CHAPTER-VII

ON FEASIBILITY OF A SEPARATE BODOLAND STATE
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The Ethnic Assertion:

The Bodo community had rose to prominence in recent time with its cultural assertion and political mobilisation. The impact of British administration, the role of Christian Missionaries, the spread of Brahma religion had its own contribution towards this assertion. However, the most important fact remains to be the emergence of an educated elite class; who, in their competition for power in socio-economic and political spheres had found the dominant Assamese nationality arrogant towards their (Bodos) demands, and so turned out for ethnic revivalism and a path of movement.

The realization by the Bodo people about their glorious past and the present hapless condition has been put by the All Bodo Students’ Union in nutshell in the following words:—

According to history, the Bodos are the aboriginals of Assam, part of Bengal, Bihar, Nepal and the North-Eastern region of India. Once they ruled the entire region. The Ahoims arrived in Assam in 1228 A.D., and after that conflict between the Boro-Kacharies and the Ahoms started. It was those Ahoms who brought the high caste-Assamese Brahmins in the State. From that time the Boro-Kacharies were gradually engulfed by them. Even then, the Boro-kacharies ruled Assam till 1854 A.D. Khaspur was the last kingdom of the Kacharies, Tularam was chieftain of that kingdom. The ruins and relics of of the last kingdom of the Boro-Kacharies are still lying scattered in Dimapur city. In Cooch Behar (now in West Bengal) the Kachari brothers Narnarayan and Chilarai
established a kingdom the palace of which is still existent. Mrs. Gaitri Devi, the princess of the last king of Cooch Behar kingdom is still alive at Jaypur and she happened to be the queen of Jaypur. But in the course of time the Boro-Kachries lost their land, kingdom, palace and everything, and today in free India this community has not a small corner of land to claim to be their own. Today they have not their own State or a place under their political exercise. So this community with glorious past must have their own land to be ruled by their own people. The Bodos and other plains Tribals must have a separate State to liberate Bodo language and culture from the suppression and to be free from political exploitation and persecution and to develop at par with other communities of India and to give economic opportunity and political power to serve their own interest and this has been the demand of the All Bodo Students’ Union.

The above realisation by the Bodo people in general and the newly emerged educated elite class among the Bodos resulted in the ethnic assertion by the Bodos. They began to draw facts from history and orient them in the way it suited their inherent urge for political power and privileges. Such an assertion in a forceful way led to the Bodo mass movement for a separate State under the Indian union.

To strengthen their arguments in favour of the ethnic assertion of the Bodos, the ABSU began to drag the present pitiful economic, social, educational conditions of the Bodos in a more concrete form in the following words:-

The plains tribals of Assam are also exploited economically. Not long ago due to the lack of schools or educational institutions the progress of literacy was very slow. Again there are no industries and other big establishments which may open job avenues in the region to absorb the
educated youths. The area is deprived of university, engineering and medical colleges and other similar technical institutions. There are no irrigation facilities in the fields of farmers. They have to depend on the rain water. The economy of Assam, on the other hand, is an agro-based economy. The Bodo areas with several unfriendly rivers also face the severe problem of land erosion during monsoon season. No Government has ever come forward with an adequate measure to control and harness these hostile rivers for the use of the farmers. All the Bodo and other tribals dominated rural areas have no good road facilities. The few roads that run through those areas are not motorable. Their socio-economic condition has been very delicate as there are no industries. The state Government overlooked the tribal and development works were only carried out in general areas as a result of which the glaring contrast between the general and tribal areas is visible.

Bodo national identity consciousness developed with substantial amount of resentment against 'Asamiyas'. The insensitivity of the political structure of the state since independence towards the linguistic and the cultural specificities of the tribal community had generated this resentment. The consequence had been the retardation of the process of assimilation. The biased role of the state has intensified this resentment. The culture of aggressive nativism of Asamiya nationality finally made the Bodos hostile towards Asamiyas.

However, over emphasis on cultural aggressiveness as key factor to Bodo separate nationalism will be one sided. The dynamism of this nationality consciousness lies in the emergence of a new educated middle class. It is this power aspirant middle class, who in their struggle against the dominant Asamiya nationality in political, economic and other fronts,
had exploited the insensitive and arrogant attitude of Asamiya nationality and adopted a path of movement to create a political space for themselves.  

The Question of Ethnic Identity:

The North-Eastern part of India comprises many tribal communities each with their perceived separate cultural identity. The state of Assam, one of the seven sisters of North-East India, is also having a number of racial groups with their cultural variation. Out of these different social communities the most remarkable is the Kirata (as referred to in the Mahabharata). These Kiratas are the Mongoloid tribes.

Wheresoever and by whatsoever name the Bodos may be known to others, now after all, the allied tribes belonging to the great Indo-Mongoloids living in the proposed Bodoland territory are often the same Bodo ethnic group. Ethnically speaking, the majority population of the proposed Bodoland territory is composed of the greater Bodo race origin. The proposed Bodoland territory has got its own distinct and quite separate ethnic identity and background which is completely different from that of Assamese.

The Bodos are of Tibeto-Burman origin, belong to Tibeto-Chinese linguistic stock whose sovereignty once extended all over the valley of Brahmaputra constitute a very important section of Assam. At present this tribe is mainly concentrated in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan in the northern tract of the valley of Brahmaputra.

Presentation of the history in the above way which go much in favour of the Bodo people with regard to their ethnicity made the Bodo people conscious of their ethnicity and made them to crave for ethnic identity. They began to feel that the term ‘Bodo’ can be conceived in a
specific sense, as a cultural-linguistic category comprising the majority of the scheduled tribes in the plains of Brahmaputra valley. This great Bodo Kachari race comprises of other sub-groups such as Boro, Rabha, Sonowal, Lalung, Deuri, Dimsa, Barmans, Garo, Hajong, Hojai Kachari, Chutia and Moran Kachari.

The concept of Smaller Nationalities:

The philosophy of smaller states was a basic ideological constituent of the Bodo movement. As they have put forward: The idea and political philosophy of smaller states given by Late Jaya Prakash Narayan should be experimented. The smaller states should be made true federating units of India with more autonomy. This theory will solve the problems of communal clashes, unemployment etc. to a great extent.

The question of nationalism in India present a very interesting and in some ways an intriguing case. The underlying spirit of and Indian Nationally is not a new thing: the distinctiveness of India as a land, of the Indians as a people and of Indian ness as an identity have always been there throughout the long and unbroken history if Indian civilization and culture. But it is also true that the content of this Indian identity has been spiritual and cultural rather than political. Nationalism in the modern sense of the term-the individual and group consciousness associated with exclusive political identity-started developing in India only in the wake of British domination. In fact, India had never been politically one before the advent of the British : even the, vast Indian empire had not encompassed the entire sub-continent. It was the British rulers who brought more or less the whole of India under one single political and administrative authority. There is no denying the facts that this unification paved the way for the emergence of modern Indian nationhood, and that
the Western type of liberal education introduced by the British fired the
nationalistic zeal for political self-determination in the heart of the
Indians. 10

In India there has been a certain pattern in these developments. First, the post-independence era witnessed the formal emergence of what has been termed "little nationalism", "infra nationalism" or "sub-nationalism" centering round the major language-culture groups. Local pulls of such linguistic cultural identities had always been there; but the reorganization of the states primarily on linguistic basis helped to strengthen those pulls, and as the idea of state autonomy within a federal set up gave semi-political recognition to the primacy of particular language-culture groups in particular states, such sub-nationalism often got mixed up with regionalism. At the same time, the constitutional recognition of the need for special treatment of the smaller ethnic communities, particularly the hill tribes of north-east India, combined with the increasingly growing consciousness among these communities about their right to manage their own affairs, led to the creation of new administrative units with varying degrees of autonomy.—— In fact, new equations are being worked out and the groups concerned are in the process of obtaining new ethnic configurations to fit their evolving aspirations and interests. 11

In the arena of modern Political Science, the concept of Smaller States has a great significance. To it has been attached the question of Smaller Nationalities as it has been agreed that only provision of one State each to those Smaller Nationalities will help them to preserve their own land, language, culture etc. in an effective way.
The Proposition for Smaller States:

As mentioned above, the concept of Smaller States is being favoured in the domain of modern Political Science so as to help the Smaller Nationalities of the country to meet their political aspirations through preservation of their land, language, culture etc. and thus to help them attain their own identities. Many of the modern Nation-States have accepted the principle of Smaller States in order to help maintain cohesiveness among various sub-nationalities within the State and to avoid disintegration as a result of conflict on the question of identity. The recent ethnic upsurges in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Indonesia and Philipines on the question of ethnic identity have resulted in premature disintegration of those States which have opened eye of the modern nation-States worldover.

Bodos demanded a separate state. Their logic was—

Not only development but the basic question is survival, preservation and growth of ethnic identity of trials and these are the most genuine factors of demanding a separate state. 12

This separate state, as they believe, guarantees the right to political self-determination. As they have put it:-

The plains tribals of Assam must have to enjoy the internationally accepted principle of right to political self-determination. As such, tribals must have a self government in Assam. 13

The constitution of India incorporates provisions for the creation of separate state through Articles 2 and 3. The Bodo Leadership pointed out these Articles as a justification of their demand for separate state.

On the occasion of the independence day celebration on 15th August the then Prime Minister of India H.D. Deve Gowda in his address from Red Fort, New Delhi made in a statement that the government of
India was in favour of creating three new states namely Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Chattishgarh. The previous government by the Congress, on the other hand, had been reiterated that the centre had no policy of creating new states in India. The ABSU welcomed the statement of the Prime Minister and reminded the centre that the oldest Bodoland demand by the Bodo people should be conceded. Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda visited Assam on 25 October 1996. During his visit a delegation team of the ABSU met him at Raj Bhawan, Guwahati and submitted a memorandum demanding a separate state. Soon after his visit a huge Mass Rally was organized on 28 October 1996 at Judges Field, Guwahati. It was the first Mass Rally after the resumption of the statehood movement and more than fifty thousand people participated in this public gathering. The Second important programme was held in New Delhi on 10 December 1996. A train was booked for that purpose and two thousand people boarded the special train to participate in the demonstration. The ABSU raised the demand of Bodoland strongly through this programme in the capital. On both the days of the programme (10 and 11 December) the then speaker of the Lok Sobha Mr. P.A. Sangma was met and a petition was submitted telling him that through this petition the demand of the separate state had been raised in the parliament. After this programme a five member delegation team of the ABSU met the Prime Minister of India Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda. The Prime Minister asked for some time to solve the Bodo issue. Before this the delegation team met the then Railway Minister Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan and requested him time and again to extend his co-operation in solving the Bodoland issue through dialogue.

The ABSU put very strongly its arguments in favour of a separate Bodoland State for the Bodos and other plains tribals on the northern
bank of the river Brahmaputra, carving out of Assam. Irrefutable the arguments are as irresistible was its movement for a separate State. The ABSU took up a preliminary investigation of its own privately and collected required data, analyzed the same, projected the outcome of it and offered its conclusion about the feasibility of a separate Bodoland State on the northern bank of Brahmaputra on the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, extending from river Sankosh in the west to Sadia in the east. The proposed Bodoland State had a boundary with the West Bengal in the west, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Assam and Burma in the east and river Brahmaputra throughout the southern boundary.

The ABSU put forward many arguments as to how the creation of a separate state for the plains tribals of Assam was possible:

1. **LAND AREA:**

The demanded area of the proposed Bodoland State covered an area of 28,478 sq. Kilometer. It comprised almost one-third of the total land cover of existing Assam. The present total area of Assam is 78,523 Sq. K.M. The whole area of Kokrajher district, northern parts of Dhubri, Goalpara, Nalbari, Barpeta, Kamrup, Daarang and Sonitpur districts had been included in the proposed Bodoland State. The present Bongaigaon district did not exist then which was declared in 1989 only clearly so as to break the backbone of the Kokrajher district and thus weaken the Strength of the Bodoland Movement as the same accrued almost all strength from this district, by virtue of its size and concentration of Bodo population. The east-west length of the proposed Bodoland was about 700 K.M. and north-south width is about 36 K.M. in average. The proposed area covered almost all major areas on the northern bank of
the Brahmaputra. The detailed areas of proposed Bodoland State has been shown in the following table:-

**DISTRICT-WISE AREA TO BE INCLUDING IN THE PROPOSED BODOLAND STATE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Total area</th>
<th>Area to be included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kokrajhar</td>
<td>4,716.5</td>
<td>4,716.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including present Bongaingaon district)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhubri</td>
<td>2,745.5</td>
<td>1,372.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>2,843.8</td>
<td>710.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barpeta</td>
<td>3,307.3</td>
<td>1,653.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>2,022.8</td>
<td>1,111.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>4,625.9</td>
<td>1,555.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>3,465.3</td>
<td>2,752.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonitpur</td>
<td>5,255.2</td>
<td>4,204.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>5,646.4</td>
<td>5,646.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majuli</td>
<td>1,241.0</td>
<td>1,241.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadia</td>
<td>914.0</td>
<td>914.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 25,478.1 Sq. KM

In the land areas of the Autonomous District Council arranged for the Tribal are added to that of the proposed Bodoland State, then the total area becomes it becomes are the following: -

Area of the Karbi-Anglang Autonomous District = 10,332.0 Sq. KM
Area of the North Kachar Hill Autonomous District = 4,890.0 Sq. KM

= 15,222.0 Sq. KM

Area of the Proposed Bodoland State = 25,478.1 Sq. KM

Total area of Assam to be secured by Tribals = 40,700.1 Sq. KM

Area of Rest of Assam (Remaining Part) = 37,822.9 Sq. KM

The ABSU argued that since it had been demanding for dividing Assam 50:50 between the Tribals and Non-Tribals, the total area to be secured by the Tribals would become little over 50% of the land area of Assam. The ABSU said that it justified because the Tribals are original masters of Assam.

Even after the creation of the demanded Bodoland State, Assam will remain the 2nd Largest State after Arunachal Pradesh only. That is a matter of consolation for the Assamese people that though they were incomers from distant Kanouj, they are getting almost an equal share to those of Tribals who are the original master of the land.

The following table shows that the demanded Bodoland State has much feasibility in respect of land area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Existing State</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>3,814.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikim</td>
<td>7,096.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>10,486.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>16,579.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>21,081.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>22,327.0 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodoland (Proposed)</td>
<td>28,478.1 Sq. KM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That is why, the ABSU argues that the proposal for a Separate
Bodoland State cannot be rejected solely on the ground of land area.

2. POPULATION:

The proposed Bodoland State will comprise a population of 61,37,914 out of the total population of existing Assam 2,25,00,000. This will cover 33% of the total population of existing Assam. The total Tribal population in the proposed Bodoland State will be 42,96,000 and the population of Non-Tribal in the proposed Bodoland State will be 18,41,914. The percentage of the tribal would be 70% would that of Non-Tribal will be 30%. The remainder of the population of Rest of Assam will be 1,63,61,086. The density of the population of remaining Assam will be 308 per Sq. KM while that of the proposed Bodoland would be 241 per Sq. KM. The following table gives a clear picture of the same:

In comparison of the population of many States. The population of the proposed Bodoland State exceeds far more. The following table shows the population Tribes within the proposed Bodoland State.

**TRIBE-WISE POPULATION IN THE PROPOSED BODOLAND STATE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Tribe</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodos</td>
<td>33,50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>5,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabhas</td>
<td>1,41,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonowals</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deoris</td>
<td>1,00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garos</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbis</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalung (Tiwa)</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 42,96,000
The projected population of the proposed Bodoland State is still far larger than those of many existing State can be gauged from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Existing State</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>1.97 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>4.94 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>6.32 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>7.75 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>10.12 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>10.73 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodoland (Proposed)</td>
<td>61.38 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the ABSU argued that the proposed Bodoland is quite viable in respect of size of population.

2. ECONOMIC VIABILITY:

1. Cultivable Land

Agriculture is the mainstay of the livelihood of the Bodos. Therefore, the demanded area of the Bodoland is expected to include vast area of cultivable land. The Bodos are expert in agriculture activity and majority of them depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. At recent, due to use of modern technics of agriculture the Bodo farmers have been able to becomes self-depended. But the Assam Government, instead of encouraging them is turning a blind eye towards them. This negligency on the part of the administration pushed their efforts down. With little incentives from the government even, their farming could be toned up an agricultural production could have given a boost. The land of the demanded Bodoland area is still fertile and the amount of cultivable
land is possess enough to make Bodoland self-sufficient in food staff. In terms of cultivable land the proposed Bodoland is much more viable than the rest of the north east States. The following table shows a comparative account about the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the State</th>
<th>Area of Cultivable Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2.01 Lakh Hectres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>0.87 Lakh Hectres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>0.03 Lakh Hectres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>0.02 Lakh Hectres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodoland (Proposed)</td>
<td>16.00 Lakh Hectres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii) Forest Resources:

The proposed Bodoland State is located on the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. The area runs along the slopes of the Himalayan Mountains. Therefore, the area is full of vast forest resources - rich, flora and fauna, valuable trees and also river streams. This rich forest area stretches about 700 kilometers right from river Sankoch in the west to the borderline of Arunachal Pradesh in the east. These vast forest resources more than enough to fulfill the local needs of the local population and can supply to outside States valuable timbers, woods, logs etc., which help Assam Government to earn a huge amount of royalty.

But it is very sorrowful indeed to note that no factory or workshop related to forest industries have been established in the demanded Bodoland area. The ABSU alleges that the Assam Government “as it breeds malice and hatred towards the Bodos, no factory or industry in relation to the forest produce flows outside. “ The ABSU is hopeful that “with proper planning and programme in this field, the proposed Bodoland would be able to provide employment to Lakhs of people and give a boost to the economy.”
The hard fact remains that "because of the rampant corruption in the Assam Administration, the valuable and rich forests lying in the northern part of the Brahmaputra are being destroyed every day and royalty due to the State has not been forthcoming to the Government exchequer. "The Northern Highway passing along the proposed Bodoland State alongside it huge forest area containing large trees, extensive creepers, huge shrubs, grazing blocks etc. Taking under advantage of the turmoil and atrocities upon the agitating Bodo people, the miscreants began to enter the forest and take out valuable trees for supply to the outside States. The corrupt forest officials of Assam Government with their zeal for enfeebling the demanded area of Bodoland State mixed with their avowed aim of making illegal money began to help the illegal intruders tacitly in this nefarious job”.

Later, when the Bodoland Movement was at its peak, it was observed that the Assam Government order for felling trees alongside the Northern Highway passing through the Bodo dominated areas in order to clear jungles along the highway so that the Bodo extremists can not hide behind the bushes and ambush upon the incoming police patrol party and the outside truckers. Thus, in the name of preventing the Bodo extremists from indulging into destructive activities hiding behind the bushes, the Assam Government officials engaged a huge number of Santal inmates for clearing the jungles among the No. 31 Northern Highway. Eventually, the santal inmates took to settle in the cleared open forest land alongside the Northern Highway. We can see that these immigrant Santal encroachers later on contributed heavily in waging a war against the Bodo population in the western part of the Bodoland area.
iii) Water Resources:

A majority of the total 120 tributaries of the River Brahmaputra fall in the proposed Bodoland. These tributaries origin from the Himalayan Ranges passes through the demanded Bodoland area and fall in the mighty Brahmaputra. These tributaries are not seasonal but overflowing because of continuous melting of snows in the Himalayan glaciers. The current of these tributaries are very strong, enough to generate electricity to meet the local needs. Therefore, these tributaries have vast potential for generating hydro-electricity.

The ABSU is hopeful that “if total projects are done, the power that would be generated from these tributaries can meet the need of many neighbouring States, thereby earning hug amount of money for the State Economy.” That apart, these tributaries can help provide proper irrigation to the agricultural fields and enhance the agricultural production of the State manifold. The ABSU is of the opinion that “there is no natural gift available in any other States of India.”

iv) Tea Industry:

Beginning from Kokrajhar district in the west to the Lakhimpur district in the east there are tea gardens in all the district of the proposed Bodoland. The ABSU is of the opinion that “tea would play vital role in the State Economy in addition to earning a sizeable amount of foreign exchange for the State.” This industry is capable of providing employment to Lakhs of people residing within the proposed State.

v) Communication Facilities:

The proposed Bodoland embraces extensive Road and Railway Tracks. The demanded area has about 700 K.M. Railways and almost all major places can be connected by Roads. The ABSU says that the network
of communication in the proposed Bodoland can be developed with lesser
cost and expenditure in comparison to costs involved in improving
communication system in any other New States in North-Eastern Region.”
The agitating organisation sees it as a good sign for advancement of a
State and says if Bodoland is formed it is sure to flourish as advance
State within a very short span of time.

However, the ABSU alleges, “The Assam Government, due to sheer
short-sightedness and retrograde outlook, has never cared to think in
terms of improving the communication network in the area of the
proposed Bodoland. As a result, there is no easy access to the Bodo
populated areas and they are being kept away from participation to the
administration. This is detrimental not only to the interest of a State but
also to the whole Country and the Nation.” The ABSU is of firm believe
that “formation of Bodoland would remove this problem.”

vi) Cottage Industry:

The Tribals living in the proposed Bodoland are expert in making
things that are useful for daily life. Furniture made of bamboos, articles
for decoration prepared out of wood products are some of the items which
every Bodo family can make out themselves. This industry can be oriented
for employment and earning by creating atmosphere to establish Small
Scale Industries. This is quite a viable proposition and by restoring to
this programme poverty among them could be removed to large extent.

Besides the above, the Bodos rear animals in every family. As the
majority of the Bodos are agriculturists, animal husbandry comes to a close
relation to it. Each and every family in the demanded Bodoland area has
cows, buffaloes, goats, etc., which reared mainly with a view to secure
assistance in the agricultural works and also for meat and additional income.
The above gives us a small picture about the economic life of the Bodos besides giving us a clue on feasibility of a Separate Bodoland. The above-mentioned economic activities are the mainstay of the Bodo Economy. The natural resources accompanied with these activities yields to economic vista of the Bodo society. Viewing from this perspective, it can well be said that the feasibility of a Separate Bodoland State is undoubtedly unquestionable.

With regard to feasibility of a separate Bodoland State a few comments may be passed from point of reality. The proposed Bodoland State covers land area more than any other existing States in the North-East except Arunachal Pradesh and remainder part of Assam. The total population living in the proposed area of separate Bodoland stands second to the remainder part of Assam after separation. The proposed area is full of natural resources like forest resources, flora and fauna, water resources including sand and gravel, vast fertile agricultural land and the likes. In respect of economic viability it may be pointed out that the proposed area is rich in natural resources, covers wide areas of fertile agricultural land, the area being very congenial for trade and commerce.

The above factors of geographical feasibility, economic vitality, natural resources, population factor combined with political expediency favours formation of a separate Bodoland State carving out of existing Assam. Besides, the history of the land has a strong backing towards the demand of the Bodos for a separate State of their own. As cited earlier, the whole of Assam including Bengal and a part of Bihar once remained under the Bodo rule. They had their own kings and kingdoms and only in British India they had been identified and dubbed as Tribe. Side by side, the Bodos have a very developed social living which mark them
off from other communities in their neighbour. They have their rich culture and well developed language which have helped them to acquire a distinct identity.

As to the valid reasons of the demand of a separate Bodoland State, the ABSU cited some recently evolved international principles. As the first instance, it mentioned the principle of Rights to Political Self-determination. It advocated that the Bodos and other Tribals living in Assam want to have their self-government which the arrangement of a separate State only could satisfy Secondly, the ABSU cited the internationally accepted principle of Smaller States. It argued that only the concept of smaller States can help satisfy political aspiration of smaller nationalities. Thirdly, it cited the principle of better administrative facilities through formation of smaller States. Lastly, the ABSU recited the principle of International Justice through giving a separate State to the Bodos with a view to help save the Bodos from domination, exploitation and social negligence meted out by the Assamese people in general and their Assam government.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:
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3. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. BODOLAND MOVEMENT 1986-2001: A DREAM AND REALITY(edited)— Published by the ABSU, Kokrajhar, 2001