

CHAPTER-IV

ROLE OF ORGANISATIONS IN THE AUTONOMY MOVEMENT OF THE BODOS

A number of organization before the independence came into existence for socio- political upliftment of the Bodo society. Their demand is mainly socio- political related with the reformation of Bodo society and political safeguard of the Bodo society. They did not think for autonomy. But after the independence, a group of Bodo people realized the need of autonomy to protect and preserve of their separate identity.

4.1.0 Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)

Political character of Tribal League was dissolved and changed it into a socio-promotional organization as All Assam Tribal Sangha in 1952 and the majority of the figurehead of the ATL either connected in the Congress or set aside themselves from party politics which produced the political vacuity in tribal politics and it was continued till the formation of PTCA.”¹ The hill tribes under the banner of All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) were struggling for separate state. Mrs Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, before the Mizo Union delegation made an announcement for re-organisation of Assam on 13 January,1967. The announcement encouraged the minds of the Bodo intellectual and got the encouragement by the statement, Bodo students’ “was formed the All Bodo Students’ Union on 15 February, 1967. The ABSU had the mastermind behind the thought of political aspiration and on their enthusiasm and initiation within 12 days of the formation of ABSU, the Plains Tribal Council was formed on 27 February, 1967 at Rongjashali Hall at Kokrajhar.”² The PTCA after formation of ad hoc district committee formed the Plains Tribal Council of Assam with Biruchan Doley and Charan Narzary as president and secretary respectively.

¹ Narzary, Charan, Dream for Udayachal and the History of Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA, 1967-93),N.L. Publications,Kokrajhar, Guwahati,2011,p.39.

² Narjinari, Haricharan, Reassertiveness of the Great Bodos, Subarna Rekha, Calcutta, 700009, 2000, p.60.

The Plains Tribal Council of Assam in second conference which was held at Harisinga under the present district of Udalguri. The meeting talked about the troubles of tribal in detail and resolved to go for separate state. "After full round of discussion the council decides to move for full autonomy in the plains areas, which alone help the rehabilitation of the tribal people and create favorable conditions to grow according to their own generous."³ The Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) demanded the separate state to preserve the unique and distinct identity of culture, customs and land rights of the tribal for effective checking from economic exploitation by the non tribal in tribal dominated localities. For that purpose, the party proposed the demand area which includes the river Sonkoch in the west and Sadiya in the east and Bhutan and NEFA in the north and river Brahmaputra in the south. The PTCA leaders with a view to place the demand met president in New Delhi and submitted the first memorandum on demand of separate state visited on 20 May, 1967.

The PTCA demanded of autonomy. The party also actively participated in the Roman Script Movement of 1974-75 and launched by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students' Union. 18 Bodo people lost their lives, many people crippled; houses were gutted, bore the immeasurable police atrocities.

The party upgraded the demand to separate state of Udayachal in the form of Union Territory on 2 December, 1972 and decided to observe the 27 February as Udayachal Demand Day.

4.2.0 Activities of the PTCA

The PTCA, to fulfill the hope and aspirations of the plains tribal submitted a Memorandum to Dr, Jakir Hussain, President of India and same was submitted personally to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. The party demanded the full autonomy basically confined within the predominated plains tribal area and Tribal Belts and Blocks starts from river Sonkosh along the foothills of Bhutan on NEFA on the northern tracts of the river valley of Brahmaputra.⁴ The PTCA started a vigorous public awareness rally in support of their demand and called a poll boycott to the Kokrajhar (ST) Parliamentary bye election in 1967 and to the second Kokrajhar (ST) Parliamentary bye election in 1968 with a view to register a strong protest against the

³ Narzary, *op, cit*, p.43.

⁴ Narzary, *op, cit*, p.44

deceitful delimitation of the ST(reserved) constituencies. Most of the people boycotted the election responding the boycott called by the PTCA. The PTCA changed the policy of boycott of election and showed the confidence in the electoral politics and decided to participate in the elections because party firmly believed that all problems of the people could be solved through the peaceful means, through the Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies. Mr. Charan Narzary, for the first time was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly from the East Kokrajhar (ST) constituency from the PTCA in 1972. The PTCA announced the demand of separate Union Territory state of Udayachal curving out of northern parts of the Brahmaputra of Assam in a press conference in New Delhi on December 2 in 1972. The PTCA launched a vigorous mass movement in support of their demand throughout the region of the proposed separate state Udayachal. The PTCA downgraded its demand of Udayachal into an Autonomous Region in 4th April, 1977 The decision taken by the party created a resentment amongst the some of the members ,supporters and well wishers and it followed the bifurcation of the party as PTCA and PTCA (P).

The PTCA adopted various activities on demand of separate state. The party also participated in electoral politics in different state and parliamentary elections (from 1972 to 1983). Staged Demonstration at Boat Club in New Delhi on 24th April in 1983, 24 hour Rail Bandh on 27 April 1987, 24 hour Rail Roko Programme on 27 November 1987, 12 hour National Highway Blockade on 27 April 1987, A six day Mass Demonstration Programme from 9 November to 14 November in front of the offices of the D.C, SDO, SDC, BDOs. There were more than 249 supporter and followers have been sacrificed their lives in the movement launched by the PTCA. The activities of the PTC A gradually lost its ground due to the rise of popularity of ABSU (U) and ended the autonomy movement of the PTCA without desired outcome.

4.3.0 United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF)

All Bodo Students' Union convened a general convention of All Tribal Organisations at Harisinga in Darrang District(now Udalguri) to unite the whole tribal political parties under one platform to achieve the desired goal on 17,18 and 19 April, 1984. The resolution no.3 (three) stated "to form a United Action Committee to unify all the plains tribal of the state in order to demand a separate state for the Plains Tribal of Assam, and to advise and conduct a movement to achieve the same and to give

effect to it. The unanimous opinion of all Plains Tribals to launch a united political movement to achieve separate state be honoured and the elements of PTCA(P), “Young elements and PTCA be advised to unite and progress on a fresh political level, this committee will decide its procedure, nomenclature, line of action and constitution. This committee will consist of 21 members”⁵ But PTCA did not respond the call and later on, the chairman and the convener Binai Khungur Basumatary and Kanakeswar Narzary respectively floated a new political party in the name and style of United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) in 13 June, 1984.

The UTNLF to draw the attention of the Government of India and submitted 5 (five) memorandums to the union government. The organization demanded Tribal Homeland for the tribal of the northern part of Brahmaputra river curving out of Assam on 2nd May, 1984. Again the party submitted another memorandum to Gyani Zail Singh, President of India, and on behalf of the UTNLF Binai Khungur Basumatary, MLA and Chairman, Kanakeswar Narzary, Convenor on 29th May 1984 demanding a separate state for the ST (Plains) curving out of Assam. Likewise, the party submitted three memorandums urging the same demand to Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India urging the same demand on 31st July, 1986, 10th November, 1987 and in 3rd May, 1988 respectively. The ABSU is also a part of this demand which is one of the prominent students’ organizations of NEI (North East India).

4.4.0 All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU)

There were few Bodo students’ organization prior to the present form of ABSU but their existence confined only within the district level. The announcement stirred the minds of the few youths and with initiative of them All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) was formed on the 27th February 1967. The ABSU is also a part of the demand of separate state. The present form of ABSU is one of the prominent students’ organizations of NEI (north east India). The ABSU, since its foundation has been struggling for the unity, survival and prosperity of the Bodos⁶.

⁵ Datta, P.S, “Autonomy Movements of the Plains Tribals, Extract of Resolutions Adopted by the All Tribal Organisations Convention” Quoted in Autonomy Movements in Assam, Omsons Publications, New Delhi-27, 1993, p.186.

⁶ ABSU Constituion Baganshali, Kokrajhar, 1988, p.2

4.4.1.0 The First stage

4.4.1.1 Age of Petition and Demand

The ABSU, though at the initial stage actively supported the PTCA but the organization of its own submitted a number of memorandums to the Union Government urging the creation of separate state since 1972. The demand of separate state movement got new momentum after the split of the organisation as ABSU (U) and ABSU (R) at Rowta Conference in 1986. The ABSU (U) to accelerate the movement in right direction proposed to form six wings. The All Bodo Students' Union demanded a separate state in the form of Union Territory. Later on deleted the words Union Territory and demanded separate state Bodoland. The name of the state, its total area, and population as mentioned by the ABSU is given below-

4.4.4.2 The Proposed State: BODOLAND

Total Area: 2500 sq. km.

4.4.4.3 Boundary of Proposed Bodoland

The proposed Bodoland is bounded by Sadiya in the east, river Sonkosh in the west, Bhutan and Arunachal in the north and Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, rural Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh Districts of Assam in the south.⁷

Again the ABSU delegation led by Upendra Nath Brahma met the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Home Minister Buta Singh and the President of India, Gyani Zail Singh in January, 1987 in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum with 25 demands.

The ABSU, again submitted another memorandum “ Why Separate State” to the President of India, the Prime Minister of India and the Home Minister of India , New Delhi on 10th November ,1987 for kind perusal and critical study and urged to create a separate Union Territory and the same is also submitted to the Governor of Assam, Mr, Bhisma Narayan Singhat Raj Bhawan , Guwahati and the Chief Minister of Assam, Mr .Prafulla Mahanta on January, 1987 where the ABSU sorted out the problems of the tribal's and main points of 92 point Charter of Demands were like

⁷ ABSU, Why Separate State Bodoland, Bodofa House, Baganshali, Kokrajhar, BTC, 2010,P.7.

language , literacy , economy, land, education, socio-cultural, job, development, crisis of identity, question of survival and political identity etc.,

4.4.5.0 Age of Mobilisation and Consolidation

The ABSU (U) leader Upendra Nath Brahma announced a vigorous mass movement on 2nd March, 1987 suspending all other 92 demands except 3 (three) -

1. Formation of Bodoland curving out of Assam
2. Nilachal and Lalung Autonomous District.
3. Recognition of Bodo Kachari of Karbi Anglong district as Hill Tribes.⁸

After a series of vigorous mass movement could manage to draw the attention of the government. The government of India arranged tri-partite talk to study the possibility of administrative legislative and financial mechanism within an autonomous set up. Accordingly Government of India constituted the committee vide Notification No.11012/22/89-NE.IV(VOL.IV)on 25th February , 1991.

The Expert Committee visited Karbi Anglong, Udalguri, Gohpur, Kokrajhar and some other places .But , the report of the committee couldnot satisfy ABSU.

The ABSU decided to participate in 1991 general election and 9 (nine) ABSU supported candidates elected as MLA viz- Karendra Basumatary, Jew Ram Baro, Parameswar Brahma, Milan Boro, Derhagra Mushahary, Tajen Narzary, Kamal Kumar Brahma and Kiren Borgoyari and lone Member of Parliament (MP) Satyendra Nath Brhma Chodhury.⁹

4.4.6 Age of Bargaining and Agreement

Finally, after the several round of talks, A Memorandum of Settlement known as ‘Bodo Accord (**Appendix-II**) was signed in between the Central-State government and ABSU-BPAC leaders in Guwahati on 20th February 1993. Through the creation of an administrative set up in the North Bank of Brahmaputra river in the name and style ‘Bodoland Autonomous Council, popularly known as BAC incorporating the 38

⁸ Brahmachoudhury, B.L, Bodos (Kacharis)At a Glance, Tribal Research Institute, Bongaigaon, Assam, 1993,p.54.

⁹ www.electioncommissionofindia.org.in, Statistical Report on General Election ,1991to the Legislative Assembly of Assam, visited on 18 April, 2018.

(thirty eight) subjects. Accordingly the organization shun the violence. The leaders of ABSU and BPAC soon realized that it cannot fulfill the autonomy aspirations of the Bodos because of its number of loopholes. So the ABSU and BPAC rejected the accord and resolved to fresh Bodoland Movement denouncing the Bodo Accord at the 28th Annual Conference of ABSU held in Langhin Tiniali of Karbi-Anglong district on 3rd and 4th and 5th March. It also decided to revive the 3(three) political above mentioned demands. The conference also resolved to launch a mass democratic movement to fulfill the demands. So accordingly a series of fresh movement launched by holding a Great Mass Rally at Kokrajhar on 04-04-1996, 6 hour token hunger strike at Dispur Last Gate on 19-08-96., Great Mass Rally at Judges Field , Guwahati on 28-10-96. Gap between ABSU and NDFB followed the killing of ABSU president Swmbla Basumatary on 30-07-1997. Besides the above agitation programme, the ABSU organized Hunger strike, public meeting, special convention, peace rally, process of unification of (BPP(S) and BPP (P), submission of memorandums to the Union and State government.

4.4.7 Revival of the Movement

The ABSU realized that the BTC also failed to fulfill the autonomy aspiration of the tribal's in general and Bodos in particular. So ABSU decided to revive the demand of separate state Bodoland again and announced the Mass Movement in a huge gathering at Kajolgaon under the district of Chirang on 2nd March 2010 and also announced a series of programme of action to draw the attention of the state and the Union government.

- 1) Submission of Memorandum on demand of separate state Bodoland.
- 2) The ABSU again submitted a 9 (nine) pages memorandum to P. Chidambaram, honourable Home Minister of India in New Delhi on demand of separate state of Bodoland on 3rd June , 2010. The ABSU in the said memorandum raised some issues. It is said-
 - i) larger states create condition of regional disparity and smaller state brings balance.
 - ii) the Bodo tribe is distinctly different from the present dominant community of Assam..

- iii) Land alienation problem.
- iv) Protection and propagation of Bodo language
- v) Proposed Bodoland area is economically viable than any other states.
- vi) Deprivation from the law of the land.

So, keeping in mind the above points, the ABSU proposed the state Bodoland comprising total area of 25000 (twenty five thousand) square kilometer i.e from river Sonkosh in the west , Sadiya in the east , Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh in the north and Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari , rural Kamrup , Darrang, Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh Districts of Assam in the south.

Besides the above, the organization demand for more autonomy of-

- i) Sixth Schedule of Karbi-Anglong, NC Hills, Mishing Autonomous Council, Tiwa Council, Sonowal-Kachari Council Rabha Hasong Council and inclusion of Boro Kacharis of Karbi Anglong into the ST(Hills) list.,
- ii) Giving special status to the Plains Tribes of Assam living outside the proposed Bodoland and other council areas.
- iii) Boro Language Promotion Bureau
- iv) Creation of separate Bodo regiment under the Indian Army and
- v) Few other socio-economic and educational demands.¹⁰

This was also mentioned in a second booklet of “Why Separate State” leaflet published by the ABSU.

Some of important series of movement launched by the ABSU and other organizations jointly mentioned below-

- 3) The ABSU sent more than two lakhs letters to the Prime Minister of India to create Bodoland on the 4th August 2010.
- 4) The ABSU again submitted a memorandum on demand of separate state to the Prime Minister of India in 28th October 2010.

¹⁰ Why Separate State Bodoland, All Bodo Students' Union, Bodofa House, Baganshali, Kokrajhar, Bodoland,2010,p.p4-5.

- 5) Reminder of the Memorandum on demand of separate state Bodoland was submitted to the Prime Minister of India through the Deputy Commissioner of Baksa District on the second March, 2011.
- 6) Reminder of Memorandum on demand of Bodoland was submitted through the Deputy Commissioner of Baksa, Sonitpur, Dhemaji, and Goalpara respectively on 15th October, 2011

The ABSU intensified its movement after the cabinet decision to create a separate state of Telengana curving out of Andhra Pradesh in 2013. The ABSU also gave an ultimatum to create Bodoland state by 15th of August 2013 along with Telengana. The government of India formally invited for Tripartite talk through the Deputy Commissioner of Kokrajhar District after an indefinite strike launched by the ABSU at Kokrajhar along with the support of NDFB(P),BPPF, UPDF, PJACBM and Kuki State Demand Committee. So the first round of Tripartite talk was held on 4th September, 2013 and the fourth Round of talk which was held on 28th February, 2014 Mr.Sushil Kumar Shinde, the Union Home Minister in presence of all Home Ministry officials and Assam Government representatives agreed to work towards resolving the Bodoland issue at the earliest possible and directed the officials to take all necessary steps to this end. But, meanwhile general election of Lok Sabha of 2014 was announced and ended the progress of talk.

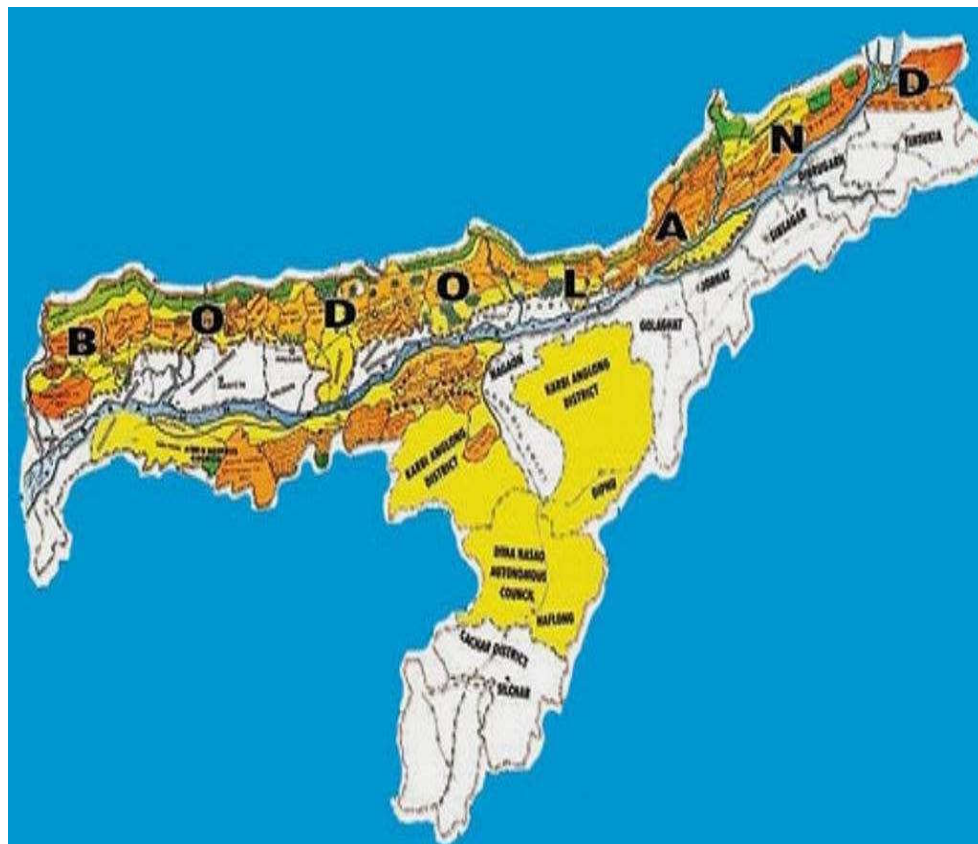
The BJP in the Election Manifesto of April, 2014 assured that-

“ The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) released today for the Lok Sabha Elections of 2014 , then BJP reiterates that it will sympathetically examine and appropriately consider the long pending demands of the Gorkhas, the Adivasis and other people of Darjeeling district and the Dooars region ;Rajbongshi and other people of North Bengal (including recognition of their language); and will take initiative for the permanent solution of the pending issues of the Bodos and other tribals of Assam”¹¹ So accordingly NDA government arranged the Fifth Round of Tripartite talks on 9th June 2015.Again a Tripartite talks was held in Guwahati on 9th of January 2017. Pramod Boro, the president of ABSU raised the demand for creation of Bodoland state.

¹¹ A state for Identity and Self-Respect, ABSU , NDFB(P) and PJACMB, Korajhar, BTAD, (Assam),2017,p.33.

But after that no fruitful talks were held with the Union or State government. So the ABSU threatened to intensify the movement and a series of movement launched by the ABSU. The programmes were as follows-

- i) 02-03-2017 = Bodoland Movement Day and Sub Divisional Intellectual Meet in each sub division.
- ii) 6, 7 and 8 March, 2018= Women Cycle Rally at Chirang organized by Central ABSU.
- iii) 18-03-2018 Friends of Bodoland Seminar at Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Ashram Hall, New Delhi.
- iv) 19-03-2018 =Rally from Rajghat to Parliament Street and in the evening Candle March and lightning at India Gate.
- v) 25,26,27,28 and 29 March, 2019 =Women’s Cycle Rally.(source Bhergaon A/CABSU)



Proposed Bodoland Map of ABSU (Source : ABSU, 2010)

4.5.0 Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT)

Side by side along with the ABSU movement, due to apathy of the government and atrocities of police upon the agitators grew the mentality of extremisms amongst a group of Bodo youths to achieve the goal of separate state of Bodoland. So they decided to go ahead by giving a birth of an insurgent group in the name and style of Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) on 18 June, 1996 at Alaikhungri village under the district of Kokrajhar.¹² Later on, Hagrama Basumatary alias Thebela and Derhasad Basumatary became the Chairman and Secretary General of the BLT struggled for the Bodoland. The movement took a violent shape and the movement under the complete control of BLT. Government compelled to invite the BLT to discuss the issue of Bodoland¹³ made an Accord through the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) (**Appendix -III**) on 10th February 2003 to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) The ABSU and other Bodo organizations extended their support through the letter of support and the ABSU suspended its demand of separate state after the agreement with the BLT. The Bodoland Territorial Area District has been formed comprising the four districts viz- Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri following the Agreement of BTC.

4.6.0 National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive) NDFB (P)

NDFB was founded at Odlā Khasibari under the district of Udalguri on 3rd October, 1986, originally under the name and style of Boro Security Force (BSF) with a motto of “Let us die for Boro nation, but let not Boro nation die for us”. The main principles and objective of BSF are to assert political rights and the preservation of distinct identity of the Boro people on the basis of their historical foundation. The organization was christened as the National Democratic Front of Boroland in 1994. The principles and ideology of the NDFB are mainly to struggle for:-

- 1) Liberation of Boroland from the alien’s occupation and expansionism,
- 2) Freedom of Boro nation from socio-economic and political exploitation,
- 3) Establishing socialist society among the Boro people to promote unity, equality and fraternity,

¹² Moshahari, Premananda, *ibid*, p.215.

¹³ *Ibid*, p.4.

- 4) Upholding the sovereign entity of the Boro nation,¹⁴ (A Welcome Address by B. Swmkhwr, General Secretary, 23rd Anniversary Celebration of the Foundation Day of NDFB.

The organization was divided into two fractions as NDFB(P) and NDFB(R) headed by Dharendra Boro and Ranjan Daimary respectively. The NDFB (P) signed the truce with the government of India on 25th May, 2005, with effect from 1st June, 2005 and abandoned the demand of sovereign state Boroland but alternately demanded the separate state Boroland within the territory of India. The organization along with PJACBM submitted memorandum to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India on 11th December, 2012 on demand of Boroland state and other Indigenous Peoples, Issues. The Demands are-

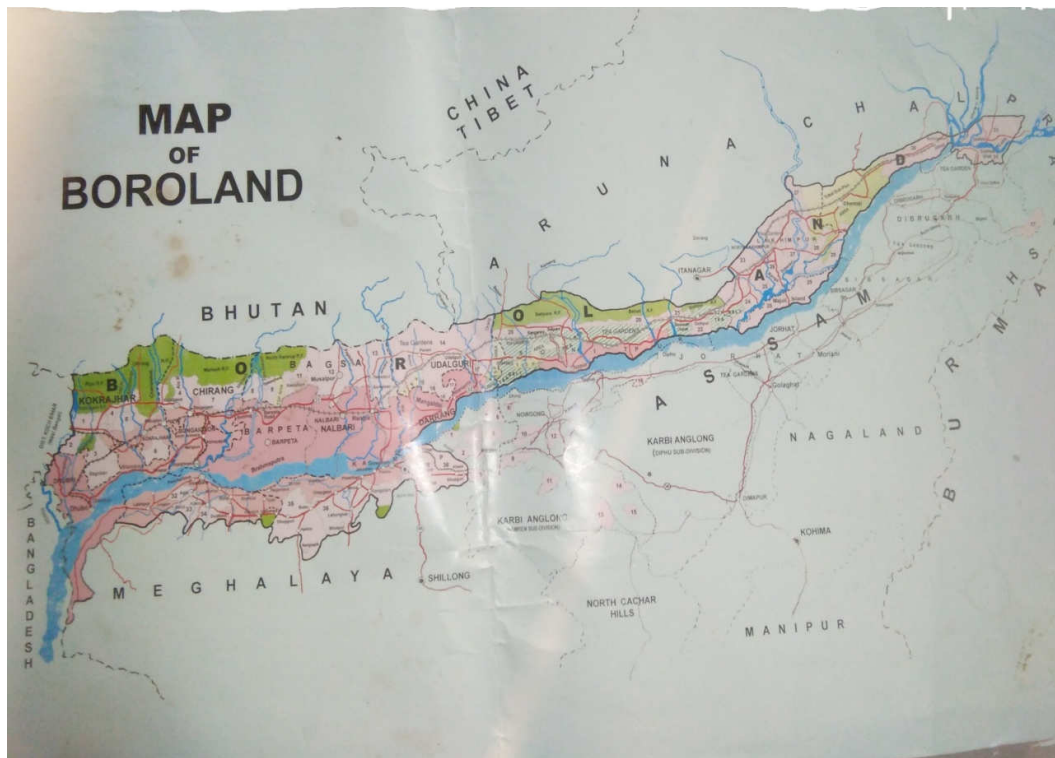
- 1) Expedite the NDFB(P)'s dialogue with the government of India in the political level for immediate amicable solution of the long standing demand of Boroland state.
- 2) Create Boroland comprising 32 (thirty two) Tribal Belts and Blocks, Tribal Sub plan area and adjoining tribal contiguous area covering 25,478 sq.km. on the northern bank of Brahmaputra from the Sonkosh river in the west to Sadiya in the east under the Article 2 and 3 with special provision to Article 371(A) of the constitution of India.
- 3) Grant Sixth Schedule status to the existing Non-Territorial Autonomous Councils for the indigenous tribal people such as –Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC),Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC), Deuri Autonomous Council (DAC), Thengal Autonomous Council (TAC),Sonowal Autonomous Council (SAC),and Mishing Autonomous Council (MAC),
- 4) Grant Scheduled Tribe status to all the sons of the soil of Assam whoever have been deprived of enjoying such right so far;
- 5) Grant Scheduled Tribe (Hill) status to the Boro people living in Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council (DHATC) in the ST list of Assam.

¹⁴ A Welcome Address by B. Swmkhwr, General Secretary, 23rd Anniversary Celebration of Foundation Day of NDFB, Sapkhati, Udalguri, 2008, 3rd October.

- 6) Grant Schedule Tribe (Plain) to the Karbi and Garo people living in the plains of the proposed Boroland area as well as in Assam who have been recognized as the Scheduled Tribe (Hill) in Assam.;
- 7) Detect and identify the illegal migrants on the basis of Census Report of 1951 and the Electoral Roll of 1952 and deport thereof for the interest of safety and security of India in general and for the indigenous peoples of the North East in particular;
- 8) Clear the Tribal Belts and Blocks in Assam from illegal encroachment;
- 9) Save Bodo sons of the soil of Assam today from Bnagladeshi monsters to save India. The same is submitted to P Chidambaram, Pranab Mukherjee, President of India and Sushil Kumar Sinde, Union Home Minister of India. The first dialogue with the government representative held on 12th March, 2005 at Darjeeling. Likewise more than 41 round of dialogue between Government of India and NDFB (P) held at administrative level but no solution could be achieved. The NDFB(P) within this span of time met several leaders both ruling and opposition parties and appealed them to take necessary steps for early solution of the Boroland problem .

The first tripartite political dialogue with the NDFB(P) was held on 26-10-2016 in New Delhi where Raj Nath Singh, Home Minister , Government of India, Chandra Mohan Patowary from the government of Assam and Hagrama Mohilary, BTC Chief and the leaders of the NDFB(P) attended in the meeting(ABSU NDFB and PJACBM 2017:17,18). It was also decided that the next meeting would be held very soon but meeting was not held. So as per the programme announced, with the initiative of the ABSU, PJACBM and NDFB (P) and UPP(L) organised Maha Dharna, Maha Satyagraha on 12,13 and 14 December, 2016. Again, the ABSU, NDFB and PJACBM called for Road Blockade Programme on 9 January, 2017. The organizations withdrew its call of Road Blockade after government assurance of talks and accordingly dialogue was held in Kahilipara, Guwahati on 9 January, 2017. But the issue is still on the line of dialogue. The Centre has revived the talk with NDFB both section (Ranjan and Progressive led by Dhiren Boro). This 28th round of tripartite talk held in Delhi on 4th July 2018. The talk was chaired by Rajnath Singh, Home Minister of India. Rajiv Gauba, Union Home Secretary Rani Mittal, Special

Secretary of Internal Security, Satyendra Garg, Joint Secretary, North East and Bhabesh Kalita, State Irrigation Minister of Assam, T.Y. Das, Chief Secretary of Assam, Kuladhar Saikia, DGP and Pallav Bhattacharya Special DG of Assam while Pramod Boro, ABSU President and Larence Islary, General Secretary of ABSU and Rakesh Boro, chief convener of PJACBM and other 12 delegations participated in the talk. The meeting reviews the talks and assured the delegation for amicable solution of the problem by the Home Minister of India



Map of proposed Boroland of NDFB (P)

(source: NDFB (P) Publicity Secretary, 2005)

4.7.0 Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD)

The BTAD is an outcome of BTC Accord which was signed by the Government of India, of Assam and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) in 2003. In pursuance of Government Notification No GAG (GB).137/2002/Pt/117/Dated 30th October, 2003 the governor of Assam pleased to reconstituted the new sub divisions and district following the BTC Accord. The reconstituted districts are as follows-

Kokrajhar District with (i) Kokrajhar Sadar Sub Division, ii) Gossaigaon Sub Division

ii) Chirang District head quarter at Kajolgaon, iii) Baksa District and iv) Udalguri district.

4.8.0 Role of organizations in the autonomy movement of the Bodos under the district of Baksa

4.8.1 Baksa District

Baksa district is situated in between 25.50⁰ N and 27.00⁰ N Latitude and 90.15⁰ E and 96.00⁰ E. Baksa district has been created carving out of certain areas of Barpeta, Kamrup and Nalbari and a small portion of Darrang district following the BTC accord as per the Assam Government Notification No. GAG (B). 137/2002/Pt/117 Dated 30th October 2003 (Extraordinary).

4.8.2 The Historical Background

Some of the scholars believe that the origin of the word Baksa is coming from the name of Bhaskar Barma, a legendary king of Pragjyotishpur. The Koch- Rabhas called Bhaskar Barhai or Barahi¹⁵

Another popular assumption is that the word Baksa is the corrupted form of Bhutani word Bangsa-a Dzonkha means a farmstead passageway. Bhutia's exploited it as business and transit to the lowland.¹⁶

4.8.3 The Geographical Boundary

The Baksa district is bounded by sovereign state of Bhutan, Chirang, Bongaigaon Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Udalguri and Darrang district on the north, west, south and east respectively. The district has (3) three subdivisions viz- Mushalpur, Salbari and Tamulpur with Headquarter at Mushalpur.

¹⁵ Barkachari, Jogmohan, "Baksa: A New Administrative Set Up of Bodoland", in Gopinath Borgoyar (ed) Khousesi Guthal, Souvenir, Bodo National Convention, Bodofa Nwgr, Kokrajhar, BTC, 2010, p.103.

¹⁶ www.baksa.gov.in visited on 16.6.2017.

4.8.4 People

The district of Baksa is a land of composite culture. Different ethnic communities, castes, religion have been living here since the time immemorial. The Bodos, Rabhas, Koches, Modahis, Sarania, Tea tribes, Garo, Bengali, Nepali, religious minority contributing to enrich the heritage to the district of Baksa and in matters of religion also different religion like Bathou, Brahma, and other Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc, are followed in this district. Most of the people of this district speak the Assamese language and this language is used as lingua franca. Bodo language is used amongst the Bodos. The majority of the people belongs to the great Mongolian Bodo Group. The total population of Baksa district is 857947 as per census of 2011. Total ST population is 331007 (male 165634 and female 165373)

Literacy Rate in Baksa district is 69.25% (male 77.03% and female 61.27%)¹⁷

4.8.5 Economy

The economy of Baksa district is based on agriculture. Most of the people's livelihood depends on the agricultural income. The major food crop is paddy. No major industry is available in this district. Only agro based, ready made and garments and embroidery, wood and furniture and few other micro and small enterprises are available

4.8.6 Road connectivity

There is only one road connectivity in the district of Baksa. Road connectivity is from north to south to highway is easily accessible. From Kumarikata to Rangia is well connected. Again Nikasi to Baram via or Pathsala to Simla or Rupahi to Sarupeta is well connected to reach the National Highway. But the connectivity from east to west of the district is very miserable. No direct road connection is plying from east to west or vice versa. The district has only one Goreswar railway station falls under Tamulpur sub division

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

4.9.0 All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) in Bksa District

4.9.1 First Phase 1987-1993

Different organizations under the district of Baksa (erstwhile Barpeta district, Nalbari and Kamrup) played very active role in the autonomy movement of the Bodos. Their role and activities may be discussed in following way- All Bodo students' of Barpeta (erstwhile) was established in 1973. The president was Manisankar Brahma and Secretary was Mahesh Banawary. The central committee of ABSU decided to launch a vigorous mass movement on demand of separate state on 2nd March, 1987. The Barpeta District ABSU also actively took part in the separate state movement. The Barpeta district ABSU was divided in two factions, one group indirectly supported the PTCA and another faction wanted to support and actively participated in the separate state movement launched by the central

ABSU. The Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup district also took part in a mass demonstration at Boat Club, New Delhi on 10 November, 1987. Mass Demonstration was organized on that day. Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup district ABSU actively took part in in Huge Mass Rally programme held at Kiokrajhar town on 4 January, 1988. At that time there was a fratricidal attack amongst the Bodos over the issue of support. But the newly formed ad hoc committee ABSU of Barpeta District under the presidentship of Ramani Daimary and secretary as a Sarbin Brahma in 28 August, 1989 decided to support the separate state movement launched by the central ABSU and accordingly the ad hoc committee of BPAC was also formed and Dharma Kanta Ramchiary was selected as president of the ad hoc BPAC and AATWWF was also founded at the same year. Dipali Narzary and Malati Swargiary were the president and secretary respectively and Bodoland movement also got momentum. After a vigorous mass movement ABSU, state Government and Central Government came to an agreement on 20 February, 1993. The accord was known as BAC. Binod Gayari was the president BDC at the time of BAC Accord.¹⁸ ABSU of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup (erstwhile) also hailed the agreement of formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC), the The ABSU of Baksa District (All the three erstwhile district Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup) actively took part all the programmes

¹⁸ Boro, Sabi Ram : Barpea District ABSU in Sita Ram Basumatary (ed) Boro History of Barpoeta District, A souvenir of Barpeat District Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Baghmara, Baksa, Assam, 2006, p342.

of central ABSU as directed by the ABSU. In the autonomy movement of the Bodos under the district of Baksa. The district of Baksa have lost 183 persons in the autonomy movement of the Bodos launched by the ABSU.

4.9.2 Second Phase of the Movement (1996- 2003)

Though, there was a differences regarding the support of second phase of the Bodoland movement under the district of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup but later on Kamrup and Nalbari (erstwhile)decided to support the movement participated in the Bodo National Convention organized by the central ABSU held in Guwahati in 12 December ,1997 ¹⁹.

ABSU , Kamrup , Nalbari and Barpeta (erstwhile) Bagsa District Committee hailed the Memorandum of Settlement between BLT, Government of Assam and Union Government of Indiawhich was held on 10 February, 2003. The ABSU directly or in directly supported the BLT .²⁰ 25 people have laid down their lives from 1996 to 10 February 2003 in the name of Bodoland movement.²¹

More than 412 Bodo people were brutally punished by the police, military and other arm forces, arrested and jailed. Rabin Brahma , son of Late Bramacharan Brahma, under village No.2 Bhagpara Po. Narayanpur, PS Barbari age 32 years on 29-6-89 shoot by gun by the Assam Police forces on Right hand shoulder and physically handicapped since then and another example of brutality of police personnel is Mr Jinaram Narzary, village-Brahmapur, Po. Narayanpur PS Barbari 55 years of age on 12-8-1992 brutally punished by Assam police and also arrested and jailed for 4 months and since then he is physically handicapped. and one Ghanshyam Brahma, village-Santipur, PO Narayanpur age- 39 on 10-7-90 brutally punished and since then he is running a handicapped life. and Hati Basumatary Village Dwimugari, PO Motipur PS Barbari 62 years of age brutally punished by Assam Police and also with Army and jailed for two times 3 months and another 4 months and one Philip Basumatary son of Gobinda Basumatary under village No 2 Katligaon

¹⁹ Nripen Bopro , Informant Age (45) , Mushalpur.

²⁰ Binod Mwsahary, Informant Age(40), Tamulpur, Rupjit Boro, Informant Age (27), Pamua pather, Mushalpur, and Lachit Swargiary , Informant Age 55 , Rupahi.

²¹ Source ABSU/BDC, Mushalpur, List of Martyrs During Bodoland Movement (1996 -2003, 18.06). 2018.

,PS Barbari age 17 years also arrested by Assam Police and jailed for 5 months. More than 1712 household of Bodo people of Baksa district also suffered the properties and Household damaged during Bodoland movement. (1987-2003)²²

4.9.3 Third Phase of the Movement (2010-2019)

The third phase of the movement started on 2nd March, 2010. A huge Mass Gathering was organized by the central ABSU at Kajol gaon under the district of Chirang. More than 20,000 (twenty thousand) people from the district of Baksa participated in the said Mass Gathering and Pramod Boro, president ABSU announced the third phase of separate state Bodoland movement. The ABSU rejected the BTC, because, it could not fulfill the aspirations of the Bodos. The ABSU/ BDC also actively took part in the third phase of separate state. The ABSU of Baksa District participated other agitational programme like Dharna, Hunger Strike, Mass Rally, organized seminar, awareness programme Cycle Rally , Bike Rally, National Highway Blockade, Hunger strike Mass Rally, , Long March, Mass Crying, observed betrayal Day, Organised Intellectual Meet. Rail Roko programme, Maha Dharna in New Delhi etc. ²³ The third and final phase of the Bodoland movement ended in the year 2019. No single people died or injured or any kind of atrocities or fratricidal attack also not happened during this third phase of separate state Bodoland Movement.²⁴

4.10.0 Role of organizations in the autonomy movement of the Bodos under the district of Udalguri

Udalguri District

The District of Udalguri is situated between 26°46' and 26°77' North Latitude and 92°08' and 95°15' East Longitude.²⁵ Udalguri district is outcome of BTC Accord and created in 2005.

4.10.1 Geographic Boundary

²² Source: ABSU/ BDC, Mushalpur, Statement Showing the Physically Handicaps/ Victims Injury During Bodoland Movement (1987-2003) ,2016.

²³ Source: Head Office/BDC ,ABSU Mushalpur, Bagsa.

²⁴ Source: Nripen Boro, age 45, President, ABSU/ BDC (2019 -2020).

²⁵ www.udalguri.gov.in visited in 8 March,2018.

The district is bounded by Sonitpur district on the east, Baksa district in the west, Bhutan and Arunachal in the north and on the south Darrang district.

4.10.2 The Historical Background

The origin of the name of Udalguri lies with a legend that , this area was earlier a dense forest with plenty of *Odal* (*Stercullia villosa* Roxb) tree. The *jori* (rope) of the bark of the *Odal* tree was used to knot the elephant. So in course of time the word *Odaljuri* corrupted to Odalguri> Udalguri²⁶

4.10.3 People

The district of Udalguri is a land of composite culture. Different ethnic communities, castes, religion have been living here since the time immemorial. The Bodos, Rabhas, Koches, Modahis, Sarania, Tea tribes, Garo, Bengali, Barpetia Assamese, Nepali, religious minority contributing to enrich the heritage to the district of Udalguri and in matters of religion people follow different religion like Bathou, Brahma, and other Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc,. Most of the people of this district speak the Assamese language and this language is used as lingua franca. Bodo language is used amongst the Bodos. The total population of Udalguri district is 758746 as per census of 2011.

4.11.0 All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) IN Udalguri District

Darrang district ABSU was founded in the year 1970. Doleswar Boro and Biren Brahma was the first president and General Secretary respectively. The ABSU has been working relentlessly for the protection of identity , unity of the Bodos since its foundation. The demand of separate state Bodoland originated from Rowta in the district of Darrang (erstwhile). The 19th Historical Conference of the ABSU was held at Rowta in the district of Darrang (erstwhile) from May 28th to 31st . In the delegate session, the issues of political rights of the Bodos were raised. Here, the demand of other political parties like PTCA, UTNLF such as Udyachal, Mishin Bodoland were highly criticised and discarded. Later, Political Rights as separate state in the name and style as Bodoland was adopted. Many ABSU leaders left the delegate session as they were against the demand of separate state Bodoland. The ABSU was divided as Niren

²⁶ Baro, Pramila, A study of socio- cultural and religious beliefs and practices of the Bodos under the district of Udalguri, Assam, 2016, p.25.

Sainary (S) group and Upendra Nath Brahma (U) group and in the last delegate session Upendra Nath Brahma was elected as the President of the ABSU in the conference held at Rowta under the erstwhile district of Darrang on 31 May in 1986. From his leadership movement of separate got a new momentum and announces the demand of separate state Bodoland at Kokrajhar on 2nd March 1987. The ABSU of Darrang District also participated at that huge gathering at Kokrajhar. From the date of announcement the Darrang District Committee ABSU also actively took part in the Bodoland movement launched by the All Bodo Students' Union. The ABSU adopted several means to fulfill the aspirations of the separate state. Some of the programmes where Darrang District Committee ABSU also took part very actively mentioned below-

4.11.1 First Phase (1987-1993)

ABSU of Darrang District also participated at Mass Gathering organized by the ABSU on 2nd March 1987 at Kokrajhar and in district level at Udalguri. ABSU leaders announced the aims and objectives of the movement and appealed the people to extend their support constantly until the statehood would be created. The mass Gathering was guided by Khagen Chandra Basumatary, president, ABSU/DDC and Maheswar Basumaatary, Secretary, ABSU / DDC

The central ABSU organized a Mass Gathering at Judges Field Guwahati on 12 June 1987. The Bodo people under the leadership and guidance of ABSU/ DDC rushed to the gathering but they were not allowed to go to participate in the said gathering by the Darrang District Administration. The Bodo people were stopped by the DC and SP of Darrang District at Mangaldai until it got over by the evening.

The Three Men Expert Committee also visited Udalguri. All Bodo Student's Union, Darrang District Committee and Bodo Peoples Action Committee (BPAC) submitted a memorandum to the Committee on matter of creation of a separate state Bodoland and other issues on 28 September, 1991.

The memorandum urged for-

1. Creation of separate state Bodoland

2. Suspension of police atrocities and withdrawal of imposing draconian Black Acts like The Disturbed Area Act , the AFSPA and prohibitory order under section 144 Cr PC

The memorandum also places brief salient features of Darrang containing the background - historical, political, social cultural, educational backgrounds of the Bodos and other vital aspects in support of separate state Bodoland. The memorandum was signed by Gajen Hazwary, President, Darrang District Committee ABSU and 202 others from different organizations.²⁷

ABSU, BPAC, ATTWF of Darrang District Committee (now Udalguri) and Jew Ram Boro MLA of Kalaigaon Constituency and Dinanath Das, Social worker, Tangla jointly submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang to settle the Bodoland Problem and other problems immediately on 16 October, 1992. The full Text of the memorandum as follows-

To,

The Prime Minister of India

New Delhi,

Through the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, Mangaldai,

Dated Mangaldai the 16th October, 1992

Sub: An appeal to settle Bodoland Problem and other problems immediately.

Honourable Sir,

With esteemed honour, the Darrang District Committee of All Bodo Students' Union and Bodo People's Action Committee desire to inform you that the Darrang District ABSU and BPAC had staged token hunger strike at the front of the court of the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, Mangaldai as per the programme chocked by the Central Committee ABSU and BPAC on Demand of immediate acceptable solution of the Bodoland problems and other ethnic and political problems of the Bodos. The activist of the All Bodo Students' Union, Bodo People's Action Committee., Tribal

²⁷ A Memorandum to Dr. Bhupinder Singh Chairaman, Dr. KS Singh, Member, Shri A.M Gokhale, Member Secretary The Three Men Expert Committee, ABSU and BPAC Darrang District Committee, Udalguri 28 September, 1991, pp.2-3.

Women Welfare Federation who came to join the 8(eight) hours hunger strike had been courted and arrested. The Dist. ABSU and BPAC expressed grave concern over this arrest against the peaceful agitators.

All Bodo Students' Union and Bodo People's Action Committee further urge upon the Central Government of India to solve the Bodoland problem in peaceful and democratic way without delay.

Thanking You

Yours Faithfully,

1. (Gajen Hajowary)

President, Darrang District Committee,
ABSU

2. (Madhu Ram Boro)

Darrang District Committee,ABSU

3. Nanda Ram Boro,

Vice Chairman,

Central Committee,BPAC

4. (Khagen Basumatary)

Press Spokesman,

Central Committee,ABSU

5.Jew Ram Boro,MLA, Kalaigaon
Constituency

6. Dina Nath Das

7. Miss Pratima Kachari, President
DDC/AATWWF

All total 165(one sixty five) people died in the first phase of Bodoland Movement²⁸

4.11.2 Second Phase of the Movement (1996-2003)

This phase was basically under the control of Bodo Liberation of Tigers. The ABSU and other wings of ABSU morally supported the demand of separate state Bodoland. Because the demand was same-separate state. The difference was the way adopted by the BLT and ABSU, former believed in violent struggle within the

²⁸ List of Martyrs during ABSU movement for Bodoland under Darrang District upto 20th February, 1993 in Udangshri Swarang Kachari (ed) Somni Thandwi, mouthpiece of Darrang District ABSU, vol-iii, Orang, 2002, P.57.

constitution of India and later believed in democratic and peaceful mass movement. Mitha Ram Boro, Bonjar Daimary, Maheswar Boro were some of the prominent leaders of the BLT from the district of Udalguri.²⁹ Mitha Ram Boro is one of the signatories of BTC Accord of 2003.

4.11.3 3rd Phase of the Movement (2010-2019)

Third Phase of the separate state Bodoland started from 2nd March 2010. The ABSU rejected the BTC alleging the failure to fulfill the aspirations of the Bodo people. Udalguri District ABSU also supported the revival of the Bodoland movement and all the office bearers of Udalguri District ABSU and members of Anchalik Committee/ ABSU participated in the mass gathering organized by the central ABSU at Kajol gaon.³⁰

Udalguri District ABSU was very actively participated all the programmes as directed by the central ABSU, worked for awareness campaign, Mass Rally, Dharna Maha Dharna, Seminar, Mass Crying, Rail Roko programme, E Movement, Mass Gathering, Cycle Rally Intellectual meet, Mass Prayer for success of talks, Highway Bandh, Hunger strike, Special convention on socio-political issues, Mass Gathering, electoral politics Submission of memorandums etc, in support of Bodoland.

4.12.0 Conclusion

PTCA, the first plains tribal political party of Assam demanded for full autonomy in the plain areas. Later on, the party demanded separate state Udayachal to preserve unique and distinct identity of the tribal. The proposed demand area which included Sadiya in the east, river Sonkosh in the west, Bhutan and NEFA in the north and the Brahmaputra river in the South in the name and style of Udayachal in 1972. The PTCA, to get the support of the people and the Government in favour of the demand for separate state adopted various democratic means. They contested both in the Parliamentary and the Assam Legislative Assembly elections and could able to win in few seats in the Legislative Assembly and from Kokrajhar Parliamentary Constituency. The party gave up the demand for separate state and downgraded the demand to Autonomous Region and became the coalition partner in the Janta

²⁹ Nripen Baro, age 40, Informant, Town – Tangla.

³⁰ Source: ABSU Head office, Udalguri District Committee.

Government in 1977. Denouncement of the demand for separate state by the party hurted separate state aspirant people and thought it betrayal and sacrificed the demand for separate state for lust for power. So, the movement of the PTCA ended without desired outcome. UTNL also raised the same voice but could not attract the mass. So, ABSU came forward and organized a vigorous mass movement on demand of separate state Bodolandm from 2nd March, 1987. The first phase of separate state movement ended with the following of the BODO Accord on 10 February in 1993 ABSU. But d, due to the shortcomings of the Accord, ABSU rejected the BAC and again started the movement from 1996. Side by side newly formed BLT also started violent arms struggle for the separate state and ended it with the BTC Accord in 2003. The Bodo people of Baksa and Udalguri also actively took part in the separate state movement launched by the different organizations. Most of the people died in the first phase of the movement launched by ABSU. Both the democratic and violent method was adopted in this phase. The second phase was violent. This phase was under the control of BLT and the third phase was very peaceful, democratic. There was no loss of life and property, injury, fratricidal attack in the third phase of Bodoland movement. The important incident of the third phase is the joining hands of the NDFB (P) with ABSU.

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