



CULTURAL ASSIMILATION OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN NORTH EAST INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE BODOS

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ABSTRACT

Various historical, social, and political reasons have contributed to the cultural integration of indigenous people in Northeast India, particularly the Bodos. One of the biggest indigenous groups in Assam, the Bodos have been through a lot of cultural changes, yet they've always tried to be themselves. The Bodo people have been increasingly assimilated into Assamese and Indian culture due to colonialism, post-independence state policies, and modernization forces, despite the fact that they have a rich cultural history and distinctive customs. Part of this process has revolved on language; people have fought against total assimilation by working to keep the Bodo language alive via literature and education. Bodo celebrations and rituals are a good example of this kind of syncretic mix; they include both traditional and nontraditional components. Traditional family and community dynamics have changed as a result of social structures that have emerged as a result of modern education, urbanization, and economic growth. Movements for Bodo autonomy have done double duty: they have fortified Bodo identity while also opening doors to other groups, which has helped to integrate their cultures. The Bodo people demonstrate remarkable endurance by skillfully balancing traditional preservation with adaptation, allowing them to embrace modernism while clinging to their past. Maintaining Bodo cultural identity in the face of larger assimilation trends requires ongoing advocacy for Bodo language, customs, and political autonomy.

Keyword: cultural assimilation , tribal communities, Political, Bodos,

INTRODUCTION

The area of North East India (NEI), which includes seven sister states and one brother state, is a fascinating wonder due to its rich anthropological and geological diversity. The cultural and biological realms are equally rich with human variability. The intricate dynamics are mirrored in the many tribal and non-tribal communities that inhabit these areas. There is religious, social, political, economic, and biophysical significance to the variety of complex differences. According to the 2011 Census of India, 56.1% of India's total tribal population resides in the Northeastern Indian tribal communities. "Scheduled areas" were created by the Indian Constitution to ensure the well-being of tribal communities. Public sector educational and job possibilities are likewise reserved. To facilitate their full integration into Indian society, the Indian Constitution has long sought to improve the economic, educational, health, and nutritional conditions of India's indigenous peoples.

But these efforts have had subpar results, and the indigenous people still confront problems with their health and survival. Statistics on tribal development in Northeast India trail far behind those of the rest of the country when compared to general and tribal populations in categories such as education, economics, health, nutrition, and sanitation. Tribal life and culture have been profoundly impacted by the arrival of civilization and the corresponding scientific, technical, communicational, and socioeconomic revolutions. Land alienation, forced migration, resettlement, infusion of non-tribals, and other interconnected socioeconomic realities exacerbate the problem. Nonetheless, there are numerous positive aspects to modernity as well. Thus, for the sake of policymaking, intervention,



cultural preservation, and adaptation, it is critical to recognize, comprehend, and resolve the current concerns pertaining to the welfare of the NEI tribal community from many domains of influence and concern.

For this reason, on April 9th and 10th, 2016, the Department of Anthropology at Saint Claret College, Ziro, which is part of the School of Human and Environmental Sciences, hosted a two-day National Seminar. The Seminar chose for a broad subject in order to accommodate different points of view: Many Views on Northeast Indian Tribes in the Modern Era. The subject was organized into four main themes to provide a forum for scholars, researchers, and policymakers from many disciplines to explore the current concerns affecting the tribal people of North East India. These categories are simply illustrative and not exhaustive. Issues of tribal government, socioculture, biophysics, and culture, as well as other matters pertaining to indigenous communities, were the primary foci.

Objectives

1. To understand the ethnic identity of Bodo tribe.
2. To study the social and cultural life of the Bodo tribe.

Methodology

The research work in question made extensive use of a technique that was primarily focused on the historical and descriptive analysis of secondary sources. During the course of an exhaustive literature review, the data was gathered from a wide variety of sources and then evaluated in order to accomplish the goals of this study. In order to have a better understanding of Bodo's search for their socio-political identity, the secondary data that was acquired from a variety of papers, books, and journals was utilized throughout the entirety of the study.

Bodos: A Historical Study

The Bodos ruled North-eastern India for millennia. The Bodos governed multiple realms with distinct names after settling in this region. The Bodos conquered each North-East kingdom during migration. Different Bodo sects ruled the Northeast at different times. They occupied Koch, Chutia, Kachari, Moran, Dimasa, and Borathehi kingdoms at will. Under the Bodos, there was no one kingdom. Due to their strong history with Bhaskar Varman, Banasura, Bhagadatta, and Narakasura, the Bodos ruled a formidable empire in this region. The first Brahmaputra valley ruler was Bodo Narakasura. The Aryanas called non-Aryan Mongoloid Assamites Mahiranga Danava. Though he was the first king of pragjyotishpura, he was not a king. Narakasura founded a kingdom after the Mahiranga dynasty, a crucial period in political and cultural history. After leaving the Kamrupa, the Bodo branch may have founded a separate kingdom around Sadiya with Sadiya as its capital. U.C. Guha noted that as the Bodos were spreading over the Brahmaputra valley, one monarch, Koundilya Narayana, erected a town called Koundilya and chronicled the kingdom as Halali, meaning shining country. Without history, the Kingdom Halali is unknown (Guha U.C. 1921). S.K. Bhuyan said that Sadiya, the capital of the Kachari dynasty, was strong. Sadiya bordered this kingdom in the east of the Dikhow and southwest of the Dihang rivers, with Dillih on the south (Bhuyan S.K. 1951).

From the aforementioned descriptions, the Bodos had powerful kingdoms, their own religion, traditions, language, and economy before the Aryans arrived. No other language, religion, or culture influenced it. The tribe lived traditionally. They had no caste system and treated everyone equally. After the Aryans arrived in the fifth century, Vaishnavism affected tribal Bodo civilization, notably



in Pragjyotishpura-Kamrupa. According to caste, Aryan civilization was split into Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra (Nath D.N. 1988). Under ancient Kamrupa and the Varman dynasty, this caste structure steadily changed. This effect affected society more. However, only Aryan royal families were affected. This impact is invariable and necessary started in Aryan-oriented society, but it progressively assimilates into the Assamese language and culture, which is now a shared language and culture among Aryans and non-Aryans.

The Bodo kingdom was encompassed by the rivers Kallang, Dhansiri valley, Dikhow, and the north Cachar sub-division with the broader territory of the southern Brahmaputra, with Dimapur as their capital, at the time of the Ahoms, a major Shan race. The thriving monarchy at Dimapur provides proof that the Bodos previously settled and extended over the Naga Hills with a large population in the capital city. During their rule in Dimapur, their kingdom was affluent and powerful, making Bodo history magnificent. Indeed, the Bodos were a formidable neighbor with high culture. They got almost 200 years for attacking the Ahom (Roy Ajay 1995). After 1490 AD, the Ahoms' expansionist ambitions collided with the Bodos and other Hostilities. In 1536, the Ahoms stormed Dimapur, assassinated prince Detsung, and looted the city. Bodo power and kingdom ended then.

Additionally, they appeared to work hard to develop a stronger Assamese society. So, the Bodos believed they deserved more. To overcome their backwardness, the Bodos lived respectfully and needed political authority. They desired political power and administrative share. The Bodos must have been organized by language and culture to acquire a unique identity and barter with the governing class to share power. It taught Bodos that social growth and the preservation of their culture are complimentary. Beginning in the 20th century, they asserted their individuality and became a movement..

Discussion and Analysis

Part A: Socio-Economic Causes of the Identity Assertion

Bodo culture and language were unaffected by foreign influence for a long time. Bodo life was distinct. But this distinctness could not be maintained for long since the Aryans' entrance started a new period of socio-cultural fusion between Aryans and non-Aryans in this region of the country.

Naturally, people of different ethnicities were incorporated into the dominant culture, uniting them under one cultural platform to establish a composite Assamese society and culture. While the Bodos reigned, Brahminism, Bengali language, and culture influenced their group more in recent decades. Bodos, especially those in lower Assam, today known as Bodos of Assam, preserved their language, culture, and customs. The Bodos did not enjoy being swamped by the dominant Assamese Caste-Hindu culture. After the British conquest, the Bodos lost their political independence. The colonial administration and its policies affected Assam's socio-economic and political landscape. Bodos, like other primitive tribes and ethnicities, were degraded from prominence to backwardness. Understanding the Bodos of Assam's socio-economic roots of identity assertion requires knowledge of their history. Bodos were formerly strong and ruled from the Northwest to the Bay of Bengal in the South and Bihar in the West. Assam Bodos were proud of their past. Identity consciousness has been raised by memories of their great past. They now led a militant drive to reclaim their power and glory. Thus, historical factors are key to their identity claim.

Another important aspect in Bodo identity consciousness is Social Reformation. The 19th and early 20th centuries were chaotic and confusing for them. The Bodo community was socially and economically underdeveloped, and their ancient bonds were weakening everyday, causing them much distress. Due to the poor social system, anarchy or disorder prevailed. Bodos also differed



religiously. Some converted to Islam, Christianity, and Vaishnavism. The Bodo of Panbari, a subdivision of Dhubri in Goalpara district, became Muslims (Brahma K, 1992). Although some Bodos switched to other religions, many kept practicing their tribal religion². The Bodos worshipped Bathou, sacrificed animals and birds, and utilized rice beer in pujas. No ceremony used to happen without rice beer. The Bodo people's religious divide through rice beer and bird and animal sacrifices harmed society.

A powerful Bodo man named Srimot Kalicharan Mech, also known as “Gurudev Kalicharan,” emerged at a vital time. Gurudev opposed the religious fragmentation of Bodo society. He proposed merging the Bodo community. After reading the Saraniya Kriya, a book of Brahma religion or Brahma Dharma rites and rituals by Srimont Param Sibinarayan Swami, the founder of Brahma religion and master of Kalicharan (Brahma K. 1992), he concluded that Brahma teachings would be suitable for the Bodos. The monotheistic religion Brahma Dharma believes in a supreme deity named Brahma, a compilation of Upanishadic Brahma (Moshahary R.N. 1985). This religion believes that Brahma is the one God and manifests himself as “Light” from the Sun and Moon. Burning and worshipping fire, known to the Bodos as Ahuti Shaoni, is the emblem of Brahma, and that is all it takes to reach Brahma. Brahma Dharma was Vedic in customs and Upanishadic in theory (Moshahary R.N. 1985). Using Brahma Dharma, he intended to take the Bodos from darkness to light. The Assamese Hindus disparage the Bodo community's widespread poultry, bird, pig, and rice beer production. Kalicharan believed this behavior made Hindu neighbors despise the Bodo. His biggest complaint was the absence of religious unity. He was concerned that many Bodos had turned Sarniya by joining Hinduism and taking names like Koch, Rajbanshi, Chaudhary, Das, Deka, Saiba, Mondol, Karji, etc. This was done to boost social standing.

It was too expensive for any Bodo to discuss embracing Hinduism with Saraniya. As per Singh K.S. 1982, Raisahab Jagat Chandra Mohahary, the Mouzader of Patakata, had to pay Rs. 6000 to become a Hindu. Bodo people in Assam and north Bengal slowly adopted Christianity. The Lutheran Santhal mission and the American Baptist mission have accepted numerous Bodos³ in Darrang and Kamrup districts, while the Anglican and Baptist missions have absorbed many Bodos (Basumatary S. 1977). Many Bodos of Mahakalguri, Jalpaiguri, north Bengal, were conquered by the Scottish Mission. The Bodos were splitting up as a society, and their extinction as a tribal group was most certain.

Perturbed by the situation, Kalicharan Mech wanted to maintain Bodo unity and identity. He believed Bodo society and religion had to change for this to happen. Kalicharan promoted Brahma Dharma to improve society. He even advocated abandoning pig and poultry farming. They want to quit drinking and brewing. He promoted commerce, weaving, carpentry, and more. He distrusted billing the bride exorbitantly. He created a Tipkai secondary school with weaving and carpentry in 1913. After moving to Sapatgram near Fakiragram in Kokrajhar District, it became Sapatgram Integrated Academy. He opened a Brahma boarding home in Dubri to educate Bodo youngsters (Basumatary S. 1977).

He also wrote to the Secretary of Education through Deputy Secretary A.J. Rainey in 1916 to develop the M.E. School of Tipkai into a high school and introduce Assamese (Moshahry R.N. 1985) to encourage them. This led most Bodos to become alert and organized. The first board organization, All Board-Chatra San Milan, was created in 1918, and Board-Maha Sabkha in 1924. It appears that Bodos understood their backwardness via social change and attempted to educate themselves. At first, their sense of establishment was restricted to socio-economic advancement, but they later added political demands. The Simon Commission received a 1929 Shillong memorandum



from Kalicharan Brahma. Sardar B.R. Kachari, Jadav Chandra Khaklary, and others wrote this Memorandum in 1933 calling for multiple political groups for tribes to create the Assam Plains Tribal League. The Tribal Federation requested that the Bodo tribe and other tribes receive at least five Assam Legislature seats in 1937 (Tipkai 1986).

Economic, historical, and societal forces also shaped Bodo's identity. Similar to other Assamese tribes, the Bodos were farmers. The Bodo economy was agrarian for centuries after they settled in Assam. British authorities and American missionaries with agricultural knowledge were valued in the early 19th century. Bodos grew mustard, cotton, and sugar cane along with rice. They also raised pigs, fall vegetables, cultured vegetables, and seasonal fruits like oranges and bananas. Handwoven Muga and Endi silkworms make various clothes. Bodos also traded across borders. After crossing several mountain passes from China and Tibet, the Bodo settled north of Bengal and Assam and traded with the other hill tribes. Bodos traded with Tibetans and Chinese via them.

These passes provided centuries-old trade routes between Tibet and northeastern India. Kachari-Dooar, the entrance to the Kacharis, is the steep area where these trails go to India's plains. The north-western hills of Jalpaiguri in North Bengal and Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang, and Sonitpur in Assam have numerous such doors. In Bhutan and Tibet, authorities controlled and operated these doors (Roy Ajay, 1995). During the winter, India exported rice, cotton thread and textiles, silk thread, and dried fish, while importing Chinese silk, ponies, musk-wax, rubber, gold dust, etc. The hill tribe Bhootias⁴ and Bodos traded the aforementioned commodities as they came down these routes. The Bodo economy benefited greatly from this trading arrangement.

Udalguri's thriving trade attracted Assamese merchants from Barpeta, now Kamrup District, known as Barpetiahs⁵. The Bodos once made money from mustard seed. The Barpetiahs traded mustard seeds in Udalguri, according to official dispatches (Provincial Gazateers of Assam, 1906). Once, they exported mustard seeds for oil manufacturing beyond Assam. Over time, their superior business diversifies into various trade lines, including frontier commerce with hill traders, sometimes sending locally grown mustard seeds and other crops. This meant that farmers still paid a lower rate upfront for the abundance of their crops in their fields, but they collected them after harvesting and paid considerably greater amounts. The impoverished Bodo farmers were constantly broke, therefore they immediately adopted this futures trading system.

This prosperous commerce left Bodos gradually. Education and job concern also hurt Bodo's economy. Education is said to be the key to social progress. Lack of education, vast illiteracy, and ignorance may explain the Bodo retreat in all areas. The district has a far lower education level than Assam for excellent reason. The Bodo traded agriculture nearly solely using archaic ways, therefore theoretical knowledge was not needed. Boys going to school meant losing farmworkers for Bodo farmers. However, their language was spoken solely without counter forms. Also, many adult Bodos who had daily business interaction with their Assamese neighbors could speak Assamese with some fluency. Children study Assamese script today. There was no aid at home, so it was hard. Assamese was as strange as English to such Bodo children. The only language taught at Bodo schools and universities was Assamese. By 1910, Douar had no schools, demonstrating Bodos' educational lack. The first state university in Assam was Cotton College, founded in 1901.

Sitanath Brahma Chaudhary, the first Bodo graduate, earned a BA. Anandaram Barua of Assam entered the I.C.S. in 1936, the last decade of the 19th century. Early 19th-century Assam elites embraced Western education and reached Calcutta. However, the district's lack of an elite class



stifled such excitement. Since they had never held government offices, Bodos never sought them like Assamese aristocrats. Bodos have lagged in modern schooling and non-agricultural jobs. This tremendous transformation that overtook the state physically and emotionally at the start of the 19th century surprised them.

Bodos' social, religious, and economic consciousness became political through language and writing issues. Bodo people speak Bodo. It is known that many people in Sadia, North Bengal, Nepal, sections of North Bihar, and Sylhet spoke the language. Brahma Chaudhary B.L. 1993: Mymensing, Cachar, Tripura. Bodos still speak their original language. They wish to preserve and develop their language, which defines them.

The Bodo people recognized their uniqueness after independence and took measures to enhance their language, literature, and culture. According to the 1952-founded Bodo Sahitya Sabha (B.S.S.), the organization has been dedicated to popularizing Bodo language and literature since 1953. The Government did not introduce it into Bodo-controlled elementary schools until 1963, despite a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam. In contrast, the 1960 Assamese Official Language Act made Assamese the official language. The Bodo, like other hill and plains ethnic groups, buried it as the Assamese language forced on non-Assamese by the government. The Bodo campaigned to integrate the Bodo language into basic education under the B.S.S. In 1963, the Assamese government established Bodo as the first language of instruction, however this did not alleviate the linguistic problem since Bodo students at the second level must learn Assamese Medium. Thus, Bodo kids found it difficult to continue their education after primary school. Bodo was required to be the language of teaching through Sixth Form. Bodos believed mainstream Assamese did not appreciate this proposal since Bodo was not recognized as a state language by the Central Government. The government and officials disregarded this request.

Their strong Bodo identity and language preservation were important to them (Barman S. 1995). A 1968 25,000-person demonstration in Kokrajhar showed that this mood rekindled the campaign. Bodo's dense regions saw strikes, class boycotts, etc., until the government caved later in the year. However, Bodo linguistic issues persisted. At the initiative of the All-Assam Student Union (ASSU), Guwahati University and Dibrugarh University switched from English to Assamese in 1972. This change prevented Bodo kids from attending college beyond Bodo Medium. Bodo pupils also faced government language policy issues. The Bodos recognized that without autonomy, they could not have higher education and hence could not think about their identity or communal development. So, their socio-religious language and economic consciousness became political.

The Bodo dilemma was worsened in 1974 when they needed a Roman script. Bodos was scriptless. Thus, this language's developers used different scripts over time. The tribe was illiterate before British colonization of Assam. Each community had a spoken language with no written form. Gospel literature by Christian missionaries gave them literary stature. Assamese or Bengali was used first, then Roman. The Bodos adopted Assamese script in 1974. Bodo demanded a Romanized script instead than Assamese to oppose Assamese domination. However, the Assamese government opposed Romanization. Finally, in 1977, Indira Gandhi promoted the Bodo Devanagari Bible. Borrowers are wary of Assamese and middle-class Chauvinism narratives. In 1986, the Assam Secondary Board of Education (SEBA) issued an ordinance making Assamese a necessary third language in schools instead of Hindi. The Bodo people strongly opposed it. An upset SEBA circulation withdrawal scheme was advised against by Bodo leaders. Thus, the Bodo and other non-Assamese stopped circulation. The Bodo doubted Assam's language policy. Thus, the ABSU



Memorandum of Understanding accused the Assamese and government of trying to absorb non-Assamese by imposing their language and culture. The Assamese and government were unaware of their faults (Memorandum of Understanding 1987).

Bodos believed the sophisticated Assamese government did not want them to develop their own language and script. These issues unnerved Bodos in mixed Assamese society. Bodos felt alienated from mainstream Assamese society. Bodos don't reject Assamese culture, but they want recognition for their language and its growth.

Part B: Phases of the Ethnic Movement

First movement phase: Bodo began with the first phase of the socio-religious reform movement in the second decade of the 20th century. Religious changes under Kalicharan Brahma encouraged Bodos to maintain their self-identity for the first time. He worried about the Bodos' conversion to Hinduism and adoption of the Saraniya Caste, the lowest rank of the Assamese caste Hierarchy, which destroyed their identity and social standing. He proposed the "Brahma" religion in 1907. He became Kalicharan Brahma. He constantly promoted the Bodos' rich cultural history and encouraged them to feel proud of being Bodo. It was another Bodo first. After many years of historical emptiness, the Bodo people realized they are unique and had self-identity. They believed they should not be ignored. Finally, Bodos realized their identity and society.

In addition to religious changes, Kalicharan Brahma promoted Bodo education via social reforms. He also helped start a literary movement. He worked hard to standardize Bodo writing. Pioneering leaders like Ishan Mosahary, Rupnath Brahma, Pramod Brahma, and Sitanath Brahma Choudhury further his work. Though Christian missionaries wrote Bodo evangelistic literature in Roman script. Since Bodo writers wrote in Assamese script, the language has adopted it (Roy Ajay, 1995).

Western education and social-religious reforms have revived the educated elite Bodos. In 1918, Bodo students founded Assam Bodo Chatra Sanmilan in Dhubri, the capital of the undivided Goalpara District, to embrace a new beginning. Bodo students advocated for improved culture, language, education, and jobs. For the first time, the group planned activities to unite Bodos and educate them how to fight for their dignity. In 1927, Sonowal Kachari youngsters founded Assam Kachari Jubak Sanmilan to discuss frustrations and issues outside of academic activities⁷.

All such groups eventually became involved in Bodo political actions affecting their future. The Simon Commission visited Shillong, Assam's capital, in 1928 to find a way for Indians to participate in British India's administration⁸. The Commission requested claims from Assam's "primitive and Backward Tribes" at Shillong on January 4, 1929. The "Primitive and Backward Tribes" ruled the plains (Basumatary B.K. n.d.). The Goalpara District Bodo Association brought a memorandum to the Commission in Shillong requesting that the Census Report include it as a separate Bodo category. The Association said in the Memorandum that the Bodo Community, with around one lac and fifty thousand members, is a significant part of the Goalpara district's population. Assam has roughly eight lacs. Many Bodos dwell in Jalpaiguri and Kochbehar, Bengal. From one lac and fifty thousand, some thousands have been regarded as Hindus, reducing Goalpara's Bodo population. Bodos have their unique culture. Bodos should have their own Census category.

– Goalpara District Bodo community memo to Indian Statutory Commission, New Delhi, December 30, 1928

Territorial redistribution, education and appointment facilities, distinct Dhubri Local Board seats, a Bodo regiment, and Legislative Council tribal electorate status should also be implemented. These were Goalpara District Bodo Community's main demands. In regards to distinct electorates, they



claimed that a mixed electorate is not acceptable. Each group should be able to send representatives to the local council. Our unique position prevents us from sending representatives to the council, despite a large voter base. Liberal views suggest we cannot benefit from reforms like other communities. All reform benefits are received by Brahmins, Kshyatriyas, or Sudras notwithstanding our great population. To protect communal interests, a separate representative should be appointed to the council (Memorandum from Goalpara District Bodo community to Indian Statutory Commission, New Delhi, December 30, 1928).

The Bodo movement's second phase was the creation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha (B.S.S.). It leads to linguistic and script migration. B.S.S. was founded at Basugaon on 19 1952 by Joy Bhadra Hagjer as president and Sonaram Thaosen as general secretary. Develop and promote Bodo literature and language is their goal. Their zero-point approach gave the withering Bodo language, literature, language, and public awareness new vitality. The B.S.S. promoted Bodo language researchers and authors through literary seminars and symposia. They wanted to unify all Northeastern Bodo linguistic groups under one umbrella organization. It was decided to create a uniform Bodo language to unify the North-East Bodo tribes and their literary language. This goal inspired other Bodo tribes to form similar bodies and collaborate.

In the Third Phase of the Movement, ethnic clashes between Bodos and Santhals were another unpleasant and dangerous result. The National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) and Birsa Commando Force (B.C.F.) insurgents have been fighting in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts' forests for years. The huge forest land invasion and infiltration of questionable identification into the Bodo communities of these two districts were the major causes of such violence. Santhal armed militant organization Birsa Commando Force (B.C.F.) wanted to create Jharkhand inside the planned Bodoland territory. This agitated Bodos about their identity. In the name of Jharkhand, the BCF supported Adivasis. The demonstration began with robbing, murdering, and threatening Bodo people. It has profoundly impacted the calm and ancient Bodo and Santhal lifestyle. A huge number of armed Bodo teenagers challenged Santhal fanatics, resulting in ethnic rioting between the two groups. Hundreds died in these riots, while many became homeless and lived in refugee camps without cash or power. Bodo People Party split on these topics. The state government formed another temporary B.A.C. Council under Prensing Brahma of the Bodo People Party, who understood Congress.

In these conditions, the formidable All Bodo Student Union (ABSU) rejected the February 20, 1993 Bodoland Accord. The ABSU's principal decision was to revive Bodoland State quest. A conversation was held to unite all political parties under one platform. S.K. Bwiswmutiary headed the BPP group that was disbanded on February 20, 1996, enabling unity. Prensing Brahma led BPP and broke with Hiteswar Saikia's Congress. On March 26, 1996, Prensing Brahma resigned from the Interim Council and dissolved his BPP group when the State Government failed to make any concessions to Bodoland Autonomous Council (B.A.C.). The All Bodo Student Union founded Bodoland Statehood Movement Council with both groups. On April 13, 1998, the ABSU reconstituted the Bodoland People Autonomous Council (BPAC), abolished in 1993 after the Bodo agreement, to lead a popular campaign.

In 1996, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta won the Assam Assembly election and led the AGP. People's Democratic Front (PDF) and another A.G.P/allied party. The All, Bodo Student Union and Bodo People Autonomous Council in the 1993 Bodoland Accord sought the breakup of the Accord when the State Government constituted the Interim Council of B.A.C. under Kanakeswar Narzary. At the



31st annual meeting on February 20, 1999, the ABSU and BPAC proclaimed a new effort to urge the Central Government to grant Bodoland independence. They claimed that only a separate Bodoland could address Bodo problems. On April 9, 1999, the Bodo organization and Assam Government issued a new notification to include 259 villages in the Bodoland Autonomous Council (Assam Tribune, 1998). Despite Bodo objections, the State Assembly enacted the B.A.C. Amendment Bill on May 13, 1999. Although they demanded inclusion in the Bodoland Autonomous Council, the ABSU and BPAC rejected the demarcation for excluding the Sirampur Check post, Bijni, Tangla, and other villages, the Bongaigaon refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (BRPL), and the Manas National Park. Their action created a new clamor for a Separate Bodoland State rather than settling the problem.

After multiple rounds of discussions and debates, the Assam and Indian governments and the B.L.T., ABSU, and BPAC reached the Bodoland Accord to tackle the Bodo concerns. On February 20, 2003, the Centre and B.L.T. signed another agreement to create Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). In addition, B.L.T., ABSU, and BPAC enthusiastically supported this arrangement. But NDFB rejected it. The modified Indian Sixth Schedule of the Constitution created the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

Conclusion: The Bodo movement is an old age grievance, not a sudden event. Early on, the Bodos just desired economic, educational, and social development. This movement was weak then. After Indian Independence, the Bodos understood they needed a distinct homeland and sovereignty to revive their lost identity and beautiful tradition and culture. Therefore, the Bodos joined the Bodoland movement. Since the third decade of the 20th century, powerful Bodo educated emerged. Initially under the tribal league, they battled to safeguard their tribal interests. The Tribal League persevered to create the Line system, tribal belts, and blocks. The Bordoloi Sub-committee to the Constituent Assembly representing Assam disregarded tribal viewpoints and incorporated them into Assamese society. There was no protection for Assam plains tribals under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution.

After six years of agitation, the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) and Asom Gana Sangram Parishad signed the Assam Accord in August 1985. But ABSU vigorously opposed the Accord, calling it anti-tribal. The newly founded Asom Gana Parishad (A.G.P.) led by the Assam Government had harmed Bodo people and provoked the ABSU. In 1987, Upendra Nath Brahma led a major Bodoland independence campaign. Bodo militancy increased during the movement. The Bodo agitators damaged the rails and road communication system that connected the northeast to the rest of the country, drawing national attention. The state was under intense pressure to solve the issues. The Government of India and the Government of Assam's final Bodoland agreement, agreed on February 20, 1993, established a Bodoland Autonomous Council after lengthy talks. It appeared like a comfort to Bodo society, but they soon realized the B.A.C. was pointless. The State Government and Bodo groups failed to agree on B.A.C. limits. ABSU rejected the Accord after failing to meet Bodo aspirations. They demanded Bodoland State, like Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand, which were founded in 2000. After a series of dialogues between the Centre and the B.L.T., including the ABSU, a new Bodo Accord was signed in 2003. The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) administers 3,108 villages in four districts—Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Chirang, and Baksha—under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Conclusion

The Bodos and other indigenous people in Northeast India have experienced cultural absorption due



to a web of political, social, and historical influences. The Bodos are one of the biggest indigenous groups in Assam, and they've managed to adapt to modern times while clinging to their unique culture. An examination of the Bodos' past finds a people that have preserved and passed on a wealth of traditional knowledge and culture. Their integration into Assamese and Indian culture as a whole has been facilitated, at least in part, by colonialism, post-independence governmental initiatives, and the demands of industrialization. Their economic practices, social structures, language, and rituals have all changed as a result of these outside forces. Because of the importance of language in cultural assimilation, the Bodo people's fight to maintain their language in the face of Assamese and English domination has been fundamental to their sense of self. The fight against total absorption has hinged on initiatives to revive the Bodo language via literature and education.

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