

CHAPTER: V

ROLE OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS IN AROUSING CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE BODOS

Formation of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* :

The formation of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* (Boro Students' Union) is a landmark in the history of the Bodos. The Bodos in general were down trodden; the social, economic and religious conditions were deplorable. They were hemmed in from all directions. In the Eastern Assam, the Bodo (the Kachari) populations were absorbing fast into greater Assamese society by method of proselytization into *Ek Saran Nam Dharma* of Srimanta Sankardev and assimilated totally in it. In the west, by the influences of the Hindu *Gurus*, some conscious sections of the Bodo population were transforming themselves into Hindu caste called the *Koch*. Some had already become Christian proselytes by following the gospel of Jesus Christ¹. Entangled in the process of a tricky affair of religious conversions, the Bodos were rendered into the position of losing its national identity. At that critical juncture, the conscious sections of their populations could not decide how to save their national identity. The Bodo population was separated into many sectarian groups. They could feel the pulse of disunity as they had been living in scattered villages without communication and any kind of interaction between them². So, as to discuss what to do at that critical moment, the existence of an organisation of all Assam character such as the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* had become much wanting and when it was founded in 1919, it had proved to be a respite of the hour for the Bodos. Had the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* not been given its birth at the crucial moment of 1919, the images of the Bodos would have been erased totally from the annals of the history. In the most critical juncture of the Bodos, the appearance of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* had proved to be the saviour of the Bodos. That crucial moment was preceded by the hectic Socio-Religious Reformation Movement under the guidance of a great religious preacher and Social reformer Gurudev Srimot Kalicharan Brahma.

The *Boro Chatra Sanmilani* (The Bodo Students' Union) was given a nascent birth by the initiative of a few Bodo educated elite class. As they studied in Bengali, they could read Bengali literatures³ and learned about Bengali culture, customs, traditions and the progress they had made in all spheres of their lives. Bengali literatures contained Bengali nationalism of the 19th century which the young Bodos studied and imbibed inspirations from them. They became vibrant with the new ideas of the Bengal Renaissance and began to compare those with their own social, economic and religious conditions and found no match with them⁴. The early Bodo nationalist leaders did not blame any for their sorry plights, but they blamed and denigrated themselves and their people. This fact is found expressed in their writings in the *Bibar* magazine which was published in trilingual i.e. Bodo, Assamese and Bengali. They had committed to uplift the fate and destiny of their people. The founders of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* had envisaged the goal of fostering unity and fellow feeling among the Bodos. Towards achieving all round development and progression of education among them, they implored the Bodos that they were down trodden, sleeping in deep slumber; they were averse to hard work and lack enthusiasm for education. For its remedies, they conceived that the necessary ingredient for fostering unity and fellow feeling among them was education. Education was seen as the only means through which a nation could thrive⁵. Secondly, to infuse national feeling, they recollected historical prides and glories achieved by their ancestors which were current as oral traditions as well as in written past and introduced them to their laymen through their writings and by staging historical dramas called *Gaon*. The third aim was the creation of opportunities for knowing and meeting each other for discussion on social, political, economic and religious issues of the Bodos living in various places of Assam and Bengal through the publication of journal, magazine etc⁶. For that they felt the need for publication and circulation of a periodical magazine through which they would get an ample scope to fulfill their aspirations of meeting each other for discussion on various issues relating to their community. They brought out a magazine called *Bibar* in 1924. From the published articles in the form of prose, poetry and essays in the *Bibar* magazine by many enthusiastic writers and readers from among the Bodos, the early aims of founding the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* in 1919 AD had become crystal clear⁷.

One of the prerequisites for the development of a nation was the 'unity'. To secure unity, the founders of the *Bodo Chatra Sanmilani* had set the goal of binding together all the sectarian groups of the great Bodo race. History revealed that in course of time, the Bodo race got separated each other in different sections and lived in various places with the new names of their tribes. For example, the term Bodo was not in use for the Mech tribe of Goalpara district, it was used to appellate the Bodos of Darrang district⁸.

Prior to the formation of the *Boro Chatra Sanmilani* in 1919, the spreading of *Brahma Dharma* and the social reformation movement was in full progressive dimension. Many of the elite sections of the Bodos and students alike had already joined the movement in their own accord. Ground was already cleared which needed only the finishing task. The pioneers in the field felt the need for organising and channelising the youth force for the constructive works. Many inspirations had come from the *Gurudev* himself. In that regard in a meeting convened at Tipkai he implored that the Bodos were illiterate and to lead them, organisations for the Bodos were necessary. He mooted the idea of formation of *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* for the parents and the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* for the youths⁹. In the religious congregations where he preached his *Brahma Dharma*, he sought the help of the young educated youths and passionately induced them to come forward to work for the greater interest of their society. As Kalicharan Brahma was accepted as their Religious *Guru* by greater sections of the Bodos¹⁰, he was instrumental in bringing about changes in Bodo society. It had become natural bend to take his advice in the formation of *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*. He was invited to attend as the chief Guest in the first session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* held at upper primary school premises at Kokrajhar in 1919. Through his valuable speech he impelled that for leading a good family life, education was important, only educated person could understand the meaning of *Dharma* (Religion), *Artha* (Economy), *Karma* (Volition) and *Moksha* (Salvation), the four principles of life¹¹. He further said that the wealth could be stolen by a thief or snatched away by a dacoit, but knowledge of education could not be taken away by any and it would remain until death¹². He also cited the remarks of Chanakya, the great Pundit that kings were respected in his own kingdom only, but the learned man was respected everywhere. With such many catchwords he exhorted the students to become a learned man, to cultivate

polite manner, truthfulness and to learn to respect old and the young alike and not to indulge in intoxication. At last he also entreated the students' body to bring out the *Bibar* magazine immediately¹³.

With those aims and objectives mentioned above, the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* was formed in 1919 at a meeting held at Kokrajhar upper primary school, Kokrajhar. Rupnath Brahma was selected as the first general secretary and Jadav Chandra Khakhlary of Kachari Pathar of Dibrugarh as the president of the inaugural session¹⁴. Resolutions adopted in the first session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* were indicative of their aims: 1. A new name for the students' union to be found out. 2. The Conferences of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* would be convened every year at various places. 3. The students of both High Schools and the Colleges should take initiative for bringing out the *Bibar* magazine. 4. Executive Committee's Chief and other members would be selected.

In successive conferences which held every year many resolutions of their national importance were adopted. The following year, in 1920, the second session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* conference was held at Puthimary M.V. school premises in which a large number of students from the far-flung areas of undivided Goalpara district thronged¹⁵. The third session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* Conference was held at Tipkai M.V. school premises in 1921 which was presided over by the noted social worker, Sjut. Narapati Kachari Basumatary from the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. The fourth session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* Conference was held at Kokrajhar M.V. school premises in the year 1922 (Bangla,1329). The session was presided over by Sjut. Jadunath Das Khakhlary from Dibrugarh¹⁶.

In the fifth Annual Conference of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* which was held in the year 1923, some socially relevant resolutions were adopted. Among them the most notable one was the compulsory primary education for the Bodos. But the feasibility aspect of the compulsory primary education was sought to be studied. The responsibility for studying the same and submission of report thereof was given to a noted social worker Sjut. Karendra Narayan Brahma of Patakata¹⁷. The opening of the night school for the poor students and adult Bodo cultivators was also a revolutionary

resolution adopted in that conference. The expansion of education and some reformations on village life were also their main objectives¹⁸.

The Secretary of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* in his Secretarial report of its sixth annual conference held at Haltugaon on and from 9th to 10th Oct/1924 said that despite some topsy-turvy in the arrangements and management of the conference was successfully concluded. In that conference many awards for attracting and encouraging the Bodos towards general education were announced along with the names of the donors. The donors were (i) Karendra Narayan Brahma, donated 'Silver Medal' for the award to the Bodo student who secured first division in matriculation examination under Calcutta University. (ii) *The Chetana Patra* was donated by Sjut. Narendra Nath Brahma. (iii) Sjut. Rabi Chandra Kachari's Silver Medal and (iv) Rupnath Brahma's Silver Medal were noteworthy. Some noted personalities from outside the district of Goalpara participated in the conference. They were – Dandiram Das, Kirtinath Das s/o Jadunath Das from Lakhimpur, Jogendra Nath Kachari, Sri Rabiram Kachari from Kamrup and Johon Kachari from Darrang and other noted leaders from the local district of Goalpara were Karendra Narayan Brahma, Sobharam Brahma Choudhury, Narendra Nath Brahma and Mongol Chandra Brahma¹⁹.

The following resolutions were adopted in the Executive Committee meeting of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* which was held on 7/02/1927 .

1. It was decided that from the ensuing 7th session of the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*, the *Sanmilani* would be known as the *Assam Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*.
2. Rangia was selected as the venue for holding the 7th Annual Conference of *Assam Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*.
3. Puja holiday was selected as the tentative date for holding the Conference.
4. Rai Bahadur Ananda Chandra Agarwala was selected to preside over the upcoming Rangia session.
5. To request the Reception Committee to complete the preparation for holding the session beforehand.

6. Sjut. Joychandra Brahma (President), Sjut. Rupnath Brahma Narzary (Secretary), Sjut. Panchanand Khakhlary (Asstt. Secretary), Satish Chandra Basumatary, Jaladhar Brahma, Kabindra Narayan Brahma, Krishna Mohan Brahma, Milan Chandra Kachari, Ananda Mohan Brahma, Gabinda Chandra Brahma, Modaram Brahma, Rabi Chandra Kachari, Jogendra Chandra Kachari, Karendra Narayan Brahma Mondal, Dinesh Chandra Brahma, Motilal Brahma Sarkar, Surjya Narayan Brahma, Narendra Nath Brahma, Namal Chandra Boro, Rajani Kanta Brahma were selected as the members of the Executive Committee²⁰.

The *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*'s activities didn't remain confined to the organisation of annual conferences only. Its activities were extended to the mobilisation from village to village for arousing consciousness in social and economic life of the Bodos. The activists toured in group in the villages as a part of awareness campaign as well as for raising donations for *Sanmilani's* fund. In course of time the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* became very popular among the Bodos. They also honoured and revered the contemporary personal achievers. Subedar Sardar Bahadur Belbungram Kochari of Amjonga of *Dakshin Par* who was the first recipient of the Victoria Cross Medal amongst the Bodos (the Kacharis) was honoured and revered. He had the credit of having acted as the body guard of King George V when the later came to Delhi to attend Delhi Durbar in 1909. He had hand checked the King George V, the credit of which only a few people could have in their luck amongst the millions²¹. W.W. Hunter endorsed the qualities of the Bodos to be fit for serving in the armed forces. He said that the Bodos (the Kacharis) formed a strong element in the military and police force. They were strongly built, stout and bold and made good Sepoys. He also quoted the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara district who opined that they were first employed as such by the old kings of Kamarupa²².

Thus, the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* did a commendable job in bringing about awareness among the Bodos regarding the importance of education for making the Bodos prosperous, in linking them each other living in various places when there was no other medium to remain connected themselves and in bringing out *Bibar* magazine which proved to be the herald in forging solid strength to work unitedly to uplift the Bodos.

The Bodo Mahasanmilani Conferences:

The most noteworthy step to uplift the Bodo society and to save the face of the Bodos from amelioration was the holding of the successive *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* conferences in various places in regular intervals of time from 1921 onwards. Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma took the pioneering role not only in arousing sentiment for organising those successive *Mahasanmilani* conferences but also in securing man and material support from the cross sections of the Bodo populations. ‘Meet together’ was the basic principle for forging ‘Unity’ and the guiding spirit for organising the conferences²³. They took the opportunity to adopt many socially relevant resolutions for eradicating many social evils plaguing the society. The medieval practices were held responsible for tarnishing the fame of the Bodos before the neighbouring communities. With the holding of many conferences, the Bodos were able to foster Unity among them for marching ahead. They garnered support and enthusiasm both from the literate and illiterate Bodos for eradicating social evil practice²⁴.

The idea of the organisation of the Bodo *Mahasanmilani* was already in the air and the information of which could be gathered from here and there in the writings of the activists themselves. Kalicharan Brahma Jr. wrote a book, *Kalicharan Gurudevni Jeu Khourang Arw Saya*. In this book, the holding of meeting at Tipkai by Kalicharan Gurudev is mentioned in which Gurudev’s remarks are quoted. He said that to arouse consciousness, the spirit of unity and brotherhood among the Bodos the organisation of Bodo *Mahasanmilani* was necessary²⁵.

The ideas of formation of organisations such as the *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* and the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* were already mooted and the idea was aired by the proponents. In order to give them into a final shape of an organisation, those ideas were again re-aired and shared in individual level by the protagonists mostly by the votaries of the *Brahma* Faith. In other words, the Bodo elite class who had already become *Brahma* converts were a handful of leaders and volunteers, activists, prose writers, poets, etc all in one or the two sides of the same coin. During the course of preaching and congregations of *Brahma Dharma*, Kalicharan Gurudev and his votaries got the opportunities for meeting each other to discuss many issues of Bodo national

importance. Thus, the idea of organizing Bodo *Mahasanimilani* conferences was materialized into the practical shape²⁶.

The first Bodo *Mahasanimilani* conference was organised at Bhaoraguri in 1921 with Jadav Chandra Khakhlary as its first President²⁷. Through many appealing resolutions adopted in the successive Bodo *Mahasanimilani* Conferences, they tried to eradicate some of the evil practices that engulfed the Bodos. Fading name and fame of the Bodos had to be brought back by appeals or by force of heavy fine imposed on the people who dared to violate the rules and regulations those were framed in successive Bodo *Mahasanimilani* Conferences. Some of the notable Bodo leaders who were themselves both leaders and volunteers were Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, Subedar Sardar Bahadur Belbungram Kachari, Karendra Brahma Mandal, Baburam Brahma Mandal, Dupharam Basumatary, Bijaysingha Brahma and many others²⁸.

A meeting to discuss the ways and means to materialise the idea of holding Bodo *Mahasanimilani* was convened at Tipkai²⁹. In that meeting, the date and venue for *Mahasanimilani* conference were decided. Bhaoraguri as the middle path between Patakata and Binya khata was selected with the hope that both the manpower and materials would easily be supplied from those two places. On the appointed date and time, the Bodo *Mahasanimilani* conference was held at Bhaoraguri with much pomp and gaiety in the year 1921³⁰. Bodo People from all walks of life thronged in vast numbers from every nook and corner of Assam. The first Secretary of the *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanimilani* was Mr. Rupnath Brahma who was a college student. The notable resolutions of the meeting were mentioned below³¹:

1. The *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanimilani* Conference would be held every year at various places in different districts.
2. For the smooth sailing of the meeting an Executive Committee would be formed and for that, a president, a secretary and some members would be selected.
3. There should be a Mahila *Mahasanimilani* too, alongside the *Mahasanimilani* Conference.
4. For highlighting the various issues and problems concerning the students of both high school and college alike a *Patrika* (Magazine) was to be published henceforth.

5. Lower primary schools would be established in substantial numbers and both the boys and the girls were to be sent to schools.
6. The social drinking of *Jou* (rice-beer) in festive occasions should be shunned thenceforth.
7. The bride price for daughter's marriage was fixed at Rs 51/- and whosoever takes more than the fixed sum would be punished with a heavy fine.

There was a report of holding of *Mahila Sanmilani* conference at Malandubi (Dotma) where many Bodo women participated enthusiastically³². Some of the chief activists were- Damayanti Brahma of Owabari, Pujari Brahma of Simbargaon, Thapeswary Brahma and many more. Among them Thapeswary Brahma of Patakata was the president of the meeting. The important decisions of the meeting were as follows³³:

1. Girl child was to be given the opportunity to receive an education.
2. The Bride price was fixed at Rs 51/- and Rs 25/- in case of widow remarriage and if any extra amount was demanded they would be fined and would be compelled to refund the same.
3. When a woman became a widow, she should be given the exclusive right over her former husband's property. In case she remarried 1/3 of her former husband's property, would be allowed to retain and other 2/3 would be shared amongst the nearest relatives of the former husband.
4. The girls (whether grown up or child) would be given 1/3 of her parents' property.

The *Mahila Sanmilani* was encouraged by Gurudev Srimot Kalicharan Brahma and other important leading personalities of the locality³⁴. At Rangia in the district of Kamrupa, the Second Bodo *Mahasamilani* conference was held in the year 1925. The honourable President of the meeting was Mahadev Sarma of Tezpur. Many Bodo leaders and social activists like Sabharam Brahma, Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, Rabi Kachari, Jagendra Kachari, Sambhu Uzir, Gopal Uzir, Durga Mouzadar and the religious leader Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma participated in the conference. Many Bodo people from the nook and corner of Assam thronged in considerable numbers. Kalicharan Gurudev took the leading role in the discussion of various issues plugging the Bodos. After thorough

discussions on each of issues one after the other, they arrived at some important decisions which were mentioned below³⁵:

1. The pig was the destroyer of the crops and its defecations were unhygienic to health. So, rearing of pig thenceforth was to be stopped gradually.
2. All the resolutions adopted in the last Bhaoraguri session of the *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conference was endorsed.
3. The children were to be sent to schools. The bride price of Rs 51/- and in case of the widow of Rs 25/- would remain fixed. The worship of the *Mwdaisafwr* (lesser gods) henceforth was stopped. *Dharma* would be accepted and the *Mahila Sanmilani* conference was to be organised alongside the *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conferences.

The third *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conference was held at Roumari Jyoti Ashram near Bongaigaon in 1929 in which Jadav Chandra Khakhlary was again selected as the President of the meeting. The conference was adorned by the gracious presence of the noted litterateur and poet Ambikagiri Roychoudhury and Nilmoni Phukan³⁶. Among the Bodo leaders who attended and took part in the discussion were Katimol Brahma, Narapati Kachari Basumatary, Sardar Bahadur Belbungram Kachari, Birendra Narayan Mandal, Gopal Uzir, Balichand Deb Karzi, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Malsingh Brahma, Dinanand Swami, Adaityanand Swami Shyamacharan Brahma, Banbasu Kachari, Rupnath Brahma, Modaram Brahma, Nepal Chandra Brahmachari, Kalicharan Brahmachari (Jr). In the discussion, many important proposals for adoption of resolutions came up which were discussed thoroughly for adoption and endorsed. The banning of the public drinking of *Zou* (rice beer) was advocated. The rearing of pigs were shunned and visiting the Hindu festivals and Pujas by the females were also banned. The other resolutions which were adopted in the previous conferences but could not be implemented fully and felt necessary to be continued were endorsed unanimously. For example, the resolution on banning the system of forcible abduction marriage which were prevalent among the Bodos and it still had the tendency of continuation despite its banning was endorsed³⁷.

The fourth *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conference was held at Kajigaon in the year 1934. That time, of course, it was not in a gorgeous manner but attended by a few leaders to deal with the few issues of a very important nature. It was felt that in absence of written social codes or the customary laws, the observance and adherence to the rules and regulations which were framed in the successive *Mahasanmilani* Conferences would, in future, recede from the public viewing. The idea of framing the social rules and regulations was materialised into a practical shape by engaging Sjut. Baidyanath Brahma, Rabiram Brahma and Jamadar Brahma who compiled all rules and regulations to be observed in social ceremonies and festivals into a book called *Boro (Bodo) Samajni Pandulipi eba Ayen*³⁸. While framing those social rules, the team of framers were engaged for the purpose and convened meetings at various places like at Simbargaon, Gombhirakhata and Kokrajhar³⁹ for consultation and obtaining public opinions on rules and regulations which were later incorporated in the *Pandulipi* (customary law). Finally, it was accepted in the fourth *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conference which was held at Kajigaon in 1934 and brought out as a booklet form in the same year which was still in extant as social codes or customary laws of the Bodos⁴⁰.

As a result of the Brahma Reformation Movement, the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* was also formed in 1919 which directly helped the *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* in their effort to eradicate evil practices of the Bodos. One of the many-faceted impacts of the Socio-Religious Reformation Movement was that many educated Bodos of that time wrote articles in the form of essay, poem and songs, which were published in the periodical journal called *The Bibar*. Most of their writings were with the zeal of reformation and urges to improve the social, political and economic condition of their fellow Bodo tribes and were the first ever to be written in Bodo. Their writings greatly encouraged the Bodo masses to give up their social evil practices. Many of their articles made the common Bodos enlightened and were able to create impression on them. The articles written in Bodo language attracted a large number of Bodo masses towards them which made the task of reformation of Bodo society much easier for the volunteers of the *Brahma Dharma* Movement.

For implementing the resolutions adopted in the successive *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* Conferences and for preaching the *Brahma* Faith (*Brahma Moth*), the protagonists expounded the idea of securing the help of the youth force, for which

Fwrlang Babaji appealed to the youths to enlist themselves as volunteers⁴¹. The enthusiastic youths responded instantly, the number of which reached to three thousand youths. They were instructed to follow three strict disciplines or principles. Firstly, the volunteers were to observe total non-violence in course of rendering services as a volunteer, secondly, they were to observe saintly renunciation by controlling greediness and thirdly, they were expected to treat all women as their mother⁴².

The enlisted volunteers carried out death and destructions to pigs and *Dabkas* (earthenware vessel used for the preparation of *Zou*). The Brahma volunteers under the leadership of Sobharam Brahma of Bhalukmari had launched cleansing expeditions by killing reared-pigs and destruction of *Dabka* from village to village initially without any resistance starting from Porbotjoar area⁴³. Since the Brahma volunteers did not get any resistance even of feeble nature, they were emboldened to carry out destructions in the more vigorous way. They now least bothered to seek the consent of the householders to uproot the *Sizau Plant* (*Euphorbia Neriifolia*), the Altar of the *Bathou*, the Supreme deity. It became too much to be born with and ultimately a tough resistance was put up by the villagers at village Durabil near Patakata of the present Gossaigaon Sub-Division. According to Manindra Narzary, age 78, village Patakata, the volunteers were compelled to stop their expedition midway. It was alleged that the volunteers resorted to looting and arson in course of expeditions so much that their leader Sobharam Brahma was later assassinated at his own house at the village Bhalukmari. After his death, the activities of the volunteers were totally put to an end⁴⁴.

Satish Chandra Basumatary, the then editor of the *Bibar* in his editorial note wrote that in the next day of the meeting of Goalpara *Ryot Sabha*, it was proposed that a meeting of the Advisory *Sabha* would be held to discuss regarding the proposed formation of the *Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani* embracing all the Bodos, Garos, Lalungs, Rabhas etcetera of the great Bodo Race to achieve the goals of expansion of education and social development among them by uniting together. In an attempt to make the house understand clearly about the aims and objectives of the proposed organisation, Sjut. Sabharam Brahma Choudhury, a noted social activist explained in detail. Among many distinguished persons attended in that meeting were Rai Sahib Panchanand Barma who was accompanied by other Kshatriya (Rajbansi) gentlemen, Kirti Babu from Lakhimpur,

Ganesh Chandra Kachari and Jogendra Nath Kachari from Kamrup and almost all respectable persons from local Dhubri region⁴⁵.

In the same editorial note, Satish Chandra Basumatary wrote that amidst heated arguments and counter-arguments they could arrive at some decisions of Bodo national importance. The decisions were⁴⁶:

1. The executive committee of the proposed *Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani* was authorised to take a decision regarding the nomenclature of the *Sanmilani*.
2. The area of operation of the *Sanmilani* would be limited to Goalpara district only.
3. The executive committee was authorized to frame the rules and regulations for the smooth running of the works of the *Sanmilani*.
4. It was also resolved that in the next day of the 7th Annual conference of the Assam *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* at Rangia there would be a first conference of the *Bodo Sanmilani*.
5. The executive committee was formed with the following members- i. Sjut. Katimal Brahma (President) ii. Sjut Jamadar Brahma (Vice-President) iii. Sjut. Sabharam Brahma Choudhury (General Secretary) iv. Sjut. Joychandra Brahma (Asstt. Secretary) v. Sjut. Rai Saheb Jagot Chandra Mouzadar vi. Sjut. Dhajendra Brahma vii. Karendra Narayan Brahma viii. Sjut. Sattakar Brahma ix. Sjut. Usha Chandra Brahma x. Sjut. Bahadur Brahma Mauzadar xi. Sjut. Biswanath Brahma (Tulshijhora) xii. Sjut. Basanta Kumar Brahma xiii. Sjut. Baidyanath Brahma xiv. Sjut. Jatindra Mahan Brahma xv. Sjut. Bhabendra Mauzadar xvi. Sjut. Maniram Brahma xvii. Sjut. Sundaram Brahma xviii. Sjut. Satish Chandra Basumatary and xix. Sjut. Surjya Narayan Brahma (Head Master).

Memorandum to Simon Commission:

A state-level national convention of Assam *Kachari Yubok Sanmilani* was convened on 12 August 1928 at Titabor to discuss the problems plugging the Bodos (the Kacharis) of Assam⁴⁷. Through discussion, resolutions were adopted for submitting memorandum to Simon Commission for their redressal. It was attended by the

representatives of the Bodo (the Kachari) communities from various parts of Assam. Modaram Brahma was the sole representative from amongst the Bodos of Goalpara. Some of the noted resolutions were as under⁴⁸:

1. that since the Bodo (the Kachari) students were not allowed to dine together with the other Hindu students in the hostels of various colleges and schools. Therefore, the decision to demand for providing separate dining rooms in the hostels of M.E. schools, high schools and colleges were taken.
2. that the Bodo (the Kachari) community of Assam did not consider themselves as the lower-class category of Hindu or untouchables and as such did declare that they were quite independent of the Hindu community in all respects - Political, Social, Religions etcetera. The president of the meeting was Bharat Chandra Khakhlary and Jadav Chandra Khakhlari was the General Secretary.

In the memorandum to the Simon Commission, the representatives of the Assam *Kachari (Bodo) Yubok Sanmilani* (Assam Kachari Youth Union) included along with other points, the problem relating to census report which showed the different Bodo (Kachari) communities of the Bodo race as the separate categories and as a result of which their numerical strength had shown very low. It said that the Bodo (the Kacharis) were divided into several sub-races. The Bodos, Rabhas, Sonowals, Meches, Thengals, Lalungs, Saranias, Dimasas and Husai etcetera were all from different ramifications of the same community ie. the Bodos (the Kacharis). The census reports did not show the whole communities under one head-Bodo (Kachari). The number of people shown under the head Bodo (Kachari) was misleading. It was found that the Bodos numbered about 16 lakhs and formed one-fifth of the total population of Assam. Numerically, Bodos (the Kacharis) were strong community, but for want of education, the bone of human progress had relegated them to a minor position⁴⁹.

In another point of their memorandum the *Bodo (the Kachari), Yubok Sanmilani* alleged that they were socially regarded as untouchables. The Hindus didn't receive them in their society. It said that socially they were regarded as untouchables. If the Kacharis (Bodos) were called Hindus, then there would be mistake because the Hindus didn't receive them into their society and were unsympathetic towards their ideals and aspirations. They were an isolated backward community and therefore, looked up and

prayed before the Statutory Commission for lending them a helping hand by recognising their position⁵⁰.

Since they were not accepted in the Hindu society, the Bodo (the Kacharis) of Assam had accepted the fact that by nature and culture they were not the Hindus, and therefore wanted to remain as a separate independent community. The fact was reflected in one of the points of their memorandum which said that the community as had been alluded to above, didn't bind itself to the chariot wheels of the big Hindu community but preferred to take its stand as independent and earnestly hoped that the commission would be pleased to class them under a separate heading altogether⁵¹.

By the act of 1919, the state of Assam was upgraded from Chief Commissioner's province to Governor's province under a Governor with Representative Council in which communal representation was provided viz. the Mohammedan and non-Mohammedan. But such system of representation deprived the Bodos (the Kacharis) who constituted one-fifth of the total population of Assam by clubbing them into the broad non-Mohammedan category which was regarded by the then leaders of the Bodos (Kacharis) as rather a tricky arrangement. They alleged that so far only the upper caste Hindus had got into the legislature and the minor communities had gone almost unrepresented. So, they begged the Simon Commission for further sub-division of the category 'non-Mohammedan' into Hindus and non-Hindus⁵². Those points were the clear replication of the treatment and attitude of the high caste Hindus towards the Bodos (the Kacharis) which resulted in negative impact on the agenda of the greater Assamese Nationality Formation.

Kalicharan Gurudev and his compatriots⁵³ submitted Memorandum to the Simon Commission on behalf of the Goalpara *Boro (Bodo) Yubok Sanmilani* on the following points⁵⁴:

1. They demanded inclusion of the Bodos in the Census Report as a separate category by clubbing out from the present category of Hindu, the reason for which the Bodos were shown lesser than actually in number in the population census.
2. In any case, they were against clubbing the Bodos with the category of Hindus. They argued that out of the total population of the whole district of Goalpara

which numbers about 6,85,882 some 3,69,397 fell under the heads of non-Mohammedan, non-Mohammedan means Hindus, Christians, Jains, Sikhs and the like. Under such circumstances, they could not enjoy any privileges provided by the Reforms of 1919, as those were enjoyed either by the Brahmans or by the *Kshatriyas* or by the *Sudras*. So, in order to safeguard the interest of the community, they demanded separate representation in the central council as well as in the local councils.

3. They demanded total four seats in the Governor's council and out of those four one seat was to be reserved for the Bodos of Assam.
4. They also demanded setting up of sub-division with Headquarters either at Haltugaon or Kokrajhar and they also demanded opening more and more employment opportunities for the downtrodden Bodos.
5. They demanded that the Bodo community should receive special treatment at the hands of the government in matters of education and appointment. They argued that the community was the most backward in point of education. Such being the case, their people were always misled. They couldn't understand the value of reforms. They couldn't save themselves from the clutches of the foreign money lenders. To remove those drawbacks there should be compulsory pre-primary education. They argued that because of their people's illiteracy and ignorance, they were easily misled by others at the time of elections and as a consequence, the people of other communities were elected.

The *Habraghat Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani (Habraghat Boro Union)* formed as early as in 1911-12 was the ever first Bodo organization. It was formed in the South of the river Brahmaputra of the Goalpara district and under its initiative the first ever book in printed form written in Bodo language was also brought out. It was none other than *Boroni Phisa O Ayen* edited by Sri Gangacharan Das, clerk (profession)⁵⁵. The *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* (Boro students' Union) which was formed in 1919 came next.

From the book *Boroni Phisa O Ayen*, many information on social, religious, economic conditions of the Bodos of the South Goalpara can be gathered. The Bodos of that part of the Goalpara district were separated by the mighty river Brahmaputra from the Bodos of the North of the same river. As far information available in the book *Boroni Phisa O Ayen*, the Bodo people were fast transforming into another caste by giving up

their own religion, language and culture. In that book, frantic appeals were made for not to relinquish their own religion, traditions and the own tribe (*Jati*). Gangacharan Das Kachari, the editor, made some general appeals to the Bodo brothers to become awakened. He asked to emphasize on expansion of education among the Bodos. He stated that all other communities who were earlier regarded as savages had marched ahead towards the path of progress. Those pieces of information or statements were testimonies of their self-consciousness of the general conditions of the fellow tribesmen and the deep remorse of fellow feelings for their tribe's deplorable conditions in all affairs of their lives⁵⁶.

The bringing out of the book *Boroni Phisa O Ayen* was synchronized with the holding of the 3rd annual conference of the *Habraghat Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani* in 1915 at Amjonga. It was presided over by Sjut. Kamala Kanta Kachari (Tehsildar, the sub-deputy collector) and Sjut. Gangacharan Kachari was the Secretary and Sjut. Madhoram Kachari was Asstt. Secretary. Notable persons among some 1500 delegates attended in the conference were Sjut. Narapati Chandra Kachari, an Inspector from village Khara gram and many others. Sjut. Gangacharan Kachari, the editor, in his inaugural address in the book *Boroni Phisa O Ayen*, said that the Bodos had come under the influence of Cursed Ahalya. He wondered when they would be able to come out from the curse. Due to the influence of the curse they couldn't rise up from the bed of laziness and darkness. He exclaimed that at the ascendancy of the reddish sunshine, all living beings of India were awakened, but the down-trodden Bodo (Kachari) tribes were still sleeping in deep slumber. They were transformed into the influences of cursed Ahalya. Didn't know when they would become free from the curse when they would be able to give up the bed of laziness after becoming awakened⁵⁷. The editor remarked that all the tribes and castes of India by dint of their hard work had marched on the path of progress.

The early aims of the *Habraghat Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani* was the making of the Bodos awakened from the deep slumber. They had seen with their own eyes the progress and development made by different tribes and caste including the Garos, their immediate neighbours. The Garos were regarded as the savage tribe who became civilized after following the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. The social activists who involved with the *Sanmilani* activities could not see any progress amongst the Bodos but could observe

as a cursed tribe, didn't know when they would be able to rise above their hands to mouth living conditions⁵⁸.

By their little education which they got from a few primary and upper primary schools established after the ascendancy of the British in the district of Goalpara after 1822, they became employee in different capacities. For example, Kamala Kanta Kachari was Tahsildar equivalent to Sub-Deputy Collector, Narapati Chandra Kachari was an Inspector and Madhoram Kachari was a Havildar of armed forces rank⁵⁹. Some of the notable persons like Narapati Chandra Kachari of Kharagram and Subedar Bahadur Belbungram Kachari of Amjonga worked heart and soul for the upliftment of the Bodos by involving themselves in the organisations such as *Habraghat Boro (Bodo) Sanmilani*. They also came over to the North bank of the river Brahmaputra to take part in the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani* and *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* conferences held from time to time in various places of Assam. Subedar Bahadur Belbungram Kachari was also associated with Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma while submitting Memorandum to Simon Commission in 1929 at Shilling on behalf of the Goalpara District *Boro (Bodo) Yubok Sanmilani* (Goalpara District Boro Youths' Union). By the noble efforts of a few Bodo leaders in South Goalpara, the identities of the Bodos of that part of the country could be saved. So, as a result of which a tribe known as the Bodos could be seen there till today. The South Goalpara was sparsely populated by the tribes of the Bodos, Garos and Rabhas who were downtrodden.

The Bodos were few in number in the South Goalpara. They could save themselves from conversion to the other religions and thereby they were able to save themselves from becoming total assimilated population. Whereas, unlike them, Kachari tribes of upper Assam had become complete assimilated population after they were being converted into *Ek Saran Nam Dharma* of Sri Sri Sankardev. In upper Assam districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Golaghat only the traces of the Kachari names of the rivers and some villages could be heard of till today⁶⁰.

Besides, those three main organisations of the Bodos viz the *Boro (Bodo) Chatra Sanmilani*, *Boro (Bodo) Mahasanmilani* and *Habraghat Bodo Chatra Sanmilani* there were numerous other localized organisations which worked relentlessly for arousing consciousness among the Bodos for education and social upliftment of the

Bodos. All those organisations sprang up side by side the *Brahma-Dharma* Movement launched by the protagonists of the *Brahma Dharma*. Wherever Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma went, the things didn't remain the same. After following his religion and advice the local activists engaged themselves in utilitarian services by organizing meetings or by forming *Sanmilanis* or unions in their local areas. Owing to semi-literate or semi-educated nature of the Bodo society many of their activities remained unreported or unrecorded, but there were a few expositions of such activities which were found divulged in their only magazine *Bibar*. Modaram Brahma, the undergraduate student reported such meeting in the *Bibar* magazine of the IV issue, December 1924 which wrote that in the last 14th Pausa (29th December) the Annual conference of the *Purba Goalpara Yubak Sanmilani* was held in which distinguished delegates delivered lectures on education and society of the Bodos. In that conference, many donors made generous donations to the society's fund and *Sanmilani's* fund for their welfare works. In the night of that session, the famous *Hangphe* drama of Maniram Gajla was staged amidst great crowds⁶¹.

Dangori Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani:

The formation of the *Dangori Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani* of the districts of Dibrugarh and Sibsagar was also an important event in the question of existence of the Bodo (the Kachari) tribe of upper Assam. Almost all the Bodo (the Kachari) tribe of those two districts were assimilated into the greater Assamese Nationality formation by relinquishing their ancestral religion, language, traditions and culture in favour of the *Ek Saran Nam Dharma* of Sri Sri Sankardev and the language in favour of Assamese. A report of holding an annual conference of the *Dangori Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani*, in writing was sent to the *Bibar* by its secretary Sjut. Dandidhar Sonowal for its publication which said that *Dangori Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani* in its 4th Annual session explained its aims as – to save the Bodo (the Kachari) tribes from the brink of extinction by showing the peaceful and just means of the path of progress. The session was held on 21st December/1924 under the presidentship of Kirthinath Das. Many Bodo (Kachari) gentlemen attended the meeting and in their faces enthusiasm and encouragement was visible. The president of the session pointed out the main cause of degradation of the Bodo (the Kachari) tribes and shown their remedial measures. After reading out the resolutions adopted in the meeting the president concluded the session⁶².

Goalpara Ryot Sabha:

The Second Annual Conference of the Goalpara *Ryot Sabha* was held on 25th December/1924 at the open field of Hatkola near Kokrajhar railway station. The Secretary of the Sabha Sjut. Karendra Narayan Brahma with his active hand successfully convened the session despite a shortage of workers due to the outbreak of cholera endemic. In the meeting, Bodos, Rabhas, Rajbangsis and Santals joined in large numbers which was around 7/8 hundred. The noted personalities among the delegates were- Babu Pratam Nath Chakravorty, Biraj Mohan Dutta, Kumar Lahit Narayan Deb, Kumar Kagendra Narayan Choudhury, Kumar Bhim Narayan Singha, Maulvi Giashuddin Ahmed, Sjut. Satish Chandra Pradhani, Sjut. Katimal Brahma, Dhajendra Brahma, Srimot Adaityananda Swami, Sjut. Sobharam Brahma Choudhury, Sjut Samadar Brahma. The Goalpara *Ryot Sabha* was presided over by Pratam Nath Chakravorty⁶³.

Formation of Tribal League:

The responsible factors for the emergence of a common political platform among the ethnic tribes of the plain districts of Assam were the social awakening and the ethnic consciousness. Although, the processes were slow as they were manifested in the activities of various active youth organisations yet, those movements or the organisational activities discussed above, after slowly gaining momentum gave rise to the formation of *Tribal League* in 1933. The educated tribal youths driven by their indomitable urges for self-assertion felt that in absence of common political platform they wouldn't be able to represent various grievances plugging the tribal communities of Assam at the appropriate political level for their redressal and for securing political and job opportunities provided by the colonial government⁶⁴. Therefore, they organized a convention of all the plains tribal communities at Raha in the district of Nowgaon on 17th April 1933, which gave birth to a political organisation under the name *The Assam Tribal League*. The nascent political organisation was placed under the able leadership of Bhimbar Deuri and Jadav Chandra Khakhlary, as its Convener and President. It was a common platform of all Tribal groups of Assam that in later stages it could secure concessions and privileges for the tribals of Assam. The main tribal groups who participated in the *Tribal League* were the Bodos, Mishings, Rabhas, Sonowals, Tiwas, Deuris, Khamtis, Singhphos, and Mataks. Thus, before India's independence

conspicuous political consolidation took shape among the Bodos and the other tribes of Assam. Thus, they had started to participate in the process of modern politics⁶⁵.

Within the hegemony of the larger nationalities, attempt to squeeze a space for them in the political arena was made by a number of marginal groups designated as tribes, outcaste etcetera. In turn, the designation of tribes, *Harijan*, low caste in the Hindu hierarchical society was taken advantage of by the Tribal leadership in their articulation to secure advantages, concessions etc in the later political games. Those factors gave them ample opportunity for conglomerating different tribal groups to struggle for socio-political empowerment and to fight the hegemony of caste Hindus. By defining generic tribal identity clearly as distinct from the caste Hindus, they refused to be absorbed into the Hindu Caste Society⁶⁶.

In the early 20th century, Assam saw the emergence of various associations among the Bodos (the Kacharis). Those associations were the preludes to the formation of *Tribal League* in 1933. It provided ample scope and ground for the creation of leadership and the ideological formation took the nascent birth in the formations of those various associations which preceded the creation of *Tribal League*. It was the fruition of matured political ideas of some of the leadership and national ideological aspirations were manifested in the active political platform. In its formative stage, the *Tribal League* envisaged the unity of all Tribal communities of the plains of Assam for securing advantages in the socio-political milieu of the colonial state⁶⁷. The socio-cultural consciousness of all the Tribal communities of the plains of Assam was given a united platform through which various issues and problems of the tribes relating to education, social evils etc were articulated by their leaders for securing political concessions and privileges in the colonial administration. The holding of the provincial level *Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani* convention at Titabor on 12 August 1928 was a pathfinder to the formation of *Tribal League* in 1933, in which resolution on the Bodo (the Kachari) communities' refusal to be identified as Hindus was adopted. It said that the Bodo (the Kachari) Community of Assam didn't consider themselves as a lower class of Hindus or untouchable and thereby declared that they were independent of the Hindu community in all respects such as political, social, religious etc⁶⁸. There was also a resolution on issue of dining of the Bodo (the Kachari) students together with other Hindu students which said that since the Bodo (the Kachari) students were not allowed to dine together with the

other Hindu students, therefore, for providing separate dining rooms in the M.E. schools, H.E. schools and colleges were demanded⁶⁹. Those sorts of the sectarian attitude of the tribal leadership didn't come all alone. It was hastened by the treatment meted out to the Bodo (the Kachari) communities of Assam by the high caste Hindus especially at Cotton college hostels of Gauhati and Dhubri high school hostels. Those kinds of sectarian feelings persisted in the minds of the then Bodo (Kachari) community leadership and it was carried forward further in the political milieu too which was culminated in the formation of *Tribal League* in 1933. Instead of joining the Assam Provincial committee of All India Congress Committee (AICC) which was already formed in 1921, the tribal leadership moved away from it and formed a separate political platform of their own. That sectarian thought of exclusivity embracing all aspects of life was persisting in the politics of Assam.

Another reason for the Tribal leadership's opposition to identify themselves as Hindus was that there were the constant efforts of the high caste Hindus to classify the tribes as *Harijan Hindus* which was perceived as a ploy to club them together with the low castes⁷⁰. The persistent opposition of the Tribal leaders to various moves by more conservative circles and the Congress to categorise them as a part of the Hindu society was a ploy to show discontentment of the harsh treatment they received since the ancient days.

The conception that 'tribal people in Assam were a dying race or races' was a blatant miscalculated a move to dub the tribal population into Hindu categorization in the Census reports until 1941. It was thought that by way of conversion to *Sarania*⁷¹ entire Tribal populations of Assam would soon be vanished into oblivion and hence it was thought, there was no necessity for a separate provision for them⁷². The tribal leaders because of that reason perceived deprived of all political, social, educational and economic opportunities. Those feelings of deprivation, in turn, led them to sectarian thought.

More specifically, deprivation of dining together with the other Hindu students at Cotton college hostels, deprivation of hostel and hotel accommodation at Dhubri, deprivation of representation of the tribal communities in local boards and central legislature, deprivation of educational facilities in the rural areas were the much talk

topic of the day which were found expressed in the *Bibar* magazine published in 1924 onward. Kalicharan Gurudev, the preacher of *Brahma Dharma*, a pioneer in all aspects of Bodo life, the elite class of the time amongst the Bodos and wealthy Timber trader had the experiences of hard reality of treatment the Bodos received from the high caste Hindus. Those circumstances naturally led the Bodo (the Kachari) leaders to think in terms of the sectarian line away from mainstream politics and social arena. In the memorandum submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission known as Simon Commission, the Bodos (the Kacharis) refused to be recorded themselves as Hindus, which said that that community as had been alluded to above, did not bind itself to the chariot wheels of the big Hindu community but preferred to take its stand as independent of them and earnestly hoped that the Commission would be pleased to class them under a separate heading altogether⁷³. Their reasoning was a very strong point in the sense that if they became or identified themselves as Hindu, they would sink into the degraded class *Harijan* or depressed class which the Bodos (Kacharis) never ready to accept. All tribal societies were egalitarian and hence want equal status alongside the caste Hindus which the latter would never concede.

The *Tribal League* leaders vied for political power from 1937 to 1947 in the Legislative Council of the colonial state. They were successful in the formation of Coalition Government once with Sir Sadullah and later with Gopinath Bordoloi. They raised various issues and opposed many government policies which were detrimental to tribal interests. On the basis of the demands made by the tribal organisations viz the Assam Bodo (Kachari) Yubok Sanmilani and the Goalpara Boro (Bodo) Yubok Sanmilani, the Simon Commission made certain recommendations, which were considered by the British India Government at the time of enacting the Government of India Act, 1935. Accordingly, provisions were made for the separate electorates to the Tribals and also for reservation of four seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly for them. Under the new Government of India Act, 1935, the general elections to the provincial legislatures were held throughout India including Assam in 1937. The *Tribal League* contested the election in four reserved seats. Rupnath Brahma from Goalpara district, Rabichandra Kachari from Kamrup and Darrang districts, Dhir Singh Deori from Nowgaon district and Karka Chandra Doley from Sibsagar district were declared elected⁷⁴. The time of the formation of *Tribal League* was a period of crisis for the

aboriginal population of Assam because there was huge population immigration from the East Bengal due to encouragement under government's Wasteland Management Policy which resulted upto the level of threats to the very existence of the aboriginal tribal people of Assam so much so that it necessitated the drawing of line system beyond which the immigrants were not allowed settlement. Despite the presence of the *Tribal League* as a coalition partner, the Sadullah ministry time and again tried to abolish the Line System but due to persistent opposition of the Tribal representatives, those moves were foiled. Thus, the *Tribal League* played a positive role in the Legislative Council politics of the colonial state and its presence brought about an intimate involvement of the tribal peoples in the state politics of Assam⁷⁵ which requires a further study for its true revelation which may be taken up by the future researcher.

Endnotes:

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- ¹ Birendra Daimary, informant, age-76, occupation- former school teacher, Vill.- Sagunhara, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 04/01/1998.
 - ² *Ibid.*
 - ³ Darendra Basumatary, iformant, age-77, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.- Ballimary, P.O. Ballimari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 14/09/2014; Tularam Brahma, informant, age-76, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Mukuldang, P.O. Gambaribil, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 02/09/2016.
 - ⁴ B. Brahma, "Jothaigirini Raifwtnai", *Bibar*, 1st year 1st issue, April 1924, pp.i-ii.
 - ⁵ Dwarika Nath Rabha, "The Presidential Speech, 6th Annual Conference, Bodo (Boro) Chatra Sanmilani", *Bibar*, 1st year fourth issue, December, 1924, p.119.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*
 - ⁷ *Ibid*, p.120.
 - ⁸ *Ibid*, p.121.
 - ⁹ Kalicharan Brahma(Jr), *Jieu Kourang Arw Saya* (Bang. -1364, Kokrajhar), p. 41.

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- ¹⁰ Sabiram Brahma, informant, age-58, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Satbil, P.O. Binyakhata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 07/12/2016.
- ¹¹ B. Narzary, &M. Mitra, *Journey Towards Enlightenment: Gurudev And Bodo Soceity*, GBD Publishers, Guwahati: Kolkata,2004, pp. 66-67.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.65.
- ¹⁵ Dhaniram Brahma, informant, age- 81, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Bhalukmari, P.O. Dotma, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 02/09/2015.
- ¹⁶ Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *op. cit*, p. 40.
- ¹⁷ Gauri Sankar Narzary, informant, age-72, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.- Gelaguri, P.O. Dotma, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 17/10/2015; Kokharam Brahma, informant, age-79, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Gambaribil, P.O. Gambaribil, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 06/07/2014.
- ¹⁸ S. Basumatary, “Editorial”, *Bibar*, 1st year fourth issue, December,1924, p.130.
- ¹⁹ S. Basumatary, *op. cit*, P.129.
- ²⁰ S. Basumatary, *op. cit*, p.145.
- ²¹ Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *op. cit*, p. 49.
- ²² W.W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*. B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi,1982. p-36.
- ²³ Gopichand Brahma, informant, age- 68, occupation- former school teacher, Vill.- Narabari, P.O. Kokrajhar, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 14/05/2014.
- ²⁴ Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *op. cit*, p.31.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, p.33.
- ²⁶ Sanjib Brahma, informant, age-87, occupation- former school teacher, Vill.-Shoulmari, P.O. Shoulmari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 07/02/2015.
- ²⁷ Santiswar Brahma, informant, age- 84, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Daikhorguri, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 24/01/2015.
- ²⁸ Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *op. cit*, p.37.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, p.36.
- ³⁰ Amarendra Narzary, informant, age- 86, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Baman Kura, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 08/01/1998.
- ³¹ Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *op. cit*, p.41.
- ³² Somnath Brahma, informant, age- 80, occupation- Retired Govt. Employee, Vill.-Bengtol gate, P.O. Bongaigaon, District- Chirang, Assam, interviewed on 08/01/2015; Gotiram

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- Basumatary, informant, age-79, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Barzabil, P.O. Ballimari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 22/06/2015.
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- ³⁴ Binay Brahma, informant, age-79, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Panbari, P.O. Panbari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 23/01/2016.
- ³⁵ B. Narzary, & M. Mitra, *op. cit*, p. 40.
- ³⁶ Jibeswar Narzary, informant, age-75, occupation- Social Worker, Vill.-Dangaigaon, P.O. Dangtol, District- Chirang, Assam, interviewed on 07/11/2015.
- ³⁷ K. Brahma, *Srimot Kalicharan Brahma* (jeu khourang) Alaikhungri Publishers,1986, pp. 27,28.
- ³⁸ *Ibid*, p.28.
- ³⁹ Bishnu Mushahary, informant, age-68, occupation- Ex- School Teacher, Vill.- Hatimata, P.O. Kokrajhar, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 14/07/2016; Amarendra Narzary, informant, age- 86, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Baman Kura, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 08/01/2015..
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- ⁴³ Sabiram Brahma, informant, age-58, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Satbil, P.O. Binyakhata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 07/12/2016; Sahen Narzary, informant, age-78, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Kokhlingbari, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 04/11/2015.
- ⁴⁴ Manindra Narzary,78, informant of the village Patakata, Gossaigaon, interviewed on 12/09/1998; Sabharam Brahma, informant, age-79, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Boro Binya Khata, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam,interviewed on 24/01/2014.
- ⁴⁵ S. Basumatary, *op. cit*, p.139.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.140.
- ⁴⁷ B. Narzary, & M. Mitra, *op. cit*, p.83.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 83.; M. K. Nath, *Asomar Janajati Rajneeti*, P.K. Mahanta, Guwahati,2013, p.51.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid*.
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- ⁵² *Ibid*, p.84.

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- ⁵³ B. Basumatary, “Sorder Bahadur Subedar Major Belbungram Kachari”, in (ed) P. Bargayary, *The Bodo*, the mouth piece of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Kokrajhar, 1998, P.132-134.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 134.
- ⁵⁵ Gangacharan Kachari, *Boroni Fisa O Ayen*, Madharam Kachari, Sesapani, 1915, P.i.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.
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- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. ii.
- ⁶⁰ Faguna Barmahaliya, “Changing Socio-Religious Practices and Ethnic Identity:A Folkloric Study of the Bodos of Sonitpur District of Assam”, in MH Lahary (ed) *The Bodo*, the mouth piece of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Kokrajhar, 2010, p.138.
- ⁶¹ S. Basumatary, *op. cit*, p.141.
- ⁶² *Ibid*, pp.136,137.
- ⁶³ *Ibid*, pp.137,138.
- ⁶⁴ Charan Narzary, “Rupnath Brahma A Legend of Our Time”, in (ed) M. Hazoary, *Jana Sevak Rupnath Brahma*, A Souvenir, Souvenir Sub-Committee, Kokrajhar, 2002, p.12.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.12.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid*.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid*.
- ⁶⁸ B. Narzary, & M. Mitra, *op. cit*, p.81.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p.81.
- ⁷⁰ Suryasikha Pathak, “Tribal politics in the Assam: 1933-1947”, *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. XLV No. 10, 2010. p.65.
- ⁷¹ The word *Sarania* means embracing of Sankaradeva’s *Ek Saran Nam Dharma* and the transformation of one’s tribe to caste by relinquishing one’s language, culture, traditions and religion in favour of it.
- ⁷² Suryasikha Pathak, *op cit*, p.65.
- ⁷³ B. Narzary, & M. Mitra, *op. cit*, p.83.
- ⁷⁴ Charan Narzary, *op. cit*, p.p.12,13.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.13.