atrocities or army raids, gang rape etc. which caused loss of properties and valuable lives of the people. They have faced several movements starting from language movement of 1961, introduction of Bodo medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools and Roman script movement of 1974 up to the political movement of separate homeland of respective political parties like P.T.C.A., U.T.N.L.F. etc. Again the villagers have faced several movements launched by the All Bodo
Students' Union (ABSU) and Bodo People Action Committee starting from 1987 up to the signing of Bodo Accord of 1993 and again another phase of movement starting from the year 1996 up to signing Bodo accord of 2003 and creation of “Bodoland Territorial Area District” within Assam.

Again when the internal clashes, divisions and rifts of the political parties or organisations broke out its reaction came directly to the village society resulting negative consequences. Internal clash between two political parties “Plain Tribal Council of Assam” (P.T.C.A.) and its dissident “United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front”, division of All Bodo Students’ union (ABSU) between two groups, ABSU (Upen Brahma) and ABSU (Ramsiaray); patricidal killings between two underground outfits; “National Democratic Front of Bodoland” (NDFB) and “Bodo Liberation Tigers” (BLT) not only distorted peace and normal life of the people but it has brought repercussion for a long period among the society, which are prevalent even to-day.

Religion and political institution:
In every society Religion plays significant role in the political life of the people. During the early decades of the 20th century Kalicharan Gurudev preached the Brahma religion which brought reformation of the society and later it generated the spirit of ethnic consciousness among them.

When British entered North East India in 1826, Hinduism was widely known in the region, but it was not the accepted religion of the entire population. The Hills areas still practiced animistic faiths and beliefs, although both Buddhism and Ramayana, Mahabharata tradition were appreciated. From the Middle of the nineteenth century, the believers in animistic faiths in various parts of North Eastern Region had to face extensive encounter with Christianity. Most of the Bodo people, who had marginal contact with the Hinduism, were converted to Christianity. Spread of Christianity started when the British Missionaries and American Missionaries started working in India just after the permission of charter of India Act of 1812, under certain condition. British established two churches in Dhubri, before the Yandaboo Treaty. After the formation of Goalpara District in 1922 Christian Missionaries spread Christianity among the Bodos of erstwhile Goalpara district by
establishing churches in Gaurang, Grahampur, Joyma, Tukrajhar, Debitola, Bongaigaon, Baghpara, Ladanguri, Santipara, Sebapur, Mornoi, Dingdinga and many other places of erstwhile, Goalpara district.

Meanwhile the faith of ‘Eksoronia’ of Sankardeva could embrace a large section of the Bodos who later avoided their tribal identity. But even some sections of the Bodos of eastern doors remained untouched by Christianity or Hinduism who were practicing their traditional faith in that time. This movement witnessed a precarious social condition of the Bodos when some section of the Bodos converted to Christianity or Hinduism and even to Islam. This situation seemed to be extinction of Bodo community. In that moment Kalicharan Gurudev preached Brahma religion for the reformation of the society. He held Bodo Mohashanmeloni (Conference) in different places of Bodo inhabited area and adopted various measures for avoiding corrupt social practices. His strong urge for reforming society created educated youth which later took up various socio-political activities for the development of society. Along with the growing new generation of educated youth he submitted memorandum to Simon Commission in 1929 which included various political demands for safeguarding the tribal interest like reservation of seats in the legislature, separate category for the Bodos in census, separate regiment called Bodo regiment etc. Although all those demands were not acceptable to the British Government, assurance conceding of some demands worked as a source of inspiration for the Bodos and tribal people of Assam to take course of political action in future. The formation of Tribal League in 1933 is the direct result of this source of inspiration.

Kalicharan was against Eksoronia of Sankardeva, who he supposed to be a high caste Hindu Assamese, responsible for conversion of many Bodos and other tribals into its fold avoiding their originality. The same fear was to contemporary Christianisation of British Missionary, that let him follow a middle way between these two folds “Brahma Dharma” for Bodo identity, although this religion is also a baptized Brahminical cult, as he thought was, suited to stand for the Bodos at that moment. Later adoption of Brahma title by himself and his followers could materialize it for the politics for the future generation.
Bodo society is now-a-days a multicultural society with different religions like Hinduism and Christianity and traditional faith. Both the Hinduism and Christianity have contribution for the progress of the Bodo society. All of those sections of the people are secularist in their attitude. They feel that every people with different religions must preserve their own culture and traditional value. But there are some lapses in maintaining in such attitude which has occurred earlier among the Bodos. Some people think that Bodo Sahitya Sabha was guided by dogmatism of Christianity in demanding Raman script for Bodo in 1974; on the other hand acceptance of the Devanagari script for Bodo was also under the pressure of Hindu sentiment of the ruling elite and some leaders of the Sabha itself. Most of the Bodo people think that the script of the language is concerned with scientific and technical matter like phonetic, morphology, pronunciation etc. rather than religious or political motivation. Experts in such technical matter should be involved in selecting the script of the language.

**Bodo Sahitya Sabha and political institution :**
Since inception Bodo Sahitya Sabha has been incredible activities for the development of Bodo language, literature and culture. After the Independence, it is the first organisation to undertake the initiative for shaping and molding the whole community to face the situation and stand for the cause of community within the existing socio-political and ethnic environment. Introduction of Bodo as medium of instruction and learning with mother tongue bestowed them with the sentiment of love and respect to their own community and this feeling attributed to unite all to struggle for common cause. Bodo Sahitya Sabhas has to launch several agitational programmes in a successive way starting to primary stage up to the university level and various issues concerning to the development of language and literature. At present Bodo has been introduced department under Gauhati University and it has been included into the eight schedule of the constitution.

Although the Bodo Sahitya Sabha is mainly concerned with the development of language, literature and culture which is considered as out of politics, it has to carry out some activities of political nature. As a matter of academic affairs, like text books, script, appointment of the teacher introduction of medium etc. are directly within the purview of the Government, the Sabha had to depend on the mercy or sympathy of the political party in power where difference naturally
occurs. First tangle of Bodo Sahitya Sabha started when Bodo Sahitya Sabha opposed the introduction of Assamese an official language in 1960. Later Bodo Sahitya Sabha had to launch a series of agitational programmes for introduction of Bodo in primary and secondary stages. Again when AGP Government came to power Assamese language was declared as the compulsory third language in secondary schools by the Secondary Education Board of Assam on 28th February on 28th February, 1986. It was also opposed by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and lastly the Government suspended it.

One of the most important events relating to Bodo Sahitya Sabha is its movement for introduction of Raman script for Bodo. Both the two political parties of the Bodos P.T.C.A. and P.T.C.A (P), All Bodo Students' Union supported the movement of Raman script.

When the Bodo Sahitya Sabha Submitted a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Mahendra Mohan Choudhury at the end of the month of December in 1970 at Guwahati circuit house he threw up the memorandum in the air saying it a "Foreign Script".17

Again when a discussion was held between the Chief Minister of Assam and the representative of Bodo Sahitya Sabha on 11th February, 1975 at the residence of the Chief Minister of Assam, Dispur, he said that Education is in deed a state subject but it is also in the concurrent list of the constitution of India.18 He also pointed out the possibility of consequential repercussion in the other state if it is implemented.

Roman script movement turned to violent movement inviting police force against the agitator. At least 15 Bodo agitators died of police firing and considerable property was lost in arson and other types of violent attack. Most of the people think that it was a misconception of the Government that the demand of Raman script of the Bodos had came out of the pro-Christian Missionaries and anti Indian attitudes. But the Raman script is being used in India for more than one language. The demand of the Bodo was genuine and the same should have been conceded. The state government of Assam granted Roman script for the Mising language.
Later when the emergency was proclaimed in 1975, the Government utilized the threat of emergency provision of arrest and detention to force the Bodo leaders to accept Devanagari Script for Bodo language. It brought division among the Bodo leaders.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha had been maintaining neutrality with the all political parties of the Bodos. When any division came among the party leaders it appealed for unification and advised to stand for the common cause. It has been extending its support to the demands of P.T.C.A., P.T.C.A.(P) U.T.N.L.F., ABSU, All Assam Tribal Students’ Unions to redress their grievances. It also supported the demand of separate state made by ABSU and BPAC (Bodo People Action Committee) as it is only key to lasting solution of the Bodo problems and peace and integration of the North East India.

The All Bodo Students’ Union, an organisation of learning section of the Bodoland formed in the same year of formation of P.T.C.A. in 1967 adopted its aims and objectives which were mainly based on socio-cultural and socio-economy. Later it took decision for launching political movement for demanding separate state of Bodoland since the 2nd March 1987. Generally the learning community was expected to remain as non-political as Charan Narzary, former PTCA leader says:-

They were always told that the Bodo students, if they liked, might participate in any PTCA program in their individual capacities and not as an organisation. The ABSU as an organisation, at best, might lend their moral support to the PTCA movement. It was because of this reason that ABSU could maintain non political character for a long time.

This let to formation of a new political party with the name PTCA (P) “Plains Tribal Council of Assam” (Progressive), later UTNLF. Although ABSU tried to unite the split between PTCA and UTNLF, it could not succeed. ABSU became failure to reunite both the political party as at took the side of UTNLF who is upholding issue for separate state for Plains Tribal of Assam as ABSU’s desire and maintain neutrality.
Although ABSU is supposed to be a non-political organisation, it has supported the political demand of separate homeland Udayachal made by the Plains Tribal Council of Assam. ABSU withdrew its support to plains Tribal Council of Assam only just after the PTCA declared the avoidance of the demand of separate homeland on 4th April 1997 with the Union Territory retreating to Autonomous area. After the national Emergency in 1975-76, PTCA leaders made an electoral alliance with Janata Government in 1977. In the general election of 1977, the PTCA won four seats in the state Assembly. Samar Brahma Choudhury Vice-President of the party returned to the Assembly and Charan Narzary General Secretary was also returned to the parliament. After winning the election Charan Brahma Choudhury became the Cabinet Minister of Forest in the state coalition Ministry headed by Golap Borbora. The declaration of the avoidance of separate homeland later brought-split in the party.

ABSU claims that PTCA was formed under the initiative of ABSU. While Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India announced the policy of re-organisation of Assam on the basis of federal basis before the delegation team of Mizo Union in New Delhi on the 13th January, 1967. The Goalpara District Bodo Students' Union warmly welcomed the policy.

Being encouraged by the statement the political party with name and style “Plains Tribal Council of Assam” was formed under the initiative of ABSU for demanding a separate state for the plains to tribal people of Assam. However, this statement was rejected by Charan Narzary the founder leader of PTCA by claiming that the statement is ‘totally unfounded, irresponsible, malicious and motivated which is intention for undermining the importance of the PTCA and align its leaders. However, it is a fact that deep rooted problems, feeling of negligence, deprivation, exploitation and sense of insecurity compelled them to arrive at the conclusion that full autonomy alone could provide the plains tribal with the necessary conditions to preserve their language and culture and help them to develop according their own genius and choice.

ABSU Movement for separate state of Bodoland was started from the 2nd March 1987 and it continued with several phases of agitational programmes up to the
signing accord of 1993. Again it launched another movement starting with declaration of denouncement of Bodoland accord of 1993 by submitting a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India Mr. P.V. Narashimha Rao on 19th March 1996. The movement witnessed formation of Bodo Liberation Tiger, an underground outfit under the leadership of Premshing Brahma which resorted arm struggle against the government demanding separate homeland within the Indian Union. ABSU continued to negotiate with the Government for the solution of the Bodoland issue BLT was prescribed under the unlawful Activities (prevention) Act for two years on October 3, 1997 and BLT declared unilateral ceasefire in response to the Union Government’s appeal for talks starting the path of negotiation.

After holding tripartite talks between the Government of India, Government of Assam and Bodo Liberation Tigers and finally a Memorandum of Settlement was signed on 10th February 2003 for the creation of self governing administrative unit to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council within the state of Assam.

A new trend of relationship between social and political institutions of the Bodos emerged when All Bodo Students’ Union launched Bodoland movement. Most of the former leaders and workers of the parties of the Bodos like PTCA, UTNLF resigned from their party and they joined in ‘Bodo People Action Committee’ a revolution wing of A.B.S.U. Bodo People Action Committee was formed on 8th April, 1988 with a view to involve mass people in the Bodoland Movement. BPAC activity participated in the Bodoland movement and these organisations became instrumental in transforming students’ movement into the mass movement.

The wave of Bodoland movement could influence the mass people in the Assembly election of 1991 where nine (9) ABSU-BPAC sponsored candidates returned to the Assembly. These candidates formed an opposition front of Bodos in the legislature which was named “Bodoland Legislature Party”. This was the first time that ABSU-BPAC supported candidate for supporting the Bodo cause.

After the Accord of 1993 BPAC was dissolved and a new political party named “Bodoland People’s Party” was formed under the initiative of A.B.S.U.Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthery leader of the BPP was appointed the chief of Interim
Bodoland Executive Council on 30th June, 1993 who resigned after holding the office for a few months. Premshing Brahma, backed by the Congress party was again nominated the chief of Interim Bodoland Executive Council in June 1996 and it brought split to Bodo People Party into two one headed by Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary and there by Premshing Brahma.

Post Accord scenario of the Bodos appeared unstable. Non implementation of Bodo accord like demarcation of Boundary, holding of BAC election created dissession not only at the political level, but whole the Bodo area appeared to be strife torn due to the violent incidents and communal clashes in the Bodo leaders divided on the score. One of the signatories of Bodo accord of 1993, ABSU also split vertically. Bodoland Legislature party also split and its dissident group formed another new party Known as “New Bodoland Legislature Party”.

The split of ABSU allied political party brought the emergence of a new political party known a “People’s Democratic Front” (PDF) in 1996. The Party got support from the Bodo Underground outfit which was opposed to the A.B.S.U and Bodo accord of 1993. During the Assembly election of 1996 the PDF defeated the A.B.S.U supported candidates only two seats of Kokrajhar East and Kokrajhar west Assam Legislative Constituencies. PDF made an electoral alliance with Asomi Gana Parishad and Kankeawar Narzary, the vice-chairman of the PDF was nominated the chief of Interim Bodoland Executive council in June 1996. In the meantime ABSU denounced Movement again. Bodoland Liberation tiger, (B.L.T) also resorted the arm struggle for separate homeland. It resulted a defeat of the PDF in the Assembly election of 2001 where no any candidate of the party returned to the Assembly and parliament. ABSU supported twelve candidates returned to the Assembly and one candidate returned to the parliament. This Victory gave a new impetus to ABSU for the solution of the Bodo problem. After the Bodo accord of 2003 and creation of Bodoland Territorial Area District, a new political party was formed with name and style “Bodoland People’s Progressive front” BPPF on 13th April, 2005 which latter split into two one headed by Hagramaj Mahilary and another headed by Robiram Narzary, the former president of ABSU.
BPPF headed by Hagrama Mohilary, who was the Chief of Bodoland Interim Executive Council, won the all B.T.C constituencies defeating BPPF headed by Robiram Narzary in the first B.T.C election held in 1995 and formed the B.T.C Government without any opposition in the council. This victory in B.T.C election resulted victory to BPPF (H) in the Assembly election of 2006 where nine candidates from the party returned to the Assembly and one candidate also elected to the Parliament. BPPF headed by Hagrama Mahilary is inducted to the Congress Government headed by Sri Tarun Gagoi where three candidates of the party are also included in the Cabinet Ministry.

One of the most important events of the Bodoland movement is emancipation of women by providing an opportunity for participating in politics and other social activities. Although it seems to be like the exhortation of ABSU for the involvement of womenfolk in the Bodoland movement it bestowed then with the opportunity to participate in the political fields of the Bodos some of those women have become successful in this regard. This process was formalised with the foundation of a woman organisation named “All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation” (AATWWF) on 14th July, 1986 which was later renamed as “All Assam Bodo Women Welfare Federation” (AABWWF) on 6th November 1993.

Formation of Bodo women’s organisation under the name All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation has got its background in the injustice and human right violation committed by the police force upon the Bodo women during the movement period. The organisation was formed to look after the interest of the Bodo Women their economic problems, civil rights and overall development.

The ABWWF played an important role in awakening the consciousness of the Bodo Women and Bodoland movement right from the beginning. The organisation has also been involving in reformative works related to abuses and malpractices of the society.

ABWWF fought in Gauhati high court against Assam police over the Bhumka Gang rape case and the organisation won victory. According to the organisation during the Bodoland movement many innocent girls as well as women lost their
chastity and some even their lives due to the harassment of the police force. The organisation is still active for the development of Bodo Women and children besides standing against injustice. It has been working for the neglected and downtrodden people. Now-a-days some leaders of this organisation are working as general members of Bodoland Territorial Council and in the cabinet ministry of Assam Government.

The whole gamut of the relation between social and political institutions of the Bodos reveals that Bodo social institution has been searching the way of progress within the existing socio-political environment. In search of the progress, they have often become easy prey to the political party in power. The Bodo Accord of 1993 and creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council and attitude of the ruling elite towards it is the depiction of this reality. On the other hand repeated split of the political parties and organisations caused not only due to the motivation of ruling elite, but the basic cause also lies in there internal clashes due to lack of farsightedness. The enlightened people think that they must avoid such bad element of the society and came forward for the development and prosperity of the all communities as a whole.
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