CHAPTER-VI

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF THE BODOLAND MOVEMENT
The Bodoland Movement was the result of centuries of suppression and domination by the ruling clique and Assamese people in general. The Great Bodos, who had own kings and kingdoms since immemorial past, had to lose their kingdom and rule since the last kachari kingdom was annexed to the British Empire in India by the East India Company in 1832 though the nefarious "Doctrine of Lapses". The North Cachar province, the last remanescents of the Bodo rule under the bold initiative of Tularam Senapati also was annexed in 1854, which brought final end to the Bodo rule in North-East. This rude fact of history was a deep shock for the Bodos which left a great resentment among the Bodos—hitherto ruling Assam and beyond, now have lost their rule and presting as well. They remained silent waiting for an appropriate time so as to reassert themselves and regain their lost rule and prestige. Centuries of deprivation, maltreatment and disparagement made the Bodos conscious of the crisis of their identity.

When the country gained political freedom from the tutelage of the British rule of 200 years in 1947, the Bodos were again deprived of any political privileges. They were made to remain within Assam and thus subjected to new subjugation in the new garb of Assam domination. The Bodos were identified as Tribal and scheduled in the Constitution as Scheduled Tribe thus limiting their constitutional privileges. The ethnically minority ruling clique, so called Assamese people took the reign in their hand began to dominate the "Sons of Soil" describing them
as scheduled Tribe. The ruling Assamese people and their government together with the non-committal Central Government began to exploite the Bodos politically, socially and economically.

The above pitiful condition of the Bodos saddened much the newly grown educated youthfolk whose heart, began to burn thinking about this sorrowful state of their people and searching a solution to this. The hitherto unorganized Bodos began to rally around the youth students who began to organise themselves at the local levels. Thus various regional (dokhora) and district (Jilla) Bodo Student Unions came up. The Goalpara District Bodo Students’ Union took the initiative for uniting all such regional formations into a single platform. In 1967, Bodo students from all corners of the State of Assam and West Bengal gathered at Kokrajhar of Assam and discussed about the idea of an united plateform of all Bodo students. Consequent upon this deliberation, a central committee was formed with the nomenclature “All Bodo Students Union (ABSU).

Prior to the formation of the ABSU, the Bodos could organise in relation to literature only. At that time, Bodo Sahitya Sabha was existing as the single organisation of the Bodos formed in 1952 with a view to organise the Bodos for the uplift of their language and its literature. All Assam Tribal League – a political party of the Assam Tribals existed with worth. This shows that the Bodos, who could organise themselves politically before the independence got disarrayed after the achievement of the political freedom by the country. The social formation like Bodo Mahasanmilani, Bodo Chatra Sanmilani etc. met their untimely death before the independence itself. This rude fact started when the newly educated Bodo youths joined politics through the All Assam Tribal league
formed in 1933. Right after getting the taste of power, these Bodo youth began to hanker after personal power and self-interest. They all became selfish and started to shed off nationalistic interest. Soon after they joined the Provincial Ministry and so as to continue in power began to make alliances first and lastly merged with the Congress. The long-cherished Tribal League turned leaderless and in 1956 transformed into the All Assam Tribal Sangha—a socio-economic organisation.

The announcement made by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India before a Mizo delegation on 13th January, 1967 that Assam shall be reorganised on federal basis awakened the political mind of the Bodo youths and they took the initiative to form a political platform for the plains Tribals of Assam. Consequently, the PTCA got its birth and began to place the grievances of the Bodos before the government where the genuine political aspiration of the Bodo tribals began to get reflection. Various problems faced by and grievances meted out to the plains Tribals including the Bodos due to long suppression by the Assamese people and the consequent linguistic and Social domination and economic exploitation began to be echoed in the leaves of Memoranda submitted to the Government by this organisation. Simple speaking, the birth of the ABSU gave way for the expression in explicit terms the longtime problems and grievances of the Bodos.

Having this background knowledge, the causes leading to the Bodoland Movement may be analysed under the following heads—

1. **Historical Reasons:**

As described above the Bodos have a long history of being subjected to subjugation and domination by the Assamese people. Right since the entry of Ahoms in 1228 A.D., there had always been a conflict.
clash for suzerainty between the Ahoms and different Bodo groups ruling a number of divided territories lying across the present Assam. The Ahoms were clever enough to enter into matrimonial relationship with the different Bodo rulers of the time and maintain congenial relation with the Bodo ruling houses, though many a Bodo ruling houses including that of Kacharis were quite upset in such a move by the new entrants—Ahoms. The clashes for supremacy between the Ahoms and the Kacharis lasted virtually till 1826, the year in which the British concluded the historic Yandabu Treaty and in consequence of which the Ahom Kingdom went under the British suzerainty. Of course, a few years later in 1832 A.D., the Kachari Kingdom also went under the British suzerainty through the "Doctrine of lapse" which was finally annexed to the British Empire of East India Company in 1854 A.D.

In the post-Independence period, the Assamese people did not make an effort so as to maintain cordial relations with the erstwhile ruling Bodo groups and instead began to dominate them. The new grown Assamese people, now resurgent, with the active involvement in the colonial politics in British India and imbied with the new enthusiasm of chauvinistic nationalism began to assert itself vigorously. It left no stone unturned to keep the moral of the different Bodo groups low and subjugated to their suzerainty. So as to keep moral of different Bodo groups low, the Assamese people began to look down upon the Bodo people and allure them to indoctrinate them religiously, socially and linguistically for conversion to Vaishnavite sect with the assurance for their elevation to higher echelon of the mainstream Assamese society—a process which started since the time of Sankardeva in the fifteenth century. In this way, Assamese people dominated the Bodos in almost all spheres—social, economic, language and religion etc.
(1) **Land Alienation:**

In the colonial period, the British rulers encouraged the immigration of Muslims from East Pakistan to enter Assam and settle there, so as to reduce the strength of the Hindu majority by outnumbering them through their infamous "divide and rule" policy. The British rulers thus tried to divide the people of the province in religious and communal lines by implanting Muslims in the areas inhabited by Hindu population. The internal motive of the British rulers was to the strength of the national freedom movement launched by the Indian National Congress by dividing the people of the country on religious line and thus creating communal clashes wherever possible.

In the post independent period, the ruling Assamese clique and the Assamese people in general made a constant move to reduce the plain Tribals living in the state, lest they may repeat the demand for a separate state as the hill tribes had already made the demands of the sort and parted away from Assam by carving away one separate State each. The Assamese people had the shock of the parting away of the hill Tribals carving away six new states from the original territory of Assam. The Assamese people tried hard to put the plain Tribals at the bottom from the point of their morale and strength. They found the easiest way in scattering away the plain Tribals in their pockets by implanting immigrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan already in the state in the Tribale Belts and Blocks created by amending Chapter-X of the Assam Land and Revenues Act, 1886.

The system of Tribal Belts and Blocks in Assam and their creation had altogether a different story to narrate. In 1947, as soon as the country achieved political independence from 200-Years British Colonial Rule
took the noble step for protection of Plain Tibals, Nepalis, Saontals, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes by amending the Sections 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, and 171 in respect of their social, economic and educational development. In respect of the said amendment and its aim the Government of Assam proclaimed, "Notwithstanding anything contained, the provincial government may adopt such measures as it deems fit for protection of those classes who on account of their primitive condition and lack of education or material advantages are incapable of looking after their welfare in so far their welfare depends upon their having sufficient land for their maintenance."

As to the device of protection of the above mentioned classes, the Section 162 stipulates thus: "The protection measures may include the constitution of compact areas in regions predominately peopled by the classes of people notified under the provision of Sub-Section (2) of Section 160, Belts and Blocks. The boundaries of the areas so constituted shall as per as possible coincide with Mauza boundaries or be otherwise easily distinguishable."

By force of the above declaration, the Government of Assam created altogether 58 (Fifty Eight) Tribal Belts and Blocks in the entire Assam. There it was provided that "A land holder may transfer or sublet his holding or any part of it within the Belts and Block only to the person belonging to the classes of people notified under Section 162 (2) or those mentioned in Section 163 (2) (a), (b) & (c). If any transfer is in contravention of this rule the lease shall be cancelled forthwith with the approval of the Government and the land holder will forfeit his Right and Status in respect of the land so transferred."

Thus it is seen that the Non-Tribals have been debarred from
acquiring any land within the Tribal Belts and Blocks by way of Sale or any mode of Transfer. In case of any such illegal transfer of land, the Government will nullify the same as void. But the Government of Assam has very utterly failed to keep the avowed aims declared about the amendments effected into the Chapter-X of Assam Land and Revenue Act, 1886. The Revenue Officer of Assam Government are flouting these provisions at will and had allotted land within the Tribal Belts and Blocks to Non-Tribals. Rather the Revenue Officials of Assam Government has encouraged such illegal transfer of land within the Tribal Belts and Blocks to the advantage of the Non-Tribals. In this way, the land has been alienated from the Bodo Tribals in Assam by fair or foul means.

Even if surplus cultivable lands are available, the Sub-Section 162 (2) (d) provides that “If the extent of cultivable land available for settlement in the Belt or Block be large enough, the bonafide needs of the classes of persons residing in the neighbourhood of the Belt or Block. Preference to be given to the persons whose religion, mode of life, agricultural customs and habits are more akin to those of classes for whose protection the Belts and Blocks were constituted.” But instead of alloting the surplus cultivable lands to the classes of persons provided in law, the Revenue Officials of the Government of Assam allotted those land to Non-Tribals whose religion, mode of life, agricultural customs and habits, etc. differ quietly from the local Tribals.

Mr. Jogendra Kumar Basumatary has highlighted this very fact in a booklet titled “Bhaiyamar Janajatir Bhumi Samasya” (Land Problem of Plain Tribals) citing a few examples. Under Bijni Tribal Block, in the villages Thaisobari and Bogidara of lat no. B the following Non-Tribals had been allotted land to the extent cited against their names:-

142
(1) Shri Jogendra Barman, 20 Bighas, (2) Shri Jaduram Barman, 15 Bighas, (3) Shri Bhaben Roy 15 Bighas (4) Shri Bhupan Roy, 17 Beghas, (5) Shri Padmalochan Roy, 14 Bighas 01 Lessa and so on. Here mention may be made of the fact that the above persons belong to Rajbongshi community, which is not just Non-Tribals but also their religion, mode of life, custom and habit etc. widely differs from those of the Bodos.

Also, the Assam Government was making constant conspiracy to deprive the Tribals from land by constraining the Tribal belts and block through dereservation. As for example, through order no AFR/73/51 dated 21-05-52 a portion of land to tune of 44691B 09L was excluded and Panbari and Kuklung Reserved Forests were created. Through another order no. RSD 28/51/41 dated 04-9-58 lands to the tune of 3489B 14L was excluded and distributed among non-bonafides. So as to settle immigrants from East Pakistan through order no. RSD 03/59/147 dated 29-07-64 land to the tune of 11253B was excluded and Bishnupur Colony was created. And in the North Lakhimpur (reverine) Tribal Bock the Mingmang area was quietly excluded and Reserved Forest was created. About 250 Bodo and Nepali families living there clearing jungles were consequently evicted on 22nd April’1966.

The Sidli Tribal Block had an altogether different story to tell. On 15th December 1966 12 Santal families living in village Palashbari under lat no. 12 were evicted. The land which they settled was of course unreserved grazing land. These Santal families had been living there right since 1954 and paying rent to the Government. As per application made for allotment of this land, a meeting of Sub-Divisional land settlement Advisory Board decided through Resolution No. 11 as following:-
"Discussed the proposal for dereeservation of the Palashbari V.G.R. for landless, the committee recommends for dereservation of 86B 04K of land in Palashbari V.G.R. of Sidli for the purpose of giving settlement to the 12 landless Santal families of locality."

The said plot of land situated near the P.W.D. road and the revenue officials had been coming to their office through this site for the last 12 years but none of them bothered neither to implement the Government resolution nor to evict them. It was noted with pain that some 30-40 Rajbomgshi people took active part in the eviction who were not Government labour but hired for the purpose.

In this block, applications made by the local Tribals for allotment of the waste land of Hashraobari village of lat No. 06 were rejected summarily and the applications tendered subsequently by the Non-Tribals were considered in haste. Later the same plot of land was allotted to 15 Non-Tribal among whom name of a woman Smt. Banmala Barmani also figures. The local Tribals resented that "where local Tribals can not register a single bigha of land with much labour, even a woman because of being Non-Tribal can acquire 13B 04L land without any difficulty.

Whichever cultivable lands could not be transferred to Assamese Non-Tribals, there they encouraged encroachment by the immigration from the erstwhile East Pakistan. Almost all immigrants were settled in the Tribal belts and blocks thus turning them minority in the belts and blocks and depriving from the rights to land. The Assamese leaders and the Government machinery jointly made conspiracy to deprive the Tribals from their land and thus enfeebles them so that they can not rise economically to be strong enough to demand a separate State like the hill tribals.
The above story of the illegal transfer of land in the Tribal belt and blocks hurt hurt the Tribal sentiment much and caused too unimaginable misery and hardship to the Tribal people living therein. The alienation of land subsequently resulted into the alienation of Tribal mind from the mainstream. They saw ghost in the Assamese neighbours whom they began to take as enemy in entirety, though wrongly. To them, the Government was looked as if it was the Government of the Assamese people only. As the rulers and the administrators top from ministers down to the officials all seemed to belong to Non-Tribals the government itself became a suspect in their eyes and they lost faith in the Government altogether. They came to think about the ways and means of getting rid of the Assamese people and their Government.

The Government of Assam deemed to have devil design in mind in regard to the Tribal people living within the Tribal Belts and Block and in constant move to deprive them from the meager protection and facility they used to enjoy therein. In many a case, the Tribal inmates living in the forest area within the Tribal belts and Blocks used to be evicted branding them as illegal encroachers upon the forest land. To many riddle arose in mind with the question how Tribals living in Tribal Belts and Blocks could be encroachers and evicted from there. Though it seemed to be a great mystery to many, it was very simple for the Assam Government and Assamese Leaders to effect the same. The Government of Assam, through a secret notification dereserved the selected area of the Tribal Belts and Blocks identifying them as forest area and reserving them. In consequence of this, the Tribal inmates living in those waste jungle area turned encroachers overnight to their ignorance. In this way, the Mingmang Reserved Forest under North Lakhimpur (Reverine) Tribal
Belt, Kuklung Reserved Forest and Panbari Reserved Forest under the Bijni Tribal Block were turned into reserved forest and Tribal people living therein since long were evicted as encroachers very mercilessly.

The Tribal Belts and Block areas saw the face of development by dint of the modern science and technology. It was observed by many, following the transfer of Assam’s Capital from Shillong to Dispur near Guwahati, many high buildings came up nearby the Guwahati – Shillong Road. But all shall get surprised to learn that none of these buildings belong to the Tribals. One will certainly wonder to think – To whom these all buildings belong? The more wonders that follows will when one come to learn that all these high buildings belong to Non-Tribals these also who happen to be outsiders. All will wonder to think – How these all became possible while Dispur happened to be a Tribal Block?

The fact remains that the Government dereserved this Tribal Block and requisitioned its land for building Assam’s new Capital. But the Tribals therein got no benefit from this move of the Government as they were paid very meager amount in the name of compensation for land. The Government took no initiative to rehabilitate them but compelled them evacuate their land to move elsewhere. The most revealing fact remains that once the entire area of Guwahati City remained a Tribal populated villages and as had more than 50% Tribal population could be identified and reserved as the Tribal Block. Now, one pertinent question shall arise – Where those all Tribal people living earlier in Guwahati area have vanished? They have not vanished altogether, but are living in the hill areas in and around Guwahati and in Satellite Towns like Sonapur. Even today, those displaced Bod Tribal are found concentrated in the hills within the Guwahati City viz., Kharghuli, Kalapahar, Narkasur Hill, etc.
EDUCATIONAL NEGLIGENCE:

The Bodo language was introduced as the medium of instruction in the Primary School of Assam in 1963. Initially, this language was introduced in the Primary Schools of the Kokrajhar sub-division of Lower Assam where a substantial sunk of Bodo population resides and dominates other population. Gradually this medium was extended to other districts of the States and began to proceed to higher classes. Subsequently, in 1967 Bodo was introduced in Middle Schools as medium of instruction. In the same way, Bodo language was introduced in the Secondary Level as a medium of instruction. The 1st Batch of Bodo Medium Students passed out Matric in 1976. Then, as a natural sequence, Bodo was introduced as an M.I.L. in Colleges of Gauhati University and NEHU, Shillong in the following year. From 1995 Dibrugarh University also introduced in its Colleges Bodo as an M.I.L. Subject. From 1985 Gauhati University opened a Diploma Course on Bodo Language so as to help the quality for Lecturers in H.S. and Colleges of the State. Lastly, Gauhati University started M.A. class in Bodo from 1995 and provided admission to the students qualifying in the Diploma Course in Bodo. In the meantime, Bodo was recognised as an Associate State Official Language in 1984 through the Ordinance by the Governor of Assam, which was translated into a State Law by passing a Bill on the same by the Assam Assembly in May’1985.

The introduction of Bodo as medium of instruction in Assam, though it seems to have been a smooth passage actually was a very hard decision on the part of the State Government, as it was very strongly opposed by Assamese radicals. In the same way, the following path of Bodo Medium was very tortuous as every Assamese officer tried to see
that Bodo Medium makes the least progress. With this best ulterior motive in mind, the officers of the education department did not take up the required steps in time so as to help Bodo Medium to advance in its promotional ladders. Whatever little steps were assured by the political leaders due to political compulsions, were stiffly restricted by the officers by relegating the required steps into corner. The Publication Board did not take up the task of publishing the text-books in Bodo Medium but gave liberty to Bodo Sahitya Sabha to publish text-books for Bodo Medium without providing any fund for the same.

With the gradual advancement of the Bodo Medium in the schools with the passage of time, created more complicacy of the educational problem as was being faced by the Bodos. The problem got increased because with the gradual advancement of the medium in the ladder of the classes the shortage etc. problems pertaining to the publication of Tex Books and also of teacher got gradually increased. The problem of accommodation also was acute as the authorities of the primary schools imparting Assamese Medium education found it a bit difficult to provide accommodation for Bodo Medium pupils immediately. In most cases the authorities concerned showed reluctance despite possessing some way and means of solving the problems. Furthermore, the authorities had lackadaisical attitude towards the growth of the Bodo Medium.

3. ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION:

"A systematic as well as random exploitation and domination of Non-Tribal people is continuing upon the Tribal people of Assam Government. The plains Tribal people have been and still being exploited by the Non-Tribals in the matter of land, education, culture, job opportunity etc. The Non-Tribal staffs, officers & administrators dominate
and exploit the Tribal in their own Tribal areas. There is no effort or policy to check such exploitation from the end of the Assam Government.” Reads the reasons showed for demand for a separate State and grounds thereof as cited in the page No.49 of the booklet titled “Why Separated State?”

It was felt for long by the Bodos and other plain Tribal of Assam that they have exploited by the Non-Tribals. They have been subjugated socially and being exploited economically since coming of the British. As a result, though they are sons of the soil they have turned paupers in their own soil. For their misfortune first of all the Bodo people and other Tribals used to blame the more advanced section of the society—Assamese people. It was alleged all the time that Assamese people are very cunning are very cleverly have occupied the position of administrator and have deprived the Tribals from all scopes for share in the administration of the State. Very cleverly they have been kept away from the affairs of administration by depriving them from job opportunities and the posts under the reserved quota have been kept backlogged. The ABSU questioned the bonafide of such a police of the State Government and raised a question—“Are the Bodos and other plain Tribal people so inferior that they are not fit even for Grade-III & IV Jobs?” Because it was seen that even Grade III & IV posts under the reserved quota have been kept backlogged. Also, the meager number of posts under reserved quota in the higher jobs-Grade –I & II have been kept backlogged.

The exploitation alleged for was greatest in case of land. It had continuously been observed that land was being alienated from the Tribal hands to Non-Tribals. Such alienation first occurred when the State Government brought Muslim farmers from erstwhile East Bengal planted
them in the Tribal area of the State. The Muslim farmers were imported under the slogan “Grow More Food” by the British Government. The then Muslim League Government headed by Sir Syed Sadullah hatched a conspiracy to brings Muslims from Bengal and turn Assam a Muslim majority State. His plane was to include Assam in future Pakistan. In the post-Independent period the Congress Government encouraged encroachment upon Tribal land from East Pakistan so as to utilise them as Vote-Bank. The state Government always planted the encroachers in the Tribal dominated areas. When there was turmoil in the East Pakistan as a result of liberation movement under the leadership of Sheikh Muzibar Rahman during 1970s, there was continued influx of refugees, the Assamese Government planted them mostly in the Tribal Belts and Blocks of the State. Such a continued influx of refugees in the Tribal belts and blocks turned the Bodos and other plains Tribals minority in their own land. The Bodos and other plains Tribals saw a conspiracy by the Assamese people and the State Government under their control so as to finish them by alienating lands from them.

The Assam Land and Revenue Act, 1860 in its Chapter-10 provides that Non-Tribal can not possess land in the Tribal belt and blocks. But the Assamese intruders and Non-Tribal encroachers were enabled by the Assamese administrators to own land in these belt and blocks as conspired by them.

4. CULTURAL DOMINATION:

The Bodos and other Plain Tribals have their own rich culture. But this aspect of life of the Plain Tribals had been neglected by the majority Assamese people. Thus the Bodos and other Plain Tribals began to feel that their culture have been neglected which is a dishonour for
them. Also, it had been observed by them that Assamese people had been trying to impose their language and culture upon them. This hurt the sentiment of the Plain Tribals imbibed with new-grown feeling of “Ethnic Nationality”. They began to realise that their culture and language is not safe in the hands of Assamese people and their Government. Such a realisation brought the feeling among them that the Assam Government is the Government of Assamese people alone. They wondered – “Why the Assamese people consider the Tribals as their born enemies while they are maintaining cordial relation with other Non-Tribals people in the State?” They thought that instead they should take Non-Assamese Non-Tribals coming from outside as their main enemy. It is because while the Tribals are the aboriginal peoples of the State the Assamese are the next old population in the sense that they migrated into Assam many centuries back. But their heart was hurt to see the opposite which filled their mind with all suspicions against the Assamese people. Gradually, everything Assamese became unpopular and unacceptable for them. Later on they began to see Assamese ghost in every occasion of distress and misfortune of them.

The Bodos and other plain Tribals thus began to think everything in terms of Anti-Assamese. They thought it as their bounded duty to raise against Assamese people and assert for their rights when slightest occasion arises. Almost all of their thought and movements became targeted against the Assamese people and State Government.

5. NEGLIGENCE TOWARDS BODO LANGUAGE:

“Bodo is the recognised medium of instruction for the Bodos in the educational institution. In a welfare-socialistic democratic government, Bodo is expected to enjoy equal treatment and the
encouragement as well, from the Government with that of other languages. To the contrary, Bodo Language has never been accepted by the Assam Government as equal to Assamese and Bodo has been exposed to calculated paucity of fund and buildings in order to dissuade the Bodos from undergoing studies in their own mother-tongue.” This is the feeling expressed by the ABSU in No. 6 “Cries and Agonies” of the Bodos against the Assamese people and the State Government.

The Bodos and other Plain Tribals believed that they have their own rich language. But they found in their utter dismay that their language have not received due recognition and acceptance from the side of the Assamese people. Instead, their language have continually been neglected and relegated to a position of corner. And in many an occasions the Tribals found their language ridiculed and humiliated in public. This offended the Tribals and their Tribal Blood got hot up. Their feeling for nascent Ethnic Nationalism thus got intensified gradually and their sentiment grew bitter day by day.

Non-implementation of Bodo as an Associate Official Language hurt the sentiment of the Bodos most. In recognition of the sustained demand of the Bodos, The Assam Official Language Act was amended in 1985 whereby the Bodo was recognised as an Associate Official Language of Assam in Kokrajhar District and Udalguri Sub-Division. However, “as insincere and irresponsible the A.G.P. Government is, it conspired in connivance with the administration unit for adopting and introducing only Assamese as the medium of instruction in all educational institutions let alone implementing the Assam Official Language (Amendment) Act, 1985 in the Offices locating in those areas” reads the Reason No. 5 in the booklet entitled “Voice of ABSU”.

152.
The Congress Government of the State under the leadership of Late Hiteswar Saikia, on 28th December 1984 made an Ordinance declaring Bodo as an Associate Official Language in the areas of the State having substantial Bodo population. Consequently, the State Assembly passed a Bill in May 1985 making Bodo as an Associate Official Language of the State. The Act identified Kokrajhar District and Udalguri Sub-Division as the areas having substantial Bodo population. The Bodos rejoiced in their language being made an Official Language of the State, though it fulfilled just partly their demand for Bodo as Official Language for the whole of the State. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students’ Union tried their best to get the portion “Substantial Bodo Population” removed from the Clause of the Act. But the State Government refused to give in and consequently the same remained as it was in the Ordinance. The Bodos desired that Bodo could be allowed to be used in the Offices wherever Bodo population is there, throughout the State.

The Bodos got hurt to see that whatever little recognition was given to the Bodo Language by making it Official Language for a District and a Sub-Division has not been implemented. Instead, they found that the A.G.P. Government under the leadership Prafulla Kumar Mahanta is trying utmost to block its implementation. Of course, when the Bodoland Movement was at its pick, the A.G.P. Government declared before a delegation of break-way faction of the ABSU that Bodo shall be made Official Language for Nalbari District also. It was a clear move to give a boost to the break-way ABSU and thus perpetrate “Divide and Rule” Policy among the Bodos. Had the A.G.P. Government kept its promise by implementing Bodo as Official Language in the Nalbari District also,
this would have nullified the allegation of conspiracy by the ABSU.

It may well be recalled for a clear idea about the same that during the peak period of Assam Movement when there was a talk between the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) and All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) on possibility of taking common cause on the foreigner issue, the ABSU sought an assurance from the AASU that after solution of the foreigner problem steps shall be taken for making Bodo as an Associate Official Language of Assam. But the AASU showed great hesitation on its part to support the same. It is very sorrowful to note that just because the AASU did not agree to take initiative for making Bodo the Associate Official Language of Assam after the solution of the Foreigner Issue, the ABSU could not extend helpful hand to a movement on a cause, which concerned the Bodos also to a great extent. Could the AASU then agree to the ABSU’s proposal, the Assam Movement would have culminated with more success by getting strong help from a strong students organization like ABSU. Anyway, the ABSU too, have made a great mistake by not extending active support to Assam Movement on a single point, however great cause that might have been.

6. ATTITUDE OF ASSAMESE PEOPLE:

“One of the most responsible factor is as to why the Tribals have become alienated from the mainstream of Assam is the attitude of Assamese people. The Assamese people have never accepted the Tribals as part and parcel of Assamese Community and society in real sense though they give a motivated slogan of greater Assamese Nationality.”

Reads the contents of the Page No. of the booklet titled “Why Separate State?”

The content continues as follows – “As for instance, a Goswami
Brahmin family will never allow or agree to give his daughter for a social marriage with Tribal youth. They hate the Bodos telling as Kacharis, Missing, a Tribal and the like.” Thus the ABSU, for the first time exposed the real attitude of the Assamese people and made a violent attack on the social disparities being maintained by the Assamese people in their social relations.

As for attitude of the Assamese people towards the Tribal people of the State, the ABSU in the booklet “Why Separate State” has shown as the follows:

i) **Anti-Tribal Attitude:**

The general attitude of the Assamese people is Anti-Tribal. Of course, there is exception of a few. But, the majority of Assamese people have deadly and poisonous Anti-Tribal attitude. They cannot tolerate the existence of Tribals such as Bodos, Missings, Karbis, etc. They never think the development of the Bodo Tribals. Rather, they are jealous of the some special facilities enjoyed by the Tribals under the provisions of Indian Constitution. Unfortunately, this Anti-Tribal attitude of the Assamese people is growing more and more rapidly with the rising movement of Separate State.

ii) **Expansionist Attitude:**

The Assamese people are following the policy of expansionism and imperialism to capture and dominate all corners of Assam including the Tribal Areas. In fact, they have the plot to conquer all Tribal areas and dominate them everywhere under their feet. That is why, they are deep-rooting Assamese colonialism in Tribal areas. The Assamese people do not want to agree or recognise the existence and predominance of Tribal people in their majority areas too. The process of engulfment and
silent aggression over the Tribals by the Assamese people is still continuing.

iii) Lack of Political Tolerance:

The Assamese people have no political toleration. They cannot tolerate the existence of the Tribal communities and other democratic organisation who oppose the policy of Assamisation and Assimilation. The Assamese people, Assam Government and the Administration consider the Bodos as the number one enemy for demanding a Separate State. They cannot tolerate the existence of Tribal organisation like ABSU and UTNL because they demand a Separate State. The Assamese people harass the supporters and activists of ABSU and UTNL this way or that way. Even the Bodo students are badly harassed by the Assamese students in the hostels of various Assamese dominated educational institutions throughout the State of Assam.

Lastly, the ABSU concludes by saying – “So, a Greater Assamese Nationality never existed and does not exist even today.” Having denied the existence of so-called Greater Assamese Nationality the ABSU made a prevent appeal to the Assamese people – “In fact, the Assamese people and the Assam Government should not oppose the demand and Movement of Separate State but should support to show their magnanimity. Because, demand and creation of Separate State is neither directed against them nor will cause a great harm to Assam and Assamese society.”

Side by side, the ABSU did not fail to enquire about the kind of attitude adopted by the Assamese people towards the Bodo people and their movement for a Separate State – “But still, why are they opposing?” The ABSU had the readymade answer to that according to their own notion – “This is only because, the Assamese people and Assam
Government never agree to hand over the rule and administration of Tribal people on their own hands. They are afraid of loosing their political suzerainty. They want to dominate the Tribals under their feet for indefinite period, which is, totally unjustified one. In fact, the outsider and artificial Assamese people have no moral right to rule over the Tribals – the sons of the soil and original master of Assam.

7. THE ASSAM GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION:

"The Anti-Tribal Assam Government, Anti-Tribal Administration and bureaucrats are the number one factor for demanding a Separate State" declared the ABSU. They alleged, "The Assamese ruling class is the most exploiting class and they never allow the Tribals to rise and prosper".

i) The Assamese Government:

The Assam Government whether the past or present one is not the Government of people of Assam but it is merely a Government of Assamese people particularly the present Asom Gana Parishad Government, which has been elected to power out of Assamese Chauvinism wave. The present A.G.P. Government is the chauvinist Assamese Government and it is by no means the Government of Tribals. As such the Plain Tribals must have a Separate Government of their own.

ii) Anti-Tribal Government and Administration:

The Assam Government and Administration are deadly Anti-Tribal. The Assamese Government and Administration are deadly Anti-Tribal. The Assamese and other Non-Tribals clerks, officials, bureaucrats and ruling Ministers and politicians all are out and out Anti-Tribal and they conspire against the Tribals behind the screen. They are hatching a deep-
rooted conspiracy to wipe out the Plain Tribals particularly the Bodos for their political suzerainty. No developmental programme is properly implemented for the Plain Tribes under this Assam Government. No progress of Tribal people can be achieved under this Anti-Tribal Assam Government whatsoever. Policies of Assam Government and Administration are always Anti-tribal and quite destructive for Tribals. As such, no expected progress of Tribals in the dimensions of education, economy, language, culture, etc. could be achieved even after 40 years of independence of India. Even today, Tribals are the most backward section in Assam.

iii) Repressive Government:

The Assam Government and Administration are deadly repressive upon the Plain Tribals particularly the Bodo youths and students. Whenever the Plain Tribals demand and cry for justice, constitutional and legitimate rights they are meted out with brutal police atrocities and tortures. On the pretext of forged cases the Assam Police forces conduct raids in Tribal areas, arrest the innocent Tribal youths and students indiscriminately, strip them into naked and beat up and torture mercilessly in an inhuman way. The cause is nothing but simply for demanding a Separate State and struggling for preservation of their own identity and culture.

The Assam Government, Administration and Police Forces are deadly Anti-Tribal and they are out to crush down the uprising of the Plain Tribals particularly the Bodos. Excessive police atrocities, indiscriminate arrest, torture started since the demand of Separate State got birth in 1967. On the 22nd May 1968 police opened fire indiscriminately at Kokrajhar upon a peaceful huge missile of PTCA,
many were grievously injured in the firing. The excessive police atrocities, indiscriminate mass arrest, heavy torture during the vigorous Roman Script Movement for Bodo Language in 1974-75 cannot be vividly described here. That was a reason for terror and an all-out effort of State Government to crush down totally the movement and uprising of Bodos. Thus the Bodos did not get the Roman Script, which was a deprivation of fundamental rights. During emergency also hundreds of public, leaders, students and youths had to go to jails.

In many occasions, numbers of time, police had been arresting indiscriminately on the pretext of forged cases on political ground and have tortured the youths and members of ABSU very badly.

Of late, police have raided Kokrajhar College Boy’s Hostel and several lodges at Kokrajhar, arrested, beaten up seriously the students during the last part of September, 1986 purely on political ground.

Recently, again for political cause, police arrested altogether 36 students and public and tortured heavily within the period from 27th April to 25th May, 1987 and raided randomly several villages in Dotma, Serfanguri, Kachugaon, Sinmbargaon areas of Kokrajhar district, causing heavy loses of properties of several families. The District Administrations throughout the State Assam have arrested more than 5000 (Five Thousand) ABSU Volunteers since the 27th August’ 1987 till today during and after ABSU’s 12-Hour, 24-Hours and 36-Hours Bandh on the 27th August, 9th September and 24th September’ 1987 respectively on demand of Separate Union territory in the north bank of the Brahmaputra, District Council in the south bank of the Brahmaputra, inclusion of Bodo-Kacharis of Karbi-Anglong into the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution and other 89 demands. The arrested volunteers were heavily beaten up
and tortured in Police Stations and Out-Post Lockups. Till today, the ABSU Volunteers have to keep absconding to escape arrest and torture by police.

What is more dreaded is that unprecedented excessive police atrocities, operations, arrest and torture are still going upon the ABSU workers and supporters and it is apprehended that it will reach its peak while the movement for separate State gets vigorous turn. This is very obvious.

So, can the Tribals hope justice under this repressive and bloody Assam Government without a Separate State?

(iv) A Conspiracy to Massacre Bodos:

The AGP Government has taken up ugly policy to drag the tribals into the street with their anti-tribal polices and shoot them to dead and thus massacre the Bodos in large scale. Along with the gaining of momentum of ABSU’s movement for separate State the AGP, AJYCP and ABSU are campaigning to resist the movement physically. It is unfortunate that those forces are trying to build up civil war against the Bodos. The ruling AGP Party under the leadership of prafulla Kumar Mahanta is taking pioneering role to cause civil war and commit genocide of the Bodos. No doubt, the Bodos will be massacred in large scale with this giant Governmental, Administrative and Armed Police machinery during this civil war spearheaded by AGP.

With the above allegations against the Assam Government and the Administration, the Bodo people bred the hope for better administration by creation of Separate State — “No doubt, the creation of a Separate Union Territory will bring a better administration for the Plain Tribals. Because, that will be a Tribal State and it will have to look after all the interests of the Tribals.”
8. CRISIS OF IDENTITY:

Last of all, the ABSU cited "Crisis of Identity" as one and the foremost factor for demanding a Separate State. The argument goes — "Not only development, but the basic question is survival, preservation and growth of the Ethnic Identities of the Tribals and these are the most genuine factors for demanding a Separate State." It contended — "The idea of Assamese Movement on Foreign National Issue was also the same — the Crisis of Identity." The ABSU asserted that the Bodos also want to survive their Ethnic Identity though here arises a clash between the Assamese and the Bodos. It had a firm believe that without Separation or Division of Assam this Ethnic Clash will not meet an end. Therefore, Separation is a must.

The causes cited above for demand of a Separate State for the Bodos through bifurcation of Assam will seem all valid and genuine in the first look. The reason cited and arguments tendered above these all will appear true for all reasons. The History of Assam and the events therein witnessed in its course of substantiate these all contentions. The political suzerainty of the Assamese people, their domination over the Tribals for centuries, social and economic exploitation for long, over and above their Anti-Tribal attitude speaks volume of truths throughout the passage of time.

Yet, the above causes cited as regards to the demand of a Separate State for the Bodos and other Plain Tribals need a deep analysis through an impartial look to the things around. Just writing volumes about the reasons as facts hidden behind the mysterious screen of history should not be accepted as projected. This will need a deep probe into facts mentioned taking all the circumstances into account.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


