

Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Prospects and Challenges.

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Abstract

The third Bodo Accord was named as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The Bodo peace Agreement signed on 27th January, 2020 in New Delhi. It was signed in the presence of Hon'ble Union Home Minister of India, Shri Amit Shah, Chief Minister of Assam, All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), Various factions of National Democratic Front of Assam (NDFB) and United Bodo People's Organization (UBPO).

The Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) Bill was introduced and passed in the Assam Legislative Assembly on 5th April, 1993 and the Bill was enacted as the Bodoland Autonomous Council Act, on 10th December, 1993. But the BAC Accord of 1993 failed to satisfy the Bodo leaders. A mass movement organized under the leadership of the ABSU and the BPAC which turned into violent one. After six years of such violent movement of the ABSU and BPAC, Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) an insurgent group was formed by a section of Bodo youths to launch the movement more in a vigorous way to fulfill the demand for a separate Bodoland. The BLT was formed on 18th June, 1996 at Alaikhungri village at Kokrajhar with Prem Singh Brahma as the Chairman and Harkhab Basumatary alias Swmrat Basumatary as its General Secretary. Later on, Hagrama Mohilary, alias Thebla and Derhasad Basumatary became the Chairman and General Secretary of the BLT.

The BLT under the leadership of Hagrama Basumatary surrendered arms along with 2,641 BLT cadres at a public ceremony organized on 6th December, 2003 at Kokrajhar Districts Sports Association field with a view to join in the main stream politics of the region. The insurgent leaders gave up the BLT flag and unfurled the white flag as a symbol of peace. Hagrama Mohilary and his colleagues accepted the BTC and officially the BTC was formed on 7th December, 2003 and Hagrama Mohilary was sworn in as the Chief of the BTC a swearing in ceremony on 7th December, 2003 in presence of the then Home Minister of India, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani as per the Memorandum of Settlement (MOS) signed on 10th February, 2003. Twelve members Interim Executive Council of the BTC was formed at Kokrajhar. As per the MOS, the BTC would try to fulfill the socio-economic, political, cultural, educational, language and ethnic identity of the Bodos with the infrastructural development of the BTC for early implementation of the developmental aspects under the BTC area. The BTC will consist of 40 elected members and 6 nominated members while 30 seats would be reserved for the Tribal and 5 seats for the Non-Tribal and other 5 seats would remain open for all.

KeyWords: Bodos, BTC, infrastructure, problem.

INTRODUCTION:

Prior to the independence of India the Bodos started their movement separate identity for under the aegis of the Tribal Sangha which was formed in 1917. The aims and objectives of the Tribal Sangha were academic & philanthropic. The founder of the Tribal Sangha was Swami Pranavananda and the Headquarter of the Tribal Sangha was Kolkata. The Tribal Sangha came into existence for the development of the Tribal including the Bodos. The Political consciousness came to the Bodos in the early part of 20th century. They demanded for a separate electorate before the Simon Commission; needs and problems of the Tribal people of Assam, reservation of seats, etc Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) has played an important role in the Bodoland Movement. It reflects the evolution, development, devolution, history, customs, faith, heritage, culture of the Bodos. All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) played important role in the Bodoland Movement. ABSU (Central ABSU) was formed on 15th February, 1968 at Kokrajhar Tribal Rest House. In 1986, Upendra Nath Brahma, popularly known as the "Bodofa" (father of Bodos) became the 8th President of the ABSU. On 1st January, 1987 the ABSU under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma submitted a 92-point Charter of demands to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: The research questions have been formulated in consistent with the objectives of the study:

1. What were the prospectus of BTR.
2. What were the challenges of Bodo people in BTR.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY: The study has been conducted on the basis of the following objectives:

1. To study the prospectus of BTR.
2. To study the challenges of Bodo people in BTR.

METHODOLOGY:

The study has been conducted based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data have been collected from the field study, Constitution and programmed of the BPPF & BPF, elections manifestos of the BPF & BPPF, office documents of the Government of Assam and the BTC. I have used the memoranda of the different political parties, Charter of demands, and the various provisions of the MOS, etc. Interview has been conducted to the former and present leaders of the Bodoland Movement. A total of 240 sample respondents have been selected purposively through sample random sampling method and interviewed them with the help of interview schedules - one for the leaders and other for the Bodo people. Out of 240 sample respondents 40 were the leaders while 200 were the Bodo people whom I have interviewed.

This study has been confined within the BTAD areas and the leaders of the Bodoland Movement. Interview method, sampling method and field study method have been used for collection of data.

Secondary sources of data have been collected from published books, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers etc. The descriptive method, analytical method and empirical method have been used for analyzing and interpretation of data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Education of leaders:

The educational system of any society is a part of the total system. It is inseparably related to older sub- system, such as family, religion, economy and polity etc. The educational attainment of a person virtually, relates to more family background, in a stratification structure of the society. Thus keeping in view, 'Educability' is by and large determined by one's position in the stratification system in all societies in lower and higher degrees. Education has always been concerned with the class, status, income and occupational structure etc. Education is appropriate for the politicians; modern politics demand a responsible understanding of the issue and events concerning to local, regional and global dimension.

Though during the colonial period western education was introduced in India, the restricted the scope of education was introduced to the masses fearing the formation of politically conscious educated middle class. Indian Constitution does not lay down any educational qualification for individual who can contest the assembly or the parliamentary elections except that of any eligible voter who attains the 25 years of age can contest elections. Initially it was feared that a large number of illiterates would enter the legislature or the party leadership. In the Constitution Assembly, several members wanted to lay down some minimum educational qualifications for the party leaders or legislators. But the Assembly

did not accept this suggestion in the view of the principle of Universal Adult Franchise and hoped that the educated candidates would be selected by the political parties concerned.

As a result, illiterate and even the literates below Metric standard have equal rights to fight elections or for a leadership. In reality and very significantly by and large, only reasonably educated people have entered in party and fight election as a party leaders.

An attempt has been made here to study the educational background of the leaders as a sample study in order to understand the educational status. The educational qualifications of the sample leaders are given in the following table.

Table: 1
Break-up of educational qualification of the sample respondents (leaders)

Educational Qualifications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to X Std.	2	5
HSLC	8	20
HS	9	22.5
BA/B.SC/B.COM/LLB	20	50
M.A	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Source: Data collected from the field study.

From the table (1) it is revealed the level of education of the sample respondents of leaders. Out of the 40 leaders interviewed, 2(5%) were up to X Std, 8(20%) HSLC, H.S passed 9(22.5%), B.A. 20(50%) and M.A. passed 1(2.5%) according to field survey report. Graduate leaders were the highest percentage among the sample respondents found during the field study.

Education of the Bodo people:

The educational system of any society is a part of the total system. It is inseparable related to older sub-system, such as family, religion, economy and polity etc.

Though during the colonial period western education was introduced in India, it restricted the scope of education introduced to masses fearing the formation of politically conscious educated middle class.

The education is a vehicle of transferring the knowledge of a society from one generation to the other. The BTC area was one of the backward areas in the field of education. It has low percentage in literacy in comparison to other area of the State. But after the formation of the BTC the educational system was improved in the BTAD area. The BTC has taken a keen interest in the process of

development of educational system in the BTAD area. For development of educational system in the BTAD area, the Educational Department under the BTC, there are 4 sub-sectors which has been divided for administration and development of education, such as- Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Higher/ University Education and Educational Training Institutes. There were various qualifications found among the respondents. During the field study the education of the respondents were found to be pursuing and could be sub-sectors as illiterate, Non-matric, matric, H.S. passed, Graduate, M.A, and others.

Table: 2

Distribution of respondent opinion regarding educational qualifications of Bodo people:

Qualifications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	05	2.5
Non-matric	12	6
Matric	69	34.5
H.S. passed	49	24.5
Graduate	29	14.5
M.A	17	8.5
Others	19	9.5
Total	200	100

Source: Data collected from the field study.

Education is the most essential attribute of any developed society. As regards the educational qualification of the Bodo people in the BTC, as shown in table (2) during field study it is revealed that 05 (2.5%) were illiterates, non -Matric were 12(6%), 69(34.5%) were Matriculates, 49(24.5%) were H.S. passed, 29(14.5%) were graduates, 17(8.5%) were Post Graduate and others were 19(9.5%) according to field survey report. Matric passed people were the highest percentage among the sample respondents found during the field study.

3.7.2. Main occupation of the Bodo people:

The stratification of the society is largely based on occupation. In the BTAD, one may have two or three occupations at a time.

Table: 3

Distribution of respondent opinion regarding households engaged in different occupations:

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
State Govt. employees	35	17.5%
Central Govt. employees	15	7.5%
Private employees	20	10%
Teachers	22	11%
Labourers	28	14%
Cultivators	65	32.5%
Lawyers	10	5%
Others	5	2.5%
Total	200	100

Source : Data collected from the field study.

BTAD is basically an agricultural based area. Industrialization is very slow and backward. There are various occupations found among the respondents. During the study the occupation of the respondents data were found and could be categorized as State Government employees, Central Government employees, Private employees, teachers, labours, cultivators, lawyers and others. As regard the households engaged in different occupations of the sample respondents as shown in the table (3) it is revealed that out of 200 respondents 35 (17.5%) were the State Government employees, 15(7.5%) were the Central Government employees, 20(10%) were private employees, 22(11%) were teachers, 28(14%) were labourers, 65(32.5%) were cultivators, 10(5%) lawyers, and 5(2.5%) engaged in others occupations according to field survey report. So it is found that most of the people have come from different occupations and economic background

IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS INCLUDED IN BTR ACCORD: For all round development of BTR the BTR Government adopted some schemes for the welfare of BTR people. These are as follows.

- 1.To establish Upendra Nath Brahma Central University at Barama in Baksa District.
- 2.To establish National Sports University in BTR.
3. Formation of Sports Authority of India centers at Udalguri, Baksa and Chirang District.

4. Formation of Hotel and Tourism Management Institute in BTR.
5. Formation of additional Navodaya Vidyalaya in each district of BTAD for development of educational scenario.
6. Organic University at Rowta.
7. For development of culture, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Memorial multi-purpose Cultural Auditorium will be formed.
8. Provincialisation of College of Music and Fine Arts at Kokrajhar.

From the above discussion it was clear that there were some objectives of BTR Accord such as to promote and protect social, cultural, linguistic and ethnic identities of Bodos, to ensure accelerated development of tribal areas, to rehabilitate members of NDFB factions. If all the objectives will be full filled then there will all round developments of BTR. Thus the study can be summed up that the Bodos in general and various socio-cultural and political organizations are in favour of the creation of a separate Bodoland state which of them protection and preservation of their identity, culture and tradition would be in a far reaching aspirations and expectations of the Bodo people

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