CHAPTER: III

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS OF PLAIN TRIBES (BODOS) AND THEIR INTEREST ARTICULATION

Introduction:

When the last Bodo kingdom was annexed by the British in 1854, the Bodos lost their socio-political existence. They gradually became most backward in comparison to other communities in the region and the Bodo society disorganised completely. There was absent of any organisational effort to unite the Bodos till the second decade of the 20th century. But it was the advent of the Western education which makes the Bodos aware of their own identity and started to organise themselves. Hence, various Bodo organisations started to shape in the beginning of 20th century under colonial rule.

It is stated in the previous chapter that despite being the original inhabitants of Assam, the Plain Tribes, especially the Bodos remained backward educationally, socially, politically and economically under the British rule and after independence of India. This has caused deep political resentment among the Bodos who feel that they have been neglected, exploited, alienated, de-culturalised and discriminated against for decades and hence failed to occupy any prominent place in the administration of the region. Important positions were mainly held either by the Bengalis or the high caste Assamese Hindu elite; hence they did not have any hand on the administrative sphere of the country. Therefore, the Bodos felt the need to be organised on the basis of language and ethnicity to fight against deprivation and to have the privileges for the all-round development of the Bodo community equally with other ethnic groups and free the
Bodo nation from the scourge of Assamese hegemony (Mainstream, Vol. No. 37, Sept.1, 2012). These feelings and consciousness take extreme form due to the rise of educated middle class and elite persons of the community for self-preservation of their identity gradually led to witness the rational growth of many socio-political organisations with their own interest articulation concerning their socio-political aspirations. As a result, at the earliest stage of 20th century, the history of the Bodos witnessed the initial stage in the development of various organisations to articulate the interest of the Bodo community. In this regard the Brahmas among the Bodos are the educationally and socio-economically advanced section and who has naturally provided the leadership of the different phases of the struggle for Bodos through various socio-political organisations and tried to articulate their sense of identity consciousness. Hence, different socio-political organisations were come into existence with their own ideologies and have been working sincerely for the progress of the Bodo society since their inceptions. Following is the discussion about the socio-political organisations that had and have been spearheading the socio-political aspirations of the Bodos.

**Origin and Development of Political and Non-Political Organisations of Bodos and their Interest Articulation:**

The development of the socio-political organisations of the Bodos can be traced back to the period of 1918 when the Assam Bodo Chatra Sanmilan was formed at Dhubri (Sonowal, 2013). It was the first student’s union and the first organisation of the Bodos. In 1924, the Bodo Chatra Sanmilan published a Bodo journal, “Bibar” (flower). This journal was published quarterly till 1926 under the editorship of Satish Chandra Basumatary. It produced many prose, stories, poems and songs to enrich the Bodo language and literature and through these writings some measures were taken to
eradicate some of the social evils from the society. Some prominent writers of this journal through their writing tried to remind the Bodos about their glorious past and their influencing existences in the Brahmaputra Valley (Deka, 2009). So it served as a mouthpiece of the entire community. Being the first organisation among the Bodos it gained popularity among the educated Bodo youths who initiated many reformist works in their community. Socio-cultural and educational development of the community was the greatest contribution of this organisation. Since its formation its effort was to rebuild the long neglected Bodo nationality. The Bodo Chatra Sanmilan and the Bodo Mahasabha which was formed in 1924 adopted a number of voluntary steps to bring about reforms in the age-old-misbelieves prevailing in the society and to generate mass awakening among the Bodos (Sonowal, 2013). The Bodo Mahasabha finally became a main platform for the activities of Bodo intellectuals. Jadav Chandra Khakhlary was the founder President of the Mahasabha. The Mahasabha in its third conference took some significant measures for social reforms like bride price lowered down to Rs. 51/-, removed the restriction on women to go to the market, imposition of the ban on marriage by captured and so on for which it persuaded a large number of youths to take oath (Prakash, 2008). It was a great effort of the Mahasabha especially towards the women empowerment. On the other hand, the Bodo Chatra Sanmilan published various works which were successfully giving impetus to the upcoming Bodo writers. Both the organisations took various measures to reform and develop the Bodo Society. These organisations were greatly influenced by a personality i.e., Kalicharan Brahma who inspired the whole Bodo community with his ideas. Under the bannership of Assam Bodo Chatra Sanmilan Late Kalicharan Brahma sought a general improvement in the field of language, educational, political, economic and cultural aspects of the Bodo
community. Thus, he became a source of inspiration among the Bodos and this inspiration helped to bring about social transformation into the society of the community. The Bodo organisation brought a sense of solidarity among the Bodo youths or the students all over Assam and taught them how to fight for the redress of their grievances. Consequently, the Assam Kachari Youth Association and Goalpara District Bodo Association were formed to fight for those grievances which are not fall strictly under the activities of the students. These two organisations, in course of time gave emphasis on some political activities keeping in view of the future of the community. When, Simon Commission visited Shilong in 1928, the Assam Kachari Youth Association Submitted a memorandum demanding separate electorate for the Bodo community and a separate Bodo Regiment in the British Indian Army in 1929. As result, four seats were reserved for tribals in the Assam Provincial Assembly under the Government of India Act of 1935 though the demand for Bodo Regiment never came into existence (Sonowal, 2013).

Another significant organisation i.e., All Assam Plains Tribal League which came into existence in 1933 under the shadow of Rupnath Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rabi Chandra Kachari, Bhimbor Deori, Jadav Chandra Khaklary, Kharsing Terong and so on (Sonowal, 2013). It was the first political platform of all the Plain Tribes of Assam, because during that time almost all the tribal communities of this region felt socially and politically exploited and suppressed. This feeling of suppression was the root cause of the growth of a number of local organisations like - Assam Bodo Kachari Youth Sanmilan and so on across the region (Sonowal, 2013). Making the same point,
Andrew Clow, Governor of Assam (1942-1946) states,

“The Assamese both caste Hindus and Muslims, professed solicitude for the tribes, but neither had studied the question nor any real sympathy with them. The feeling of deprivation among these communities thus fostered the growth of local organisations, i.e., the Kachari Sanmillan, Koch Rajbongshi Sanmillan, Chutiya Sanmillan, Muttock Association etc. throughout the Province. Initially, they all functioned independently......, but in 1933 joined hands to form All Assam Plains Tribes League (AAPTL, TL for short) (Prakash, 2008:265).

The Tribal League tried to unite all the plain tribes under a common platform and aims at to solve all the socio-economic problems of the tribes. It tried to spread primary education among the tribal communities and tried to eradicate the evils of opium from the society. The members of the League advocated for the preservation of the Inner Line system to protect the tribal economy and culture from the unrestrained influx of the immigration. They also fight for a separate electorate with reservation of seats in the legislature under the banner of the League.

In 1928, the Bodos and other Plain Tribals submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission demanding a separate representation in the legislature. Consequently, the Government of India Act of 1935 made the provision for reservation of five seats for the plain tribes in the legislature in it. Thus, five members were elected from the Tribal League against the reserved seats in the Legislative Council’s election held in 1937. Those five elected members are Late Dhirsing Deori, Rupnath Brahma, Kharsing Terong, Rabi Chandra Kachari and Karka Chandra Doley (Sonowal, 2001). It was the Tribal League who for the first time in the history of tribals transformed the social struggle into a political struggle of all the tribes. This proved the turning point for the plain tribes of Assam. From this time onwards the Tribal League was fighting against
the illegal occupation of their land by immigrants, local non-tribal traders, businessmen and moneylenders. The League thus started to play a significant role in the political scenario of the province and also played a determinant role to form the government. Only with the help of Tribal League both the Leaders Gopinath Bordoloi and Sir Mahammad Sadullah could form the ministries. When the Congress party formed its first ministry in September, 1938 under the leadership of Gopinath Bordoloi after Saadullah’s resignation the Tribal League agreed to support the ministry on the ground of Bordoloi’s proposals for protective measures to the tribal belts (known as Line system), to safeguard the tribal lands from immigrants (Prakash, 2008:265). But it was not materialised as because Bordoloi resigned due to the involvement of Britain in the World War- II. Following that resignation, Saadullah again came to power in March, 1940 and convinced the Tribal League to extend their support to the Ministry (Prakash, 2008:265). Taking this advantage the League became successful to persuade Saadullah’s ministry to pass the resolution for the imposition of ban on settlement of wastelands with any immigrants entering Assam after the first January, 1938 (Pathak, 2010). Rather, Saadullah took this measure on pressure put by the Tribal League for which he had to face strong criticisms from the members of his party. But, later due to the Saadullah’s pro immigrants policy and apathy to the issue of Line system and its stand on the Cabinet Mission plan regarding the inclusion of Assam with Bengal in Group- C, the League totally dissatisfied and decided to withdraw its support from the Saadullah led Muslim League Ministry in its fifth session at Mongaldoi (Prakash, 2008:265).

The Tribal League played an important role in terms of land problem related to their community in the Legislative politics during the period of 1937-1947 (Pathak, 2010)
and articulated the interest of the plain tribes. After that, due to some internal clashes some leaders of the League merged with some other political parties like congress party and socialist party, which made the Tribal League week as lost its influence as a common political platform of the plain tribal communities and hence it also lost its ground and credibility. In 1953, the tenth and last annual session of the Tribal League was held at Baropujia, Nowgaon where the League was converted into a social welfare organisation which was known as the All Assam Tribal Sangha (Sonowal, 2001). It remains as such even today and the government of Assam recognised it as a competent body to scrutinize and issue the Scheduled Tribe Certificate to the genuine tribal claimants (Roy, 1995). From the discussion it appears that there was no such strong political organisation of the individual plain tribal communities before independence of the country. The Tribal League was the first political platform which gave the opportunity to all the plain tribes in general and the Bodos in particular to raise their voice for their grievances.

In the independent India the Bodo aspiration regarding their identity and culture got momentum with the creation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha. It brought a new revolution on Bodo language and literature among the Bodos (Basumatary, 2012). The creation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in the 1950’s also the creation of clash between Assamese nationality and Bodo nationality in ideologically, socio-cultural, linguistic and finally in political ways (Basumatary, 2012). R. B. Vagaiwallah, the census superintend of Assam in this regard termed the assertive language policy of the Assamese as “aggressive nationalism” (Census of India, 1951 & Choudhury, 2013). In the meantime the Assam Government issued a circular prohibiting settlement of non-indigenous people with defining indigenous people as “indigenous persons of Assam mean persons belonging
to the state of Assam and speaking the Assamese language or any of the indigenous languages of the region” (Choudhury, 2013). In the passage of time though the advanced section of the Bodo adopted the Assamese language but they were keen to develop their mother tongue at the same time. It is important to note that the plain tribes of Assam did not openly react against the language policy of the government in early fifties whereas the hill tribes did. In this regard, the executive committee of the Mizo Union met in a meeting during that time of debate under the President ship of Mr. Thanhlira where a resolution was adopted to protest against the attempt of imposition of the Assamese language in the middle level schools in the district of Lushai Hills. Such kind of environment forced the educated Bodo youths to think something about the development of their mother tongue. Consequently, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha started to take a shape of an organization with some enthusiast Bodo youths who came forward to lead the organization. Among those, Ravinendranath Basumatary was prominent who led the Sabha later on (Choudhury, 2013: 93-104). This literary organization of the Bodos i.e., Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) was formally established consisting of the representatives of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Nepal at Basugaon on November 16, 1952 for the promotion and development of the Bodo language, literature and culture (Sonowal, 2013:49). Joy Bhadra Hagjer (a Dimasa leader) and Sonaram Thaosen were the president and secretary respectively of this organization. The creation of the BSS was the first landmark among the Bodos in the post-independent era and added a new dimension to the Bodo consciousness of heritage and self-identity (Singh, 2002:95). The BSS is also known as “Boroni Tunlai Aphalt” (Sonowal, 2013:48) which tried to enrich the Bodo language and literature by encouraging the Bodo writers and create more Bodo literatures. It also aims to shape a
path for the growth and development of the Bodo community in different aspects of the community.

It is necessary to mention here that the origin of the BSS was backed by two parallel organizations viz., “Boro Literary Club” and the “Boroni Onsai Apath”. Boro Literary club was a handmaid institution of some Bodo elites in Dhubri district for the upliftment of the Bodo language and literature and also to encourage emerging Bodo litterateurs. This organization came into existence on 28th September, 1950 under the leadership of Indramohan Brahma as its president (Sonowal, 2013). On the other hand Boroni Onsai Apath was a student’s organization at Dhubri working with the Bodo literary club for common goal and both of them realized that without the active participation of the entire Bodo community inhabiting different parts of the north-western region, it is not possible to empower them. Consequently, the Bodo literary body organized a common convention at Basugaon on November 16, 1952 of the entire Bodo speakers throughout the region (Sonowal, 2013, p.49). Thus, BSS was created to serve the cause of the Bodos as is mentioned above. It started working for the welfare of the Bodo society and tried to unite all Bodo writers towards the development of the Bodo language since they did not have their own script, for which they had to take education through Assamese Script. It created the platform for the development of Boro language in a written form with Devnagari Script (Basumatary, 2012).

Again, the formation of the BSS was inspired by the Asom Sahitya Sabha, the nationalist organization run by the Assamese middle class. It was this organization through which the Assamese middle class tried to establish cultural hegemony over all other groups throughout the province with their aggressive agenda. Therefore, the Assam Sahitya Sabha touched the hearts of some educated Bodo youths and inspired
them to form Bodo Sahitya Sabha in the same model with similar objectives. Initially, the prominent Bodo leaders were not associated with the BSS hence its beginning was humble. Thereby, the potential significance of the BSS was undermined by the Assamese. Gradually, with this potentiality, the BSS became successful to spread cultural awareness among the Bodos in the early days of 1960’s after Brahma Movement. When the debate on the issue of state language was its peak, the Asom Sahitya Sabha raised the demand for recognition of Assamese as the only official language of the state and compelled the B.P. Chaliha government to introduce a bill in the Assembly which subsequently became the Assam Official Language Act in 1960. The BSS opposed this Assam Official Language Act of 1960 and its outcome of making the Assamese language as the official language of the state. Hence, the Bodo intellectuals felt that the Bodos must come forward with its full strength to preserve and develop their language at per with Assamese and Bengali languages.

As a consequent of this, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha met and adopted a resolution to protest the language policy of the Assam Government and on November 16, 1962 the Bodo Sahitya Sabha organized a huge gathering of at least 15,000 Bodo people at Kokrajhar demanding recognition of the Bodo language at primary level. This move backed by the BSS attracted the attention of the Bodo people towards it and politicians could not ignore the demand and also the Bodo MLA’s too took up the issue immediately with the state government after realizing the gravity of the issue. With the experience of the Barak Valley Movement, the state government also felt urgency and appointed Rupnath Brahma, the Bodo minister and formed a one member committee to examine the demand. On the basis of recommendation submitted by the Rupnath Brahma Committee, the B.P.Chaliha Government introduced Bodo language up to class III at
Government High School of Kokrajhar as the medium of instruction (Choudhury, 2013: 93-104). The Bodos realized of late that education through their mother tongue is the key component to the overall development of the Bodo people and even for the Bodo language. Apart from the development of the Bodo language, literature and culture, the BSS aimed at the creation of a separate Directorate of Public Instruction for Bodo medium educational institutions, retention of English as medium of instruction in the primary, secondary, graduate and post-graduate stages; inclusion of the Bodo language in the Eight Scheduled of the Indian Constitution, recognition of Roman Script for Bodo language and bring all the Bodo groups of language in the North-eastern region under one umbrella organization and so on (Sonowal, 2013). This language movement helped a lot in bringing cultural awareness together with the introduction of Bodo language as a medium of instruction in the Bodo inhabited areas of Assam.

The BSS has also participated and contributed in the agitational politics for the interest articulation of the Bodo society and mobilised the Bodo people through publishing an annual mouthpiece i.e., “The Bodo” (Sonowal, 2013). The BSS tried to establish the Bodo language as the link language among all the Bodo tribes and it has been holding its annual sessions time to time in the Bodo inhabited places to unite all other Bodo tribes in the region. After all, the BSS became quite successful for articulating the interest of Bodo people especially in pressurizing the then B.P. Chaliha Government to introduce Bodo language as a medium of instruction in the lower primary schools in 1963 and secondary stage in 1968. Apart from that, Gauhati University and North East Hill University recognized the Bodo language as Modern Indian Language (MIL) up to degree level latter on. Now in the BTAD areas, Bodo is the associate official language according to the Assam Government Language Act of 1985. This language movement
helped a lot in bringing cultural awareness together with the introduction of Bodo language as a medium of instruction in the Bodo inhabited areas of Assam. The recent inclusion of the Bodo language into the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India by the BTC Accord in 2003 was a great achievement of the BSS (Brahma, 1993). However, there are various other problems and grievances of the BSS regarding the community still remain.

The All Bodo Students Union is one of the leading organizations of the Bodos almost in every part of their lives. Of course, there are numerous kinds of student’s organisation almost for all groups and communities in the society of Assam. The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) is also one of those organisations of the Bodos of Assam. The attempt of the formation of the ABSU was made when some of Bodo students were assembled at Cotton College premises in the 1960’s. A friendly discussion was made among those Cottonians about the Bodo students’ organisations, sanmilans, and clubs of their respective districts and decided to form a student’s union covering the whole of the region. Mr. Surath Narzary, a Cottonian was given the responsibility to convey a meeting within 1967 but he failed to cover the whole of Assam. Hence, ABSU was formed covering only the undivided Goalpara district on 15th February, 1967 under the founding President of Mr. Baneswar Basumatary. Another attempt was made aiming at covering the whole districts of Assam to make the ABSU full-fledged in the same date i.e., 15th Feb., 1968 at the Tribal Rest House premises, Kokrajhar but it was shifted to the Kokrajhar College Union Hall for better accommodation (Atreya, 2007). It is a student body representing the entire Bodo students’ community across the world. The ABSU as an organization comprises of four level committees viz. the Central committee, the State committee, the District committee and the Anchalik committee.
The All Bodo Students’ Union was a frontrunner in all agitational movements of the Bodos. The ABSU has been nomenclatured as the All Bobo Students’ Union not as the All Assam Bodo Students’ Union because it comprises all the Bodos around the world. Before the formation of the ABSU, there was no co-ordination among the Bodo students clubs, sanmilans or conferences, district Bodo students unions and anchalik Bodo students’ union and they worked independently. It was only in 1967, all the Bodo students clubs and unions either district or anchalik level came under the same banner of ABSU (Sonowal, 2013).

The ABSU, in its contribution tries to organise the students of various Bodo groups into an organisation and it also tries to achieve better and mutual understanding among the people of Bodo groups from the different parts of India and abroad. The ABSU has been formed with certain aims and objectives for the greater interest of the Bodo community in general and have been working with the motto - Unity, Survival and Prosperity. The main aims and objectives of the ABSU are: to promote language, literature and culture of the Bodos. The Union shall try to achieve better and mutual understanding among the Bodo students and people of different parts of India and abroad. The Union shall also make efforts, particularly to find out ways and means to: (a) propagate the education through the mother tongue, (Bodo language) among the masses. (b) Improve and develop the Bodo language and literature through various literary activities, publication works etc. (c) work for the welfare and development of the students’ community in the educational field. (d) Safeguard and develop the culture of the Bodos. (e) Develop the Bodo nation economically by taking economic agendas and programmes from time of time. (f) Tackle and settle the political issues if and when the existence of the Bodo people is threatened, though the ABSU is a non-political organization. (g) Struggle to
achieve the rights and privileges given in the Indian Constitution through democratic process. (h) Support the principle of democratic socialism for economic emancipation. But the Union shall welcome the principles of new economic order that may emerge from time to time. (i) Fight for ensuring safety & security, dignity & securing Human Rights and Civil Liberty of the Bodo Nationality living around the world. Thus, ABSU has been working in various socio political fields taking in mind the various aims and objectives of the organization. It is only through the significant role of the ABSU that the various socio-political problems got raised before the Government of India and in the international arena of politics. It aimed at to develop the socio-economic conditions of the Bodos and also to safeguard culture, literature and language of the great nationality. Moreover the Union shall try to achieve better mutual understanding among the Bodo Students and the Bodo people through adopting various ways and means. Therefore, it feels for imparting education through mother tongue so that it helps to propagate among the masses. It also gives importance to develop the Bodo language through publishing various magazines, documents and other literary works. So far as the economic emancipation of the Bodos is concerned, ABSU will support the principle of socialism for economic emancipation and if necessary it will adopt economic programmes from time to time and also tries to settle the issues relating their identity crisis and raises voice for the human rights and civil liberties. Though it is a socio-economic cultural and literary organisation it shall not refrain even from struggling for political self-determination within democratic process of non-violence and Indian Constitution.
The preamble of the Constitution of the ABSU states that…

“We, the all Bodo Students unanimously and with our purest hearts have resolved to organise the students of various Bodo groups into an organisation for better and mutual understanding among ourselves, to safeguard and develop the socio-economy, culture, civilisation, tradition, language and literature of the great nationality and this organisation is known as the All Bodo Students’ Union and on the expediency of having a written guiding rules of the organisation, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution on this day of 2nd May, 1969” (Sonowal, 2013&Mushahari, 1995).

Apart from that, the Union shall have its own flag in deep yellow colour of the size 3:2 and the flag shall bear in its middle a symbol of shield and a pair of swords in black signifying that they were a Heroic and Warrior race (Sonowal, 2013:53).

It is the ABSU which became successful to bring the Bodo community under the same banner with same aims and objectives to a large extent. With the emergence of ABSU, a competitive spirit had grown among the various students community and with the effective leadership of ABSU, the Bodos gained immense strength (Atreya, 2007) and also sharpened the identity consciousness among the Bodos. Consequently the Bodos under the banner ship of the ABSU came out against the desperate attempt of Assamese Caste-Hindu middle class for the consolidation of their supremacy. This move of the ABSU considered as a kind of Reactive Chauvinism of their own (Gohain, 1991 & Phukon, 2014). Therefore, this emerging ethnic leadership was not prepared to accept the hegemony of the upper caste dominated Assamese Hindu ruling class. This sentiment was sharpened when Upendranath Brahma, the then President of ABSU advocated for a separate state for the Bodos within Indian federal structure with the following words…
"The Assamese have no moral right to rule over the tribals of Assam – the sons of the soil. The Assamese are not original masters of Assam but they were actually intruders and silent aggressors who had unjustifiably snatched away the land of ours. The actual and original master of Assam is these deprived tribals – the Mongolians. Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta has no right to rule over the tribals nor can he claim not to divide Assam further because he is not the master of Assam, but originally, an outsider from Konouj. The Bodos or the Kacharis, the Koches, the Morans, the Chutiyas, the Ahoms, the tribals and Mongolians had kings and kingdom in Assam, but there is no record in the history of an Assamese nationality and Assamese kingdom” (Brahma, 1987 & Phukon, 2014).

This statement passed by the ABSU leadership reflects that there is a passionate urge for their self-determination. Main motive for the demand of a separate state of Bodoland is to regain their lost position. The ABSU demanded this demand on the basis of the following reasons…

1. To ascertain self-rule for themselves;
2. To restrain unlawful habitation in their area;
3. To allocate a bigger share of development planned expenditure for their people as has been enjoyed by other tribal states like Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura;
4. To drive out undesirable human elements either lawfully or by force;
5. To control completely economic, social and political exploitation of their people by the other privileged ones;
6. To ensure all constitutional benefits to their inmates, to remove their rampant unemployment problem (Sarma, 1997:281-282).

Therefore, ABSU played an important role in all parts of life of the Bodos and articulated the interest of the Bodos to a great extent.
After the Indian independence both the Bodo organizations viz., the BSS and the ABSU became quite successful to raise consciousness among the members of the Bodo community. In the meantime i.e., on January 13, 1967, the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi declared that Assam will be re-organized on federal basis (Sonowal, 2013). Consequently, the political consciousness sharpens among the plain tribes of Assam and especially the Bodos came forward to form a political platform for the distinct Bodo identity and safeguard their socio-economic and political interest. Hence, the Bodos formed their first political organization in independent India i.e., PTCA (Plains Tribal Council of Assam) on February 27, 1967 to articulate their political aspirations with the initiative of Mr. Samar Brahma Chaudhury, Modaram Brahma, Charan Narzary, Biruchan Doley, Pratul Kumar Bhadra and so on (Sonowal, 2013). Apart from the above reason there are some other factors behind the emergence of the Plains Tribal council of Assam. First one was closely connected to the Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution because during the post-colonial period, the plain tribes like the Bodos of Assam enjoyed the minimum constitutional safeguard in comparison to other Scheduled Tribes living in India. Another season, that also contributed towards the birth of the PTCA was land issue which is not well protected rather East Bengal immigrants started to settle in their areas since the beginning of the 20th century (Bhuyan, 1989:56). Besides, the government did poor response to the plain tribes regarding those issues. Therefore, they were forced to think for an organised organisation in the form of PTCA which could protect the plain tribes living in Assam from those challenges. It was a new dimension of political arena of the Bodos for their identity consciousness. ABSU extended its support to the PTCA on the ground of Bodo nationality.
It is necessary to mention here that the emergence of this first political platform of all the plain tribes of Assam i.e. PTCA was preceded by the formation of All Bodo Students Union. Before 12 days of the formation of the PTCA i.e., in 27th February, 1967, various students’ organisations of the Bodo areas got together at Kokrajhar and decided to work unitedly under one banner ship to raise the demand for an autonomous region for the plain tribes. It was the ABSU who took the initiative to transform this move into a political party and hence the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) came into its real shape. The propagation of autonomy for the plain tribes was the main objective of the PTCA (Choudhury, 2007).

Within this organisation the Bodos were dominant among the all groups, despite that it was named as Plain Tribals Council of Assam. The PTCA submitted its first memorandum to the President of India on 20th May, 1967. This memorandum reflected the issues related to land and languages of the plain tribes for which they demanded for full autonomy in the form of Udayachal. PTCA with the support of ABSU raised this demand for separate union territory or Udayachal comprising plains tribals areas of northern tract of erstwhile Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Sibsagar districts including tribal belts and blocks of these areas of Assam (Dutta, 1993).

Initially, the plain tribes were divided into two groups viz., the Bodo group and the Miri or Mishing group. The Bodo group included the Bodo Kacharis, Hojai, sonowal Kacharis, Tiwas (Lalungs), Mech, Rabhas, Deoris and so on (Dutta, 1993 & Choudhury, 2004:63). Nevertheless, PTCA was a political platform of all the plain tribes of Assam, its leadership decided not to participate in the election initially from the strategic point of view. This strategic point of view of the PTCA leaders was to extract as much as possible for the plain tribes through negotiations with the Congress party.
especially through their Congress fold Bodo leaders. Therefore, they did not want to take an anti-Congress stand. But, once the notion of acquisition of political power set in mind of the people, it is very difficult to contain the emotion of the people. Hence, immediately after the submission of the memorandum in May, 1967, a by-election was held in Bodo dominated constituency where the PTCA had to take a decision on pressure created by the younger activists but the decision was to boycott the election and urged upon the people not to participate in the electorate programme (Choudhury, 2007). In reality, both PTCA and ABSU in support of the demand for the creation of a separate administrative unit jointly boycotted the Parliamentary election in 1968 (Sonowal, 2013).

In 1973 the demand of the PTCA for an autonomous region was upgraded to the demand for a Union territory status. Accordingly, they started to agitate, announcing bandhs and holding picketing mostly in the tribal dominated areas. But their agitational programmes were called off for time being when some agitators and tribal leaders were arrested during the emergency period (1975-76) of Indira Gandhi’s regime. After emergency the Janata Party came in power at the Centre and in the meantime of the PTCA decided to merge with the Janata Party in 1977 (Mosahary, 2011). As a result, the demand for Udayachal was stopped which disappointed the members of the PTCA. Hence, the PTCA suffered for a split and PTCA (Progressive) or PTCA (P) was carved out in 1979 from PTCA. The PTCA (P) tried to maintain continuity with the former stand. Hence they submitted their first memorandum to the Home Minister of India on 9th July, 1980 demanding proposed territory for the plain tribes except the name which was raised by former PTCA. The PTCA (P) preferred to use the word “Mishing Bodoland” for their proposed territory and the word “Udayachal” was rejected
The leaders of the PTCA (P) tried to keep touch with the highest authority of India by sending their delegations time to time. The PTCA (P) delegation met the President, the Prime Minister and different Cabinet ranked ministers of India in different times where they discussed about the issues related to Plain Tribes of Assam. Apart from that they met various Governors, Chief Ministers and leaders of various regional and national political parties of the Eastern Indian states for raising their demands effectively. In 1983 the PTCA (P) submitted its last memorandum regarding their stand on the demand for separate territory to the Prime Minister, Government of India (Chaudhury, 2004). In this regard All Bodo Students’ Union observed that the demand of Udayachal will not be achieved until the reunification of the PTCA and PTCA (P). Therefore, ABSU invited both the groups in a convention with other tribal groups in April 17-19, 1984 at Harisinga of Darang district for that purpose. But the effort reached no consensus for their re-unification. All Bodo Students’ Union then went for a joint action committee to gear up the movement for self-rule in the convention (Mosahary, 2011). In 1984 the PTCA (P) again suffered for a split and a new organisation was formed in the name of United Tribals Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) but their stand was same as before. Because they also demanded for a separate Union Territory for the plain tribals and continued to keep the same path for sending memoranda to the supreme authority of India for the consideration of their demands. Till 1987 from its inception, UTNLF submitted five memoranda to the then Prime Minister of India regarding their various issues like the issue of working of the Gaon Panchayats, issue of displacement of tribals to the installation of major irrigation project of Dhansiri in the Darrang district despite their issues of land and autonomy (Chaudhury, 2004). The UTNLF was again later renamed as “United Boro Nationalist
Liberation Front” (UBNLF) and demanded for a union territory of Bodoland and when it formally declared its support to the ABSU movement its activities became inactive (Mosahary, 2011). All these efforts could not achieve the goals due to the lack of unity among the tribal leaders themselves and especially for the self-polar activities.

Till the late 1970’s the women participation in the ABSU movement was negligible. In the meantime, the ABSU leaderships realised that without the active participation of the Bodo women in the movement it is not possible to achieve their desired goal. Upendranath Brahma believed that a society cannot progress without the progress of women and their support. Hence, a Bodo women organisation i.e., All Assam Tribal Women’s Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on July 14, 1986, with the active initiation of the leaders like Upendranath Brahma, Sansuma Khungur Bwismuthiary, Subhash Basumatary and Deora Dekhereb Basumatary of the All Bodo Students’ Union (Chaudhuri, 2004:74). Pramila Rani Brahma was its founder president (Bhuyan, 2007) who started her political career with the close association of Upendranath Brahma. Thus, the political mobilization of Bodo women came in an organised way. This women organization of the Bodo community had played a strong role in promoting a strong bond of unity among Bodo people in general and Bodo women in particular during the period of the Bodo Movement. It was expected by the Bodo leaderships that this women organisation could play a significant role in the struggle with their direct participation as well as overall welfare activities within the Bodo society. It aims to fight for equal rights, status and honour of the Bodo women in socio-political and individual life in the society. The constitution of the AATWWF explained…

“It is considered expedient to form a federation of the women folk belonging to all tribal groups of entire Assam to unite themselves in a common platform
through mutual understandings being imbibed in a common ideology with a view to fighting for ensuring rights and justice of the tribal women in the spheres of socio-economic, political, educational, cultural and for their emancipation from their socio-domestic drudgery and thereby to enable themselves in rendering services to the promotion welfare and preservation of the indigenous self-identity of all tribal groups living in Assam” (Chaudhuri, 2004:74).

Besides, AATWWF also aims to defend rights of women in conflict situations and fight against the violation of the rights of women. In such cases their activities involves visiting to relief camps, console the victims, appeals to state and district administrations for due and proper rehabilitations, slogans for peace, women empowerment and formulation of socio-economic developmental programmes of women. In the political scenario, AATWWF is seen taking active part in protest rallies, silent march, calling for bandhas, strikes, blockades, gheraos in government offices, holding seminars and conferences. Apart from that AATWWF popularised the Bodo movement along with its aims and objectives among the illiterate women in the rural areas rather it was its commitment when it was came into existence. It is necessary to mention here that the most of the central committee members of this women organisation were teachers. The AATWWF comprised with almost all the tribal groups of women such as the Bodo, Garo, Mishing, Tiwa, Karbi, Naga and so on but when the Bodoland movement was intensified, it fought merely and specifically for the Bodo cause (Bhuyan, 2007). Hence, other tribes started to feel alienated and maintained distance. As a result in 1993, the AATWWF changed its name to All Bodo Women’s Welfare Federation (ABWWF) in its third Annual Conference of Tamulpur (Bhuyan, 2007) and this name was more acceptable for the Bodo women as because almost all the members belonged to the Bodos (Chaudhuri, 2004). Since the formation of this women organisation, it has been
facing lots of hurdles from different angles. In this regard, the killing of Helena Basumatary, an ABWWF member in a protest rally testifies it. ABWWF has been actively working in BTC in setting up many small scale industries for Bodo women, taken up the health issues and literary issue for eradicating social evils like witch hunting and some other evil practices and so on (Haokip & Roluahpuia, 2014). ABWWF is also successful in bringing out souvenirs like Songdan, Raikhmuthi etc. The members of ABWWF played significant role during the Bodoland movement in giving out first Aid services to the wounded and the victims of the movement.

During the 6 (six) years Bodo Movement, another Bodo organisation came out to address the issues relating to the Bodo employees. This organisation is called as All Bodo Employees’ Federation (ABEF) which was formed on 28th October, 1989 with a view to provide a platform to all the Bodo employees together (Brahma et al., 2001). Though, this organisation was for the government Bodo employees, it extended helping hand to the Bodo Movement for which many Bodo employees were imprisoned and some of them were killed during the time of the Movement. This organisation tried to unite all the Bodo employees from different parts of the region and from different offices. It also extended financial help to the Movement for smooth running of its activities. As a result of this kind of involvement in the Movement many of Bodo employees were suspended and some of them lost their jobs.

The phases of the Bodo Movement are also significant due to the emergence of different Bodo insurgency groups with different ideologies. In such a phase of their struggle, a new insurgent group of the Bodos i.e., Boro Security Force (BrSF) came out in the late 1980’s with a strong determination to protect the Bodo land and people against the Indian occupation of Bodoland. This is an armed revolutionary organization formed
with clear cut principles and ideology to liberate and save the Bodo people from the suppression and domination of the ruling yoke and also their inherited land from the foreign occupation and expansionism (Mosahari, 2011). Initially, this armed separatist outfit was known with a name called Boro Security Force (BrSF) which was formed in 3rd October, 1986 under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary, in Odla Khasibari village which is situated in the present Udalguri district of BTAD, Assam. But later on, this organization was rechristened forthwith as the National Democratic Front of Boroland on 18th April, 1993 (Ahmed, 2010). The principal objective of the NDFB, for which it was formed is the creation of a “Sovereign Bodoland” comprising the areas of north of the Brahmaputra river. Some other objectives are declared in their Constitution which was adopted after nearly 12 years i.e., on March 10, 1998 as follows…

1. Liberate Bodoland from the Indian expansion and occupation;
2. Free the Bodo nation from the colonialist exploitation, oppression and domination;
3. Establish a democratic socialist society to promote liberty, equality and fraternity; and
4. Uphold the integrity and sovereignty of Bodoland (Mosahari, 2011:47).

The NDFB is in favour of eliminating all kinds of threats of equality and liberty in the Bodo society for making a strong foundational base for a democratic socialist society. It struggles against the under development in the region and the influx into the region. It believes that the problem of the Bodos can be solved by seceding from the Indian Union and establishing a sovereign Bodoland. The NDFB has been indulging in various activities such as arson, abducting, kidnapping, bombings in public places, killing people etc. For instance, it carried out several attacks targeting non-Bodos civilians. It also attacked the 7th Assam Police Battalion headquarters at Choraikhola in Kokrajhar...
District of Assam. The NDFB has always been sticking to their demand for Bodo sovereignty and thus opposed the BAC Accord signed on 20th February, 1993 between the Government of Assam and the ABSU. They had also denounced the accord between BLTF and the government of India for the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council. The Indian government tried to bring them on the table of discussion. The Chairman of the NDFB, Ranjan Daimari was offered amnesty by the chief minister Tarun Gogoi in December 2003, but he rejected the offer. However one group of the NDFB under the leadership of Govinda Basumatary signed a cease fire agreement with the Indian Government on 25th May, 2005. However, certain factions of the NDFB continued their armed struggle under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary (Anti-Talks Faction). After the arrest of the Chairman of the NDFB (Anti-Talk Faction) in Bangladesh the organization received its set back. But the other un-arrested members of NDFB under the leadership of I.K. Songbijit announced the formation of a nine member “Interim Council”, which resulted in a split in the organization. The main armed faction now includes the NDFB led by I.K. Sonbijit. This faction of NDFB led by I.K. Sonbijit or NDFB(S) has been actively carrying out the insurgency activities around the nook and corners of Assam which is a serious matter to be dealt with by the government for the solution of the insurgency problems in North East of India.

The All Bodo Students’ Union under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma systematically planned to organise the Bodo people for their collective goal of self-rule. In this respect, under the well organised auspices of the ABSU, the Bodo Peoples’ Action Committee (BPAC) was formed on November 8, 1988 at Surjakhata village near Dotoma of Kokrajhar district. Karendra Basumatary and Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary were the Chairman and Convener of the BPAC respectively (Mosahary,
BPAC took the responsibility to unite the Bodos from all the corners and maintained to co-ordinate among all the Bodo groups for achieving the movement for self-rule. It spearheaded the movement with the slogan “Divide Assam 50-50” (Bhuyan, 2007: 27). Indeed, BPAC joining hand with the ABSU began to launch the mass movement in a vigorous manner. Most of the central committee members of the BPAC were the executive members of the ABSU. Finally, this organisation was dissolved after the formation of the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) (Chaudhuri, 2004:75). The BPAC was an apex body of the Bodos in the 1980’s, comprising social, cultural and women’s organisations of the Bodos as well as the Bodo Employees’ organisations and involved in the Bodo struggle jointly and parallel with the ABSU with their own constitution (Sharma, 2014). It was an umbrella organisation to ensure support and participation of all sections of Bodo people and it became successful to a great extent to receive active co-operation and support from the Bodo masses in the region.

Apart from these organisations, Bodo Women Justice Forum (BWJF) is another Bodo organisation relating to their issue of human rights. The human rights activist Anjali Daimary took an initiative to form a women association in order to look into the issues of the human rights violation of the women sections in the North-eastern region of India and in the state of Assam. Thus, in 1992, Anjali Daimary formed the Bodo Women Justice Forum to bring awareness about the community rights of the Bodos (Sonowal, 2013). Though, it is a women’s human rights organization, they also discussed the issues pertaining to their entire community.

Due to the dissatisfaction of the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) Accord of 1993, a section of Bodo Volunteer Force was compelled not to lay down their arms and as a result another new separatist outfit came into the battlefield in the form of Boro
Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) to continue to fight for greater political autonomy of the Bodos (Bhuyan, 2007:29). The Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF), a military wing, was formed by the ABSU during the Bodoland Movement under the Chairmanship of Prem Singh Brahma to intensify the movement. In the meantime the Bodo Volunteer Force was formally disbanded following the BAC Accord in 1993. But, as per the newspaper and government sources at that time had suggested that the BLTF is a modified name of the Bodo Volunteer Force in the post BAC Accord (Baruah, 1999:194). Hence, it was born in the year 1993, again under the leadership of Prem Singh Brahma seeking to obtain a separate state for the Bodos in Assam (Sonowal, 2013). With the passage of time the armed struggle for greater Bodo autonomy in the form of a separate state of Bodoland was started to turn into an aggressive nature and made the situation more complex in the Bodo dominated region. Subsequently, the Bodoland Accord of 1993 was collapsed due to the massive violent activities and aggression carried out by the BLTF. Those violent activities included both public and private properties. They were mainly attacks on school buildings, markets, public buildings and bridges which paralysed the normal life of people in the violent affected region. The Bodo militants also included ethnic cleansing campaign in their agenda especially in the targeted Bodoland areas through adopting the methods of killing or violence, extortions kidnappings which made the situation uncertain for livelihood in the affected areas. As a part of this, large scale of attacks was carried out in May, 1996, against the Santhal community led to the displacement of about ten thousand people. In this Bodo-Santhal or Bodo-Adivasi clashes, over 300 people were killed in two weeks of time. It was again reported that over 70,000 people were displaced in this ethnic clash occurred in May, 1998 as a second wave of attacks of this kind (Bhuyan, 2007). Among those
victims of the ethnic violence, a large number of people included women and children who were either killed or rendered homeless. As a result, the Bodos themselves displaced too especially from where they were minority in number and some of them also killed due to the fight back of the Adivasis (Bhuyan, 2007). Due to this massive violence campaign of the BLTF cadres, the communication system in the region was almost paralysed which includes destruction of bridges, roads and railway stations and other means of communications. In fact, the whole atmosphere of law and order situation was deteriorated in the region. All these activities carried out by the outfit were to attract the attention of both the State and the Central Government to rethink about the Bodo issue of autonomy in a right direction. It remained a force to reckon within the districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Nalbari, Barpeta, Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Dhemaji until its ceasefire agreement with the Indian Government on March 29, 2000 (Sonowal, 2013). Subsequently, the BLTF continued its negotiations with the government of both the State and the Union, for the creation of a Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) comprising the Bodo dominated areas of lower Assam. Tripartite talks were held between the Government of India, Government of Assam and the BLTF/BLT and as a result, a memorandum of settlement was signed on 10th of February, 2003, in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani and Assam Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi (Sonowal, 2013). This memorandum of settlement led to the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) where Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) was itself a signatory. Hence, an autonomous self-governing body in the form of Bodoland Territorial Council came into existence within the state of Assam and it was designated as Autonomous Body providing Constitutional protection under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution with an aim of fulfilling the economic, educational, linguistic
aspirations, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos and to speed up the infrastructure development in the BTC area. With this Memorandum of Settlement, the cadres of the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) agreed to lay down their arms and came back to the mainstream of Bodo politics.

It is a significant feature of the insurgent groups in the North-Eastern part of India that they initially want to secede from the Indian Union but with the passage of time they started to play an important role in the electoral politics later on within the Indian democratic framework. It also happens in the case of Bodo militants when in June 18, 1996, a number of Bodo groups came forward unitedly to form the Bodo State Movement Council (BSMC) with the active support of Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) or BLT (Mahanta, 2013). This organisation was established under the leadership of Prem Singh Brahma to propagate their agenda. Again the People’s Democratic Front (PDF) was formed in the contemporary time of BSMC by the hardliners of ABSU and BrSF/ NDFB. It received support mainly from the NDFB and Swambala Basumatary was the founder of the BSMC which revived the demand of statehood (Sharma, 2009:143). Both these organisations viz., Bodo State Movement Council (BSMC) and People’s Democratic Front (PDF) backed by Bodo insurgent groups participated in the electoral politics where they became successful to win one and eight seats respectively (Mahanta, 2013). This scenario opened the door for the militant groups and it becomes a common phenomenon for them to participate in the electoral politics and it was one step forward when the Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) leaders came back to the active politics of the Bodo mainstream after the BTC Accord of 2003.
Another Bodo organisation, Bodoland Peoples’ Progressive Front (BPPF) is a regional political party formed on 12th April, 2005 to participate in the elections of Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) (Sonowal, 2013) with Rabiram Narzary as President and Hemendra Nath Brahma as general secretary. As a sub-regional or small political party its ambit mainly concentrates the Bodoland Territorial administrative Districts (BTAD). It is common political platform of various Bodo organisations that either became an active part of it or support it in the post BTC Accord of 2003. The emergence of Bodo Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF) is a repetition of similar incident as it was in the case of Assam Gana Parishad (AGP). The AGP was the outcome of the leaders of the Assam Movement just before the Assembly election of Assam in 1985, likewise BPPF also the outcome of the leaders of the Bodo Movement just before the Bodoland Territorial Council election, 2005 (Konwar, 2006).

After a long Bodo struggle, the Bodo Peoples Progressive Front brought a ray of hope for articulating the Bodo aspirations among the members of the community. It was reflected in the form of massive mass support to the BPPF in the first BTC election in the Bodoland Territorial Administrative Districts (BTAD) areas. In that election, BPPF was successful to secure 19 seats where 5 seats were elected unopposed that implies the charismatic capacity of the BPPF’s leaderships (Konwar, 2006:201). Like some other political parties, the BPPF also suffered from internal clashes in its party platform regarding the issue of selection procedure of candidates to contest in the BTC election. In this regard a daily newspaper reported as follows…

“The newly formed Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF) has run into serious trouble immediately after the filling of nomination papers for the polls to the BTC and now former chief of the BLT and Chief Executive Member of the
interim body of the BTC, Hagrama Mahilary, who is also one of the member of policy making body of the BPPF, is openly supporting several independent candidates, who are contesting against the official candidates of the BPPF” (Konwar, 2006:201).

However, the party faced a split into two different political organisations viz. BPPF(R) under the Presidentship of Rabiram Narjary and BPPF (H) under the Presidency of Hagrama Mahilary. Moreover this splitted faction of BPPF entered into the electoral politics of BTC as well as in the state politics of Assam. However, the BPPF (H) changed its party name to BPF (Bodoland People’s Front). The BPF as a state political party have successfully established its position in the BTC and state of Assam. The BPF have been successfully ruling the BTC Government till date which is going to complete its two consecutive terms. In the 12\textsuperscript{th} Assam Legislative Assembly elections BPF had been able to win 10 seats and also in the present ruling Government of Assam it had won 12 seats and has been a part of the current Indian National Congress led ruling coalition in Assam. In the general elections of 2009 its candidate Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswumuthiary was elected to the 15\textsuperscript{th} Loksabha from Kokrajhar constituency and Biswajit Daimari to the Rajya Sabha in May, 2008 (Frontline, July 02-15, 2005). Hence, BPF have been successful in occupying an important position in the politics of the BTC and Assam but their internal political clash during its earlier phase of emergence indicated the narrow political interest of the Bodo leaderships regarding their power hunger which was of course not a healthy sign for the Bodo aspirations. Now, BPF is the leading political organisation in the BTAD areas to articulate the Bodo cause. In the recently held third BTC election in April 8, 2015, the BPF formed Executive Council and BPF supremo Hagrana Mahilary sworn in as the BTC chief for the third consecutive term (The Assam Tribune, April 20, 2015).
The United Democratic People’s Front (UDPF) is also an organisation constituted for the Bodo cause in the post-independent India with its headquarter at Udalguri has actively been organizing rallies, demonstrations and engaged with the representatives of the Central Government regarding the vexed problems of the Bodos (Sonowal, 2013). It has participated in Council and Assembly elections too but is yet to gather enough support bases among the Bodos. It was seen that the UDPF in collaboration with ABSU, Peoples Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement and Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front have been involving in the talks with the Central Government with an aim of resolving the political problem of the Bodos and hence it is yet to be seen what kind of farther role does UDPF plays in the coming years too.

Another Bodo organisation, the Bodo National Convention is a new umbrella organization of the Bodos which was formed at the capital of BTC in Kokrajhar. It came into existence with an aim of providing a common platform for all the Bodo organizations both political and non-political in order to fight for their common causes, including the demand for a separate state of Bodoland. The BNC is headed by the chief of BTC, Hagrama Mahilary (Sonowal, 2013). These organizations have been taking up the issue of demand of a separate statehood for the creation of Bodoland within Indian Union. They had a several round of talks with the government officials and pressurized the government to take up the matter as soon as possible. Meanwhile the BNC has welcomed the central government’s initiative in constituting an expert committee in order to examine the issue of creating separate state for the Bodos. The BNC as a Bodo organization exerted pressure on the government of India to hold talks with the NDFB for peace in the Bodoland area. It has been actively working out for the interest articulation of the people in the BTC.
Apart from the formation of BNC, in the recent context of socio political organizations and interests articulation of the Bodos, we have seen the formation of another umbrella organization i.e., Peoples’ Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement consisting of 44 Bodo organisations. It was formed in the year 2013 and since its inception it has been accelerating the momentum of Bodoland movement for the greater interest of the Bodo society (Sonowal, 2013).

Apart from these organisations, there are some other organisations or associations which played important roles in the Bodo movement viz, Bodo Students Association, All Bodo Women’s Welfare Federation, Bodo National Peace and Co-ordination Committee and so on. In this respect it is important to note that, so far as the Bodo society is concerned it is divided into different organisational lines and hence their activities, ideologies and policies are not similar. As a result it led to the polarisation in the Bodo society. Many Bodo organisations took the path of non-violence and kept their faith on the democratic principle for the attainment of their vested goals. They had shown their firm believe on the Indian Constitution and tried to solve their problems within the ambit of the Constitution. But there were also a few organisations which were not loyal to the Indian Constitution and hence took the violent path to achieve their goals. For example, National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) did not want to follow the non-violent way and expressed dissatisfaction on the Indian Constitution. This kind of attitude of this organisation destabilized the development process in particular and Bodo society in general. These kinds of different organisational lines and ideologies among the various Bodo organisations created the disunity and disturbance in the Bodo society. Even it led to the killing of their own people. Therefore, the Bodo leaders felt the necessity of unity among the Bodo people and wanted to stop that kind of fratricidal clashes among the
various Bodo groups. Consequently, the Bodo leaders decided to form a Bodo National Peace and Co-ordination Committee after concluding their two day Convention of all the Bodo groups at Guwahati (Sonowal, 2013). Through this effort they wanted to eradicate their misunderstandings over their issues and also tried to bring back peace and unity in the Bodo society. Immediately after this effort they tried to bring the militant organisations viz., the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) back to the peaceful non-violent path of democracy. This move was to some extent successful when the BLT leaders declared cease-fire and agreed to sign over an agreement with the centre for creating BTC Accord under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. This effort of the BLT leaders showed the sign of a ray of hope towards the solution of their problems. But the NDFB leaders remained adamant over the issue of independent sovereign state of Bodoland even not receiving the support of the entire Bodo people.

Moreover, the initial Bodo organisations were emerged with a view to development of education and reform in their society where some traditional practices based on some superstitions were prevailing. In course of time and constant efforts made by these non-political Bodo organisations became successful to bring drastic changes into their society and injected the sense of identity consciousness among the Bodo people. This sense of identity consciousness and the spread of Western educational values helped to raise a section of Bodo elite. Gradually, this section of Bodo elite started to organise the Bodos for their socio-economic and political deprivations which was reflected when they submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929 for their political aspirations. Thus their socio-cultural movement transferred to the political one. Hence, some organisations were created in political lines viz., All Assam Tribal League
(AATL), Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), where All Assam Tribal League started its journey as a first common political platform of all the tribes though the Bodos dominated the League. Its achievements are measured on Line System, Tribal Belt and Blocks, reservation of seats in the State Council and so on in the colonial environment.

Among all other Bodo organisations Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) have great impact in the Bodo struggle. Without the great involvement of these two organisations one cannot imagine the success of the Bodo Movement. These two organisations have touched all the sections of the Bodo people and society. Therefore, under their leadership, the Bodos became the most united, assertive and highly organised community in the region.

In this context, it is also necessary to mention here that the growth and development of the Bodo organisation and their interest articulation regarding their issues does not pose threat to the mainstream rather it benefits the mainstream. By approaching the authority with a democratic way to reduce their hindrances is itself a benefit for the system. In support of this view almost all the Bodo organisations organised the Bodo masses against the illegal immigration and land acquisition with tribal blocks and belts which helps the Assamese society as a whole. Again, when Simon Commission was visited Assam in 1928, the Bodo organisations submitted memorandum to the royal commission opposing the proposal of to transfer the Goalpara district to the province of Bengal whereas the Tribal League and PTCA were in a position to protect the land of the indigenous people by not hampering on the line system and tribal belts and blocks. Apart from that in the eve of Indian independence the Tribal League strongly opposed the inclusion of Assam into Pakistan. These efforts by the tribals (Bodo) organisations
imply their loyalty to their own community in particular and to the national integration in general.

So far as the violent activities of the insurgent groups like BLT and NDFB is concerned the BLT cadres came back to the mainstream with signing the BTC Accord of 2003 with the Central Government under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the Bodo people welcomed this move whereas the ideology of NDFB is side-lined by the mainstream Bodo society. Therefore, there is no doubt that the growth and development of the various Bodo organisations and their interest articulation except one or two is not a move to pose threat towards the national building process of the mainstream rather it is an effort to make this process of national building more effective to develop consciousness of the Bodo people in socio-economic and political fields.

**Conclusion:**

It is very difficult to mobilize a community in an organized manner for achieving their socio-economic and political aspirations. From the above discussion, it becomes quite clear that the injection of consciousness of any kind is developed by different organizations to mobilize people of the same community in a planned way. Therefore, in this context, the above discussion of the origin and development of both the political and non-political organizations of the Bodos and their efforts for interest articulation of their own community is justified. They organised the Bodo society and drive them in a planned way to achieve their desired aims and objectives after making them aware of their issues. The root causes of the origin and background of these organizations rest with the process of insecurity, deprivation and exploitation of the Bodo community in
various fields since long time. Therefore, they came out to lead the unorganized Bodo society and succeeded to move them in an organised way to meet those issues.

Within the society, some organizations tried to acquire power politics believing in the democratic machinery to solve their problems and others like BLT and NDFB believed in violent ways while some others showed the sign of non-political character but follow the method of pressure techniques on the authority to achieve their desired aims. At last, on behalf of the Bodo community, these political and non-political Bodo organizations articulated the interest of their own community as a whole even though in the pretext of protecting their distinct identity.
Reference:


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