Chapter-VII
QUEST FOR SELF IDENTITY
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Prior to the establishment of British role in India the existence of the Bodos and other allied societies were on the verge of extinction. Social change was oriented to structural assimilation either to Hinduism or Islam. These people were quite unaware of their societal dignity, pride and honour. For centuries, tradition of structural assimilation as a process of social change remained as a popular tradition among the Bodos. The new conditions created by the British Government in India totally changed the traditional mindset of the people not only of the Bodos but also all sections of the people of India. Under new liberal intellectual conditions set by the British rule, the Bodo people developed the sense of self-respect, identity consciousness of their society and soon they started to reassert their community identity. They started to reassert their community identity by reviewing and restructuring, their lost history, culture, tradition, custom, language etc. The movement for reassertiveness was started with Brahma Dharma movement. The Brahma Dharma movement was followed by a series of movements like, movement for language, movement for education, movement for economic security and lastly the movement for political autonomy, which ultimately turned into a violent shape. The Bodo movement is not the result of any particular factor but it is the result of multiple factors. Some factors are historical, others are economic, some are religious and cultural, some are political, some factors lie in the environment they live in and etc. All these factors gained forces in the new conditions created by the British government and led the Bodo society into a new direction of social change. The nature causes and direction of social change in the Bodo society during and post British rule is discussed below:

The primary reason was modern civilizations installed by the British government in India like, introduction of modern education based on science and rationality, introduction of new economic system as against the static caste based economy, emergence of multiplicity of employment avenues giving opportunity to the people for economic and social mobility irrespective of caste and religions, development of transport and communication, introduction of new pattern of administrative and political system, introduction of new legal system treating all section of Indian people equal before the law, Protection of the rights of the disadvantage sections of society. The effect of the introduction of modern culture and civilizations was far reaching. It instilled the sense of self-respect and Socio-cultural, political, economic consciousness amongst all sections of people in their own stations. It also created identity consciousness based on ethnicity, race, language, religion etc

7.1.1 Traditional hold and domination of the Brahminical orthodoxy was weakened by the introduction of rational and scientific education. Principles, ideals, norms of Hindu religion controlled
political, economic, custom, tradition and other aspects of institutional life of the society. Elite section of the society constituted privileged class and rest of people in the society constituted proletariat class. Modern education is rational and scientific and contrary to worldview of religion. It emphasizes democratic values such as liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. Modern education laid great stress upon the importance of man. Thus the progress of modern education has encouraged the principle of equality among man. The feeling of superiority and untouchability are being gradually eliminated from the minds of children. Depressed people realized how they were suppressed and exploited for centuries of years in the name of caste and religion.

7.1.2 Introduction of Western culture and civilization, like introduction of English education, political and administrative system, legal system, revenue system, transport and communication system, development of trade and commerce on non-caste line, growth of urbanization and industrialization etc. created conditions for the emergence various type of non caste based employment avenues, professions and occupations etc. As a result people adopted occupations, profession, services and employment that appears to him more suitable and profitable. Caste system no longer remained as the only dimension for choice of occupations. New system introduced by the British government created conditions leading to emergence of new avenues of life. And the way of achieving this economic opportunity was not based on hereditary or birth but was based on efficiency, ability and quality of the individual. Under new liberal political conditions, people prepare themselves for acquiring the opportunity of employment. People become free from the age-old restrictions of caste based economy and exploitation.

7.1.3 Although it is difficult to point out what event in the history first created awakening among the deprived sections, it is said that Christian Missionaries were one of the first to have created conditions of self awareness. Missionaries of different denominations came from the west, established their stations at various places in India. Many of them started working with the lower castes and tribes and succeeded in converting large groups. Different Missionaries with the help of British Raj were not only able to expand their evangelical, educational, medical and welfare activities, but they were also successful in securing for their converts the basic civic rights and employment in public services. The non-converts neighbours saw their own caste men who were converted, being able to break tradition to get their benefits of English education and able to secure job in public services. In many cases the contrast was so glaring that the non-converts were easily attracted to
Christianity. The perception of the contrast in many cases led to social awakening among many of the deprived classes. It made them think could they not do something to ameliorate their own condition, without necessarily getting converted to Christianity. The reform movement among the upper caste also created conditions of awareness among the deprived sections of society. The Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj, Prarthona Samaj that emerged in the nineteenth centuries were concerned with two major programmes – the emancipation of women and the amelioration of the depressed classes, while the former concerned itself mainly with the upper caste and the later related to itself mainly to the problems of the untouchables and depressed class. Under the leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, the Brahma Samaj organized education and welfare programme for the untouchables.

7.1.4 The Arya Samaj, however, took far greater interest than the Brahma Samaj in the uplift of the untouchables and depressed class. It sponsored the Sudhi movement in 1891 to reconvert the low-caste Christian and Muslim converts to Hinduism. It gave the untouchable the right to wear the sacred thread, ‘the symbol of twice-born status’, and also established educational institutions for the benefit of the untouchables and depressed class. Similarly the Servant of India Society, founded by Gokhle in 1905 had the amelioration of Depressed Classes as one of its objectives. In Bombay V.R. Shinde founded the Depressed Caste Mission in 1906 and established educational institutions for the untouchables. Western educated upper class intellectuals who hoped for a renaissance, and formulated a liberal and egalitarian ideology led all these reform movements.

7.1.5 The growth and spread of an egalitarian ideology occurred in the wider political context of democratization and the national movement. The introduction of Pax Britannica helps the spread of egalitarian values through educational, legal and political institutions. With the adaptation of the Morely-Minto reforms of 1909, Minorities and deprived sections acquired a sense of political identity and the right of representation. People belonging to the deprived sections became aware of their basic civic rights including the rights of political representation, and felt encourage organizing themselves. Pax Britannica gave them new secular sources of legitimacy based on English education, such as the castes to ‘caste free’ modern employment opportunities and political power. At the same time they undermined traditional sources of legitimacy, namely priest and king that upheld the hierarchical values of the caste system and patrimonial authority.
7.1.6 In the new legal machinery of the British Government all people were treated equally for the same offences. The concept of equality before law was implemented in letter and spirit particularly in case Indians, though in many cases Europeans were exception to it. The establishment of judicial courts deprived the authority of Caste Panchayat to judge the crime and to punish the criminals. Litigation in the society was the prerogative of the high caste people. With the introduction of modern legal system people become free from the unequal, discriminatory caste based social, customary and traditional law, which was under the discretion of the high caste people. In pre British period lower sections of the society were debarred from justice. The people have an opportunity to become free from the age-old obstruction and exploitation of the high caste people. The authority of law was shifted to the court of law from the kings and agents of the kings. At the advent of Uniform law, Caste law lost its grip over the society as well as on the depressed section of society in particular.

From 1971, the first census of India onward there was growing number of caste organizations often claiming their caste status higher than what actually was. This development was not just a desire for higher status in the society but the basic reason lies with the Hindu social structure in which the aspirations of the weaker sections or low caste people was put under suppression. It is an upsurge against the age-old traditions of suppression and exploitation inherent in the traditional Hindu social structure.

The growth of national movement was responsible for awakening the masses regarding their rights, like civil, political, economic, social, religious, educational, legal, etc in contrary to age-old supremacy of orthodox cultural values. Mahatma Gandhi took up a programme for the uplift of Untouchables and supported them in the temple entry movement. All these development in the late nineteenth century and earlier of the present century created an atmosphere in which the depressed classes became aware of their basic civic rights and also felt that they could do something to redress their conditions of relative deprivation. This accounted for the emergence of protest movements among the backward classes, which should be seen in the wider social and political context. And this protest movement was definitely against the age-old tradition of high caste domination. The age-old traditions of exploitations, injustice, and discrimination constituted force of unity and spirit of the movement of social consciousness. Western education helped in understanding their miserable plight in the society And their loyalty shifted from the traditional authority to British government.
Sri Narayan Dharma Paripalana Movement in South India, by Sri Narayan Gurus Swamy and Mahars Movement in Maharastra under the leadership of Dadabhai Ambedkar, Viacom Temple-Road Entry Movement, 1927, led by T. V. Madhavan under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, Namásudra Movement led by Sri Guru Chand Thakur in Bengal, Rajbongshi Movement led by Panchanan Verma in north Bengal, Depressed Class Mission Movement by, V.R Sinde were definitely not against the British government but it was definitely an anti-orthodox Brahminical movement. By these movements efforts were made to minimize the socio-cultural tensions and distances between the high caste and low caste and thereby try to create unity of feeling among the people. These movements were the movement for reformations in Hindu social and religious order, and in ideal and attitude of the people. The targets of these movements was to redirect the psychological orientation and loyalty of the people from English culture and civilization to New Indianism or Indian nationalism. The objective of these movements also targeted to stop the waves of the conversion to Christianity and Islam. Because, during that time, particularly the depressed and weaker sections of the society became the easy target of Christianization and Islamization.

7.2 Srimat Kalicharan Brahma was born in a well to do family in the year 1862 at Kajigaon village Under Dhubri sub-Division, the then Goalpara District. His father Khoularam Mech was man of high dignity in the society. His mother was Randini Mech. There was no school in Kajigaon during that time. Kalicharan started his preliminary education under Bir Narayan Sarkar (Baro). He read only primary to class-IV. He could not continue his study due to his father’s death and undertook the profession of his father, as a timber merchant. He was very much influenced by the teachings of a book, 'Saranityakriya' Written in Hindi language, collected from one, Charan Mandal (Brahma) and felt that the teachings of the Brahma dharma would be beneficial to the Bodo society and he determined to preach the Brahma dharma among the Bodos. He had an opportunity to meet Sivanarayan Param Hangsha at Bagribari when Swamiji came to Assam on religious tour and visited royal palace at Bagribari and Mahamaya Dham on the way to Calcutta. Kalicharan Brahma decided to meet Sivanarayan Param Hangsha the founder of Brahma Dharma for enriching further knowledge on Brahma Dharma. He went to Calcutta in 1905 accompanied by Jamadar Mech, Maniram Mech and Charan Mandal (Mech) and met Swami Sibanarayan Paraam Hangsha at Bhabanipur road and learnt about the ideals, norms and principles of Brahma Dharma. On the advice of Sivanarayan Param Hangsha he devoted himself in the study of Amrit Sagar, Gita, Vedas, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharat, etc. In 1906 AD, Kalicharan Brahma
organized a religious rite, 'Maha Yajna' at Banyaguri Village that was initiated by Phani Bhushan Chatterjee who was specially invited for the purpose from Calcutta. The Maha-Yajna was lasted for seven days. The Maha-Yajna was attended by thousands of Bodo people from different villages. It was for the first time that Vedic religion began to embrace thousands of Boro people within its realm, without sacrificing their ancestral socio-cultural identity. It was a new development in the History of Sanskritisation and Hinduization when the converts are allowed to retain with their ancestral language, culture, customs, and traditions even after conversion. In earlier chapter it is shown that process of conversion was always accompanied with sacrificing of ones ancestral language, culture and tradition etc. It is part of reformation of Hindu religion initiated by different Reformation Organizations. When Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma was working for spreading of Brahma Dharma, at the same time, simultaneously a very strong current of New Vaisnavism was sweeping larger sections of the Bodos in different parts of Assam.

Mark differences between the Brahma Dharma movement and New Vaisnava Movement and earlier process of conversion to Hinduism and other are-1. Nava Vaishnav Movement or earlier conversion to Hinduism was a processes of assimilation in which converts sacrifice their ancestral socio-cultural identity in favour of Aryan social structure and functional system. On the other hand Brahma Dharma is a movement of integration. Converts retained their ancestral socio-cultural identity. 2. The earlier process of conversion brought structural change in the society and created new identity for the converts that are distinct from ancestral socio-cultural identity. They become status (caste) group in the broader Hindu social hierarchy initially occupying lowest status in the hierarchy, keeping option for upward mobility for them. Followers of Brahma Dharma are regarded as low grade Hindu by the high caste though they did not form a caste category within Hindu social hierarchy. But they do not make a category of caste within Hindu social structure. New Vaishnava treated all Bodos including the followers of Brahma Dharma as inferior to them. In earlier tradition the Hinduised people cannot perform religious rites and that was fixed only for the Brahm. In case of New Vaisnava movement, ritual activities are allowed to perform by non-Brahmin caste also. Similarly in case of Brahma Dharma, priesthood is granted to the community member.

In his Mission Kali Charan Brahma was faced with dire obstruction from Rai Saheb Jagat Chandra, Maujadar of fourth division, Sidli who wanted to make the Boros converted to new
Vaishnavism (Saraniya) with the help of Ananta Narayan Goswami of Baitamari. He could successfully put aside the opposition of Mauzader and set the trends of conversion sustained and many Bodos were converted to Brahma Dharma. Gurudev organized another Maha-Yajna at Rajbomra Borkella hill, near Borshijhora village on the occasion of Mahalaya, and that was the first yajna performed by Gurudev himself as priest. For teaching of Brahma Dharma he organized yajna in different Boro villages of Assam and his co-workers and disciples assisted him in preaching the Brahma Dharma in different areas of Assam and Bengal. And slowly many villages came under the jurisdiction of Brahma dharma, replacing traditional Bathou religion.

In the same year next Maha-yajna was performed at Kazigaon the birthplace of Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma. And similar type of Yajna was performed at Gombhira Khata in 1907 and Bangshi jhora in 1908. In 1912 a great Maha Yajna was performed at the ‘Jnanada Pukhri’ near Tipkai on the occasion of Mahalaya. Rani Ynanada Sundari of Bagri Bari Estate extended a lot of contribution in organizing this Maha Yajna.

In 1913 and 1914 he visited Krisnai, Dudhnoi, and Rongjuli etc. to propagate the massage of Brahma Dharma among the Boros of South Goalpara. He was heartily welcomed by the people of Dudhnoi and assisted in his wok sincerely by Narapati Basumatary and Yudhisthir Hazoary. In 1940 under the initiative of Narapati Basumatary and Yudhisthir Hazoary of Kharalapara village, Dinananda Shanti Ashram was established at Loreng hill near Darrangiri for the spread of Brahma Dharma among the Boros. He also went to Dibrugarh along with Kali Charan Brahma II, Yadav Chandra Khakhlay and Yudunath Khakhary and also to Nagaon district for propagation of Brahma Dharma and large number of Bodos embraced Brahma Dharma.

Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma was assisted in his mission by a number prominent enlighten disciples of Brahma Dharma. Charan Mandal of Bainyaguri, Jamadar Brahma of Patakata, Bir Narayan Brahma of Daulabari, Kali Charan Brahma II of Simbargaon, Bantri Kumar Brahma of Bamunkhura, Karan Mandal of Patakata, Malsing Brahma Choudhuri of Patakata, Mwnbaru Brahma of Bhalukmari, Dwijendra Nath Brahma of Basbari, Rupnath Brahma of (Ex-Minister of Assam), Padmashri Madaram Brahma of etc.

Siv Narayan Param Hangsha advised Kali Charan Brahma to use the surname, ‘Brahma’ after their name. In 1911, Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma appealed the Deputy Commissioner and Census Commissioner of Goalpara district for using this surname and henceforth with due permission from the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara district, the followers of Brahma Dharma were entitled to write Brahma after their name. However option was retained for taking ancestral title like, Basumatary, Narzary, and Swargiary etc. after their name.

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From the study made by Kameswar Brahma and other it seems that the Brahma Dharma was not propagated in an organized way through a well-organized committee or Sabhas. He was just assisted by some trusted friends all along. He visited Kamrup, Nogaon, Darrang, Goal Para, Dibrugarh and even Jalpaiguri district to preach the teaching of Brahma Dharma. Haribilash Agarwalla of Tezpur translated the Sarnityakriya into Assamese.

7.2.1 The organization of the meeting of first Boro Maha Sanmelan in 1921 at Bhaoraguri, of Gossaigaon under Goalpara district was a landmark event in the history of the renaissance and reconstruction of socio-cultural identity of the Bodos. This is often identified as the beginning of the movement for self-determination, because the objective and characteristic feature of this event was less religion and more concerned with social reform, concerned with identity and status of the community and socio-economic and educational development of the Bodo community. It was less religion in objective features. Kalicharan Brahma, very clearly understood that mere adoption of Vedic ideals would not improve their community status in the context of wider Assamese society. Since long Bodo people were quite unaware of their degraded socio-economic condition. They lived an isolated self-contended community life in the physical and socio-cultural environment in which they lived. They were quite unaware of about their backward socio-cultural and economic condition as well as about their community identity and glorious history of the past. He identified the factors responsible for their degraded status and socio-cultural backwardness in broader national and inter societal context. Development in education and eradication of evil practices from the society was the only way to improve their lots. He understood that massive changes in the normative structure of existing society were needed which could be brought only through modern education and reform movement. The Maha Sanmelan resolved to work for the up-liftmen of the Bodo Community and adopted some important resolutions, like, 1. Prohibition of the preparation and use of liquor. 2. Restriction in rearing of pig and poultry. Hindu religion considered both pig and liquor as polluted and impure. Eating of pork pollutes man and so also drinking of liquor creates sin. Using of liquor and pork is a sign of low-grade caste or tribe. So giving up of the use of liquor and pork also constituted as an agenda of reform movement everywhere in India especially among backward caste and tribe including the Bodo reformed movement. It was thought that development of education on a mass level was the only way to emancipate the community from sickle of degraded socio-cultural condition. 3. Discourage to customary practice of Bride price and elopement of young girls. The practice of this tradition is also sign of degraded society. By banning of this type
of practices reformer or leader of community tried to raise their community status. 5. The high caste people considered the moving of women freely in market and public places as an immoral act. Following this ideal both Rajbongshis and Namasudras of Bengal prohibited free movement of their fellow women in market and public places during the identity movement in the last decades of 19th century and 1st decades 20th century. Boro Maha Sanmilani also resolved to follow similar ideals with their fellow Bodo women. Even restrictions were made on attending Durga puja, Kali puja etc. by women. Formation of women organization and Publication of periodical mouthpiece for the growth of socio-cultural consciousness among man and women constituted an agenda of reformed movement. This resolution was made in tune with reform movement that was taken in other places of India. 6. Prohibition of worshipping of deities and spirits. Religious reform movements carried by different leaders in different parts of India were emphasized monotheism, worshipping of only one Supreme Almighty God. Other gods and goddesses were regarded as the part Supreme Almighty and hence encourage believing in one Supreme one. Similar way Brahma was considered as the symbol of supreme God and prohibited the worshipping of deities and spirit. Some of the customs and traditions practiced by the Bodo community appeared quite unsuitable and odd to cope with the new trends of civilization. So resurgence in culture and religion, which became urgent need of the time, was brought in the community through reformation. The Maha Sanmelan was ended with enlightening speech on socio-cultural and religious importance. Rupnath Brahma was the organizing Secretary of this Sanmelan.

The second conference of the Bodo Maha Sanmelan was held in 1925 at Rangiya of Kamrup district under the presidenship of Madhav Sharma of Tezpur. This Maha Sanmelan was attended by a number eminent personalities of the Boros, like, Sobharam Brahma, Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, Ravi Kachari, Yogendra Kachari, Sabha Uzir, Gopal Uzir, Durga Mauzadar and many other. Thousands of people from different parts of Assam and Bengal attended the conference. The Second Maha Sanmelan endorsed the resolution adopted in the first Maha Sanmelan in presence of Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma.

The remarkable feature associated with Brahma Dharma and Social reform movement led by Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma was that the entire movement was assisted, guided and cooperated by the high caste Hindus intellectuals from the very beginning. High caste liberal Hindu intellectuals understood that the Orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism, as a system of religion and way of life no
longer remained as the viable option for untouchables, depressed class and tribe due to its inherent features of social inequality and exploitation. Islam with the principle of equality and brotherhood and Christianity with principle, ‘all men are equal before the sight of God’ stood as viable alternative before them. To detract the mass people from conversion to Islam and Christianity, the structural and ideal norms of Hindu religion was reformed for which the converts neither to lose their community identity nor constitute low caste stratum in the Hindu social hierarchy after conversion nor the converts become subject to exploitation and suppression of high caste people. Kali Charan Brahma himself witnessed that large number of Boro in Panbari area of Dhubri were converted into Islam and similarly to New Vaishnavism throughout in Assam losing their socio-cultural identity.10 It was a serious concern for the Hindu nationalists.

The third Boro Maha Sanmelan was held at Roumari near Bongaigaon and was presided over by Yadav Chandra Khakhlay and was attended by famous Assamese litterateurs Ambikagiri Roy Choudhuri and Nilomani Phukan. The Maha Sabha found out ways and measures for the extension Brahma Dharma amongst the Bodos. Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma suggested to forsake the use of traditional Bodo musical instruments like, Kham (drum), Siphung (flute), Jotha (cymbals) and traditional Bodo dances. He explained that these traditions were closely associated with the rites of ancestral Bathou religion like, observation of Kherai, propitiation of spirits and deities with sacrifice of animals, birds, eggs, and offerings of liquor etc. But his disciple Nepal Chandra Basumatary (later Phwrlang Babaji), Rupnath Brahma and Satish Basumatary did not uphold his view. They held that the community identity of the Boro would sustain only by retaining traditional music, dance, dress etc. and both religion and traditional culture should go hand in hand for the survival of the Bodos with community identity.11

Definitely the Brahma Dharma movement led by Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma was a part of national level Socio-Religious Reform movement that was taken place in different parts of India under different leaders. It was a part of national movement carried by Hindu Mission, Calcutta and Hindu Maha Sabha, the primary target of which was to stop the untouchable caste and tribe from conversion to Islam and Christianity and integrate and unite them to broader Hindu society. The leaders of this movement were quite successful in their mission in bringing unity, integrity and upsurge amongst different sections of the people of India retaining their distinct socio-cultural identity. Only after this movement, Bodo people came on the tract of enlightenment and development and marched
towards the movement for the reconstruction and establishment of community identity, development of language, literature etc., ultimately leading to the movement for self-determination.

The movement led by Kali Charan Brahma was more than a religion. His mission was for all round development of the Bodo society. Kali Charan Brahma founded an ME School at Tipkai in 1912. He established a *Brahma Boarding House* at Dhubri town *in 1913*. He founded a timber trading company known as *Brahma Company*, in order to encourage the Bodo youth in trade and commerce.12

In 1916 Gurudev also submitted memorandum to the Commissioner of Education through the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara district, Mr. A.ILainy for upgrading the ME school in Tipkai into High School and also for introduction of Assamese medium in the School.

Gurudev ventilated his strong support to non-violent movement led by Mahatma Gandhi through a resolution adopted in a meeting of *Brahma Company* in 1920. He appealed the Zaminders of Bagribari and Rupshi and the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara for reduction of taxes of timber trade.

In 1927, Gurudev submitted memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara district on demand of retaining Goalpara district within Assam.

In 1927 he submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission at Shillong for the solution of genuine grievances faced by the Tribal people of Assam and put an urge for the formation Tribal League. In 1932, Gurudev revolted against the oppressive measure taken by the Zaminders on Bodo people.

Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma met Mahatma Gandhi when he attended a public meeting at Rupshi, the headquarters of Rupshi State in 1921. Gurudev apprised Mahatma Gandhi about the miserable socio-economic conditions of the Bodo people. Mahatma Gandhi warmly embraced and appreciated Gurudev Kali Charan for his leadership in reformation of Bodo society. Due to his innumerable and untiring services rendered to Bodo community the non-Bodo people called Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma as ‘Mech Gandhi’. What Panchanan Varma worked for Rajbonshis Bengal

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and Assam, and what Guru Chand Thakur worked for Namasudras in Bengal, in similar tune Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma worked for the upliftment of the Bodos in Assam. His central theme of movement was Brahma Dharma and other reformation activities were revolved around the religion. After Kali Charan Brahma some Changes were brought to Brahma Dharma by his disciple, Nepal Chandra Basumatary.

722 Nepal Chandra Basumatary was one of the noted disciples of Kali Charan Brahma. Later Brahma Dharma named him as Phwrlang Babaji for his dedication. He opposed to pure form of Brahmanical Hinduism and instead he added some indigenous traditions to Brahma Dharma and proselytized it in ideal and forms. In this approach Kali Charan Brahma supported him.13

Phwrlang Babaji along with Kali Charan Brahma II went to Calcutta and met Swami Nigamananda and discussed about some problem relating extension of Brahma Dharma. After coming back from Calcutta he founded Jyoti Ashram in his own land at Roumari near Bongaigaon for spreading the massage of Brahma Dharma. (Brahma, Sekhar Brahma, Ibid, 68). Some times he went to deep forest of Bhutan Hill and set for meditation for several days.14

In the beginning, during performance of Yajna, the prayer and mantras were chanted in Sanskrit and Bengali language. Common people neither could pronounce nor understand Sanskrit language. Under his sincere initiative prayers and mantras of Brahma Dharma were translated into Boro language and the first Brahma Yajna was performed under the priesthood of Phwrlang Babaji in Boro language. Babaji says that, God knows every language of his creation and he even hears the language of hearts. Henceforth, the chanting of mantras, excepting Gayatri mantra are chanted in Boro language 15

Phwrlang Babaji advocated in favour of the retaining Boro music and dance along Brahma Dharma. But he strongly opposed to other kinds of social evils practiced in Bodo society, like use of liquor, polygamy, marriage by elopment, marrying of woman by force and also discourages rearing of pigs, poultry and free movement of women in market, mela and public places Roumari Jyoti Ashram turned into nerve centre of the Brahma Dharma congregation For the management of Ashram there is Ashram Committee Ashram committee runs a Boarding School in the Ashram premises. The school imparts education on religion along with regular academic courses

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After the death of Gurudev Kali Charan Brahma and Phwrlang Babaji Goal Para District, Brahma Sanmelan was formed by the joint efforts of Yogendra Nath Basumatary of Gossaigaon (Basugaon) and Rabiram Brahma, a resident of Ashram, itself in 1372 B.S. The Sanmilan deputed Sri Lalit Chandra Brahma the preacher of Swarup Sthiti Kendra of Jyoti Ashram and Dewansing Brahma of South Goalpara to attend Mahalaya Yajna at Calcutta, where they met Siv Narayan's disciple Shakti Kole. They collected materials containing information regarding the ideal, philosophy and concepts on Brahma, atman, paramatma, truth, salvation etc. Under the banner of Jyoti Ashram, Brahma Dharma Parichalona Committee came into existence. Shri Lalit Brahma accomplished the assignment of translation work of Yajna Prakaran into Boro language as desired by the Committee. The work contained detailed information regarding the concept of satya (truth), Chetan (sense), and shudhva (purity) of Brahma Dharma.

Kali Charan Brahma II wrote a book known as 'Boroni Jalanga' on traditional Bodo methods of treatment of disease and religion. Bijoysing Brahma another disciple of Gurudev Kali Charan wrote a book, 'Kriya Darpan' based on Dash karma or Dash Sanskar (ten reforms) of Hindu religion. Likewise the idea, norms and rites of Vedic religion made its entry into Boro society through Brahma Dharma.

"The pace of Cultural assimilation with the Hindus became faster as a result of the spread of Brahma Dharma and the Boro people increasingly showed interest and attachment to the Hindu religion and religious texts. And in the subsequent decades, some new cults of Hinduism appeared in the Bodo society due to admixtures of Bathou and Brahma ideas and several other established Hindu cults also made inroads into Bodo society.""\(\text{18}\)

7.3 With the creation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1952 clash of interest started between Assamese nationalism and Bodo nationalists. Both in ideological, socio-cultural and lastly in political level. So long Bodo Sahitya Sabha was not in existence the trends of the construction and development of Assamese nationality moved up unaffected and flourished into high level. Bodo Sahitya Sabha was founded in the Convention of Boro Maha Sanmelan in the year 1952. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha was founded keeping three important objectives in view like, 1) Creation of Common Bodo Language and literature by synthesing Dimacha, Kok-Brok and Boro languages.
2) upgradation of the same as the medium of instruction. 3) Development of Bodo Culture and construction Bodo nationality through literary works. Keeping as a symbol of force and unity Jaybhadra Hagier was elected as the first President and Sonaram Thousen as first Secretary of Bodo Sahitya Sabha. Yogendra Nath Basumatary was elected as joint Secretary. Syam Charan Tripura was executive member from Tripuri Kokr-Brok. In these convention representatives from undivided Assam even from Bengal were participated. From Jalpaiguri district Bolichand Dev Karjee, Prabhu Dayal Muchahari, and Jitlal Machahari along with many other participated. The then MLAs, Rupnath Brahma, Dharani Dhar Basumatary, and Davidson Bhobra attended the Convention. The convention discussed about the introduction Bodo as the medium of introduction. Initially all the MLAs including Rupnath Brahma opposed to this move but ultimately they were persuaded.

In 1953 Bodo Sahitya Sabha submitted a memorandum to the then Minister of Education, Mr. Jay Bhadra Hagjer demanding introduction of Bodo medium in Primary school. A copy of memorandum was also submitted to Mr. Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Congress president of Assam State Committee. The Chief Minister and Congress president made no response. The members of Assam State Congress committee were sharply reacted and apprehended that Bodo people might subsequently put demand for separate state. In the 3rd session of Bodo Sahitya Sabha a constitution was formulated for Sahitya Sabha. Primary units Bodo Sahitya Sabha came into existence in different places. 1952 to 1960 achievement was only confined to organizational development, nothing remarkable. The demand for Assamese as Official language of entire Assam in 1960, exerted negative reactions on the non-Assamese people particularly amongst the Hills people. The non-Assamese people of Assam considered it as the policy of Assamisation, through the imposition of Assamese language on non-Assamese people. As a reaction to this move taken by Assamese speaking people, the hill people demanded for retention of English as the Official language in Hill areas and the people of Barak Valley demanded Bengali as the official language in Barak Valley.

The Executive meeting of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, held at Kokrajhar in 1960 considered that, the implementation of language policy would divide Assam on language basis and hence resolve to urge the government for implementation of Hindi language as the official language of Assam as an alternative, acceptable to all. Later a statement was released by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and was published in Assam Tribune, Ananda Bazar Patrika, Yugantor and Hindustan Standard. Ultimately the three language formula i.e., Assamese in Assam, Bengali in Barak and English in Hill area was accepted.
In the Executive meeting of the Bodo Shitya Sabha raised the issue of Census enumeration, 1961 and on instruction of the Executive Committee Yogendra Kumar Basumatary organized a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bodo Shitya Sabha at Kajalgaon, near Bongaigaon. The Executive Committee strongly resolved that, the Bodo people would show their language not as Assamese, but as Bodo, religion as, Bathou, Brahma or Christian in the next Census enumeration.

On 16th November 1962, the Bodo Literary Day, more than twenty thousand people gathered in Kokrajhar town and show demonstrated mass rally on demand of introduction of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in Primary level. Soon after this event, Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha along with Rupnath Brahma arrived in Kokrajhar and assured the leaders of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha to fulfill their demand. On 18th July 1963, Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha formally and officially inaugurated the introduction ceremony of Bodo language as the medium of instruction in primary school. The huge public meeting was presided over by the President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, Mr. Prafulla Goswami and attended by the Education Minister, Deva Kanta Barua and Deputy Education Minister Mrs. Kamal Kumari Barua and number of Ministers. On 28th December 1984 Bodo language was declared as the associate Official language of Assam.

The first batch of the students of Bodo medium completed their Primary school in 1967 and became eligible for admission into ME School. As per Govt order, Bodo medium was only for primary level. The government was not aware of the fact and no initiative was taken by the government for giving introductory knowledge on Assamese to those students of Boro medium in primary level. Students and guardians faced a serious trouble. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha had an opportunity for demanding implementation of Bodo language in ME School level. This demand was discussed on 31st January 1968 at Shillong between the Government and the representative of Bodo Sahitya Sabha. The discussion was failed. The bureaucrats of the department of Education informed that as per clause-350, Bodo medium could not be extended up to ME level. Bodo Sahitya Sabha put ultimatum for 15 days.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha extended the ultimatum to 27th February 1968 and informed the government by telegraph that failing to resolve amicable solution on the issue Bodo Medium would lunch a mass movement with effect from 28th Feb, 1968.

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Till 27th Feb, no response came from the Govt. of Assam. The government of Assam referred the matter to the Govt. of India for clarification whether ME standard (class IV V VI) comes under Primary level or otherwise) and requested Bodo Sahitya Sabha to wait until clarification is received from the Govt. of India. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha started mass movement from 28th Feb’ 1968 without waiting clarification from the centre. Mass rally was demonstrated throughout Kokrajhar town. From 1st March, Schools and College within Kokrajhar Sub division observed bondh. And 4th March onward total Kokrajhar Sub Division was declared bondh. Education Minister Jay Bhadra Hagjer and other Ministers and MLAs requested to suspend the movement but no use. On 7th March, a team of Ministers and MLAs led by State Minister of Education, Sayed Ahmed Ali came to Kokrajhar. This team included, Minister Ranendra Narayan Basumetary and other MLAs, Bahadur Basumetary, Uttam Brahma, Rani Manjula Devi, Sarat Rabha, and Kabir Ray Pradhan. Bishnu Rabha, MLA came as a special representative of the Chief Minister. On the Day, the Govt. team arrived at Kokrajhar a total Kokrajhar bondh was observed. Bodo Sahitya Sabha informed the government team that Matric final examination Scheduled to hold on and from 12th March would be obstructed on failure of the fulfillment of demand for introduction of Bodo as the medium instruction in ME standard. As per report of the Deputy Commissioner, On 11th March, night, about fifteen thousand people gathered at Kokrajhar town with a view to obstruct Matric examination on 12th March 1968. The police force became very alert.

In the meantime the Assembly Session held on 11 March recognized the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in ME standard by passing a law. And this decision of the Govt. was conveyed to Bodo Sahitya Sabha through the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara through telegraphic massage right at 10 PM, 11th March.

On 28th September 1968, Minister of State for Education, Sayed Ahmad Ali ceremonially inaugurated the introduction of the Bodo language as the medium instruction in ME standard in Kokrajhar Govt Higher Secondary School. The inaugural function was presided over by Ranendra Narayan Basumetary, the then Minister of Forest, Assam

On the basis of the Statement released by the honourable Chief Minister, Bimala Prasad Chaliha on 12th March, 1968, a joint meeting of the Bodo leaders and representatives of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was held on 31st March, 1968 at Shillong in the residence of Ranendra Narayan
Basumatary at right 8.00 AM. This meeting was quite unofficial. This meeting unanimously took a decision in advance and decided to place it before the table of the official meeting. The decision reads as follows-

"We the undersigned who have been invited by the government of Assam to participate in the meeting to be held on the 31st March, 1968 at Shillong strongly feel convinced that the educational interest of the Bodo Community be better served by adopting Bodo language as medium of instruction in the secondary stage of education. Therefore the undersigned urged upon the Govt. of Assam to introduce the Bodo medium in the secondary stage of education and implement it from the current academic session forthwith by gradual upgrading from class IV and upward.

Twenty-two members both from govt. and Bodo Sahitya Sabha representatives signed this draft resolution. Ultimately this draft decision was accepted as the policy decision for implementation of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in secondary and upward stage, in the Government level meeting held on the same day at 10.00 AM. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Jaybhadra Hagjer, the then honourable Minister of Education. This decision of the government paved the way open for introduction of Bodo medium in secondary, Higher Secondary, undergraduate and Post-Graduate level.

In the year 1971 the first batch of the Bodo medium students in ME standard completed their education and came for admission into class VII in Secondary level. The government of Assam was quite indifferent on implementation of Bodo medium in Secondary level. On pressure of All Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the Honourable Chief Minister Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha arranged a joint meeting of Govt. of Assam and the representatives of All Bodo Sahitya Sabha on 6th June 1971. As per agreement of dialogue between Govt. and the representatives of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, ultimately the government agreed to implement Bodo medium in Secondary stage (High School Stage) as part of the Govt. standing policy decision of 31st March 1968. On 6th August 1972 Bodo medium was implemented in Secondary Stage.

Since the introduction of the Boro language as the medium of instruction in Primary school the use of suitable script for Bodo language had appeared as a major organizational issue before All Bodo Sahitya Sabha. In every session of All Bodo Sahitya Sabha it appeared as a matter of hot
discussion. The 8th Session of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, held at Kokrajhar in the year 1966 formed an Expert Committee for the settlement of script issue. This committee failed to suggest any concrete measure and hence another expert committee was formed in the Rangapara Session of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 1969. The Expert Committee recommended the Roman Script as the suitable script for the Bodo language. With much debate and discussion the recommendation of the Expert Committee was approved by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha. A team of representation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha met honourable Chief Minister of Assam, Sri Mahendra Mahon Choudhury on 30th August 1971 for discussion. The Chief Minister maintained quite anti Roman Script stand. The talk was miserably failed. Govt. of Assam politicized the script issue. The Government of Assam, guided by high caste Assamese Hindu bureaucrats had already became much cautious on the growing Bodo nationality movement and took it as a thread to the existence of Assamese nationality, and always charge for an opportunity to put stumbling block on the way to further development of Bodo nationality. This opportunity appeared before the government. Later, Mr Sarat Chandra Sinha, the Chief Minister of Assam, cunningly referred the matter to the Government of India for settlement saying that the question of Roman Script was a national issue to be settled by the Central Government. Meanwhile the situation in Boro areas was rapidly worsening because of calculated repressive measures adopted by the State Government to crush the movement. In this connection Mr Charan Narzary says, “I sense that the Boro Sahitya Sabha was losing its sustaining power and movement was almost on the verge of collapse. For the Bodo Sahitya Sabha it became a prestige issue to retreat and embrace the Assamese script again after losing a number of valuable innocent lives in the non-violent democratic movement. The BSS leaders seemed to be mentally prepared to accept any other script and not Assamese script. Thus forced by circumstances, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha finally had to accept the Devnagirri Script gracefully at the instance of the erstwhile Madam Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.”

The Office of the Prime Minister, Govt. of India, suggested Devnagiri Script for Boro language as alternative to Roman script. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha session held at Dhing, Nagaon accepted the Devanagiri script as the script for Bodo language after long debate and hot exchange. It was a compromise, forced by the circumstances. On the other hand the issue of script continued to remain as a matter of discourse for a section of over-ambitious people in Bodo society, who dream of becoming Messiah by championing the cause of Roman script for the Bodo language.
On subsequent time the government of Assam changed its attitudes toward and other indigenous tribes and adopted a policy of dialogue and mutual understanding in resolving issues relating to language, literatures, education, curriculum, creation of post etc. In the introduction of Bodo language as MIL subject in the PU/HS and Under Graduate level Bodo Sahitya Sabha did not face any trouble. Bodo as a subject of Major Indian Language (MIL) in PU, Gauhati University was introduced in the academic year 1976 in Degree level in the year 1978, on 29th Feb. Introduction of Bodo language as the subject of MA, was formally begun on the 18th January, 1996. The history of the chronological development of Boro language is shown in Table-X.

**Chronological record of the development of Bodo language**

1. Emergence of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 16th Nov. 1952.
2. Introduction of Bodo language as the medium of instruction in Primary School, 18th July 1963.
3. Introduction of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in Middle English School (ME). 28th Sept. 1968.
5. Introduction of the Bodo language as the Major Indian Language (MIL) in Pre-University level: 1976, Academic Year in Gauhati University.
6. Introduction of the Bodo Language as the Major Indian Language (MIL) in Graduate or Degree level, 29th Feb'1978. First appeared in BA final Examination with Bodo as MIL subjects.
7. Introduction of the Bodo language as the subject in MA level in Gauhati University: 18th January 1996.
9. Introduction of Bodo MIL as a subject of State Level Eligibility Test for the of lecturer of Bodo MIL in the Colleges and Universities of Assam.: 28th Sept. 2003
11. Radio telecast started in Bodo language and Bodo section of All India Radio was started from AIR, Gauhati Station.

12. In 1989 April TV center at Kokrajhar was installed but still not yet been operated.

13. On 15th August 1999, a Centre of AIR in Bodo language was started at Kokrajhar.

14. Approved by the Govt. of India as the MIL paper in UPSC Examination.

15. 2006, August introduced Bodo as Major Course in Degree Level in Gauhati University and Advance Bodo Course as HS level in Assam.

The introduction of Bodo medium since 1963 has been associated with a number of relevant complicated issues. The failure of handling of these delicate issues amicably, the result of the introduction of Bodo medium in schools adversely affected academic carrier of Bodo medium students for a long period of time. The genuine problems are as follows-

Since the introduction of Bodo language as the medium instruction Bodo medium students have been facing with the diversity of problems like non-availability of teacher or under quality teachers. In the initial stage, in order to meet the dirt of teachers, the government of Assam relaxed the norms and qualifications for the appointment of teachers in Bodo medium in Primary, ME and even in Secondary level for a specific period of time. As a result, many under qualified teachers were appointed. Dirth of teachers in Science and Mathematic still stands as a serious problem for the Bodo medium students in Secondary levels and ME. As a result the academic standard of Bodo medium students have been adversely affected.

With the introduction of Bodo medium in Schools the existing available infrastructures were to divide and share between Bodo and Assamese medium faculties. Sometimes it was seen that the Bodo medium faculties were compelled to be shifted in separate campus. As a result, the schools with both mediums effected seriously with the problems infrastructure.

Non-availability of Text Book is a burning issue for all medium students. In case of Bodo medium this problem is multiplied by number of factors: 1) Lack of technical experts on different subjects - As a result, non-technical persons were to engage in the translation work and preparation of text books leading to publication of defective books quite unsuitable for academic purpose. 2)
The technical terms used in Bodo textbooks often represent different meaning, concept and ideas due to engagement of non-technical person on the subject. 3) Lack of fund attributed to non-publication or delayed publication of textbook. 4) Lack of coordination among Government authority, Text books Production Committee and other related agencies, like Sahitya Sabha, HS council, University etc.

Even in spite of all these shortcoming the output of the introduction of Bodo language as medium of instruction in school was appeared far better compare to the performance in Assamese medium in earlier time. During the time of Assamese medium the rate of passed out students of Bodo students in primary level was less than 20% and now after introduction of Bodo medium it increased upto 45%. During 50s and 60s the rate of dropped out students constituted more than 80% (both dropped out and failed). At present the rate of dropped out students in primary level is less than 30%.

The increased rate of success of the Bodo medium students in primary level was also fairly reflected in increasing enrolment of students in elementary and secondary level. It appears that there had been considerable improvement in the success rate in HSLC examination. Indeed the rate of success of the Bodo medium students in HSLC is admittedly lower than the success rate of the students from Assamese medium. 1963 onward; the Bodo medium students had maintained increasing trends in achieving quality education. After 1984-85 this trends reversed into decreasing order due to effect of continuous movement led by ASSU and ABSU, BLT etc. The negative impacts of vigorous movements led by different students and youth organizations created new situations leading to the development of negative trends in students’ achievement and performance. These situations are as follows-

1. Irregularity of teachers’ attendance.
2. Low quality teaching.
3. Lack of supervision and control over the functioning of school.
4. Low quality management of Schools
5. Lack of coordination between superior and subordinate organization of the school management system.
6. Indifferent attitude of the elite section of society towards Bodo medium School.

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The continuous stress and strains caused by the series of movement have created certain new development in the Bodo medium school from primary level onwards:

1. Decreasing enrolment of students.
2. Decreasing attendance of Students
3. Indifferent attitude of teachers and guardians and management.
4. Decreasing level of quality teaching
5. Declining quality performance
7. Violent and defying attitude of students in examination hall.
8. Absence of quality control and management.
9. Lack of basic infrastructure.
10. Lack of check and balance on the functioning of school

All these development created a totally different attitude among the parents and guardians towards the vernacular medium schools under government management. Elite and middle class sections of society are also less concern about the new circumstances affecting the academic standards. Because they have money to purchase better education for their children. The confidence and attitude of the people towards vernacular medium school has completely damaged. Their faith and confidence to vernacular medium school have shifted to the English medium schools and colleges run by the private entrepreneurs. The inherent weaknesses of the people towards English medium school encourage further mushroom growth of English medium schools everywhere in the state. Apathy and indifference of the people are multiplied by non-availability of textbooks, standard literature and reference books essential for carrier development and orientation to competition in life. Contrary to schools and colleges under government management system English medium schools and colleges under private management maintain ideal features of a model school and colleges like:

- a. Quality Control and Management
- b. Order and discipline
- c. Regularity in academic activities
- d. Quality teaching
- e. Quality achievement
- f. High level competition and result oriented education
- g. Teaching as profession
- d. Involvement of parent and guardians
- h. Provision for basic infrastructure

The standard of the Bodo language and literature is still young and will have to wait for more time for achievement into maturity. The Bodo language and literature failed to fulfill the basic mental needs, ideal, philosophical, intellectual and psychological and interest of the intellectual
community. Comparatively better literature is available in Bengali, Assamese and English etc. Globalization threats to the existence of small nationalities. Similar type threats are hitting, Assamese, Oriya, Marathi, Punjabi etc. language. Bodo language and literature appeared in the International level and included in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This achievement is political rather than literature.

Children Literature, Science literature, Drama, prose literature, literary criticism are still young. Bodo literature failed to fulfill the intellectual needs of enlighten sections of society. High-level universal thinking and Philosophy is rare. Short story, Novel Essays are very limited. People think- Boro language and literature have no bright future. Due to number of factors, the question of sustenance of Boro language and literature would be great challenge in future.

7.3 The socio-cultural consciousness, which started its beginning with socio-religious reformation movement, i.e., ‘Brahma Dharma Movement’, gradually transformed into the movement for political autonomy. Bodo society, once which constituted an integral part of the composite society of Assam slowly and gradually alienated from the mainstream of Assamese society. Deep introspections over the issue show a number of factors that attributed to alienation of the Bodos and other tribal people of Assam from the composite society of Assam.

7.4.1 Social inequality is inherent feature of Hindu social structure. Since immemorial, a section of Orthodox *Varnabodis* keeping their narrow political, economic and caste interest always have been insisting on the principles of divide and rule as a technique of domination. The system of caste is basically based on this principle, in which the members of society are divided into a number of categories into high and low and pure and impure. In earlier chapter, some historical samples have been presented how a homogenous, egalitarian and archaic community of people through the process of sanskritization and upward social mobility, gradually transformed into a number of social groups with feeling of opposition to each other like, pure and impure and superiority and inferiority among themselves. Caste structure in Assam never attained into the height of social curse leading to untouchability. A picture of superficial hierarchy of statuses could be drawn among the people of Assam, though, practically, no hierarchy of status is maintained among them. Practically each of the groups is equivalent to each other. But the idea of purity and pollution is
loosely maintained among them. From empirical situation a picture of hierarchy among the people of Assam may be drawn this way- Bodo: Khena>Sarania>Pani-Koch>Hharu-Koch>Bor-Koch>Rajbongshi>Kalita>Mahanta etc.

These traditions of social (caste) inequality and cultural exploitation through the principle of divide and rule policy, in spite of a number of religious reform movements in Indian history, continued to exist in Hindu society. These movements were rather necessary periodical outburst of the tensions and revolt of the people against the existing traditions of exploitation. However, after every movement the dominant caste groups slowly accommodated, readjusted and consolidated their caste hold in the society and upheld the principles of caste inequality. Though the Vaishnava Guru, Sri Sri Sankardeva and many other religious gurus done a lot for humanity, equality and mankind but the spirit of inequality, pure and impure is clearly evident in inter-caste and inter-community interactional level even among the followers of these gurus. Restrictions in marriage, food habit and interactions in many respects of social life are strictly followed. Tribal and scheduled caste people were not allowed to dine with the caste Hindu people together. They do not take cooked food from the tribals and antyajas. They were termed as Asura, Rakshwas, Chandalas, Danavas, Daityas, and Antyajas etc. Their traditions and practices were regarded as *kuachar*, Language as *kuvasa*. Students were not allowed to stay along with caste Hindu students in the same hostel even in the government hostel. In every important college, there was a separate arrangement of hostel for tribal students. In this situation, some of the Vaishnava gurus like Mayamara Satradhikar and in the later period Pitambor Deva Goswami have taken some important measure for unity and equality. But, that trend was not so strong.

This tradition of divide and rule policy has been followed even after independence. In the name of reorganization of States and protection and preservation of the interest of different communities As a result of the reorganization of state, a section of people of the same community come within the fold of particular (Scheduled) Tribe or Caste category and rest of the same section come under different constitutional category. Boros, Rajbongshis and many other homogenous groups are badly suffered by this policy. Boros and other plains tribes of Assam living in Karbi Anglong District are constitutionally treated as non-tribal. The plains tribes of Assam are treated as OBC in Hills areas of Assam. The distinction between Hills and Plains are demarcated in Political technique to weaken a community Boros of Bengal and Meghalaya and even of Karbi Anglong.
and Haflong are brought under OBC category. This thing is now emerging as serious socio-cultural and political question. They are not included within the Scheduled Tribe category of Indian Constitution. Their rights are not constitutionally protected. The number of Bodo populations living outside the BATAD area taken together constitutes not less than many individual tribes of north East India. They do not enjoy the political and economic benefits that are enjoyed by the Boro people living in Bodoland Council area. Whereas their plight is the same.

Bodo people living in different parts of Northeastern region are identified by different names like, in Bengal as Mech, in upper and middle part of Assam as Kachari. But they have their own community names in like, Sonowal, Deori-Chutia, Boro, and Tiwa in the plains of Assam, Dimacha in Kachar, and Kok-Brok in Tripura. Even after Hinduisation the process of divide and rule policy continues unabated. Converted Bodos too are put in different categories like, Khena or Sarania, Hharu-Koch, Pani-Koch, Bor-Koch, Rajbongshi, Kalita etc. Likeness is the source of unity and unity is a force. Absolute ruler never desires unity among the people as a force. Difference and inequality on any aspect like, social, economic, religion, or some other else, are accepted and utilized as condition or conditions for designing social structure in which each caste category stands not as a homogenous group, but stands as opposition to each other.

"Pride of Hinduism for historical role played by Hinduism in bringing about a synthesis of the various ethnic groups leading to formation of a general society. But its infinitely absorbing power notwithstanding, Hinduism major characteristic of the caste system-made the social syncretism only superficial."²⁹ The Hindu Mahashabjria and other Hindu Reformists Organizations recognized converted Tribals as Kshatriya, but they are practically treated as untouchables by the high caste Hindu."²⁹ The continued humiliation inflicted towards the ethnic groups by the caste Hindu people caused much aversion amongst them against the mainstream of Assamese society, whose dominant members were high caste Hindus. The hostile attitude of the tribals against the mainstream Assamese was reflected on many occasions. In as far back as 1922, the annual conference of the Assam Kachari Sanmilan held at Titabar took the following resolution-

"Resolved that the meeting is of opinion that the Kachari Community of Assam do not recognize themselves as a lower class of Hinduism, as untouchables, and do hereby declare that they are quite independent from the Hindu community in all respects such as political, social, religious etc."³⁰
The Bodos of Goalpara district made the following complaint “Socially they (the Bodos) are regarded as untouchables. To call them Hindu will be a misnomer in as much as the Hindus do not receive them into their society, do not dine with them and are mostly unsympathetic to their ideas and aspirations. They are, an isolated backward community.31

“One of the most responsible factors as to why the tribals have become alienated from the mainstream of Assam is the attitude of the Assamese people. The Assamese people have never accepted the tribal as a part and parcel of the Assamese community, and society in a real sense, though they give a motivated slogan of greater Assamese Nationality. As for instance, a Goswami, Brahmin family will never allow or agree to give their daughter for a social marriage with a tribal youth.”32 The high caste Assamese Hindus regarded them as antyaja or polluted and led a very much-restricted social life with the Bodos and other tribes.

If the casteist pride of the Assamese was one barrier to integration, the other barrier is their imperious attitude towards the tribal population. The Assamese middle class, in the hope of creating a homogenous Assamese society through out the North-East, endeavored to run their cultural and linguistic wheels of juggernaut over the tribals.33

7.4.2 The primary basis of tribal economy is land and the natural environment they live. The conflict occurred between Assam, Nagaland, Assam and Meghalaya and Assam and Arunachal are basically based on land. For the promotion and development of these backward classes of people, the policy of protection and preservation, as conditions, these Belts and Blocks were created for them.34

Since the beginning of renaissance in India the dominant Hindu community strongly advocated the policy of assimilation as the process of national building. On the other hand with a view to protect the small tribes and ethnic groups from extinction, the British government followed the policy of isolation. Some of the tribal areas were declared as restricted areas to save them from the total assimilation.

At the time of the Sadulla Ministry in Assam, the line system was created for the protection and preservation of Bodo and other Tribal areas and free entry of the non-tribal people was
restricted by this system. The line system was withdrawn by the policy of “Grow more food campaign” and access of non-tribal people were allowed in certain areas for clearing forest land for agricultural purpose. More trial for enacting regulations for the protection of Tribal people was started.35

The Provision of Separate Electorate System as laid down in the India Act. of 1935, was availed by the Assam Plains Tribal Party the only tribal political party of the time by an agreement concluded with the Assam Congress on 10-3-1939 and also with the Muslim League (United Party) on 16-3-1940 on certain terms and conditions. By a provision of Line System Tribal areas were converted into restricted area for its protection and preservation. Special provision for the settlement of landless Tribal people was also incorporated. These terms and conditions were never fully implemented.36

After the abolition of the Line system, the Chapter X was incorporated in the Assam Land Revenue Regulation Act. In 1947, the Assam Assembly approved the Act, 1886 with certain modification, which was enacted by the colonial government for protection of tribal land. Under this Act. 45 Tribal Belt and Blocks were created. But, since the time of independence Tribal Belt and Blocks were exposed to encroachment for the outsiders.

These Belts and Blocks were the basis of survival with their distinct socio-cultural identity and integrity in broader national as well as regional society. To identify the Belts and Blocks area and accordingly adoption of necessary measure for protection and preservation lies with the Government and bureaucrats. But since independence the govt. showed quite indifference in this regard. The government itself becomes the primary agency and initiator for eliminating the tribal Belts and Block areas. The Government structures, institutions are always installed in tribal belts and blocks areas displacing the inhabitants without giving adequate compensation and alternative rehabilitation.

After independence even after the creation of Tribal Belts and Blocks, non-Scheduled people were allowed to settle till recently patronized by the Government agencies. Rehabilitation of refugees has always been made in the tribal land. Unauthorized encroachers occupy the tribal land and the laws for eviction of illegal encroachers have never been applied due to interference of a section of vested political interests. Many refugees and displaced people, indigenous and outsiders are rehabilitating in these area under government care.37
With an amendment of Assam Revenue Act. 1986, by the inclusion of Chapter X, the policy of the protection of tribal land was created. As per this Act the people who had been the permanent settlers of these areas before the creation of Belts and Blocks, their rights and interests would be protected. Henceforth, the people of non-scheduled categories are constitutionally disqualified for settlement in the Scheduled area. With the joint efforts of political leaders and bureaucrats, illegal and unauthorized people have been encroaching in the Scheduled area and they were allowed to be settled.

The amendments made by the inclusion of Chapter X of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act. 1986 provides the following clauses-

(a). No land holder transfer his land in Belt or Block to any person not belonging to a class of people noticed under section 160 or to any person who is not a permanent resident in the belt or block and that.

(b). No such land holder shall transfer his land in a Belt or Block to any person who is a permanent resident in that Belt or Block or who does not belong to the noticed or protected classes except with due permission of the Deputy Commissioner.

As a piece of further safeguards against illegal transfer of land within the Tribal Belts and Blocks from the protected classes including the tribals to non-eligible persons, The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment Act.) 1990. Accordingly another section namely "164(B)" has been added to the section"164 (A)". This newly added section provides penalty for both to the transferor and the transferee in case of illegal transfer of land. The section runs as follows-

“If any transfer of land is affected in contravention of the provisions of this chapter both the transferor and the transferee shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may be extended to six months or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees or both.”

Alienation of their land, agricultural and residential, to the hands of moneylender, caused irreparable damaged to the socio-economic and political interest of tribal people. Everywhere the outsiders, national and foreign, outnumber indigenous tribal people. The community identity and economic life of the people become quite uncertain. For the safeguard of their community identity and economic security almost all major tribal people of Assam, Tiwa, Mishing, Rabha, Boro compelled to demand ‘autonomous rule’ Due to obstruction of non-tribal encroachers there was delayed in granting autonomy.37
Affected by two types of encroachers, one is local and national and another one is outsider. Migration is desirable in case of administrative, commerce and business. It becomes threats when it crosses the limit, snatching the land and employment opportunity from the hands of the indigenous. It happens only because of the indifferent attitudes of the government towards the interest of tribal people. For the fulfillment of desire of community or a race, right to protect landed property, economic right is also very essential along with the political right.

Necessary instruments prepared by the government should implement in letter and spirit for evicting the illegal encroachers settled in tribal Belts and Block areas. Those who have been the settlers even before the creation of Belts and Block should be allowed equal right.

Necessary instruments available in the hands of the government for social, economic, educational development of tribal people are not properly handled. The people were led to live a natural life. Nothing sort of special care was taken by the government for the uplift of the tribal people. On the other hand if any special care is taken by Christian missionary for the tribal that is severely criticized as anti national. The Hills tribes of north east are fortunate enough, because they got much care and attention for socio-cultural, economic, educational and political awareness from the missionaries for which they are lagging ahead of the tribal people of the plains. Special constitutional right is meaningless to the illiterate, unconscious, simple, ignorant people if it is not initiated and properly implemented by technically expert authorized agency. It is like a coconut for a baby, which is never for consumption.

1. 66,786 bighas of lands were deconstituted under different Govt orders out of 3,02,545 B.O.K.L. of the Bijni Tribal Block in Old Goalpara District which was originally constituted by the Govt of Assam order No RD/69/46/20 dt. 5.12.47 and RD/69/29 dt. 30.8.48 and where now the then East Pakistani refugee colony in the name and style of Bishnupur Colony exists.

2. 1,29,202 B.O.K.O.L. Lands were deconstituted under Govt. Order No RSD/26/64/PI/38 dtd 30/7/69 from out of the total areas of 7,72,454 B.O.K.L of South Kamrup (Guwahati) Tribal Belt which was originally constituted by Govt. order RD/74/46/172 dtd. 27/2/50 (the present site of the capital complex at Dispur was the part of this dereserved area)

3. 47,157 B.O.K.O.L lands were deconstituted out of total area of 4,62,637 B.O.K.O.L. of Tamulpur Tribal Belt (Gauhati and Nalbarri) Sub-Division of Kamrup District) which was originally constituted by Govt order No- RD/74/46/161 dtd 22-8-49
4. 37,862 bighas land deconstituted vide Govt Order No.-63/49/15/ dtd. 22/11/49 (Tihu Revenue Circle) out of the total area of 3,77,512 B.O.K.O.L. of Baska Tribal Belt, created vide Govt. order No. RD/74/46/161 dtd. 22/8/49.

5. North Lakhimpur Town and 23 villages, had been deconstituted by Govt. order in 1969 out of the total area of 6,00,160 B.O.K.O.L. from North Lakhimpur (Sub mountain) Tribal Belt. This Belt was constituted vide Govt. Order No. RD/92/46/34 dtd. 28/4/1948. (These data are collected from the Report of the ‘Sub-Committee of Advisory Council for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes(Plains)’ on settlement of land on Tribal Belts and Blocks and Forest Land, 1976 constituted by the Govt. of Assam vide Govt. Order No. TAD/ACB/84/74/4 dt. 10th July, 1974 & No. TAD/ACB/87/74/Pt.22 Dt. 31st July 1974.

(These instances are extracted from the Memorandum To Three Member Expert Committee on Bodo Issue, p.74-75)

“The tribal turbulence at present shaking the very foundations of Assamese society has also a number of historical roots.” “Up to the end of the 19th century the process of assimilation of the various ethnic groups living within the boundary of Assam went on almost unimpeded. As in other parts of India, in Assam also Sanskritization at one time made positive contributions towards social synthesis by holding fast the diverse social segments and thus paving the way for a composite Assamese culture and society.”

Land alienation and encroachment created serious problems. “Mr. Thaneswar Boro, the Revenue Minister of Assam during the Chief Ministership of Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, personally admitted that 21 lakh 13 thousand and 40 bighas of land in Tribal Belts and Blocks under the illegal occupation of non-tribal encroachers.”

Machiavellian shrewdness, the policy of divide and rule in India was not a new thing. Kings with their ally counselor, the Brahmin, in letter and spirit used this policy to divide people for their narrow sectional interest and for continuation of power domination on hereditary line over the rest of the population.

Zaminders, the agents of feudal kings, who were none other but their own people turned into instruments of cultural, social and economic exploitation. “Zaminders crushed them to dust by levying upon them numerous taxes like bon kor, jol kor, magon kor etc. (Avoidance of taxes was one of the reasons why the tribals, particularly the Bodos, frequently took to shifting of cultivation.)”
7.4.3 The entire history of including the history of the Bodos was disfigured and rearranged. Artificial historical conditions were prepared. Historical facts were misinterpreted. Some ficticious things were added. The actual history of the actual people of mainland was driven out to Hills and jungle area. The glorious history of Culture and Civilization of the Bodos, developed in entire Greater Bengal was pushed out to Kachar, Tripura and Dimapur only. The histories of the autochthons were blackmailed in the interest constructing glorious history of Aryan language, culture, religion and civilization etc. Nothing is clearly found in the classical Hindu literatures about the ancient civilization of the autochthonous people of India. Only with the establishment of British rule in India scientific approach to the study of Society, culture and History was started. Recent researches conducted under different universities are more scientific than earlier. Earlier studies were mostly based on classical literature. Modern studies are based on archaeological facts and inter-disciplinary approaches. Recent researches conducted by the Archaeological department and Gauhati and Dibrugarh University brought a new light in the Kachari history of Upper and Middle Assam which was earlier blackmailed in the name of Aryan, culture, religion, language etc. Histories of the Varman, Salstambha, Pal, Sen, Koch, Boraho, and Bhouma dynasties were mis-represented and misinterpreted. Enlightened Bodos come across to the actual histories of these Royal dynasties and realized how their glorious history of the past was maligned by vested section of historians. Discovery of their glorious history creates a sense of self-respect among the new generation encouraging the entire Bodo community to reassert their self-identity and reinstall their lost image in broader Indian society. The glorious histories of the Bodos were reflected in the early Bodo literature, poetry, drama, newspapers, Journals, magazine etc, which exerted tremendous influence in developing Bodo nationality spirit.

The foundation of Assamese society is rooted in the Aryan language, culture and religious traditions. But the demographic basis of the Assamese population undoubtedly stands on the autochthonous people of the region. The endeavor for building of the structure of Assamese nationality was just started with the establishment of British rule in Assam. The trend of sanskritisation was faded away with the expansion of Islam. And that was fully revitalized during the time of national movement. The Assamese nationality movement was mingled and coincides with Indian national movement. The great challenge stood before the builders of Assamese nationality was 'unity amongst the diverse groups of people with diverse language, culture, religion and ethnicity'. Absorption and Assimilation of the autochthonous people into Hindu social structure through the process of
Sanskritisation was an old tradition and even during the time of national movement also it remained to be a strong tradition. Since pre-historic time, non-tribal, the autochthonous kings and elite sections of their society always patronized this process. During that time, ethnicity was not a problem and it was beyond the imagination of the builders of Assamese nationality that ethnicity based on language and tribe would create problems in the future. Rather, the pan-Aryan psychology swept the autochthonous people. The persons who took important roles in building of Assamese nationality were the same persons who took vital roles in building of Indian nationalism. The builders of Assamese nationality were obviously and rationally but not emotionally, inclined and guided by Aryanism in building of greater Assamese nationality, as it was a strong force during that time. And they never considered the existence of small communities as a thread to the origin, development and existence of Assamese nationality. And hence treated the small communities as a part of broader Assamese society. The barriers lies between tribal and non-tribal, higher and lower castes, is rooted in Hindu tradition. And this tradition is slowly changed into community barrier between Assamese and non-Assamese.

In 1972 on September 23, the Assam Legislative Assembly took a resolution to the effect that in all educational institutions under the purview of the two universities then existing in Assam, the medium of instruction should be Assamese. Decision was dictatorial and only for Assamese. The tribals have been looked down upon, they have often been repressed and reproached, and their voices of dissent muffled; because they are in a lower phase of economy than Assamese people generally are. The year 1962 was nightmarish year for those ethnic people to whom Assamese was more or less a foreign language. For in that year the Assam Legislative Assembly passed a bill prescribing Assamese as the Official language of entire greater Assam "Thus ironically enough, it was Assamese Chauvinism which, instead of creating a greater Assam, had reduced Assam to a narrow geographical boundary."43

Role of militant Assamese nationality during language movement of 1972 created contradictory environment against the development of indigenous tribal language and literature. Negative roles played by the Assamese chauvinism during Roman script movement in 1974 was in no way matter of human tolerance; instead of going under suppression it enflames the spirit of revolt against the government or any other obstruction on the way to their demand.

The foundation of Assamese nationality cannot be separated from the indigenous people of Assam. The demographic, socio-cultural basis and strength of Assamese community is the...
indigenous people. The structuring of history and Assamese language and culture was initiated under the patronage of the tribal kings of Bodo-Kachari origin and their subjects. Linguistic base is Aryan but demographic basis is tribal. People claiming low as well as high caste status in the society are also basically having the same origin.

7 4 4 The extreme Assamese chauvinism based on Assamese language and culture which was developed after sixties boosted other ethnic groups of Assam to fight for their socio-cultural, political and other constitutional rights in an organized way. In pre-independent period the people of Assam were not divided on community or ethnic lines. People were worked together for freedom against the British imperialism. When advanced Assamese Caste Hindu people were fighting for the construction of greater Assamese nationality based on Aryan language, culture and civilization, encompassing all other ethnic groups of Assam taken together along with freedom movement in national level, and then socio-cultural consciousness among the Bodos and other tribes was just like a newborn baby. They were quite unaware of their backwardness and historical alienation and assimilation of their socio-cultural identities to caste Hindu and Islamic society. Till sixties Bodo students considered themselves as an integral part of the Students community of Assam. Along with other factors Assamese chauvinism hasten the development of ethnocentric attitude among the Bodos and other tribes. "It may be noted that until the beginning of 1967, there was no common forum for the Bodo students at the state level. Of course, there were many Bodo students associations at various localities almost in all the Districts of Assam. The functions of these associations were confined to hold their Annual Conferences through which efforts were made to instill a sense of socio-cultural awareness among the Bodo students and public at large. During the conferences they organized sports, cultural shows, exhibitions, and also campaigning a little bit of social works such as construction of village roads, irrigation, canals, etc. They also undertook programmes of social reformations such as prohibition of liquor and all other evil practices and superstitions prevalent in the backward Bodo society. "These lines are ample to understand the background and objectives of the emergence of Bodo Students' associations. Definitely it was the outcome of the impact of Brahma Dharma and other socio-cultural and political movements that were taken place in particularly the then Bengal and Assam. Even before the emergence of All Bodo Students Union in State level, different Bodo students' organizations came into existence in local level with different names. They worked for welfare of the students' community as well as for the society in their locality. The most important example is the "Kachari (Boro) Chatra Sanmilan". Which was formed
under the guidance of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, in the year 1919. "Being the first generation of the enlightened Boros and having been inspired by Kalicharan Brahma they gave a unique contribution to the development of education and literature of the Bodos." The mission of the Boro Chatra Sanmilani was purely non-political and their activities were purely confined to the welfare of the Boro students' community. The Bodo students associations originated in the subsequent time maintained functionally non-political character in attitude and action. Boro Charta Sanmilani took some other important measures to create awareness and encourage the Bodo students as well as people towards education. Some of the important measures are-

i. Organization of Trust for poor students known as Daridra Boro Chatra Bhandar. The fund for trust was collected from the public and distributed to the meritorious students in the form of scholarship.

ii. Measures for giving awards to meritorious students for outstanding performance.

iii. Organization of conventions for distributing awards and scholarship to successful students. These conventions worked as the agency of educational awareness amongst the students and the people. The Boro Chatra Sanmilani, which was a product of the social revolution of the early 20th century, brought about an upsurge of the spirit in thought and pursuit of education among the Boros. The Boro parents and children got new inspiration and realized the importance of education in the new era and as a result of it, the number of school goers increased remarkably and in the Boro areas more primary schools and Middle schools came into existence. The ideological maneuvering and initiative for organizing a common platform for Bodo students' community was started amongst the students' leaders of old Goalpara District. They felt the need of integration of different Bodo Students Associations lying scattered in different districts and localities. Goalpara District Bodo Students Union, which was formed in the year 1965, was the strongest of all. In this connection Charan Narzary, honorable Ex-MP & MLA has stated as, "For the purpose of integrating all Bodo Students associations scattered in different localities in various districts and to create a common platform under one umbrella, the senior Bodo students leaders studying at Kokrajhar College convened a meeting of the Bodo Students on 15.2.67 at Kokrajhar College, which was attended by students representatives from other Districts as well. On this day the organization of All Bodo Students’ Union was formally founded. The functional area of the organization of All Bodo Students’ Union represents not only Assam but it represents the entire Bodo students community of the world. And in the same year on 27th Feb, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam, the first Political organization was founded by the joint efforts of Bodo students and leadership
category of the Bodo people of Assam with an objective of gaining Separate State for the Plains
Tribal People of Assam. Both the ABSU and the PTCA were the birth child of the intellectual
exercise of the educated Bodo nationalists, students and people of old Goalpara District. The
formation of ABSU and PTCA was the milestone in the history of movement for political autonomy
for the Bodos.

Since inception, ABSU has been playing tremendous roles in the socio-cultural, literary
and political upsurge of the Bodo society. ABSU, which started its humble beginning as the follower
and allied organization of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and PTCA, after Bodoland movement in 1988,
emerged itself as the parent and master organization of the whole Bodo Society. In all important
and serious matters, ABSU had been the friend, ally, assistant, guide and co-worker of the Bodo
Sahitya Sabha. Both ABSU and BODO Sahitya Sabha maintained this tradition till now. ABSU
stood as a force and energy and guiding spirit behind all important organizational affairs of the
Bodo Sahitya Sabha. In maneuvering every important policy decisions on language, literature,
education, medium of instruction etc ABSU held the position of guiding spirit. ABSU has extended
its active support to the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in its endeavor for introduction of the Bodo language
as the medium of instruction starting from Primary to Secondary level. All Bodo Students’ Union
had been a strong force behind Goalpara District Bodo Sahitya Sabha during the movement for
the introduction of the Bodo language as the medium of instruction in secondary level.

While Assamese speaking people launched a vigorous movement for the recognition of
Assamese language as the sole Official Language of Assam, the Bodo students Union along with
Bodo Sahitya Sabha and other minority Community organizations launched a movement for retention
of English as Official language along with Assamese in mainland Assam, Bengali in Kachar District
and English in Hills areas of the then greater Assam. When All Assam Students Union lunched a
vigorous movement for the introduction of Assamese as the sole medium of instruction in Higher
Secondary and Colleges of Assam, ABSU launched a movement for the retention of English as the
medium of instruction in the colleges for the convenience of the non-Assamese medium students
ABSU took a very active role in the Roman Script movement launched by Bodo Sahitya Sabha in
1974-75. In fact ABSU had been the strong force behind the organization and operation of Roman
Script movement. Thousands of ABSU activists suffered a lot for the cause of script movement.
ABSU played a strong and constructive role in the recognition of the Bodo language as the Associate
Official language of Assam in Kokrajhar District and Udalguri sub-Division in 1984.50

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Since 1967, ABSU and PTCA maintained close relationship between the two. In fact, ABSU extended strong support to PTCA in the extension of organizational base of PTCA in grass root level in the entire Northern Tract of Brahmaputra Valley specially among the Bodos. ABSU extended its full support to PTCA on demand of Separate Autonomous Region of Udayachal for Plains Tribal people of Assam and had been working together hand in hand for the realization of the cause. On 20th May 1967, the PTCA, for the first time submitted a memorandum to the President of India, Jakir Hussain in New Delhi, on demand of Separate Autonomous Region for Plains Tribal People of Assam. The PTCA and the ABSU jointly boycotted the Parliamentary election on 19th May 1968 to draw the attention of the Central Government on demand of Separate Autonomous region. In the State Assembly Election, 1972, Mr. Charan Narzary, the General Secretary of the PTCA was elected defeating nearest rival of the Congress Party and the then Cabinet Minister Mr. Ranendra Narayan Basumatary. In 1973, the demand for Autonomous Region was upgraded to the Creation of Union Territory of Udayachal. On support of ABSU and even the eminent workers of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the PTCA consolidated its organizational ground amongst the mass Bodo people.

In the General State Assembly Election of 1977, the PTCA own four seats and joined in the coalition government headed by Janata Party. Mr. Samar Brahma Choudhury returned in the State Legislative Assembly and got the berth of Cabinet Minister for him in the coalition government. Mr. Charan Narzary, the General Secretary, PTCA was elected as the MP. After joining the government the PTCA suspended its demand for Union Territory of Udayachal and retreated to the demand of Autonomous Region without consultation and consent of the allied organizations and party supporters. Bodo Students Union and Young party workers vehemently opposed it. ABSU took major role along with PTCA in upbringing political renaissance amongst the Bodos. The ABSU and the young supporters withdrew their support to PTCA when the later, suspended the demand for Separate Union Territory of Udayachal after joining the Janata Government in 1977.

The break away of young faction of the PTCA formed a separate political organization as, Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA: Progressive) on 22nd May 1979 and submitted a memorandum Smt Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India, demanding separate state of 'Mishing Bodoland' on 8th July, 1980. The PTCA leadership undermined the sentiments of the youth forces who were always ready to sacrifice their lives for the noble cause of the Bodo nationality.
With the Parting of ABSU the mass base organizational support of PTCA started to erode and by the middle part of nineties had totally collapsed. The PTCA (P) succeeded in its attempt to draw the attention of the Central government of India towards their demand for political autonomy. In order to discuss on the question of political autonomy for tribal people of Assam, a joint discussion was arranged at Raj Bhavan, Shillong on 20th August, 1980 which was presided over by Yogendra Makwana, the then Minister of State for Home Affairs, Govt. of India, who was deputed by the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi as her Emissary. Mr. L. P. Shingh, the then Governor of Assam and Mr. H. C. Sarin, the Principal Adviser to the Governor, and the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Assam attended the meeting. Altogether 17 representatives from leading tribal organizations like, PTCA, PTCA (P), All Assam Tribal Sangha, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, ABSU, All Assam Tribal Students Union attended the discussion. While discussing the question of creation of a separate State for tribal people of Assam, Mr. L.P. Singh, the Governor of Assam, made a remark that Udayachal is misnomer, Bodoland is the most appropriate linguistically. The most important thing that is observed in the history of PTCA or PTCA (P) is that the Bodo leadership failed to secure the mass support from other tribal communities. Other tribal people of Assam did not extent their support to neither PTCA nor PTCA (P) because they had doubt on the leadership of the Bodo people. The reason attributed to this fact is that, when ABSU was steering movement for separate state of Bodoland then other tribal communities were under the total grip of mainstream leadership. Mishing, Sonowal, Chutia etc tribes of upper Assam totally were swept by the ASSU movement ABSU leadership attempted for the unification of PTCA and the PTCA (P) for several times. But due to indifferent attitude of PTCA leadership the humble attempts of ABSU were resulted into failure. On 1984 onwards, the PTCA (P) gradually turned non-functional as political force and slowly submerged with the mission, vision, spirit and organization of the ABSU.

During the time of ideological conflict between PTCA and ABSU, the ABSU leadership never remained as an idle. As students’ organization, ABSU worked restlessly on all issues, language, literature, economic, political in all time for interest of the Bodo people in Assam as per demand of the time. ABSU initiated a movement for the fulfillment 92-point charter of demand encompassing all genuine problems, economic, political, educational, language, socio-cultural etc on 2nd March 1987 in its own initiative and confidence, without depending on PTCA or Bodo Sahitya Sabha or any other organization. The 92 point charter of demand was placed before the Assam and the Central Government of India as well ABSU clearly realized that without movement, the Government
in Centre and State as well is not ready to concede any demand of the Bodo people for solution. Bodo people are to fight their own battle lonely for the cause of the Bodos without depending on others. ABSU realized that, ‘Bodo problems would remain unsolved until and unless the Separate State is created for the Bodos in northern tract of Brahmaputra and Autonomous Districts for the people of Karbi-Anglong and South Bank of Brahmaputra. The Government understands only the language of movement. Instead of organizing repeated movements for several issues, indeed it is more logical to launch a movement for the creation of Separate State of Bodoland in which they could be able to exercise their will, the concept of self determinations, for all round development of Bodo people as per needs.

In Bashbari Session, 1988, during the Presidentship of Upendra Nath Brahma, ABSU unanimously resolved to undertake a rigorous and mass movement for the creation of Separate State of Bodoland. And in the same session “Bodo Peoples’ Action Committee”(BPAC) was organized for the purpose of steering mass movement for separate State of Bodoland. Soon after the Bashbari Session, ABSU and BPAC initiated the movement for separate State. In this movement as many as 11035 people were killed. Hundreds of Bodo girls and women were raped and molested by the Assam Police. 11 Bodo women were gang raped by the Assam Police in Bhumka, No-12 in Kokrajhar District. Bodo villages in Gohpur area were completely burnt into ashes by joint attack of Assam Police and Chauvinists Assamese in 1989. Hundreds of youths were murdered brutally by the police in the open field in the presence of villagers and guardians. The AGP government of Assam left no stone unturned to crush down the Bodoland movement and to wash out the Bodo Community from the soil of Assam.54

The ABSU movement took a violent shape. At some times it was gone beyond the control of the ABSU leadership. Besides, police atrocities, some militant supporters of ABSU resorted to killing of some innocent civilians whom they considered as anti- Bodoland movement. Bihuram Boro, the Ex-Secretary, Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Samar Brahma Choudhury, Vice-President of PTCA, the most remarkable personalities of the time, became the victims of the militant activists. Hundreds of bridges, Government offices, veterinary and dispensaries were either destroyed or burnt down. Out of fear many Assamese intellectuals shifted to other safe areas. Compulsory taxation was imposed on government employees and businessmen of Bodo dominated areas. The atrocities, repercussions, damage and havoc created during ABSU movement were far to less in compare to the havoc created by ASSU & AGSP during foreigner Deportation movement.
To consolidate the mass support ABSU in its own initiative gave birth to a number of allied organizations and these Organizations worked for ABSU movement as strong organizational organs. The allied organizations created by ABSU initiative are-

2. All Bodo Employees Federation (ABEF)
3. All Assam Tribal Women’s Welfare Federation (AATWWF).
4. Bodo People’s Union for Human Right and Civil Liberties.
5. All Bodo Lawyers’ Association.
6. All Bodo Samaj.

Many Non-Bodo organizations also extended their full support to Bodoland movement along with other leading Boro organisations. More than 27 organizations, Bodo and Non-Bodo, either actively participated or extended moral support to the Bodoland movement.

The first phase of the Bodoland movement came to an end with the signing of Bodo Accord on the 20th February, 1993 between the Centre-State and Bodo movement leaders. On behalf of the Centre Mr. Rajesh Pilot and on behalf of State, the Chief Minister, Mr. Hiteswar Saikia signed in the accord. Mr. Sansuma Khungur Basumatary, the then President of ABSU was the first signatory of this accord on behalf of the movement leaders and organizations. By this accord, Bodoland Autonomous Council was arranged. This political arrangement was put on trial for some years and the ABSU, the prime signatory of the accord considered the BAC arrangement, nothing but a mockery. Because, no power of autonomy, economic, political, legislative etc were granted to BTC by this arrangement. In the 28th Langching Session, 1996, ABSU formally denounced the BTC arrangement and was resolutely decided to fight unitedly till the creation of Separate State of Bodoland.

7.4.5 The Bodo Accord of 1993 between the All Bodo Students’ Union, Govt. of Assam and the Union Govt. which led to the creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council failed miserably. The causes for the failure of the Bodo Accord was mainly due to lackadaisical attitude on the part of the state Govt. of Assam and the Union Govt. in regards to implementation of the clauses of Bodo Accord. There was no delimitation of boundary of the Council areas, no withdrawal of the
cases leveled against the movement activists, no relief and rehabilitation of the martyr families, no
delimitation of constituencies for holding Council election and no holding of Council elections and
so on and so forth. In protest against all these the Chief of the Interim Council, Mr. Sansuma
Khungur Bwiswumuthiary (the first signatory of the Accord) tendered his resignation. Then Mr.
Premising Brahma, the then Deputy Chief of the Council (Chairman of Bodo Militant Force who
surrendered giving due honour to the Bodo accord along with his colleagues) was elevated to the
post of the Chief of BAC. He, too failed to get Bodo Accord implemented. The ABSU, the
struggling Bodo organization and the signatory of the Bodoland Accord, denounced the Bodo
Accord totally in its Langhin Session (Karbi Anglong) 1996 and resolved to launch movement for
Separate State afresh along with its two other demands - Creation of Nilachal District Council in
the South Bank of the river Brahmaputra and inclusion of the Bodos living in the Karbi-Anglong in
the ST (H) list. The ABSU started a series of agitational programmes. The members of Bodo
Militant Force who surrendered only with its Chief Premising Brahma were suffering from untold
miseries due to non-implementation of Bodo Accord and as they became unarmed fell easy prey
to the hands of rival group, National Democratic Front of Bodoland. They found themselves between
monster and deep sea. Some of them were killed either by Security forces or by rival NDFB,
some were languishing in jails tortured and humiliated. Asserting of NDFB with arms activities
became a thread to the ABSU leadership over the Bodoland and other issues. Emergence of
Peoples’ Democratic Front (PDF), a political party on 24 March, 1996 patronized by the NDFB
and subsequently winning in the six seats in the Assembly Election of 1996 compelled to think
ABSU and BMF leader in other wise. And chose arm struggle as the alternative way left for them
to fight for cause of Bodoland as well as for their security.

At that juncture, one Mr. Chilagang Basumatary, blue eyed boy of Bodofa Upendra Nath
Brahma and trusted lieutenant of Premising Brahma, took advantage of the situation by regrouping
the members of erstwhile Bodo Militant Force forming the Bodo Liberation Tigers on the 20th
Feb', 2003, with himself as the Chairman in 1996. The main objective of the BLT was to bring
about all round security and development of the Bodos through an armed revolution. The demands
of the BLT were in line with that of ABSU, i.e., 1. Creation of Separate State of Bodoland within
Indian Union, 2. Creation of Autonomous Council on the South Bank of Brahmaputra and 3 Inclusion
of the Bodos in Karbi-Anglong in the ST (H) list. The BLT Cadres used to resort certain violent
activities such as bomb blasting in railways, bridges and public places. It may be mentioned here

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that the founder Chairman, Mr. Chilagang Basumatary died of cancer in 1997 and the then Deputy C-in-C, Mr. Hagrama Basumatary (now MahiJary) step into his shoes. Then came the famous proxy war between India and Pakistan in the Kargil, Drass and Batalic sectors of Jammu and Kashmir. Expressing solidarity with the Union Govt. of India and on a good gesture the BLT declared a unilateral ceasefire in that situation of national distress. The National Democratic Alliance Govt. realized the gravity of the situation and reciprocated the ceasefire. Ground rules for the Ceasefire prepared Monitoring Cell formed and a series of unofficial and official talks were held between the BLT, Govt. of Assam and the Govt. of India since March, 2000. Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BLT and Central Govt. and the State Govt. on 20th February, 2003. Accordingly the Bodoland Territorial Council Act. was passed to create Bodoland Territorial Council under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution. A constitution amendment was also made to incorporate Bodo language under the Eight Schedule of the Constitution. Memorandum of Ceasefire (MOS) was signed by Hagrama Basumatary, Chairman of BLT., Mr. PK Dutta, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam, Mr. RCA Jain Secretary(BM), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India on the 20th Feb’, 2003.

Creation of Bodoland Territorial Council in the name of Bodoland Territorial Administrative District (which included the district of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baska and Udalguri) seems that the Bodo problem comes to an end.

The basic objective behind the creation of the BTC was to create a Self Governing Body for the Bodo people to fulfill their aspiration relating to their cultural identity, language, education and economic development under the Sixth Scheduled of the Constitution.

Area of BTC comprises 3082 villages as it was mentioned in the most whole villages under the BTC, are divided into four districts – Kokrajhar, Baska, Chirang and Udalguri. These districts are known as Bodoland Territorial Administrative Districts. Composition of the BTC:- The total number of constituency of BTC is 46. Out of them, 30 seats are for the Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 seats are opened for all communities and 6 members to be nominated by the Governor of Assam from the unrepresentative communities of BTC area, of which, at least 2 should be women. The people of BTC area on the basis of adult franchise elect the 40 members for a period of 5 years. Within the BTC there is an Executive Council, which comprises of not
more than 14 members. Out of them one becomes the Chief, another one Deputy Chief, of the Executive Council. There is provision for representation of non-tribal members to the Executive Council. The Chief and Deputy Chief of the Executive Council enjoy Status equivalent to the Cabinet Minister and the other Executive members equivalent to the Minister of State of Assam Bodo Accord of the 20th Feb’ 2003, BLT was the signatory organization and ABSU supported the Accord and withdrew Officially the demand for Bodoland giving honour to the Accord.

The Political history of the Bodos, since the inception of All Bodo Students Union and Plains Tribal Council of Assam, witnessed a very conflicting development regularly after every victory. It is seen that there came a tragedy in the leadership of autonomy movement after each victory. This type of tragedy was for the first time witnessed after the Assembly Election of 1977. PTCA won 4 seats and joined as thequaition partner in the Janata Govt. and suspended the demand of Separate Union Territory. With this development rift emerged and the friendship between ABSU and PTCA turned into hostility. Another tragedy seemed to occur after the signing of Bodo Accord on 20th February, 1993 after six years of restless movement. This accord granted the arrangement of Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) vide No. PLA/219/92 dated 19th May 1993. And Interim Bodoland Council was formed with S.K. Bwiswumuthiary and Premsigh Brahma as the Chief and the Deputy Chief respectively of the interim council. ABSU was not satisfied with the arrangement. Mr. S.K. Bwiswmuthiary tendered his resignation from the post of the Chief of BAC. But defying the spirit of ABSU Mr. Premsigh Brahma accepted the post of the Chief of Bodoland Executive Council. In 1996, Premising Brahma was relinquished from the post BAC Chief and Mr. Kanakeswar Narzary was appointed as the Chief of BAC. The then ABSU President Mr. Garlabatha Basumatary in contrary to the spirit of ABSU associated with Kanakeswar Narzary and PDF party and took the role of the Adviser of the Bodoland Council. After 1996, BLT assisted by ABSU, started arms struggle for the achievement of Separate State of Bodoland. After six years of vigorous movement the Bodoland Accord was concluded on 20th Feb’, 2003, and Bodoland Territorial Administrative District (BTAD) was granted. But at the moment of sharing of power, a serious rift developed between ABSU and BLT. This is the exposure of political attitude, interest and expectation in individual as well as sub-group level and that is a good sign. People should allow to assert their political desire in a democratic way. This type conflict will normally be repeating in future too as a part of political expectation, power game as a part of democratic process. Organizational ethic works only within certain limit in a democratic set up.
Political behavior in democratic setup is not solely guided by force but also by other political ethics and other diverse factors. That factors should not be undermined.

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32. ABSU, Why Separate State. P.35.
37. Ibid. p89.
38. Ibid, p. 73.

40. Why Separate State of Bodoland? (Demand and Justifications): by All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) 152.

41. Ibid. 155.

42. Ibid, p. 154.


47. Charan Narzary, Ex-MP & MLA, "The Emergence of the Bodo Students' Union" in the Souvenir, 'Manas' 45th Annual Conference, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Bagsa' p. 34.

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55. A Memorandum to Three Member Expert Committee.... p. 77.

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