INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY
Introduction:

It was in the late 20th century when the social movement of the Bodos exerted its greatest force with its political character. In the long history of the Bodos who have been living in the north-eastern region of India since time immemorial, for the first time a vigorous movement was launched demanding equality, economic and social justice, political and civil rights and rights to land, language and culture. The political movement in the late 20th century from eighties was the greatest human struggle and it ran into the 21st century. This struggle is known as Bodoland Movement.

The vigorous mass movement for separate BODOLAND State led by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) from 1987 to 1993 is a significant event in the history of political movements in the world. Formed on 15th February, 1967 as central organization of the Bodo students, the ABSU confronted with political issues right since its inception as it stood as harbinger of the aspiration for a separate State for the Bodos and other plains Tribals living in Assam. This aspiration for separate political arrangement for the Bodos and other plains Tribals living in Assam dawned to Bodos when Smt. Indira Gandhi, the late Prime Minister of India announced on 13th February, 1967 before a Mizo delegation that Assam would be reorganized on federal plan. Then the ABSU took the prompt initiative for formation of a political platform for the plains Tribals of Assam with name and style Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA) on 27th February, 1967.
The following period saw the hectic political activities of the PTCA with the ABSU remaining behind the screen reigning over the political affairs of the plains Tribals of Assam. The trend continued so till 1977 when on 4th April issue of the "Dainik Asom" newspaper published a write-up by Mr. Charan Narzary, General Secretary of PTCA announcing that the party has abandoned the demand for separate "Udayachal" State. Then the ABSU, having failed to pursue the PTCA to retain the demand for a separate State, took further initiatives for organising new political platform for Assam Tribals through the formation of the United Tribals Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) through a political convention at Harishinga of Darrang district.

As the new political formation devoid of veteran PTCA leaders failed to draw enough enthusiasm among the Bodos and other plain Tribals of Assam, the ABSU took up the reign of political movement of Assam Tribals in 1987 and in the central mass rally held at Kokrajhar declared on 2nd March its "Peaceful, democratic, non-violent mass movement" for a separate Union Territory. Though declared thus, the movement had violent manifestations during its pick period preceding beginning of tripartite talks from 28th August, 1989. The negotiation continued for over three years and culminated in the signing of the "BODO ACCORD" on 20th February, 1993 which rang curtain over six-years’ long Bodoland Movement. The accord provided a separate political arrangement within the Assam State in the form of "Bodoland Autonomous Council".

The tales of ABSU movement for a separate State and its success story inculcated new enthusiasm among other ethnic student organisations. They followed suit and began to raise political demands
taking up agitational programmes. This was because the ABSU movement for a separate State was unprecedented in the world history for the reason that though there were student movements on political issues and problems earlier also, they never did not take up independent political movement demanding a separate State. The neighbouring All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) led a mass movement demanding deportation of foreigners from Assam soil which was a political movement either, but the difference remains that that movement did not involve purely a political question involving creation of a separate State.

Thus seen, the ABSU led “Bodoland Movement” had opened up a new chapter of student movement in the world history. The All Jharkhand Students’ Union (AJSU) followed the ABSU’s foot print and was able to secure a separate Jharkhand State in 2000 A.D. The different ethnic student formations of Assam Tribals as All Rabha Students’ Union, All Mishing Students’ Union, All Tiwa Students’ Union followed the ABSU’s foot print and were able to secure autonomous council set-ups in the line of Bodos.

Organization of Study :-

The study relates to the question of ethnicity of the Bodo people and to new political developments given rise as the result of ethnic aspirations. It has tried to analyse such political developments from the viewpoint of ethnic aspirations and the causes and their genuineness in present context of world affairs.

To help serve the above purposes, the whole study has been divided into different chapters according to the areas of study in a logical manner. The areas of study has been adopted and arranged in systematic way so as to help arrive at a logical conclusion of the whole study. For this, the
following areas of study have been incorporated to help achieve the avowed goal of study.

**Theoretical Construct:**

The Bodo community had rose to prominence in recent times through cultural assertion and political mobilisation. The impact of British administration, role of Christian Missionaries, the spread of Brahmo religion had their own contributions towards this assertion. The above factors had led towards the growth of an educated elite class who, in their competition for power in socio-economic and political spheres found dominant Assamese Nationality arrogant towards their demands and turned out for ethnic revivalism and path of movement.

Thus, the basic question remains that the Bodoland Movement has raised the perception of crisis of identity. As an ethnic group is defined as "one that is composed of people who are bound together or they feel they are bound together or they are thought to be so, by common ties or race, nationality or culture, living together within an alien civilisation but remaining culturally distinct" the feeling for ethnicity has led towards extremism in intensity of this feeling and in the path adopted for attaining the same.

**Basic Research Question:**

The whole study revolves about the following basic questions which form the core of this study undertaken so as to help solicit answers to the growing problem of ethnic resurgence and militant path adopted for achieving the same:

1. What is Ethnicity and what are basic ingredients of Ethnicity those help attach importance to ethnic feeling?

2. What are the main causes behind growing feeling for Ethnicity
and what extraneous factors contribute towards their growth?

3. What are the probable measures those may help check ethnic feeling growing in a undesirable way providing amicable solution to insurgent problems?

The Hypotheses:

In pursuance of above theoretical construct, it is desirable to presume following few hypotheses so that we may be able to arrive at some concrete conclusion in this study on Bodoland Movement, pertaining to questions of ethnicity and political development consequent to this among the Bodos specifically during the period from 1967 to 1999:

1. The Bodoland Movement represents politicisation of Bodo ethnicity and reflects a conflict between dominant Assamese Nationality and emerging Bodo Nationality.

2. The newly emerged educated elite class among this specific group is playing crucial role in Bodoland Movement, and they have raised the question of ethnic crisis as an excuse for their struggle for power.

3. The insensitive, arrogant and biased policy/policies had fuelled the resentment of the Bodo community.

4. Ideological commitment, skill and vision of leadership and organisational network which are the basic requirements of a movement lead to up and downs of a movement.

5. The practice of granted autonomy shows its success or failure subject to goodwill of the State as well as to the overall nature of the movement.

6. Power was the the central issue on which the Bodoland Movement rests.
SOURCE MATERIALS:

Various memorandum submitted to the State and the Central Governments by the ABSU, the spearheading organisation of the Bodoland Movement and booklets published by it time to time, had been considered as the reliable source for this study.

Books of history authored by reputed historians of the land also has been considered as a primary source of this study. History of the Bodos given by authors in Assam and abroad have been considered as the reliable source in respect of the history of the Bodo people.

Books published in recent times by reputed authors on socio-political condition and upheavals in North-East India have been considered as dependable source of information with regard to ongoing condition of strife and strives in the region.

Statistical data and other informations pertaining to the Bodos and related to this study have been given due consideration and adopted wherever found useful and necessary.

Books published on the Bodoland Movement in recent times by various authors have been duly considered in this study as source material. Research works and Seminar papers on Bodo people and Bodoland movement also have been due consideration in this study.

METHODOLOGY USED:

A number of methodology have been used in this study in order to help achieve success. This has been done with a view to see that all aspects relating to the subject of this study can be achieved.

Historical Method has been adopted as the first and foremost suitable method of study as the subject of study is deeply related to recent
historical facts. All facts mentioned and reasons cited have been looked from the point of history.

Analytical Method has been used as the second most dependable method of study. The historical facts and figures cited have been duly analysed from practical points.

Inductive Method has been applied in order to solicit historical information required for this study. A few facts have been inducted so as to help arrive at desirable conclusions in this study.

Deductive also has been duly applied with a view to segregate the historical facts as felt required and place them in their rightful place in the course of history. Deductions of facts have been done with a view to arrive at conclusions desired in this study.

Experimental Method also has been used in this study with due care. Experiments normative in nature have been conducted so as to help arrive at conclusions desired in this study.

**RESULT OF THE STUDY:**

The present study has arrived at the following conclusions with regard to impact of the feeling of ethnicity among the Bodos and the consequent Bodoland Movement:-

1. That the Bodoland Movement was the result of the conception of the idea of ethnicity among the Bodos and its impact on them.

2. That the protest against the Caste-Hindu Assamese chauvinism and domination on them had manifested in the form of movement for a separate State.

3. The arrogant and biased role of the State with regard to solution to the problems being cited by Bodo organisations and leaders alike have contributed in no small way towards the rising of the Bodo
people against the Government of the State which took the shape of a mass-movement.

4. Emergence of power aspirants among the Bodo middle class helped giving shape to the concept of Bodo ethnicity and the demands put forward to help advance its cause in a big way.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study is being limited by several factors those hinder to the course of smooth sailing in the study. Among these, the following may be cited as the main limitations encountered in the course of this study:

1. As the subject of study is quite new in the domain of political research, the study encounters with the problem of unfamiliarity. Those political scientists and students alike express their quite helplessness in understanding the theme of the subject itself.

2. Ethnicity is comparatively new theme of study among the researchers in the field of political study in the North-East. Though several write-ups including seminar papers pertaining to other ethnic groups have already been available, no such papers are available in respect of ethnicity of Bodos.

3. Bodoland Movement is the pathbreaker with regard to ethnic movement among the tribes living in the North-East India. As the case indicates only initiation of the process of ethnic movement in the region, no case-study on ethnic movement is available so as to help advancement of this study.

4. This study has confronted with acute problem of shortages of source materials. No authentic and defendable source materials regarding the ethnicity of the Bodos and ethnic movement among them are available except of the literatures published by the organisations pioneering the movement which are feared to be conditioned by lack
of impartiality which is a need in case of a research work.

Over and above, the Bodo people conditioned severely by the feeling of newfound ethnicity, could not take the purpose of this study easily. Severe fear of political mileage and misinterpretation are conditioning the Bodo mind and hence no heartful and meaningful co-operation could be secured from the end of Bodo people and their leaders alike.