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Political Demands and Memorandums of the Bodos and the Emergence of Political Consciousness

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Abstract

Various tribal organisations especially the Bodos, the largest plain tribe of Assam tried to locate the causes for their under development or backwardness in both the pre and post independent scenario and various efforts were made by the emerging leaderships to meet up the issues related to them by time to time. Hence, to develop, uplift or improve their community, some political attempts were made in the form of demands and memorandums by the pioneers of the Bodo community to the ruling elite in the plains of Assam explaining their grievances and demanding the solutions. These memorandums and demands submitted by the Bodos were not merely documents concerning some demands but showed the sign of political awareness of the Bodos. Right from the beginning of the arrival of the British Simon Commission in 1929 in Assam till now, all the memorandums and demands relating to their issues reflected greater socio-political sensitivity among the Bodos which again draws the attention of the other tribal people in the region. On the other hand, these were the efforts in the form of demands and memorandums through which the Bodo organizations tried to uplift and develop their own community.

Key Words: *Plain Tribe, Bodos, Political Demands, Memorandums, Political Consciousness, Interest Articulation.*

Introduction: The early 20th century led to the emergence of various tribal organisations in Assam to locate the causes for their under development or backwardness and various efforts were made by the emerging leaderships to meet up the issues related to them by time to time. Among those various tribes, Chutiyas, Morans and the Kacharis led to the emergence of various tribal organisations among them where Bodo community also started showing signs of political consciousness (Deka, 2009). This growing political consciousness among these tribes was backed by congress mobilization and emergence of caste consciousness like Ahom Sabha, Kaivartta Sanmillan and these were the inspiring sources of their various organisations (Pathak, 2010). These newly emerged tribal organisations out of rising political consciousness were made various attempts to develop and uplift or improve the conditions of the tribes and tried to find out the reasons for tribal backwardness and

consequently, they tried to introduce reforms in social practices and so on (Pathak, 2010). In this regard, the struggling ethnic groups of Brahmaputra Valley especially the Bodos have been appealing to the ruling elite to the solution of their problems and the solutions were evaded to them. But, it is said that when the ruling elite have failed, the masses must rise, and rise before it is too late. Hence, from time to time to develop, uplift or improve their community, some political attempts were made in the form of demands and memorandums by the pioneers of the tribals in the plains of Assam explaining their grievances and demanding the solutions.

These attempts were started among the plain tribes with the submission of the memorandum when the Simon Commission arrived in Assam in 1929 which again shows the presence of strong political consciousness among them (Pathak, 2010). Through these demands starting from the arrival of Simon Commission in 1929, the tribals attempted to redefine their own tradition from constant hegemonic nature of some other traditions and tried to adjust themselves with the colonial modernity. These were regarded as some of first steps towards the construction of distinct tribal identity. Following discussion is an effort for exploration about the presence of tribal awareness in the plains of Assam in the form of political demands and memorandums.

Political Demands and Memorandums of the Bodos and Emergence of Political Consciousness: The arrival of the Simon Commission in 1929 in the land of Assam provided an opportunity to the tribals for the first time to put forward their various grievances and aspiration to the Commission. Various organisations belonging to tribal communities submitted their memorandums to the Royal Commission for the first time regarding their various grievances and aspirations (Pathak, 2010). Among those tribal communities the Bodo Kachari community is one who submitted memorandum to the commission. The commission took into consideration of the memorandum submitted by the Bodo community of Goalpara also and few representatives from the primitive and backward tribes. So far as the Bodo community of Goalpara district is concerned it put forwarded a demand for a second chamber in the Legislative Council to the Commission and urged not to transfer the Goalpara district to Bengal (Mahanta, 2013). The Bodo community of the Goalpara district in a memorandum represented thus:

“The Bodos have a distinct civilisation of their own. There should be separate category “the Bodos” in the Census report.... In our opinion there should not be mixed electorate. Each section of people should have the liberty of sending in their representatives in the local council... So in order to safeguard the interest of our community we should have a separate representative in the Council.” (Sonowal, 2013:100)

The memorandum submitted by the Bodo Kachari community observed that they were depriving from the benefits of the reform and only the upper castes are enjoying the benefits from that (Pathak, 2010). To get rid of those situations, some conscious tribal leaders like Jadav Chandra Khaklari, general secretary of the All Assam Kachari Association demanded

in their memorandum for a system of separate representative in the local council (Mahanta, 2013) and one reserved seat for the Bodo community in the Central Legislature to the Commission in 1929 (Pathak, 2010). The Bodo community felt that education is the key for development and fight against backwardness and exploitation. Therefore, they raised the issue of illiteracy in their memorandum and demanded for special treatment in the fields of education and appointment stating that the Bodo people are being exploited and misled so they are unable to understand the value of reform and cannot save their members of the community from the hands of foreign moneylenders. In that context, the tenth convention of the Assam Bodo Chattra Sanmillan in 1929 stressed on the necessity of education among the community for progress and better utilization of facilities or opportunities under the leadership of Rupnath Brahma, the Sanmillan urged the setting up of educational institutions to fight against illiteracy and other social evils (Proceedings of the 10th Convocation of the Assam Bodo Chattra Sanmillan, 1929, p. 11-12). In this regard, Benudhar Rajkhowa in his Presidential address to the Sanmillan in 1929, appealed for the establishment of schools in each village with the peoples' own initiative and with the help of local administration (Pathak, 2010 & Presidential address to the Assam Kachari Jubok Sanmilani by Benudhar Rajkhowa, 1929, p. 11).

Moreover, in the memorandum, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the leadership of the Assam Kachari Jubok Sanmillan also opposed the classification of the tribal communities in the census report where they were placed as low caste Hindus. They stated in the Memorandum that the tribal as Hindu was misleading by the upper caste Hindu society and even they were not received into their society. The later was very unsympathetic with both their aspirations and ideas. The Bodo Kachari community claimed that they were never a part of the caste based Hindu Assamese society rather they were independent (Pathak, 2010). Therefore, when the Simon Commission was in New Delhi, the Kachari Jubok Sanmillan complained in a memorandum submitted to the Commission on 14th September, 1928 as follows:

“Socially, the tribals are regarded as untouchables. To call them Hindus will be a misnomer in as much the Hindus do not accept them into their society, do not dine with them.....As the students of their community are not allowed to mess together with those of the Hindus, they naturally look for provision of separate messing in all the schools and colleges of Assam” (Kachari Jubok Sanmillani, 1928; Deori, 1941; Phukon, 2014).

As a result, it became clear that the distinctiveness of tribal identity was more visible in the late 1920's especially after the arrival of the Simon Commission in 1929.

In the meantime Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) formed an expert committee on Bodo language and literature in 15-16 November, 1952 to prepare a memorandum which was later submitted to the delegates of Assam Provincial Congress Committee, Dhubri session on 26th December, 1952. The memorandum stressed upon Bodo dialects which was quite different from languages such as Assamese, Bengali etc. The Bodo Kachari people of

Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nagaon, North Kachar and Mikir Hills, Naga Hills, Garo Hills speak Boro dialects; therefore, under that circumstance they demanded a favourable order instruction of Boro dialect as medium of instruction of the students in primary level. Apart from that the memorandum appeals to give necessary aid to promote the Boro language, literature and culture (Atreya, 2007:165). Moreover, they also demanded introduction of Bodo MIL, opening of Bodo department in Dibrugarh and Gauhati University for which submitted memorandums to the university authorities and state government. They also submitted memorandums on the matter of Bodo language and education policies of government, formal recognition of Roman Script for Bodo language and so on to both the state and central authority time to time. Thus, the BSS kept submitting various memorandums and demands to different dignitaries of government authority in different time to consolidate the base of the Bodo language and literature with articulating Bodo aspiration.

The gradual encroachment on the tribal Belts and Blocks led to the deterioration of general economic conditions of the tribals which again led to the gradual increase of the number of landless people among the tribals. In spite of the developmental activities which were taken by the Government could not restrain the deterioration of the economic condition. Apart from that, the stepmother attitude of the ruling caste Hindu Assamese towards the Plain Tribes demoralised the younger generation in particular and the plain tribals in general. In the meantime, the announcement of the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi regarding the reconstruction of Assam on federal basis brought the ray of hope for the plain tribes. They thought that the proposed federal plan is potential enough to fulfil their aspirations. As a reaction of that, immediately after the fourth general election on February, 1967, the tribal leaders and activists from all parts of Kokrajhar district met under the Presidentship of Shri Modaram Brahma and decided to take political initiatives for their purpose with an organised form of Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) (Bhuyan, 1989: 113). Therefore, the PTCA welcomed the reorganisation of Assam on federal basis with the condition of the creation of a federating unit for the plain tribals.

The plains tribals including the Bodos after the formation of the PTCA submitted the first Memorandum to the President of India on 20th May, 1967 on behalf of the plain tribals of Assam. The Memorandum raised the problems of the plain tribes related to their land and language for which they demanded full autonomy for the tribal dominated areas (Chaudhuri, 2004: 64). This autonomy movement of the plain tribes was known as Udayachal Movement with the predominantly plains tribal areas of the northern tract of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar Districts including all the tribal Belts and Blocks of those areas (Datta, 1993) for which they submitted memorandum. With this demand for full autonomy in the memorandum, the plains tribals wanted to...

- i) adequately protect their land;
- ii) give effective check to economic exploitation of tribals by non-tribals;
- iii) conserve their language, culture, customs and what is best in them;

- iv) prevent political domination by non-tribals over tribals and imposition of anything which would disrupt their traditions and customs and;
- v) grow according to their own genius and traditions (Bhuyan, 1989:113-114 & Datta, 1993:139).

By and large, though these were the result of linguistic assimilation of the Bodos with the Assamese language (Choudhury, 2007) but this speculation was proved wrong in the last three decades, especially when Plains Tribal Council of Assam submitted its memorandum to the President of India in 1967 making it clear that the Bodos were neither eager to involve in the assimilation process nor in the process of Assamisation (Choudhury, 2007). The memorandum inter alia, says:

Language spoken by the Bodo group of plain tribes belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group and widely differs from the Assamese language which is one of the modern Indo-Aryan languages. Though few of them speak partly Assamese, most of them speak their mother tongue and village folk, particularly the women folk, do not at all understand the Assamese language” (Choudhury, 2007, PTCA, 1967).

In this regard when the demand of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha for recognition of Bodo language as the medium of instruction was its peak, the PTCA was of the view that only a full political autonomy of the plains tribes could provide safeguard to their language, literature and culture. Therefore the PTCA decided not to participate in the by-elections to the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha Constituency in 1967 and 1968 in support of their demand for full autonomy although it was a political organization. In the eve of these by-elections large number of the PTCA leaders and workers were arrested and detained for sometimes due to their involvement in creating law and order situation in those areas. After coming out from the jail, the PTCA leaders organised a conference in Tezpur on 12th to 14th January, 1969 and demanded “*to ensure peace and better and more efficient administration in the northern tracts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darang and Lakhimpur up to the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal, autonomy has to be granted to the above tracts*” (Mukharjee, 1992). But due to political power hunger and misjudged of the PTCA leaders could not put forward this demand except creating a kind of political excitement among the plain tribals.

When determining the areas of their proposed federating unit, the PTCA demanded the areas where plain tribals are pre-dominant and the population in the voter list of the year 1957 should be the basis. Apart from that which plain tribals areas are not contiguous to the proposed federating unit and hence remain outside the unit should be declared as scheduled areas as well as should be included under the provision of the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution (Bhuyan, 1989:114). In this regard, regarding the prevention of alienation of tribal land to non-tribals, the Dhebar Commission in its recommendation, Para 45 of Chapter II quotes, “.....*We further recommend that the Deputy Commissioner or Collector should have powers suo-moto or at the instance of the aggrieved tribal land holder within a period of 12 years to institute enquiries and restore possession of the land with or without payment of any compensation to the transferee. This provision should be*

made applicable to all transfer of land by tribals to non-tribals with retrospective effect from the 26th January, 1950; adequate machinery should be created to implement this law and regulations; should immediately be given effect to by making suitable laws”(Bhuyan, 1989:114 & Datta, 1993:139-140).

The submitted memorandum said the following words among other things:

“That the Plain Tribals’ Council of Assam considers that it will be a great injustice to the plain tribals of Assam if their genuine grievances, sentiments and viewpoints on the issue of the proposed reorganisation of the state of Assam on federal basis are not given due importance and sympathetic consideration...The Plains Tribals’ Council of Assam deem that full autonomy within the framework of the Indian constitution will alone help the plains tribals grow according to their own genius and tradition. The plains Tribals’ Council of Assam have since long been demanding full autonomy comprising the pre-dominantly tribal inhabited areas of the plains of Assam” (Choudhury, 2013:113).

It is important to note that though the PTCA demanded autonomy in the form of Udayachal, it did not specify the clear vision of that autonomy. It was not a mistake from the part of tribal leaders but a well-planned strategy of them. They were actually not in a position to anticipate the federal plan which was envisaged by the Central government hence they kept the demand flexible for further modification if necessary. Moreover, the PTCA was always ready to keep the door open for negotiation on the issue of their demand for autonomy with the state government (Choudhury, 2013:113). But, due to the constant opposition of the Assamese the plan for reorganisation of Assam on federal basis was stopped by the Central government though the PTCA was continuously in favour of the demand for creation of an autonomous region for the plains tribes in the north bank of the river Brahmaputra and extension of the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution to the tribal areas of the southern bank of the Great River (Bhuyan, 1989:115). When the PTCA decided to join in the Janata Government, 1977 and gave up their demand for separate territory of Udayachal movement made the most of plain tribal leaders disappointed and consequently the PTCA (Progressive) craved out from the PTCA in 1979. The PTCA (P) continued the former demand for a separate territory. To make their movement for separate territory for the plain tribes more effective and fruitful, they submitted first memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 8th July, 1980. In that memorandum the PTCA (P) preferred to name the proposed territory as *“Mishing Bodoland”* instead of their former name i.e., *Udayachal* (Trivedi, ed., 1995:639, Chaudhuri, 2004:64). The memorandum states,

“Assam and the whole north-eastern states are in the state of turmoil out of larger scale lawlessness specially in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam resulting in grim events of assault, looting, arson, murder and abduction.....in between the indigenous people and so called immigrants – the foreign nationals as well as outsiders who claim themselves as minority communities though their number is

about to swamp the indigenous inhabitants and for such reasons and unhappy situations which threaten the very existence of the aboriginal tribes particularly the plains tribes of Assam, the PPTCA / PTCA(P) would like....help in sorting out the problems within the purview of the Indian Constitution as to give protection to every ethnic group.....”(Trivedi, ed., 1995:639).

“.....the PPTCA, in the context of present troubled situation in Assam arising out of the movement for deletion of the names of foreigners from voters’ list, detection and deportation of foreigners from Assam, opines that this complicated issue must be solved through discussion considering the genuine sentiment of the indigenous inhabitants of Assam because of the fact that the number of the people of immigrants and foreign nationals is going to outnumber the population of the indigenous people of Assam, which is the prime cause of fear of being swamped...You are aware of the fact that this population of immigrants and foreign nationals has engulfed the very existence of the Indo-Mongoloid aboriginal tribes of Cachar plains and Tripura.....Likewise all the 33 Tribal Belts and Blocks of Assam have also now come under such engulfment by the so called population of immigrants and foreign nationals and even the practice of settling down in such tribal areas by the immigrants and foreign nationals is going on still.....this substantial population of immigrants and foreign nationals, in the name of minority communities, are creating a chaotic state of affairs in the whole of Assam.....”(Trivedi, ed., 1995:639-640).

Keeping view of these situations the PTCA (P) / PPTCA demanded following things:

1. All the immigrants and foreign nationals who have already settled down in tribal belts and blocks since the creation of these belts and blocks must be evicted as per the Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1986 and also they should be deported from there.
2. Keeping in view of maintaining intact of all the tribal villages of the northern tracts of Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts of Assam as the Government of Assam have already declared under the “Tribal Sub-Plan” relating to tribal development cell as created in 1975, must be declared as the “Tribal Areas” in accordance with the Article 244 (2) of the Indian Constitution for the purpose of creating Autonomous region for the plain tribals of Assam and provision of Inner Line system as enforced in Arunachal Pradesh must be extended to that kind of tribal Autonomous region in the plains.
3. The issue of deletion of names of the foreign nationals from the voter list and detection and deportation of the same from Assam should be done on the basis of peaceful negotiation and discussions.
4. The political settlement must be done on the issues related to plain tribals of Assam (Trivedi, ed., 1995:640-641).

The PTCA(P) again submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India in 1983 as its last memorandum (Chaudhuri,2004:64)stating about their prime issues before it was dissolved in 1984 and United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) was came in to the political scenario of the plains Assam.

Since the inception, the UTNLF had kept submitting memorandum in a number of occasions to the then Prime Minister and the President of India between 1984 and 1986. After the diversion of goals as envisaged by the PTCA and PTCA (P), it was the UTNLF who tried to revive the earlier demand for separate territory for the plains tribes. When the UTNLF submitted its first memorandum to the then Prime Minister Late Indira Gandhi on 2nd May, 1984 it included the demand for a separate Union territory giving another nomenclature as "*Tribal Land*" for the plains tribals of Assam (Datta: 1993:273). Besides that, this first memorandum enshrined the evaluation report titled "*The Working of the Gaon Panchayat Level Co-operative Societies in the Sub-plan Areas*" prepared by the Tribal Research Institute of Assam and also the report titled "*The Study on the Displacement of Tribal Due to the Installation of Major Irrigation Projects: the Case Study of Dhansiri Project in the District of Darrang, Assam*" prepared by the Tribal Research Institute of Assam (Chaudhuri, 2004:65). In the same month and year, Binay Kr. Basumatary, MLA (Chairman) and Kanakeswar Narzary, (Convenor) submitted another memorandum on behalf of the United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front (UTNLF) to the then President of India, Shri Giani Zail Singh on the 29th May, 1984. In the memorandum they sorted out some problems which have been suffering by them since long time. They mentioned that the Scheduled Tribes of Assam have out of reached from justice under Articles 14, 15, 16, 21, 26, 28, 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution. They have also been excluded from the benefits under Fifth and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Again, the Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1986, have also failed to protect the tribal land and areas due to the systematic sabotage of the State government. On the basis of these complexities, the memorandum submitted by the UTNLF includes the demands on a separate state for the Scheduled Tribes in the plains of Assam, creation of Sixth Schedule Areas in the predominantly tribal inhabited areas of Nagaon, Kamrup and Goalpara districts adjoining the Karbi-Anglong district of Assam and the state of Meghalaya (Datta, 1993).

The UTNLF was constantly fighting for a separate homeland for the plains tribals of Assam for which the UTNLF again submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi on 10th July, 1985 and demanded for the creation of a '*Tribal Homeland*' (Datta, 1993: 273) as their central demand. After once submitting the memorandum they did not feel relax but kept submitting reminders time to time to the Central authority.

Therefore, the UTNLF submitted their another memorandum on 25th July, 1986 stating that the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government was on the verge to evict the original inhabitant i.e., the plains tribes from the age old land rights on the pretext of lack of records regarding their land rights. Therefore, they demanded for the direction under Article 339(2) of the Indian Constitution through the memorandum so that their occupied land rights could

be registered as well as protected in all the forest areas in Assam (Singh, 2002:99). Almost same things were included when it submitted another memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 31st July, 1986 in New Delhi by referring all those previous memorandums submitted to him before. The UTNLF very specifically raise the issue of Bodo language as the medium of instruction in educational level and urged an amicable solution for that. Apart from that they raise the issue of employment situation and demanded to eradicate all unnecessary complexities and discriminations regarding employment of tribal youths. They also requested the Prime Minister to issue directives under Article 339 (2) of the Indian Constitution to issue “records of rights” in all forest areas possessed by the plain tribals so that till this is completed, no tribal family should be evicted. Moreover, the UTNLF raised question on the “Memorandum of Settlement dated 15.8.85 between AASU and the Central Government” and blamed it as an effort by the AGP government to interpret the settlement only to suit their chauvinistic and parochial motives in the province. Referring the issue of law and order situation in the state through this memorandum, the UTNLF expressed deep dissatisfaction over this serious and dangerous situation under the aegis of AGP government which is also detrimental to the national unity and prosperity in general and the North-Eastern region in particular. They also upheld the demand for a Union Territory, provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution and also urged to remove area restriction for Scheduled Tribes of Assam from the Hills to Plains and vice-versa (Datta, 1993:200-206).

The UTNLF again submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 10th November, 1987 and 3rd May, 1988 respectively. The former added some new demands such as tribal rest house as the place of shelter for tribals at Paltanbazar, Guwahati, allowing the tribal students to wear their traditional clothing to schools including the previous demands of Union Territory with Legislative Assembly to be named and styled as “TRIBAL LAND” (Datta, 1993:210) where the later memorandum alleged the State Government’s failure to maintain law and order situation in the tribal areas and its policy of anti-tribal attitude.

Another Bodo pioneer organization i.e., the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) from its birth in 1967 has been submitting memorandum in several times regarding various issues of the plains tribes of Assam particularly the Bodos and tried to draw the attention of the central leaders of the Union Government towards the issues. As a part of that, the ABSU on the 9th November, 1972 submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Shilong on the issue of Separate State. They demanded a separate state for the Bodos comprising the Bodo dominated areas of Assam. Regarding this issue, a detailed talk was held by a group of Bodo delegation with the Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi after when they submitted another memorandum to the Prime Minister on the same issue in June, 1980 at New Delhi. In the same year, when the then Home Minister, Giani Zail Singh visited Gauhati, the ABSU leadership took the opportunity to approach the Home Minister regarding their issue of separate statehood. Consequently, it submitted another memorandum to the Home Minister at Jawaharnagar, Guwahati demanding separate homeland under the Indian Union. The ABSU, again, submitted a fresh memorandum in the

year of 1983, i.e., immediately after the turmoil of 1983 Assam Assembly election. This time also the memorandum of the ABSU raised the same issue with the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi (Datta, 1993:273).

The Bodo students' body, ABSU has been constantly keeping the issues of a separate state for the Bodos as their main agenda. Therefore, on 10th July, 1985, ABSU leaders met and submitted memorandum to the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi again, raising the same issue for the plain tribes in the state. The ABSU delegation also met the Home Minister of India S. B. Chavan on the 8th August, 1985 and submitted a separate memorandum where they raised the same issue for the creation of a separate homeland in the form of a separate state. With this memorandum they approached the Home Minister of India regarding another burning issue i.e., the issue of illegal immigration in Assam. They urged the then Home Minister of India to come forward to open the door for the creation of a separate state for the plain tribes in Assam and to take effective action towards the issue of foreign nationals in the state in the shake of protecting the tribal culture and heritages (Datta, 1993:273-274).

The negligence of the central government towards their issues despite the submission of various memorandums in several time, the ABSU leadership never lost their enthusiasm. Rather the kept submitting and approaching the authority towards their issue particularly about the forcible attempt of the then AGP government to Assamizing the tribals which was stated in one of their memorandum as:

“The intention is very clear. The Assamese people and the Assam Government want to Assamise and assimilate the non-Assamese through the imposition of Assamese language and culture. The Assamese people and the Assam Government have not yet realised the mistake with Assamisation and assimilation policy. Still they want to force others to read Assamese and accept their policy of Assamization and assimilation.” (Choudhury, 2007; ABSU, Nov.10, 1987)

Therefore, again on the 22nd January, 1987, the ABSU delegation under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma, the President of ABSU, met the Prime Minister of India Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and submitted the memorandum stating with the upgraded issue for creating separate state with the status of Union Territory in the northern tract of Brahmaputra valley of Assam for the plains tribes. At the same time they also visited to the Home Minister, Mr. Buta Singh on 24th January of the same year where they discussed about the issue in detail with him and put forwarded the demand for separate state with the Union Territory status in the form of a memorandum. With this visit Upendra Nath Brahma led ABSU delegation team took the opportunity to meet the then President of India, Giani Zail Singh at Rashtrapathi Bhavan in the national capital territory on 30th January, 1987 and submitted the memorandum for the same purpose (Datta, 1993:273-274).

Thereafter, the ABSU leadership prepared a 92 points charter of demand in the form of a memorandum and decided to submit to the then Chief Minister of Assam Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta on the 1st January, 1987 at Dispur, the capital of the province. The same 92

points memorandum submitted to the Governor of Assam and Meghalaya respectively on 10th January, 1987 by the ABSU leadership as a part of effort to bring speedy to their cause (Datta, 1993:273-274). This Charter of 92 points of demand was tried to justify with stating that the plain tribes including Bodos had numerous problems relating to social, cultural, economic, language, education, land, employment and so on where identity crisis and question of survival and political insecurity are acute among those. The Charter of demands also reflects the sufferings of the Bodos from discrimination, injustice, insecurity in various spheres of their socio-economic life.

On the basis of these 92 points of demand, the Bodo movement was breakout where 89 out of 92 related to socio-economic issues. Such socio-economic issues are mainly: implementation of Bodo as Associate official language in Kokrajhar district and Udalguri sub-division and its extension in other districts of Assam, establishment of Central University at Kokrajhar, provincialisation of all L.P., M.E. and High Schools in the tribal areas, appointment of bodo medium teachers in schools, regular publication and distribution of Bodo text books, distribution of food and clothing to the tribal students of L.P., M.E. and M.V. schools, establishments of major educational institutions such as Government Medical College, Engineering College, Indian Institute of technology (IIT), Veterinary Science College and Government Ayurvedic College at Kokrajhar, installation of an Agriculture college at Udalguri, to insure protection of the tribal Blocks and Belts and creation of new ones, creation of a separate Directorate for plain tribal education with the provision of separate budgeting, introduction of Bodo MIL subject for post-graduation in Universities and the inclusion of Bodo language into the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution, inclusion of Boro-Kacharis of Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills Autonomous Districts into the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, appointment of lecturers in colleges for teaching Bodo MIL, introduction of Bodo MIL as Honours course in degree level, retention of English language as medium of instruction in colleges and universities of Assam, construction of tribal hostels in various parts of Assam such as at Guwahati, Shilong, Kokrajhar and Tezpur, increase in the reservation of seats for the Scheduled tribes into the admission of educational institutions and Government services and also to fulfil S.T. backlogs, inclusion of Boro language as one of regional languages in U.P.S.C. and other civil service examinations, electrification of villages, proper irrigation facilities to all agricultural lands, adequate health care facilities, construction of road and communication covering remote areas of tribal dominated people, installation of industrialisation, elevation of poverty, supply of pure drinking water in the interior areas, higher recognition and protection of Bodo heritage and culture and protection of tribal lands, detection and deportation of foreign nationals, introduction of Roman Script for Boro language, opposition of forceful imposition of Assamese Language in educational institution, settlement of the boundary dispute between Assam and Nagaland and provide adequate protection to the people living therein, free and compulsory educational facilities for the children up to the age of 14 years and so on. (Mosahari, 2011:48-51 & Sharma, 2014)

So far as these demands are concerned neither the State Government nor the Central Government showed political will to fulfil these demands. Therefore, the Bodos thought that until a separate political arrangement for the Bodos (e.g., Bodoland) it is simply not possible to fulfil these socio-economic issues of the Bodos. As a consequences, they dropped these 89 socio-economic points of issue from the 92 demands of Charter and retained the remaining 3 (three) points of demand which were purely political in nature relating to granting of a separate state and autonomous councils (Sharma, 2014). These three demands were a) Separate state for the Bodos on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, b) Creation of Karbi Anglong Regional Council within the District Autonomous Council for the non-Karbi tribal population and c) Formation of an Autonomous Council for the Bodos on the Southern bank of Brahmaputra (Brahma, Yamao, Zhwlaolao, et al., 2001:IX). Therefore, the ABSU delegation under the leadership of U.N.Brahma moved to the National Capital Territory and submitted a fresh memorandum to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the President of India Giani Jail Singh comprising 25 demands in 22nd and 30th January, 1987 respectively (Mosahari, 2011:51&Datta, 1993:221-237). The main demands of the memorandum are:

- 1) Creation of separate state with the status of union territory for the plains tribals of Assam under the provision of Article 2&3 of the Indian constitution for all round development comprising the areas in the northern valley of the Brahmaputra River and the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan,
- 2) Extension of the provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in the tribal compact areas of the southern valley of the Brahmaputra of Assam and create Autonomous districts for those plain tribals of the southern valley of the Brahmaputra river who will be residing in that part after the creation of a separate state for the plain tribes of the northern valley of the Brahmaputra, Assam,
- 3) Creation of a Regional Council for non-Karbi tribes in Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council as because the non-Karbi tribes from the plains such as the Bodos, Rengmas etc. are not allowed to enjoy the constitutional and political rights as tribals within the said District Council,
- 4) Preservation of tribal belts and blocks from the non-tribal encroachers and creation of new ones to protect the poor landless tribal families,
- 5) Establishment of a central University at Kokrajhar to keep away the tribal students from non-congenial atmosphere at the universities of Gauhati and Dibrugarh. As because the tribal students have to face threats from the chauvinist Assamese aspects therein and also the tribal areas devoid of major educational institutions for higher studies,
- 6) Installation of an Indian Institute of Technology at Kokrajhar for educational boosting and encouragement among the educationally backward tribal youths in the area,
- 7) Retention of English as medium of instruction in the colleges of Gauhati and Dibrugarh University as because the Bodo students coming from Bodo medium at secondary stages getting difficult to access education with the implementation of Assamese as a sole medium of instruction except a few colleges,

- 8) A Central Museum at Kokrajhar should be installed to preserve historical evidences, cultural monuments, sculptures, symbols and other significant evidences of the Bodos and other indigenous communities of the North-East India,
- 9) Installation of All India Radio (A.I.R.) station at Kokrajhar to give wide coverage to all kinds of colourful Bodo and local programmes,
- 10) Doordarshan Kendras at Udalguri and Kokrajhar to telecast Bodo programmes and news,
- 11) Revival of Balajan airport at Kokrajhar for linking with New Delhi and other parts of the country avoiding bottleneck transportation,
- 12) Increment of scheduled tribe reserved quota in government services (up to 40% in the state) keeping in notice of the rise of unemployed educated Bodo youths and fulfilment of its backlog in no delay,
- 13) Recognition and implementation of Bodo as one of the regional language subjects in U.P.S.C. and other civil services examinations because the Bodo medium candidates have to face a lot of difficulty in the examination while offering the regional language paper like Assamese,
- 14) Inclusion of Bodo in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution on the ground that this language is spoken by over a forty lakh people and have a standard Bodo dictionary as well. Moreover, it is recognised as an Associate Official Language of Assam and as a medium of instruction up to secondary stage.
- 15) Extension of special provision for tribals in the Indian Constitution from 1990 to indefinite period until and unless the tribals are fully developed as because they are lagging far behind in the fields of education, economy, jobs, culture and so on.
- 16) Eradication of poverty for which the Central Government is urged to adopt some constructive policies to eradicate the acute problem among the Bodos,
- 17) Free and compulsory education for children up to fourteen years of age which is ensured by the Article no. 45 of the Indian Constitution needs to be implemented with due stress.
- 18) Opposition to clause no. 6 of Assam Accord which is quite undemocratic, unconstitutional and against the tribals in general and the Bodos in particular. Under this clause, the Assamese language is imposed upon the non-Assamese indigenous people of Assam as a part of Assamisation and assimilation policy of the provincial government,
- 19) Opposition to clause no. 10 of Assam Accord and eviction operation from the forests of Assam where thousands of poor landless people living in but to give permanent settlement to them and in this regard the Central Government needs to direct the State Government to do the same,
- 20) Opposition to Four Language Formula because nowhere in any other states of India this Formula is being implemented. The Bodo medium students will read in their mother tongue i.e., Bodo, the international language i.e., English and the national language i.e., Hindi but they cannot take extra burden of the forth language.

Therefore, the ABSU urged the Central Government to put pressure on the State Government not to introduce that kind of undemocratic move,

- 21) Revocation of Assamese from the pre-condition in state services. It means the state government laid down the pre-condition of knowledge in Assamese language for the recruitment in the state services which proves as discriminatory and unconstitutional for the Bodo medium students.
- 22) Extension of Bodo as an associate official language in other districts of Assam so that all Bodo speaking people and the Bodo medium students from all parts of the State cannot be deprived from their legitimate right,
- 23) Opposition to AASU's demand for Constitutional amendments in regard to the article no. 3, 30 and 347 of the Indian Constitution as because ASSU did not want to apply these provisions in case of Assam. The ABSU, therefore, strongly urged upon the Central Government not to respond this kind of chauvinist pressure,
- 24) Stoppage of political assassination and extremism in Assam and also demanded to bring peace and solidarity in the region and
- 25) Stoppage of brutal police atrocities upon the Bodo students and youths (Mosahari, 2011:53-65).

The main motive of the ABSU behind the demand for a separate state of Bodoland is to regain their lost position. When they realised that it is very difficult to convince the authority to make a separate arrangement for the Bodos, they adopted some violent methods to terrorise the people and administration. They demanded for such a separate political arrangement for another some following reasons:

- 1) To ascertain self-rule for themselves.
- 2) To combat illegal habitation in their area.
- 3) To enjoy larger share of developmental planned expenditure like in the case of Nagas, Mizos in Nagaland and Mizoram respectively and so on.
- 4) To detect the illegal immigrants from their land either lawfully or by force.
- 5) To control exploitation of the community in various fields like social, economic, political and cultural by the other privileged sections of the society.
- 6) To ensure constitutional benefits and control the problem of unemployment and poverty (Sarma, 1997, p.281-282).

For such demands, the ABSU constantly keep submitting their demands in the form of memorandum to the established authority with other methods of struggle and it was quite successful to mobilize the Bodo people.

Thereafter, ABSU demanded "Divide Assam Fifty Fifty" in August, 1987. It is a 53 (fifty three) questions answers demand which was passed in the Central Executive meeting held at ABSU head quarter, Kokrajhar on 23rd August, 1987. The argument of ABSU behind the demand of "Divide Assam Fifty-Fifty" is that "*Assam must be divided fifty-fifty between the tribals and non-tribals. The present area of Assam is 78,523 sq. km. Half of it becomes 39,261.3 sq.km. Tribals are getting 25,478.1 sq. km. as Union Territory plus 15,222 sq.km.*

for Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills Autonomous State (though within Assam) totalling 40,700.1 sq.km. together which is slightly more than fifty percent. Non-tribals will get 37,822.9 sq.km. in the rest of Assam” (ABSU, 1987). The meaning of this demand of ABSU is that the half of Assam is for the Assamese and other non-tribals and the other half is for the tribals but in reality this demand was only a kind of elusive and had no genuine intention but to foil the demand.

In the beginning of the New Year i.e., on 4th January, 1988, the ABSU organised a mass rally at Kokrajhar district where more than one lakh people gathered and same rallies were organised by various ABSU committees in the Headquarters of the districts of the state demanding for creation of a Union territory for the Bodos and other plain tribes. These rallies showed its effectiveness and strength for which the then President Ramswami Venkataraman invited the ABSU leadership to discuss about their demands. As a result the ABSU delegation team headed by its President Upendra Nath Brahma went to New Delhi to meet the President of India (Mosahari, 2011, p. 74-75). As a result they met the President on January 18, 1988 with a memorandum demanding the creation of a Union Territory both for the Bodos and other tribals living in the Northern part of the river Brahmaputra of Assam, creation of District Councils for tribal dominated areas of the Southern part of the river Brahmaputra with the inclusion of the Bodos in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. In this meet, the ABSU leadership urged the President of India to draw an attractive attention in order to solve the Bodo issues. They also equally stressed to keep the issue before the Constitutional Head of the State about the nature of the Assam Government and its anti-tribal character for which it becomes difficult to survive for the tribals with their proud heritage. Again, they made it clear that it is better to die than to live under a kind of nasty, repressive and domineering rule of the provincial government (Mosahari, 2011, p.74-75). After hearing about the grievances of the ABSU leaders and allegations made by them against the existing provincial government at that time, the President of India acknowledged the genuine grievances of the tribals living in Assam and also agreed upon the creation of a Union Territory for the plain tribals of Assam stressing on principle. Apart from that, the President also assured the leaders to approach the Union government regarding their grievances to take necessary steps but it was also made clear that it is up to the Union government to take fruitful measure to solve these last long grievances of the tribals. Then the ABSU leaders met the Prime Minister of India on the very next day i.e., the 19th January, 1988 and submitted another memorandum concerning the same grievances related to Bodo issues and urged him to hold a talk with them. Thereafter, they approached Mr. Chintamani Panigrahi, the then Union State Home Minister, about their issues and formally submitted a copy of memorandum related to their demand of creating a Union Territory. As a result, the Minister proposed to setup an Autonomous Council in the line of Union Territories but the ABSU leaders denied and kept urging not less than on the demand of creating of a Union Territory for the plain tribals without which their survival would hardly be possible in the Province. (Mosahari, 2011, p.75)

It needs to mention here that on what circumstances the Bodo leaderships were being depressed with the effort made by the caste Hindu Assamese and make them a part of the 'larger Assamese nationality' irrespective of their distinct identity likewise, other plains tribal communities of the Brahmaputra valley also started to feel fear being a part of the 'larger Bodo nationality' where Bodos constitute a larger part. This was justified when the ABSU published the map of proposed Bodoland making Mishong areas as one of parts of the Bodoland. Moreover, the changing nomenclature of the proposed homeland from 'Udayachal' to 'Mishong Bodoland' and finally to 'Bodoland' showed the clear indication of the dominance of the larger plain tribe i.e., the Bodos. Again, the ABSU literature and the Bodo leadership were quite silent on the separate ethnic identity of the smaller groups of tribes like, the Rabhas, Mishongs and Tiwas though they constitute the greater Bodo group. Even the 92 points charter of demand of the ABSU which is the basis of the Bodo movement and among those as many as 27 points related to the Bodo language and culture. None of the points of the above mentioned charter represents the culture and language of the other plain tribes specially the two communities viz., the Rabhas and Mishongs.

Apart from these issues, there are some other important demands which found the place in those memorandums put forwarded by the ABSU delegation teams in various times. Among those issues, creation of District Councils under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in the tribal dominated areas of the south bank of the Brahmaputra river of Assam, inclusion of the Bodo-Kacharis of Karbi-Anglong into the same provision of the Indian Constitution and issue of illegal immigration into their areas were important. The leaderships uttered through memorandum putting demands to the Central as well as provincial government (Datta, 1993:273-274).

This kind of sense of separate ideology of the Bodo leadership had grown when the deep sense of alienation in relation to the Assamese society was developed and when they were being treated as peripheral part of the Assamese society. In this regard, the continuous negligence and indifference attitude of the Assamese elite class towards the cultural heritage and socio-economic condition of the tribals also pushed them to develop a hostile kind of situation with the Assamese. Again the caste stratification of the caste Hindu Assamese society, treatment of the tribal culture as inferior to the so called Assamese culture and compelled them to merge with the Assamese way of life and Assamese language strengthened their sense of separate ideology. Therefore, the Bodos developed a distinct kind of nationality differed from the Assamese one. In this context an ABSU memorandum on 10th November, 1987 states, "*The problems of the Bodos and other plains tribes are nothing but a nationality issue. The Bodos have a genuine aspiration to establish a distinct Bodo nationality and to get recognised in the world as being civilised and advanced. Without a separate state this is not possible*" (ABSU: 10th November, 1987:59 & Sharma, 2014:110). It also claimed that the Assamese are not the original masters and they do not have the moral authority to dominate tribal people as because they came in as immigrants during the Ahom regime. Hence it clarifies as "*The outsider Assamese has unjustifiably overthrown the original masters, the Kacharis*" (ABSU: 10th November, 1987:9-10 &

Sharma, 2014:111). While defining Assamese identity, the ABSU said in the memorandum of 10th November, 1987 *“the Assamese language and community are nothing but only artificially defined language and community... but surprisingly and cleverly this artificial Assamese community has captured Assam and its administration and now dominating (over) the once master ruler of Assam the Kacharis the Bodos”*(ibid). The ABSU alleged that it was one kind of conspiracy of the caste Hindu Assamese to assimilate the Bodos with the greater Assamese fold.

The formation of the Bodo People’s Action Committee (BPAC) on November 8, 1988 by the effort of the ABSU leadership specially to make the Bodoland agitation successful working parallel with the ABSU. Therefore, the BPAC also raised the issue of a separate Bodoland with the ABSU. As an effort from the part of BPAC, it raised the issue of a separate state for the Bodos in Assam submitting a memorandum to the Union Home Minister of India, Buta Singh on the 13th February, 1989 in New Delhi. During this visit to the National Capital Territory, they also met the then President of India, Venkata Raman, Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi and the State Home Minister of India, Santosh Mohan Deb and also submitted separate memorandums to each one over the same issue. This sixteen member delegation team under the banner ship of the BPAC led by its Chairman Karendra Basumatary discussed the matter for the demand of a separate Bodoland with the central leaders during that visit. Rather, they tried to convince the Union Government in regard to meet their demand for a separate state with these memorandums. They also approached the Union leaders about the dominance of the state government as well as of the non-Bodo majority group of people and urged them to solve the issue peacefully and save the Bodo people and their culture immediately from the danger situation of dominance and deprivation (Mosahari, 2011:97).

Exactly one month later i.e., on the 14th March, 1989, the second time thirteen member delegation team led by the Chairman Karendra Basumatary representing the BPAC went to New Delhi with a memorandum related to their issues. The delegation team got difficulty to meet the ministers concerned as because they were busy and could not find any time for the team to discuss the issue. Again due to some monetary problems, the three members (viz., Karendra Basumatary, Sansuma Khungur Bwismuthiary and Subungsa Mosahary) of the delegation team decided to stay at New Delhi to make necessary arrangement for their issue with the ministers concerned and others had to come back home. After some times, the remaining three members of the delegation team of the BPAC were successful to meet the President of India, R. Venkata Ramanin Rastrapathi Bhavan, the Union Home minister of India, Buta Singh, whom they submitted memorandums regarding the Bodo issue. They also discussed the issue of demand for separate state for Bodoland again and several issues related to the plains tribes particularly the Bodo community (Mosahari, 2011:100-101).

During that visit, the Bodo delegation team also raised the issue of Human Rights violation in the Bodo dominated areas by the AGP led provincial government and approached the human rights organisations like International Amnesty and urged them to visit the areas and investigate the situation of the Bodos. Apart from that they also met some

national level journalists and pressmen to reflect the situation at the national level about the Assam Government's dictatorial rule through police atrocities and violation of human and civil rights of the Bodo people in the violent areas (ibid:101).

Besides, the delegation team also tried to take up the issue of demands in the floor of parliament after having separate discussions with different members of Parliament (MP's) like Santaram Nayak, M.P. (Goa), Piyush Tiriki, M.P. (West Bengal), Ram Abadhi Singh, M.P. (Lokdal), Chittaranjan Basu, M.P. (Forward Block) and Lal Krishna Adbani, M.P. (Bharatiya Janata Party) (ibid:101). Therefore, the delegation team was successful by and large and especially by persuading the national level leaders to put questions in both the Houses of the Parliament of India. Therefore, the fruitful effect was seen over the Bodo issue as because various political and non-political organisations came forward and raised voices to solve the Bodo problem through peaceful settlement between the Central Government, State Government and the Bodos as soon as possible. Moreover, in order to draw more attention of the Central Government towards the Bodo issue, the ABSU and the BPAC declared a 100 hour Assam bandh on 14th August, 1989 but this bandh was called off following the Central Government's calling a Tripartite Talk for the first time on Bodo issue in the National Capital, Delhi. Accordingly the talk was held on 28th August, 1989 among the Centre, the State and the representatives of the ABSU-BPAC under the Presidentship of Mrs. Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee. In this tripartite talk backed by the Centre, the representatives of the ABSU-BPAC demanded for the inclusion of the Bodos in Karbi Anglong in the category of Scheduled Tribes (Hills) and creation of a strong Autonomous Council on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River. During this talk the ABSU-BPAC representatives had to face a strong debate with the representatives of the State Government and no consensus was reached. Consequently, several rounds of tripartite talk were held up to the month of September, 1990. But in the meantime, ABSU-BPAC arranged demonstrations at New Delhi where thousands of people took part to raise the demand of separate state and urged the Central Government to solve the Bodoland issue within a short period of time. (Brahma, et al. 2001)

When the Bodo movement gradually sharpened, it started to draw the attention of the Centre. Therefore, in the early 1990's the Central government felt urgency of the Bodo issue to be solved in a peaceful manner. As a result, the Central government decided to appoint a three member expert committee on 25th January, 1991 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Bhupinder Singh while Dr. K.S. Singh and Padmashree A.M. Gokhale were the other members of that Committee. This Bhupinder Singh Committee was appointed to study the Bodo issue and to make suggestions for determining the areas of the Bodos and plain tribes of the north of the Brahmaputra valley. It was also expected to make necessary recommendations regarding the legislative, administrative and financial powers for the proposed Autonomous Council for the Bodos. But the ABSU-BPAC was not comfortable with the Bhupinder Singh Committee report concerning its suggestions and recommendations, as it was failed to bring a well-accepted formula for solving the Bodo aspiration. Thereafter, the P.V. Narashimha Rao Government on January, 1992, resumed

the tripartite talk on the Bodo issue realising the gravity of the situation in the Bodo dominated areas. Likewise, the BAC Accord was signed in 1993 and the ABSU-BPAC leaders accepted the same. Despite that the Bodos started to feel about their autonomy as puppet autonomy as because not the maximum autonomy was given in the memorandum of settlement (Dutta, 1994 & Barpujari, 1998: 99-100). Though it is an Act, the BAC Bill conferred no power of legislation, neither of an autonomous state nor even a district council to the Bodo leadership. Rather the Bill even reduced the BAC lower than Gaon Panchayat (Barpujari, 1998: 99-100). Again it was very difficult to demarcate the jurisdiction of the BAC area for which the delimitation of the constituencies was not possible though the then Home Minister desired to hold the election to the BAC. Expressing dissatisfaction over all these hindrances of the BAC, an articulate Boro said, *"We sacrificed our demand for a separate state to pave the way for BAC, but the government have not given anything in return"* (The Statesman, 13 July, 1995 & Barpujari, 1998: 99-100). In this context, the newly emerged Boro People's Party (BPP) under the Chairmanship of S.K. Bwismutiary found no option but to take a crucial decision regarding re-launching the agitation for achieving a full-fledged State for the Bodos. As a part of this agitation a four member delegation team led by the President of BPP, S.K. Bwismutiary submitted a memorandum to the prime Minister of India on 27th August, 1995 on the issue of a full-fledged autonomous state for the Bodoland. With this memorandum, the BPP put forwarded the demand to the Central Government of India for a fresh dialogue on their genuine hopes and aspirations. It was also reflected in the memorandum that the Bodo leadership did not wanted to keep any link with the province of Assam and their proposed separate state will be created comprising the areas from the river Sankosh to Sadiya on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, creation of Nilachal autonomous district in the south of the Brahmaputra river and also demanded the inclusion of the Boro-Kacharis of the Karbi-Anglong in the list of scheduled Tribes (Hills) / ST(H) (Barpujari, 1998: 99-100). The ABSU also in its 28th Annual Conference held from 3rd to 5th March, 1996 adopted a resolution to denounce the BAC Accord and to resume Bodo movement for separate state. In this period of political turmoil, the BLT, a Bodo extremist organisation was formed in 1996 to conform the demand of separate state like the ABSU but in a violent way within the territory of the Indian state. This violent move of the BLT made the situation more complex. On the other hand, the ABSU submitted another memorandum to the Prime Minister of India Mr. H.D. Dev Gowda, for a separate state when he visited Assam on 25th October, 1996 (Brahma, et al., 2001). It was BLT who finally became successful to persuade the Central Government through their demands to sign over the agreement with the BLT leaders and the State Government after 10 years of BAC i.e., on 10th February, 2003 in the form of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Conclusion: The above mentioned memorandums and demands submitted by the largest plain tribe of Assam i.e., the Bodos were not merely documents concerning some demands but showed the sign of political awareness of the Bodos. Right from the beginning of the arrival of the British Simon Commission in 1929 in Assam till now, all the memorandums and demands relating to their issues reflected greater socio-political sensitivity among the

Bodos which again draws the attention of the other tribal people in the region. Besides that these demands and memorandums placed issues related to them before the authorities reasonably and the background of those demands and memorandums was created as a result of constant exploitation, deprivation and forceful imposition of something by the dominant community. On the other hand, these were the efforts in the form of demands and memorandums through which the Bodo organizations tried to uplift and develop their own community. Apart from that, all these efforts made by the demands and memorandums are largely successful to mobilize the masses through an organized Bodo movement to a greater height of political sense to achieve their aspirations as a distinct community.

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