

**ROLE OF ALL BODO STUDENTS' UNION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE
POLITICS OF ASSAM (From 1967 to 2016)**

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BY

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Summary of the Thesis

1. INTRODUCTION:

The work “Role of All Bodo Students’ Unions and its Impact on the Politics of Assam (from 1967 to 2016)” tried to analyze the role of All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) in protection of identity, culture, language, literature and political rights of its community under the constitutional provision of India. The study also tried to analyze the language and separate state movement of ABSU and its impact on the society and politics of Assam.

History of student’s movements is the evidence of the society that the youth power and service has been playing very important role in nation building and reformation of the society. The student can work for the national unity and emotional integration in the country. They are much more rebellious than the general people and are the harbinger of new ideas and thoughts. All these factors make the students the first and foremost to respond whenever there is any injustice. The history of student movement was rich in India. The first student movement was started with the formation of Academic Association in 1828 at Bengal by a section of well-to-do educated youth against the British colonial rule. During post-independence period under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose and several others the youths of our country took active part in the freedom struggle of India which was highly appreciable and remarkable. The youth of North-East (NE) India is not also exceptional. More than 24 youth organizations of different ethnic or religious groups of Assam (North East India) were formed in different time to solve their respective miniature problems. The impact of youth power on the politics of Assam cannot be denied in this context of Assam. The historic Assam Accord Signed on 15th August 1985 after a struggle for 6 years against foreigners in Assam launched by All Assam Student’ Union (AASU) gave birth to regional political parties, AsomGanaParishad (AGP).

Assam is a miniature society with ethnic diversity and cultural plurality. Each ethnic group has its distinct lingo-cultural society which always tries to protect and preserve their own identity. In the post-independence period, most of the tribal ethnic groups of Assam along with Bodos felt that they were neglected and discriminated by the section of advance community. This perceived feeling of negligence and deprivation encouraged the All Bodo Students’ Union

to start the ethnic mobilization to safeguard their indigenous ethnic identity. The ABSU as one of the constituent organizations of Bodo has been working relentlessly to organize the young generation of Bodo people as well as reconstruction and development of the Bodo nationality with the spirit to reach the standard of the other develop community. Since its inception (1967), the All Bodo Students' Union as a strong youth organization of Bodo nationality has been standing and assisting the society in all respect for the preservation of their own language, literature, culture and has been agitating for political security. The Bodos are aspired to live with their own identity, culture and tradition. Both the ABSU and Bodo Sahitya Sabha have been playing a vanguard role in awakening and fostering self respect and identity consciousness among the Bodos in the decades. The student union has been working in two different ways-the movement for people's rights (rights for life and security) and the other for social awareness of the masses (Bodos)

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The All Bodo Students' Union was formed to unite the young Bodo students to fight in united manner against the multifarious challenges faced by the Bodo society to preserve their identity, language and culture. Since inception the ABSU has been agitating for their constitutional rights in a democratic way. The student union has been trying hard to bring the socio-political awareness among the Bodo. At the initial stage ABSU continued its role as an interest group to promote the language, literature, culture and traditions of the Bodos and fought to redress their social grievances. In course of time this youth organization actively involved in self-determination movement with demanding separate state for the Bodo people with the slogan of divide Assam 50-50. The problems like the encroachment of the non-tribal people in tribal area and non -implementation of so-called protective measures of Tribal Belt and Block provided in the Chapter X of Assam 'Land Revenue Regulation Act' 1886 etc. has created the question of survival, crisis of identity and political insecurity. In course of time the agitation of ABSU for separate state movement had made the ABSU as a strong and powerful new political force in the state. This movement of student union had brought many changes in socio-political and educational conditions of the Bodos. The Bodo movement is the outburst of their frustration therefore; it needs to re-evaluate the political objective of ABSU movement, to assess the outcome of the ABSU movement and its impact on Assam politics. The different phases of

movement led by ABSU brought many changes in the field of socio-economic, cultural, political and educational spheres of the community.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

J. Neil Smelser (1962) in his book “Theory of Collective Behaviour” categorized the movement into two broad concepts—the Norms-Oriented and Value-Oriented movement and their treatment by Philip G. Altbach (1996) as an inter-related approach which has formed the cornerstone for a detailed study of various student movement worldwide.

The value oriented movement may provide the genesis of an issue important to the student movement is concerned, value orientation has a more important and long standing impact and is often a leading element in apparently norm-oriented action. The Bodoland movement of ABSU can be categorized as value oriented movement which is completely based on socio-economic and political issues. The language issue and the issue of separate state movement is a long standing demand of ABSU in the region which completely socio-political in character. Thus, the ABSU movement can be studied on the basis of value oriented theory.

The **Relative Deprivation Theory** developed by American scholar Ted Robert Gurr in 1970 has been used to understand and analyse the separate state movement of ABSU. According to this theory the potent cause of social movement is the feeling of deprivation or deprive of something to which one believes oneself to be entitled. The political awareness of Bodo was developed by their perception of deprivation, negligence, exploitation, alienation and discrimination for decades by the majority group of the society.

The above-mentioned theories are the foundations for the study of student movement in the present study to examine the socio-political movement of the All Bodo Students’ Union systematically.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Following are the few research questions whose answer will be the main motto of the research work:

- a. Why the elite group led to form ABSU as a platform for youth?
- b. What circumstances led to the separate state movement of ABSU?

- c. How far ABSU could succeed to achieve their political goal for the protection of their language, culture and separate identity?
- d. How ABSU has impact to the politics of Assam?
- e. What is its stand in power sharing of mainstream politics?

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of the present study are:

- ❖ To highlight the formation of All Bodo Student's Union.
- ❖ To study the role of ABSU in raising socio-political consciousness among the Bodos.
- ❖ To study the separate state Movement of ABSU.
- ❖ To understand the impact and the role of ABSU on the politics of Assam.

6. HYPOTHESIS:

The following hypotheses have been formulated in order to test the validity of the research study:

1. There is educational improvement in vernacular medium due to the educational awareness activities of ABSU.
2. There is close relationship between the Socio-Political Awareness Activities of ABSU and Socio-Political awareness of the Community.
3. There is close relationship between the Role of ABSU in politics and its impact on the politics of the state.

7. METHODOLOGY:

Techniques of Data Collection and Sampling Procedure: Data sampling has been taken randomly from ABSU workers, Ex-workers of ABSU and educationists and members of different organizations. Out of 28 districts of Assam, 6 districts of Northern Part of Brahmaputra Valley have been selected for the research work as these districts are within the proposed Bodoland demand area. The information from the respondents was collected by interview schedule and focused group discussion.

The data samples were taken from 400 respondents. Out of 400 respondents 80 are from ABSU workers and 120 are from Ex-ABSU workers. The other 200 respondents are intellectuals and

members of different organizations. These 200 respondents are taken from the members of different organizations like the members of BSS, members of *All Bodo Women Welfare Federation*(ABWWF), members of political parties like BPF, BPPF, Congress, BJP, AGP and other intellectuals of schools, colleges, offices and different students' organizations. The respondents from other student's organisation are All Assam Student's Union (AASU), All Koch-Rajbanshi Students Union (AKRSU), All Bodoland Minority students Union (ABMSU). The ABSU respondents are taken from 6 districts of proposed Bodoland areas and central ABSU office and outside of proposed Bodoland areas. Out of 80, 10 respondents are taken from each district and *Anchaliks (Block)*, 10 are from Central ABSU and 10 ABSU respondents are from the outside of the proposed Bodoland area. Out of the 10 respondents of the district, 4 samples are taken from district ABSU office and two each from three *Anchalik*(block) ABSU offices.

Sample Size: In research work, the sample size is determined by the following statistical formula:

$$N = T \times (1-T) / SE p^2$$

Where, N is the sample size;

T is the estimated proportion of a characteristic in the population,

SE p is the standard error permitted in the sample.

Under this method it is become difficult to determine sample size due to the following questions:

1. How to determine size of the sample in case the value of T is not known?
2. How to determine size of sample if the characteristics selected have more than two sub categories?
3. How to decide as to how much error in the estimate between the sample and populations may be accepted?

It is because of the above complication the researcher finds it difficult to determine the size of the sample using statistical method. So, the table prepared by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) based on improve formula has used in which no calculation are needed to determine the size of the sample.

Therefore, the data samples have been taken from 400 respondents- 80 from ABSU workers, 120 from Ex-ABSU workers and 200 respondents from intellectuals and members of different other organizations.

The researcher calculated the composition of the sample taking each proportion of the stratifying characteristics in the population and multiplying it by the desired size of the sample.

Thus, multiplying by 400 with the desired sample size:

The proportion of ABSU Workers $(400) * (.2) = 80$, the proportion of Ex-ABSU Workers $(400) * (.3) = 120$ and Intellectuals $(400) * (.5) = 200$.

Therefore, the distribution of sample respondents is shown in the Table-1.1

Table-1.1 Distribution of Sample Respondents

Category	Sample Break up	Proportion	Percentage
ABSU Workers (Existing)	80	0.2	20
Ex-ABSU Workers	120	0.3	30
Intellectuals	200	0.5	50
Total sample (n) =	400	1.00	100

After having determined the sample size for each sub category the researcher used simple random sampling for drawing the desired number of respondents from each category.

8. CHAPTERISATION

The research work has been organized into six chapters which are as follows: In the chapter-I with marking student's movement worldwide and a sketchy description of theoretical consideration I have started my work. This chapter also contains review of literature, statement of the problem, scope of the study, objective of the study, hypothesis, and research methodology.

Chapter-II presents about identity assertion of Bodos through different organizations, birth of ABSU, the origin, its preamble, Name and Flag, Aims and Objectives of the Student's union, organizational structure and different activities for socio-political consciousness of Bodos etc.

Chapter-III analyses the factors responsible for the growth of socio-political consciousness of Bodos and its transformation to self-determination movement by ABSU, nature of different phases of Bodoland Movement lead by ABSU.

Chapter IV deals with the role of ABSU in power sharing of the mainstream politics, analyses the growth of Bodo Political Institution, different phases of Bodo politics, its participation in the election of parliament, state assembly and BTC politics.

Chapter V tried to analyse the impact of ABSU movement on the Bodo society and politics of Assam, separate electoral politics of Bodos and its impact on power sharing of main stream politics and impact of ethnic assertion of Bodo nationality in the new projection of Assamese identity.

The last chapter (VI) presents data analysis, findings of research work, summary of study, conclusion and recommendations. Data collected from secondary and primary sources are clearly and deeply analysed to represent the objectives set out for the research work. The data are presented with the help of simple statistical tools and techniques. Tabulation, percentage, diagram and charts have also been used to represent the data.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH WORK

- i) The main issues of ABSU movement are like language, literature, medium of instruction in schools and inclusion of Bodo as a subject in the colleges and Universities, inclusion of Bodo language in the 8th Schedule of the constitution of India and making it as one of the recognized regional languages has clearly reflected in the Table 6.5. It is found that the student movement have been successful in achieving the major issues of Bodos.
- ii) In the table 6.2 it is found that still there are 27% Bodo medium venture schools, among them 24% are primary schools, 44% are middle schools and 12% are high/Secondary schools. The student union put pressure on the government time and again to improve the condition of Bodo medium schools. Despite that the condition of Bodo medium schools remained same and the number of students in public schools has slowly declined. Thus, ABSU realized the need to take the alternative way to improve the quality of Bodo medium students and has taken initiative to introduce the private Bodo medium schools in the name of 'U.N. Academy' in different Bodo dominated areas. In the subsequent period this effort has shown good performance of the Bodo medium students in the HSLC Exam. The Table No.6.3 depicted that during the year 2006 number of First Division holder in HSLC Examination was 66 from Bodo Medium School in state has increased to 1370 and 1606 numbers in the year 2017 and 2018 respectively.

- iii) Table 6.4 reveals that sample respondents supported the educational awareness activities of ABSU as a model of success. In this respect it can be said that ABSU has strived hard in the development of Bodo language and literature. They have been generating the spirit of competition and also sharpened the sense of identity consciousness among the Bodo students.
- iv) Table 6.6 showed that 33.5 percent of the respondents were highly agreed that the socio-political awareness activities taken by All Bodo Student's Union were effective in bringing the socio-political awareness among the society. While, 49 percent of the respondents were partially agreed. On the other hand 29 percent of the respondents disagreed with the activities taken by All Bodo Student's Union for socio-political awareness made effective in bringing the socio-political awareness among the Bodo society.
- v) Table 6.7 and 6.8 clearly revealed that 58 percent of the sample respondents believed that All Bodo Student's Union (ABSU) was effectively working among the society to prevent social abuses like, witch hunting, superstitious believe, drug abuse, gambling and human trafficking etc. from the society. Majority of the respondents thought that though the ABSU could not totally stop the above evil practices but the union was successful in reducing these evil practises which were prevailed in the Bodo society.
- vi) Table-6.10 shows that out of 400 respondents, 232 sample respondents i.e., 58 percent respondents believe and support that the factors like the force homogenization and hegemonic role of Assamese people, land alienation and excessive encroachment of outsider, the economic backwardness and unemployment problems, wrong policy of government, non-implementation of Clause10 of Assam Accord triggered the on-gonging ABSU movement for the protection of ethnic identity and their all-round development.
- vii) The study also reveals that the vote polarization on ethnic basis or rise of ethnic based politics and their participation in electoral politics are the impacts of ABSU movement. The political parties of various ethnic groups or smaller cultural communities have begun to play significant roles in electoral politics in Assam. The ABSU movement encouraged the other plain tribes of Assam to fight for their genuine rights and protection of their lingo-cultural and ethnic identity.

- viii) It is found that during separate state movement of ABSU the large-scale violence has escalated at the Bodo dominated areas. Consequently, thousands of people lost their lives, lakhs of public and private property have been lost. The terrorist activities of the extremist created tension and a sense of insecurity and panic among the cross section of the population in the Bodo dominated areas which resulted negative impact of the ABSU Movement.
- ix) ABSU launched its mass movement for separate state from 1987 and at the same time it also started massive mobilization to make the Bodos to understand the importance of the political power and sharing of decision making process in the mainstream politics to achieve their goal. In this regard Table No. 6.12 clearly revealed that the student movement got materialised its goal.
- x) Moreover, in the study the fact reflected that since 1987 till today within 9 to 12 constituencies of state legislative assembly within BTAD and adjoining BTAD constituencies have been occupied by the Bodo community base political parties. The share of vote percentage in Assam of these winning candidates remain almost same (in between 3 to 6 percent) in a consecutive manner.
- xi) It is found that in the post BTC period the ABSU backed candidates have failed to hold their position in the Bodo politics as they had dominated in electoral politics of state assembly before the creation of BTAD.
- xii) It seems to be fact, that there is no strong and powerful ABSU backed political parties which could last for long days. This has reflected the problems of leader crisis and political defection in the parties. Frequent change of leaders, leadership crisis, party splits and high ambition of politicians may be the reasons for declining of popularity of these ABSU backed political parties.
- xiii) It is found that the movement was initially started in democratic manner with slogan of *Divide Assam 50-50*; but due to repressive policy of government the movement turned into violent movement. On the other hand the emergence of the two militants groups, the NDFB and BLT had also created the conflict situation during movement. The Bodoland issue is still remained as an unresolved problem.
- xiv) It seems to be reflected in the Table No 6.11 that the separate state movement of ABSU has brought the change in the course of Bodo politics and has affected the politics of the

state. The BTC was created by carving out of 8 districts of Assam: Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sanitpur.

xv) Lastly the study reveals that the ABSU movement and its massive campaign could revive the self-confidence and self-reliance of Bodos and today they have dared to take up a drastic step for their nationality with supreme sacrifices. Though, their demand for separate state hasn't fulfilled but they are successful in re-awakening and mobilising the Bodos of all sections for self-assertion for their identity and survival.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion: Thus, all the above finding clearly indicates that the fighting of the All Bodo Students' Union for attaining of their constitutional rights and all-round development of society has great impact both in the society and the politics of Assam. The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) is a powerful youth force of Bodo nationality who is relentlessly trying to improve the backwardness in every sphere of life of its community. During last four decades, the issue of separate state has been remained as potent factor of the political mobilization and election battle in Bodo politics. Bodo politics is mainly concentrated on the grievance and problems of their own community. ABSU launched its mass movement for separate state from 1987 and at the same time it also started massive mobilization to make the Bodos to understand the importance of the political power and sharing of decision-making process in the mainstream politics to achieve their goal. Though the student movement has failed to achieve their goal of separate homeland for the Bodos but the creation of Territorial Council or self-governed political set up again augmented a new enthusiasm and self respect of their own language and culture. The movement brought a great revival of their culture and traditions which were about to be extinguished among some groups of Bodos because of assimilation.

Separate state movement of ABSU had tremendous impact on the law and order of the state in the Bodo dominated areas and adversely affected the economic condition and day to day living. The movement has brought the change in the administrative structure of the state and change in the course of Bodo politics and the politics of the state. The creation of BAC in 1993 and its up gradation to BTAD (2003) is the result of long struggle of decades for separate state by ABSU-BPAC. The separate state movement of ABSU has brought the change not only in the course of Bodo politics but also has impact on the politics of the state. Now, the Bodos can play

a major role in deciding the outcome in 12 constituencies of state Assembly in the BTC area and its adjoining constituencies, which in turn can affect the formation of state government.

The research is being carried out keeping in mind the objectives set out and to fulfil these objectives in different Chapters which are elaborately presented. The major findings in this research as analysed and enumerated in the Chapters have facilitated the researcher to fulfil the targeted sets of objectives.

11. RECOMMENDATION:

In this field, the future researcher can study widely considering many numbers of communities and students organisations by collecting greater number of respondents. The topic is not only relevant in regional or national context where many of ethnic groups are in the row, the issue is equally important in global perspective.

This research is confined within one community relating to their movement against the allied community and government to preserve their constitutional right and culture, education and land right, protection of identity etc. there are many other areas which was not studied in this research work have ample scope for further research. However, there is scope of future researcher to conduct research on economic factors and the human rights parts which were untouched in the study. Despite being the son of soil some forest dwellers of BTAD are not still getting their right to vote and other privileges provided by the government which are needed to be studied.

Socio-economic conditions of the community within the BTC area have ample scope for further research for researcher and scholar to study elaborately. Among the different communities of the region a comparative study can be made.