

**CHAPTER – V**  
**ROLE OF GOVERNMENT, NGOs AND OTHER SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS**  
**TO ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS**

**5.0 Introduction**

Human Rights violation have been taking place in the context of Bodo community in BTAD area even after the achievement of BTC in 2003. Yes, it is quite obvious that it is more or less in number. In the chapter four, the attempt was being made to discuss in various sector and found certain violation of human rights. It is noteworthy to mention here that many government and non-government agencies have been working to ensure human rights. There is need of helping hand from every section of people in this regard. The following given are some of the roles played.

**5.1 Role of Government:** - The first and foremost responsibility of ensuring human rights of its fellow citizens always lies in the hand of government. The government of India, government of Assam and government of BTC (as an autonomy small political arrangement within the state) have been trying to establish good governance, peaceful society, and stable economy and free from any kind of environmental degradation. There are many schemes which have mentioned in chapter 4, while discussing on government scheme concern issue. The very pro-human agendas to ensure human rights reflects on those policies. But, in practice while implementing is the issue of great concern. In this juncture, responsibility to show by finding out the not proper functioning of schemes lies to general masses also, and response of concern authority should be fast and stern in this regard.

**Policy Making,**

As per as policy making is concern, the govt. of Assam and govt. of BTC have been providing various facilities to the benefit of poor section of people in the field of health, education, housing, drinking water, sanitation and loans to unemployed youth for livelihood. Since, govt. of BTC is a small political arrangement within the state with limited power. It make laws on 40 (fourty) numbers of department. Some of the policy are - the infrastructure development of newly created districts headquarters, sub-divisions of BTAD, newly established and existing educational Institutions, upgradation of CIT Kokrajhar to Deemd to be University, Irrigation projects of (Champabati, Suklai and Dhansiri), Bodoland Vikas Yojana, Housing for poor section of people etc.

### **Implementation of Schemes,**

The Public Works Department (PWD) is an integral part of government. The infrastructural development including building, roads and bridges are being carried out by PWD. The developmental projects that we have seen in four districts of BTAD including buildings of newly created districts, sub-divisions, infrastructure of newly established education Institutions and infrastructure improvement of existing Institutions, roads, bridges, culverts, irrigation projects in agriculture field and many others.

The Govt. of BTC under the Panchayat & Rural Development Department (P & RD) has implemented numbers of centrally funded schemes awarded by the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission and other programmes. Some of those programmes are Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programmes (NSAP), Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS).

The **tables 5.1, 5.2** and **5.3** shows the very details:

**Table 5.1**

**Statement on beneficiaries of MGNREGA and IAY for 2015-16**

Sl. No.	District	MGNREGA		IAY		Remarks
		Total work days	Total nos. of job card issued	Total nos. of houses	Total nos. of house completed	
1	Kokrajhar	43,300	1,80,763	5,208	3,043	-
2	Chirang	15,34,385	99,859	2,815	2,815	-
3	Baksa	35,799	1,99,745	5,889	1,435	4,454 (Going on) <sup>1st</sup> Instalment released
4	Udalguri	1,15,450	1,25,659	4,701	690	4,011 (Going on) <sup>1st</sup> Instalment released

*Source: - An Achievement book 2015-16, published by I & PRD, BTC.*

**Table 5.2**  
**Statement on fund received for BRGF and NSAP for 2015-16**

Sl. No.	Districts	BRGF		NSAP	
		Fund Received (In Lacs)	Fund Utilized (In Lacs)	Total nos. of beneficiaries benefitted	Fund utilized
1	Kokrajhar	1,521.38	1,474.45	33.768	100%
2	Chirang	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
3	Baksa	1633.87	1,123.73	Nil	Nil
4	Udalguri	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: - An Achievement book 2015-16, published by I & PRD, BTC.

**Table 5.3**  
**Status Report of NFBS of DRDA, Kokrajhar**

Sl. No.	Scheme	Financial year	Target	Fund received (In Lacs)	Fund utilized (In Lacs)	Physical progress
1	NFBS	2015-16	256 Nos.	51.20	51.20	100%

Source: - An Achievement book 2015-16, published by I & PRD, BTC.

### **Conflict,**

As per as ethnic conflict is concern, the BTC govt. has been trying its best to take care the victims. Though Relief & Rehabilitation subject has not transferred yet to BTC, a total outlay of Rs. 2521.00 lakhs was earmarked during 2014-2015 for supply of relief materials to the violence affected families of Kokrajhar and Chirang districts.<sup>1</sup>

In respect to govt. arm forces and militant conflict is concern, the govt. of BTC has been appealing to both govt. of Assam and govt. of India to seat for dialogue with militant groups like NDFB (S), and always raising voice in favour of the solution of problem through diaolouge with ceasefire group NDFB (P) and NDFB (R) at earliest possible.

### **Witch Hunting,**

Project Prahari is a community empowerment initiative of Assam Police, which was launch in the year 2001 under the initiative of Kuladhar Saikia. Since then, it has been doing commendable work against the scourge of witch-craft related superstitions. It has been giving common platform to different stakeholders like women's group, science

<sup>1</sup> BTC, An Achivement 2015-2016, p. 48.

societies, village heads and local police stations to coordinate and act on matters that require the involvement of both law enforcers and community.

Project Mother is a scheme to combat witch hunting launched by Kokrajhar district police on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011. District police identified 50 numbers of vulnerable villages to be covered under the project. This project was made public in the workshop-cum-awareness meeting under Project Prahari, which was held at Habrubari U.N.B. Vocational Girls High School under Serfanguri police station in Kokrajhar district.<sup>2</sup> It was at this village Habrubari, where Sarat Bindu Hazoary (65 years) and his wife Taposri Hazowary (57) were brutally killed on the suspicious of practicing black magic on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011.<sup>3</sup> During the launching of project, Kokrajhar district Superintendent of Police P. K. Dutta<sup>4</sup> said “We are trying to make Project Prahari more effective, more result oriented. We are trying to evolve a mechanism to prevent the crime along with various students’ organizations, NGOs, Village defence parties and village headman. Kokrajhar police have chalked out an action plan, project Mother to fight witch-hunting.”

### **Health Care,**

As per as health care is concern, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, BTC has been taking initiatives for infrastructure development and advancement of technology. Some of the notable projects and programmes are - construction of new hospitals and staff quarters in rural area, repairing and renovation of existing hospitals, Procurement of Medicines, Procurement of Machines and Equipments, Procurement of Vehicles, Malaria Eradication Programmes and Health Mela.

In order to provide pure and safe drinking water, the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department has been taking various initiatives. Some of these are – installing Hand Pumps, Rig Boring and Ring Wells. Renovation and repairing of many water supply centres, and supply of water through pipe to community are also one of the example. The department also provides safe and pure drinking water by tankers in meetings, exhibitions, seminars, workshops and when called for at the time of urgent requirement of drinking water.

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<sup>2</sup> Project Mother to stop murders: Workshop-cum-awareness meet on witch hunting held, by The Telegraph, Online Edition, Published on 15.06.2011.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

The PHE department also initiated project call Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in order to provide sanitation facilities to rural areas with 100 per cent coverage. The TSC was launched in 1999 by restructuring Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP). The aim and objectives of project are: improvement of quality of life, acceleration of sanitation coverage, awareness and health education, provide sanitation facilities and promote hygiene among students in Schools/Anganwadis, encourage effective and appropriate technologies in sanitation, and elimination of open defecation.

### **Education,**

In the field of education, the BTC government through the Department of Education, after its formation has been taking many developmental projects and policies for upliftment of education sector. The establishment of Central Institute of Technology (CIT), Bineswar Brahma Engineering College (BBEC), upgradation of Gauhati University (Kokrajhar Campus) to Bodoland University at Kokrajhar, General Colleges, B. Ed. Colleges, and Training Institutes brought lot of changes in education sector of BTAD, especially among Bodo community. The improvement of the infrastructure of newly established Institutions and existing Institutions by BTC government is remarkable and praiseworthy. During the financial year 2014-15, an amount of Rs. 3645.00 Lakhs was allocated by BTC<sup>5</sup> for various schemes which includes construction of school buildings, extension of class room, boundary walls, furnitures and other grants to schools and colleges of BTAD. Some 1141 numbers of Asstt. Teachers were appointed in LP and ME/MV School for elementary education during 2005-2006.<sup>6</sup>

The ongoing programmes like Operation Black Board and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) are working to increase the literacy rate and to improve the quality of elementary section of education. Apart from these programmes, some of the most notable programmes are National Adult Education (NAE), National Literacy Mission (NLM), Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Mahila Samakhya Programme.

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<sup>5</sup> Bodoland Territorial Council, An Achievement 2015 – 16. Pp. 40-41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

### **Employment Generation,**

The Industries & Commerce Department of BTC has been implementing various schemes for employment generation and to motivate the people to create an environment for rapid growth of industries in BTAD area through its head quarters and sub-divisional head quarters with the help of BTC sponsored schemes along with Central and State government sponsored schemes.<sup>7</sup> The schemes that were undertaken by BTC are - margin money assistance to entrepreneurs on loan from bank or financial institutions, provide financial assistance in the form of one time grants (i.e. supply of plant and machinery for setting up of enterprises, micro, small or medium industries in BTAD area), holding of entrepreneur development programme, exhibition, trade fair and publicity in order to bring awareness to the people.<sup>8</sup>

### **Flood Management,**

The Water Resources Department has been taking some initiative in respect to manage the flood. The following is details of it.

**Table 5.4**

**District wise damage of flood management structures (Embankments and others)  
in BTAD during the floods of 2012-13**

Districts	Type of Embankments	Length of embankment (in KM)	No. of embankment breached		No. of breaches in the embankment		Length of breaches (in meter)	
			2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Kokrajhar	Tributary Dyke	32.20 Km	1	Nil	2	Nil	60M + 50 M = 110 M	Nil
Chirang	Tributary Dyke	36.84 Km	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Baksa	Tributary Dyke	41.20 Km	2	Nil	2	Nil	200M + 200M= 400M	Nil
Udalguri	Tributary Dyke & Brahma Dyke	26.40 Km	1	Nil	1	Nil	200M	Nil

Source: - CHD, Water Resources Deptt. BTC.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

### **Soil Conservation,**

The Department of Soil Conservation deals with prevention of soil from erosion by floods and other natural calamities. Some of the programmes or projects that were undertaken by the said department of BTC in the financial year 2005 - 2006 are Direction and Administration, Gully Control Project, Land Development Project, Protection of Riverine Project and Stream Bank Erosion, and Water Distribution Project.<sup>9</sup> An outlay of Rs. 450.00 lakhs was earmarked for various projects in order to prevent soil erosion by BTC authority through Soil Conservation Department during the financial year 2014 - 2015.<sup>10</sup> In same financial year, the total amount of Rs. 1335.00 lakhs was allocated through Water Resource Department, BTC for anti erosion works, embankment and river training works.<sup>11</sup>

**5.2 Assam State Human Rights Commission (ASHRC):** - ASHRC was established on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1996 with the aim and objectives to promote and protect the human rights. Since inception, the commission has been disposing hundreds of cases, imposing fines on the quality and providing compensation to the victims.

The Commission has its own investigation team headed by a person not below the rank of an Inspector General of Police appointed by it and such team is consists of the categories of officers as the Commission decides from time to time. The Commission may in any given case appoint an appropriate number of outsiders to be associated with the investigation either as investigators or observers.

The functions of Commission<sup>12</sup> are:

i) Inquire sou-motu or on a petition presented to it by a victim or any person on his behalf, into a complaint of: Violation of human rights or abetment thereof, or Negligence in the prevention of such violation, by a public servant.

ii) Intervene in any proceeding involving any allegation of violation of human rights pending before court, with the approval of such court.

iii) Visit under intimation to the state Government, any jail or any other institution under the control of state government, where persons are detained or lodge for purposes

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<sup>9</sup> An Achievement of the BTC, Annual Publications, 2005-2006.

<sup>10</sup> BTC, An Achievement 2015 – 2016, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 96.

<sup>12</sup>The Assam Human rights Commission (Procedure) Regulation – 2001.

of treatment, reformation or protection, to study the living condition of the inmates and make recommendations thereon.

iv) Review the safeguard by or under the constitution or any law for the time being in force for the protection of human rights and recommended measures for their effective implementation.

v) Review the factors, including the act of terrorism that inhibit the enjoyment of human rights and recommended appropriate remedial measures.

vi) Undertake and promote research in the field of human rights.

vii) Spread human rights literacy among various sections of the society and promote awareness of safeguards available for the protection, media, seminar and other available means.

viii) Encourage the efforts of NGOs and institutions working in the field of human rights and

ix) Any other functions on which, the Commission feel necessary for the promotion of human rights.

There are many cases that are registered and disposed by the AHRC. Following are some of the cases since 2002-03 to 2014-15 of Assam.

**Table 5.5**

**Statement of cases registered and disposed of by AHRC since 2003 to 2014**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Cases registered</b>	<b>Cases disposed of</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1	2002-03	604	373	231
2	2003-04	704	315	389
3	2004-05	786	405	381
4	2005-06	849	293	556
5	2006-07	912	327	585
6	2007-08	942	442	500
7	2008-09	818	309	509
8	2009-10	769	372	397
9	2010-11	652	266	386
10	2011-12	695	366	329
11	2012-13	651	297	356
12	2013-14	691	443	248
13	2014-15	508	382	126

Source: - [www.ahrc.gov.in](http://www.ahrc.gov.in)



**5.3 Role of NGOs:** - The NGOs have great role to play in ensuring human rights to the indigenous Bodo people in BTAD area. There are many NGOs, which have been working tirelessly in order to ensure human rights. The main objectives of those NGOs is to establish equity and justice for all. The deprivation and discrimination from due rights is against the humanity and in the socialist country like such sort of injustice should not happened.

**5.3.1 NEDAN:** - NEDAN Foundation is an NGO registered under the Public Charitable Trust Act active in Northeast region in general and BTAD area of Assam in particular. The vision of NEDAN is to build a society marked by development, equality, peace and respect for human rights for every sections of people. This foundation strongly belief the collective power of youth to bring change in society. It has been working to empower youth, women and girls on various issues such as human rights, trafficking in women and children, livelihoods, gender, sexuality, reproductive and sexual health (RSH), HIV/AIDS, environment etc. and enable to them to be equal decision makers in the development process and peace building in Northeast region of India. NEDAN attempts to provide youth a forum and a platform for creating a development vision and conscience through which they will endeavour to child networking between North East youth groups and international youth forum.

NEDAN's special focus has been on promotion of human rights violation, combating Cross Border Human Trafficking, Child Trafficking, Child Protection and RTE, Protecting and Preventing Children from exploitative situation through CHILDLINE 1098, rescuing women and girls being lured, re-integrating the survivors with families and creating alternative livelihood.<sup>13</sup>

The NEDAN foundation has been taking various initiatives to ensure human rights among the backward community of BTAD. The *Child Protection Intervention* is an initiative to protect and promote the child. Some of the initiative under this mission are,

**Education base initiatives:** - One of the most effective policy to prevent human trafficking is education. So, imparting education to every section of people is need of hour. Hence, under the Community based Child Protection (CPC) initiative, awareness campaign is carried out in backward areas through training, workshop and discussion to

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<sup>13</sup>Annual Report 2007 of NEDAN Foundation, p. 6.

make the people understand about the needs of education and care of children. Accordingly, some of them have improved minimum knowledge about children along with issues pertaining to atrocities against children and its protection mechanisms. The foundation feels the necessity to provide minimum knowledge about child related acts and schemes as RTE Act 2009, ICDS Scheme and other child welfare schemes so that they can raise their voice against the ineffectiveness of those schemes in their respective areas.<sup>14</sup>

**Livelihood and Social Entrepreneurship based initiative:** - The Weaving Destination Livelihood Mission was established in 2008 by NEDAN Foundation and today it is being recognised as an income generation program for the vulnerable tribal women of BTAD area, who are trafficked survivors, domestic workers and drop out girls and hence they came financially independent.<sup>15</sup>

NEDAN Foundation initiated organic cultivation in BTAD area realizing the demand of consumer for organic crops for better health and to enable trafficked survivors poor family to be financially independent. Accordingly, people move forward for farming using organic fertilizers of organic origin of such as compost, manure, green manure, and bone meal and places emphasis on techniques such as crops rotation, companion planting. In return, families could able to enhance their financial stability and raise standard of living. The market linkages was also shown by foundation in the initial stage.

Most of the vulnerable women, mothers of trafficked survivors and school dropout domestic child labourer from and among the IDP of Kokrajhar district do not have enough land to meet their food requirement. In this connection and in order to create vegetables vendors, Social entrepreneurship training programme was provided to 29 participants, out of these 10 numbers of women come up to set up the vendor.<sup>16</sup>

Various other programmes like – providing tailoring training for better livelihood, cattle, goat farming for supplementary income improving in living standards of poor Bodo people.

**Youth Empowerment initiative:** - NEDAN Foundation has been organizing and observing ‘International Youth day’ Program since 2011 with the aim and objective to

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<sup>14</sup>Anna Annual Report 2017 of NEDAN Foundation, Kokrajhar. p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid p. 28

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

strengthen the power of youth by making them aware about the serious issue of human trafficking in the region.<sup>17</sup>

**5.3.2 NERSWN:** - The North East Research and Social Work Networking, shortly known as NERSWN is a secular, non-for-profit, gender just, non-political organization set up in 2004 and registered in 2005 under the Societies Registration Act 1860. This is a responsive voluntary institutions conceived, led and managed by a bunch of committed and dynamic young people from the region, working towards sustainable and holistic change mainly in the North East region of India. NERSWN seek to reach out with social endeavour to the doorsteps of people, to realize development and rights of the marginalized by building capacities of communities and strengthening knowledge technology and networks.<sup>18</sup>

The programmes of the NERSWN are,

**Health related initiative:** - One of the most remarkable health related initiatives taken by NERSWN was bringing Malaria Control to the doorstep in two districts i.e. Kokrajhar and Chirang in BTAD. These two districts were known to have high incidence of Malaria in Assam due to cover of thick forest. In 2005-2006, NERSWN started work of anti-national services to the doorsteps of the masses, with financial support from BTC.<sup>19</sup> In the year 2008-09, the got involved with NRHM to launch a seven-week awareness campaign to herald important immunization weeks, health meals, world TB day etc. They also interacted with health personal so that community members could freely seek information about TB, Malaria, STI, RTI, etc.<sup>20</sup> Again, in the year 2009-10 in order to empower communities to claim health as their rights, Nerswn has worked actively with Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), the most effective innovation in the NRHM. They trained over 100 ASHAs on primary health care, health rights, community mobilization and leadership.<sup>21</sup>

**Women empowerment initiatives:** - According to NERSWN, empowering and enhancing women vendors has been one of four most successful and joyous programme. They started the program in 2007-08 with the modest financial support from the Govt. of BTC and followed by a three years grant from Sri Dorabji TATA Trust, Mumbai. The

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid p. 19

<sup>18</sup><https://www.nerswn.org>

<sup>19</sup>Report of NERSWN (2004-2014), Looking back on a decade long journey of work. p. 5

<sup>20</sup>Ibid p. 7

<sup>21</sup>Ibid p. 10

objective is to facilitate small internal credits at lowest possible interest to cash strapped vendors.<sup>22</sup> In 2009-10, they started Women's Cycle bank with the aim to reduce dependency of women vendor's on men and to give freedom of mobility.<sup>23</sup>

**Skill for life initiative:** - Skill is one of the most essential for all round development of human being. Person with skill can survive in every situation. Since, most of the people of BTAD are based on agriculture, they trained farmers in Systems of Rice Intensification (SRI) with new techniques being introduced and certified seeds, weeders other support being provided by the agricultural department. They also aware people to link with banks for credit, process for formation of SHG to develop piggery and grow cash crops.<sup>24</sup>

**Peace building and conflict resolution initiative:** - NERSWN took active role in providing relief materials to conflict victims of 2012 ethnic conflict between indigenous Bodo and Bengali Muslims. In order to bring confidence in the mind of people and to build peace, one of the effective method carried out was clean up of village by its villagers. Men and women from both sides – who were loggerheads couple of years ago came together and participated actively, which showed their shared of humanity once again.<sup>25</sup>

**5.3.3 Mission Birubala:** - Mission Birubala is a non-profit making progressive organization founded by conscious people especially from Goalpara, Kamrup (Rural) and Kamrup (Metro) districts of Assam. Ms. Birubala Rabha has been solely working since 1985 to eradicate social evils like witch hunting in different parts of Assam and Meghalaya. After seeing and realizing the work of Ms. Rabha, few of the conscious people come forward and offer their helping hand to get rid from social evils and to form better society. This way, Mission Birubala came into existence in 2011 and got registered as an NGO on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012 under the Society Registration Act 1860. Since its inception, it has been working with witch hunting issues such as – rescue and rehabilitation, awareness meeting, sensitization camp, free health camp and formation of student cell.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid

<sup>23</sup>Ibid

<sup>24</sup>Ibid p. 11

<sup>25</sup>Ibid

The mission has been carrying out various activities across the state against witch hunting issues in order to ensure human rights. Some of the activities carried out in BTAD area are,

i) The national level seminar was conducted on the topic ‘Developing Scientific Outlook against Socialist Evils like Witch Hunting’ at Janata College, Serfanguri on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014 organized by Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Janata College in collaboration with Mission Birubala Janata College Cell.

#### **5.4 Role of Social Organizations**

**5.4.1 Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS):** - The Bodo Sahitya Sabha was founded on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1952 with the aim and objectives to promote the Bodo language and literature. After freedom of nation from British colonialism, the leaders and intellectuals of Bodo community realized the need of organization to take care the protection and promotion of Bodo language and literature. Many of the early Bodo leaders, intellectuals and authors of Bodo community studied in school or college were either in Assamese or Bengali medium. Through the Bodo community had a rich language with sizeable number of population, but language was not introduced as medium of instruction in schools. The BSS since its inception tirelessly work for protection, promotion and overall welfare of the Bodo language and literature. As a result of prolong struggle and determination of BSS, the Bodo language is in present position.

**Promotion and protection of language, literature and culture:** - The BSS being one of the most old and respectful organization has been working a lot in this field since its inception.

i) The organization has been demanding to the Govt. of Assam for proper implementation of the RTE Act 2009, in the Mother Tongue education of the state.

ii) Separate Directorate for Tribal language in general and Bodo language in particular is long standing of BSS.

iii) The organization has been working for development Bodo medium schools. The demand which have made by organization are infrastructure development of schools, appointment of teachers, every financial assistance to schools, provide available text books and uniforms for students.

**Peace initiative:** - The BSS has been taking remarkable initiative to establish peace in BTAD area. They have appealing every section of people to end up the violence and to bring peaceful environment. Some of the initiative are,

i) The BSS on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2012, met both Principal Secretary of the Home department and Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam to discuss the Bodo Muslim conflict and to know the security measures taken by Govt. of Assam and India as well.<sup>26</sup>

ii) 25<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August 2012, visited relief camps of trouble torn Kokrajhar and Chirang district during the volatile situation of conflict between indigenous Bodo and Muslim people.<sup>27</sup>

**5.4.2 All Bodo Students' union (ABSU):** - The All Bodo Students' Union shortly known as ABSU, a non-political students' organization was founded on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1967 at Kokrajhar Tribal Rest House. The aim and objectives of ABSU is to promote language, literature and culture of the Bodos. Since its inception, the ABSU has been working to achieve better and mutual understanding among the Bodo students and people of different parts of India and abroad as well.

The union has been trying its efforts through various means and ways to achieve its objectives.

i) Propagate the education through the mother tongue i.e. Bodo language among the Bodo people.

ii) Improve and develop the Bodo language and literature through various literary activities, publication works etc.

iii) Work for the welfare and development of the students' community in the educational field.

iv) Safeguard and develop the culture of the Bodos.

v) Develop the Bodo nation economically by taking economic agenda and program from time to time.

vi) Tackle and settle the political issue, if and when the existence of the Bodo people is threatened, through the ABSU is a non-political organization.

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<sup>26</sup>A memorandum to Tarun Gogoi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam by All the Bodo National Organisations under the banner of BSS, dated – 14.08.2012. Published in 'The Bodo' mouthpiece of BSS, 38<sup>th</sup> Issue 2013.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid

vii) Struggle to achieve the rights and privileges given in the Indian Constitution through democratic process.

viii) Support the principle of democratic socialism for the economic emancipation. But the union shall welcome the principles of new economic order that may emerge from time to time.

ix) Fight for ensuring safety and security, dignity and securing human rights and Civil Liberty of the Bodo Nationality living around the world.

The ABSU has been initiating various programme in various sector to give justice to every section of people in Assam. Hereby, I am going to present the activities carried out in the context of human rights of Bodo Community since 2003 to 2014 in BTAD. These are,

**Initiative for quality education,**

The ABSU started ‘Mission Quality Education’ in 2007 with the aim and objectives to provide quality education to coming generation. As a part of mission and to spread the necessity of quality education, union organized cycle rally across the Assam, which started on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2007 from Kokrajhar District Sports Association (KDSA) paly ground, Kokrajhar and same was inaugurated by Retired I.F.S. Mr. Upen Chandra Boro.<sup>28</sup>

**Peace initiative,**

i) Unidentified miscreants attacked in NDFB camp at Medhaghat of Baksa district on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007, where one cadre of NDFB was killed. In this connection, ABSU with other organization of Bodo met Chief of BTC, Mr. Hagrama Mahilary on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007, and discussed regarding law and order situation of BTAD in Conference Hall of Kokrajhar DC Office.<sup>29</sup>

ii) The ethnic conflict between indigenous Bodo and Bangladeshi Muslim took in September 2008 in Darrang and Udalguri District of Assam. To take stock of victims in relief camps, ABSU visited the said two districts on/from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008.<sup>30</sup> In this

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<sup>28</sup>Annual Report 2007 of ABSU, 3<sup>rd</sup> Issue. Published by ABSU on the occasion of its 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention held on 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at Gandhi Maidan, Boko under the district of Kamrup, Assam.

<sup>29</sup>Activity Report 2007 of ABSU, 3<sup>rd</sup> Issue, published by ABSU, p. 3

<sup>30</sup>Activity report 2008 of ABSU *op.cit.*p. 10.

connection, union made understand and submitted memorandum to Minister of State for Home Affairs, Govt. of India on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008.<sup>31</sup>

iii) After July 2012 conflicts, thousands of Bodo people were forced to stay in relief camp with difficulties of basic facilities like food, shelter and dress. On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012 team of Central ABSU visited many Bodo relief camps at different places of two districts in Kokrajhar and Chirang.<sup>32</sup> In order to ensure good health on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2012, one team of ABSU led by Cultural Secretary Mr. Maneswar Daimary, medicines were provided to the relief camps of Maktaigaon, Titaguri, Bidyapit, Commerce College, Swrang High School, Sukhanjhora, Gambari bil, Nayekgaon and Dotma.<sup>33</sup>

iv) The ABSU organized all party meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2005 with other organizations of Bodo community like BSS, ABWWF, ABEF, DuBAA and DBHA to discuss on political situation of BTAD and faction within the community. Through this meeting all presented organizations appeal to all the political leaders of Bodo to be united and work for the betterment of community.<sup>34</sup>

**Demand for proper implementation of policies,**

i) One team of ABSU under the leadership of its President Mr. Promod Boro met and submitted memorandum to Home Minister Mr. Sushil Kr. Shindhe and DONER Minister Mr. Pawan Singh Ghatowar on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012.<sup>35</sup> The demand they placed were,

- a) Detection and deportation of Bangladeshi illegal migrants.
- b) Provide compensation to conflict victims' indigenous Bodo people.
- c) Rehabilitation of conflict victim Indigenous Bodo people to their respective place in tribal belt & block areas, and forest land.
- d) Security of life and property.

ii) The Mass demonstration was organized on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2005 across the Assam in order to regularize non-government schools, appointment of teachers and publications of

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid p. 11

<sup>32</sup>Activity Report 2012-2013, 8<sup>th</sup> Issue. Published by ABSU on the occasion of its 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference held on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 at Goybari Nwgr, Tamulpur, Baksa. p. 18

<sup>33</sup>Ibid p. 14

<sup>34</sup>Activity Report 2005, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Published by ABSU on the occasion of its 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention held on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2006 at jwiphukuri, Chichupani, Golaghat, Assam. p. 12

<sup>35</sup>Activity Report 2012-2013 *op.cit.* p. 14



Bodo medium text books. Memorandum was submitted to Hon'ble chief minister and Hon'ble Education Minister of Assam.<sup>36</sup>

### **Entrepreneurship Programme,**

The literate Bodo youth after competition of higher education sit idle at home and look for the government job. Despite of having degrees, most of the literate Bodo youth even seen frustrated due to failure of several times to get govt. job. Realizing all this, ABSU organized 'Awareness campaign Cum Workshop on Entrepreneurship Programme' on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 at Gambari bil village in Kokrajhar district.<sup>37</sup> The same programme was also organized at Tipkai Chamber Hall on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008 under Porbotjhora sub-division in Kokrajhar District.<sup>38</sup> This way same programme was carried out in various districts of Assam.

**5.4.3 All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF):** - During the Bodo movement period led by ABSU, the Bodo leaders felt the need of Bodo women to take an important role for the welfare of the Bodo society. As an outcome of realization, the All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1986 under the direct initiative of the then leaders of ABSU. The women organization encompassed all tribal groups of Assam such as Bodo, Garo, Rabha, Missing, Tiwa, Karbi, Naga and others at the time of its formation. However, as the movement for separate Bodoland intensified, the organization increasingly came to be seen as one specially set up for the Bodo community and their movement. Hence, the womenfolk from other tribes began to feel alienated and started distancing themselves from AATWWF. Women leaders from other tribes were even prevented from participating in the meetings of the committee by their respective tribal leaders. As a result, the name of the organization was subsequently changed from All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation (AATWWF) to All Bodo Womens' Welfare Federation (ABWWF) in the third annual conference of the Federation held in 1993 at Tamulpur. After the rechristening of the name, the members of the other tribal groups left the organization. Since then it has been popularly come to known as ABWWF. The aim of ABWWF is to build up the bond of unity among the Bodo community through collective through and

<sup>36</sup>Activity Report 2005. *Op.cit.* p. 12

<sup>37</sup>Activity report 2008 of ABSU, 4<sup>th</sup> issue. Published by ABSU on the occasion of its 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference held on 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009 & 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 at Daoharu fwthar, Borgaon, Thelamara, Sonitpur, Assam. p. 2

<sup>38</sup>Ibid

action, to stand for equal rights and justice in socio economic freedom under socialism in order to free Bodo women from the chain of socio economic bondage.

The main aims and objectives of ABWWF are:

1. To work for the fulfilment of interest and aspiration of the women folk belonging to the Bodo community.

2. To build up a strong bond of unity and also to foster brotherly and sisterly feelings among the Bodo people in general.

3. To fight for equal rights, status and honour of the Bodo women in the society. To eradicate the evil practices and injustices from the Bodo society.

4. To protect and promote rights of Bodo women in armed conflict situation.

5. To approach the government for providing required medical care and facilities to the down-trodden Bodo women folk and their children.

6. To raise voice for the human rights and civil liberties of all the down trodden, Bodo groups.

7. To save prestige and status of women folk in particular and men folk, in general.

The ABWWF since its inception and as women organization has been tremendously working for the welfare of Bodo people of Assam in general and womenfolk in particular. The Bodo women under the platform and guidance of ABWWF agitated to secure political rights for the Bodo community and on the other hand they have been trying to eradicate various ill practices from the society such as polygamy, alcoholism, illiteracy, superstitions related witch hunting etc.

The following given are some of the initiatives taken by ABWWF since 2003 till 2014 during different period and time.

i) ABWWF launched a protest rally against the molestation on girl student and other women on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2005 in Brahmaputra mail by Haryana Police.

ii) ABWWF observed a protest week on/from 06.01.2006 to 12.01.2016 to protect women from atrocities at Lakhiram Bhawan situated in Guwahati.

iii) ABWWF led two hours rail blockade on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2006 over the incident of Brahmaputra Mail on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2005.

iv) A peace rally was organized by ABWWF on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009 in order to bring peace in the BTC region.

With the aim and objective to empower women, at present the organization has set up many weaving centres at Kokrajhar and other parts of BTAD region. It has also established some of Self-Help Groups like Jwanglaguri Mahila Samiti, Orchid etc. The federation also organizes seminars, conferences, on the issue of health such as HIV-AIDS, evil practices, witch hunting etc. ABWWF has been observing 4<sup>th</sup> April of every year as anti-liquor day. It has also undertaken a mission for adult education for each girl in every household. In the literacy field, federation has brought out souvenirs like Songdan, Raikhmuthi etc. annually. Many renowned Bodo intellectuals, poets, write on women related issues in these magazines. The articles mainly discuss the contribution of women to the upliftment of the Bodos, involvement of the Bodo women in politics etc. The ABWWF members are running an orphanage home named Alayaran at Debwrgaon of Kokrajhar since 14<sup>th</sup> August 2003, which has been looking after the victims of the violence. At present, there are 120 numbers of children out of which 54 are girls. These children have lost their parents either at the hands of security forces or due to the factional killings between rebel groups or whose parents have been killed in the name of witch hunting. The women federation has made every provision for their schooling as well as for their recreation. It has been running by the donations of the common masses collected by the members of the federation.

**5.4.4 Bodo Womens' Justice Forum (BWJF):** - The Bodo Womens' Justice Forum, shortly known as BWJF, is another women's organization which is working in BTAD region. The organization was established in the year 1993 by Anjali Daimary. The organization focuses on the upliftment of the Bodo Women. The organization was mainly formed to bring about awareness among women about their rights. It has been launching movement against the Armed Forces Special Power Act which is in operation in the North-Eastern states. According to the President Anjali Daimary, in a conflict situation it is the women who suffer the most. Women are being violated by the security personnel and the military organization. In BTAD region Bodo women faced the brunt of raids by the security due to the conflict nature of this region.

The aims and objectives of the BWJF are given below,

- i) To protect the rights of Bodo Women during conflict situation.
- ii) To raise the status of women.
- iii) To bring peace in the region.

iv) To protect the socio-cultural heritage of Bodos.

v) To empower the Bodo Women.

The main function of BWJF is to protect the rights of women during conflict situation. According to the members of the organization conflict situation in the BTC region has led to large scale violation of human rights and it is the women who suffered most in such conflicts. In order to protect women during conflict situation BWJF adopt various mechanisms like protest march, gherao, appealing to Government through media etc.

The following are some of the examples of activities which have been carried out by the BWJF in BTAD region since 2003 to 2014.

i) On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009, with hundreds of women BWJF initiated a bold political demonstration with 'Rape Us' inscribed on their chest and backs against the rape of two young girls in Udalguri district by Central Reserve Police force (CRPF).

ii) Another important function of the BWJF is to help the victims to achieve justice and to receive compensation from the Government. During the time of the Bodo Muslim clash in 2012 representatives from organization visited the affected areas and also submitted a memorandum to the District and State administration and tried to secure compensation to the victims.

iii) BWJF is also working to remove the evil practices from the Bodo society like witch hunting, polygamy, drinking alcohol etc.

iv) The organization is also playing effective role in defusing fractional conflicts between the various Bodo groups.

v) BWJF is playing a very important role in bringing peace as well as in protecting the rights of the women in the region. The organization is a founder member of the Bodo National Convention (BNC) which was formed in 2012 to bring peace in the region.

Besides above mentioned activities, it has been organizing workshops and seminars to promote inter group dialogues and mediation skills. The organization also welcomed the ceasefire between the NDFB ® and Government of India. During the BTC election 2008 BWJF intervened on several occasions to defuse tensions and violence between different political groups. Thus BWJF is playing an active role not only in protecting the rights of women but also in bringing peace in the region.

**5.4.5 Bodoland Peoples' Front Women Wing (BPFWW):** - Bodoland Peoples' Front Women Wing shortly known as BPFWW is another women's wing organization of Bodoland People's Front (BPF) political party headed by Hagrama Mohilary in BTAD region. This organization was established in the year 2006. The aim and objective of organization is mainly to empower women politically, socially and economically as well. It has also aim to raise the status of women in BTAD region irrespective of their class, caste, religion etc.

The main aim and objectives of BPFWW are given below,

- i) To carry out the directives of the BPF party when it is called for.
- ii) To organize women for strengthening peace, progress and unity among all sections of people for the all-round development of the BTAD and outside.
- iii) To work out various programmes of development and welfare of society among the women in BTAD as well as outside in consultation with the Central Committee of BPF.

The functions, working and role of the organization are,

- a) To raise the political status of the women in the region. They encourage the women to participate in politics. Since, political participation of women is necessary to raise the status of women in the region.
- ii) Another important function is to empower the women economically. It also provides financial help to self-help groups for the empowerment of women. For example Mainao Agro Multipurpose Society, a women self-help group is financially assisted by BPFWW.
- iii) BPFWW has taken some agenda for the development of rural areas, development of education, development of agriculture, horticulture etc.
- iv) They also help the poor peasants in securing their land rights.
- v) They also put pressure on the Government for the infrastructure development of the region.
- vi) They are also playing an active role towards protection of the women's rights during conflict situation.
- vii) The organization strongly condemns every illegal activity against women. They take care of the fact that culprits get punishment. They also provide shelter to the victims. According to the interviewers during the time of various ethnic conflicts in the

region the representatives from organization visited the affected areas and submitted a memorandum to the District and State administration and tried to secure compensation to the victims.

viii) The organization also maintains contact with other women's organizations through meetings, seminars etc. their unity with the other women's organizations also helps them in meeting various challenges posed by evils in society.

Thus, BPFWW are playing a very important role in political and economic empowerment of women in BTAD region. However, since it is an allied wing of the BPF political party, it is more concerned with the party activities. It generally works according to the instruction by the parent body of BPF political party.

**5.4.6 Bodoland National Conference (BNC):** - BNC is an umbrella organization consisting of 43 Bodo organizations formed on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Mr. Hagrama Mohilary President of BPF Political party and Chief of BTC was unanimously selected as Chairman of BNC. The main objective of organization was to provide a common platform for all Bodo organizations including political and non-political to raise the descent voice for common cause for welfare of the community. Some of the major member organizations of BNC were BSS, BPF, ABWWF, BWJF, NDFB (P), DuBHA and others. The organizations moved forward to work to bring an end to mutual conflicts, killing or atrocities among the Bodos.

The historic formation of BNC added a new chapter in the peace making process of proposed Bodoland demand area of Assam. One of the major priorities of this organization was work to establish peace in area and expedite the peace talks with anti-talk faction of NDFB. As a positive result initiated by BNC, NDFB under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary declared unilateral ceasefire on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Accordingly, the general meeting of NDFB decided to give up all kinds of hostile activities to have political dialogue with government for the solution of demand. Such response by militant outfit to cease of anti-social activities can be considered as positive move towards establishment of peace at Bodo dominated area, which has been knowing for sensitive zone due to hostile situation since long.

One of the significant move by BNC members led Chairman Hagrama Mohilary was officially meeting of representatives of government of India on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in order to urge the officials to speed up the peace process with ceasefire NDFB. They met

Shambhu Singh, the then Joint Secretary of North East, Ministry of Home Affairs and Interlocutor P.C. Halder.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

In regard to ensure human rights the government, NGOs and other social organisations have been taking role in their possible ways. As per as government is concern, it is noteworthy to mention that they have been taking development oriented policies and schemes, but unfortunate part is lack of its effectiveness in implementation. Hence, the fruit of those schemes are not fully reaching to weaker sections of people in ground reality.

The NGOs viz. NEDAN, NERSWN and Mission Birubala are very active in BTAD area in respect to the protection and promotion of human rights. More specifically, NEDAN is working in the field of human trafficking by rescuing them and engaging them in work for their livelihood. The NERSWN on the other hand has been working in health sector and establishment of peace. The Mission Birubal has been working in the field of witch hunting.

The student and other social organisations of Bodo viz. BSS, ABSU, ABWWF and BWJF are very conscious for the cause of community. The very history of getting birth of all those organisations are for the protection and promotion of ethnic identity as Bodo, and to establish the Bodo as Master Race Community in this world.

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