

ROLE OF BODO SOCIO-POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS TO UPLIFT THE SOCIETY IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

During the century Organizations or any socio- political Association were the backbones of the backward society. The Associations are need to take responsibilities to uplift the people in the society. The people of the society are also dependent on the organizations. Like so, at that period deferent Socio- political Associations/Somajari rajkhantiyari Afad came into existent in the backward Bodo society along with other organizations by the initiative of personalities and the students. Backward Bodos were unconscious regarding in deferent angels Impact of that, Bodos became gloomy /Khwmshi and downfall in their existence. They never be stand with other conscios enamouring people Because of that, the socio- political Associations took responsibility and role in the time situations through their aim & objectives to abolish and backwardness of Bodos for upgrading the people as well as society .After taking the role the Associations Bodo people became conscios towards the education, economic, culture as well as political for their existence in the society.

KEYWORDS: *Somajari rajkhantiyari Afad, Khwmshi*

INTRODUCTION:

During the early phase of 20th century the Bodo were not only backward in education, economic and culture but also backward in the sides of socio- political too. Due to these reasons Bodos did not come ahead. They could not stand in common platform with the others. Impact of that, Bodos has faced with exploitation, unsociability along with constitutionally neglected atmosphere in the society. So that, due to the political weakness and backwardness Bodos were deprived from the Govt. allowed facilities and also were deprived from the constitutional rights. At the time, Bodo did not get opportunity to establish their own language, literature, culture and self identification as an Indian nationality or citizen of India.

As a result, during this time some mentionable socio-political association came into existence in the society under the guidance of some spiritual Bodo personalities and social workers who actively took role through the Association to establish the sound and healthy society in India by abolishing socio-political problems of the Bodos. In this regard, luckily *Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, Rupnath Brahma* came in the society and actively participated to reform the socio- political problems of the Bodo through creating the socio- political Association¹ one after another .The associations are-

¹ Brahma, Brajengra Kr. *Saosabpanai Gwdan Swdwmsri*. Kokrajhar: Pioneer Printers, 2015. pp.23-24

2.3.1 Habraghat Boro Sanmilani

The *Habraghat Boro Sanmilani* is the first organisation and also a first popular socio-political organisation of the Bodos. This organisation has come into existence in 1912 in the Bodos of southern bank of Brahmaputra valley. In the nick of time, within the living Bodo of the south bank of Brahmaputra valley created the Association by the courageous students and social workers of the area. The prominent leader of the area was Ganga Charan Kochary and Narapati Chandra Kochary who were the active mentionable workers of the Sanmilani², with active participation of them the Habraghat Boro Sanmilani has come into born in 1912. The other co-leaders of the Association were - Kamala Kt. Kochary, Makharam Kochary, Aniram Boro, Shib Charan Kochary and Hari Chandra Kochary. *The aims & objective of this organisation was, facing with the socio-political of the Bodo of the areas and by society the socio-political crisis to highlight and to make up rising of social system and to their politically conscious among the Bodos. Another aim was unit the Bodo people and reforms the milieu Bodo society through the literature.*

During the time, the customary laws of the Bodos were becoming looser in their domestic life. Beside, due to impact of other rich customary law, the customary laws of the Bodos became milieu and assimilated with other customary laws. The originality of the customary laws of the Bodos becomes looser due to impact of it. Bodos were try to use the other customary laws and also tried to convert into other society in enamouring cast. Due to impact of it the customary laws became instable; the rules of the social system were becoming looser and weak day by day in their social life. In the mean time, in respect of the crucial situation of the Bodos, *the Habraghat Boro Sanmilani came into existence in the Bodo living area of south bank Brahmaputra valley to take step and measure of the ongoing problems of the society.*

So, the courageous workers of the organisation were actively involved and participated to save own customary laws of society as well as Bodos of Assam. At the moment, the illiteracy problems were also 'another great problems of the area³. So, the workers were launching the movement on the importance of education and literature in the society along with the movement of customary laws of Bodo through the organisation. They took step to publish Bodo books and magazines; through lurching the movement for the upliftment of the customary law of the society along with the culture and history of the Bodo. *In these regards, the organisation first published the Bodo book of society named Boroni Fisa O Ayen in 1915 by the initiative of Gangacharan Kochary, where he only mentioned about the customary law of the Bodos' inspiring to save own laws of custom and cultural identity.*⁴ Hence, Narapati Boro and Prasanna Kr. Khakhlary wrote in their poems about the laws of society of the Bodos.

Like so, Ganga Charan Kochary wrote in the Boroni Fisa O Ayen book- '*Boro Jatia swrni bongso, bohaniprai utphan jakhw, bini bichay alosana khalamnai jadung* (i.e. Boro whose hereditary, burned from which, to be discuss on this mater.) Prasanna Boro also wrote in his *Bathou Nam Baisaguni Gidu-Bodo were related with observing with the Baisagu festival, hare Bodo were worship the lord Mahadeva. In his poem, he is inspiring to progress the Bodo people for future. Hence he expresses-*

² Op-cit, p. 30

³ Boro Thunlai Afat. *Raitai Bihung*. Kokrajhar: Publication Board, 2007. Vol-I. p.20

⁴ Brahma, Brajendra Kr. *Saosabpanai Gwdan Swdwmsri*. Kokrajhar: Pioneer Printers, 2015 p.30

Jou lwng nanai noao gadi lana tabla

Boro daoganw haya.

Jou lwngnanai tod gwmabla

Arai khatayata missa he lokkhai

*Arai jatayabw misa.*⁵

(i.e. Bodo people are more absorbed rice beer and only stayed at home, then how can progress come. If the Bodo people all the time so, then progress is never to come among the Bodo as well as in the society). Like so, the organization took role through the literature in respect of the progresses of the Bodo nation.

2.3.2 Boro Maha Sanmilani

The *Boro Maha Sanmilani* came into existence in 1921 among the Bodos under the leadership of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma (as the chief organiser) and Rupnath Brahma (as the Secretary). *The aims & objectives of the Sanmilani were to look out the present and future and to make unity among the Bodos to stand against the socio-political cultural, educational and economic conditions of the Bodo. The one more most remarkable aims of the Sanmilani was to stop the conversion to other cast and acceptance of i.e. religion, culture and social system by giving up own identities*⁶.

The Maha Sanmilani was the first ever organizational platform that provided a space for the Bodos to discuss about their problems and to take measure for the solution of the problems. During the time, Bodos were so weak that, they were facing identity crisis due to lack of self consciousness and uneducated persons. The Bodos were socially and religion ally looser than other neighbouring cast of the Assam. Hence, many Bodos were converted to other higher society and accepted the other religion and assimilated with other culture.

During the time, there was political conspiracy also the educationally, socially and politically weak Bodos could not stand with the other educated society. They never face with them. In that sense, other society compelled and forced the Bodo people to accept their nature of the society. So, the weak and looser Bodo people found no way to argue and oppose their force and lastly accepted and assimilated with their society. Like that, at a time many Bodo people and family have lost and forgotten their own great identity.

Therefore, the organisation along with the *Boro Chatra Sanmilani* actively participated to save the Bodo and tried to stop conversion to other side, the organisation was giving interest about the need of education and publication of Bodo Magazine for the spreading of knowledge and creative writing among the Bodo boys and girls. That is why, the organisation actively tried to set-up primary and middle schools in Bodo dominated areas. The *Boro Maha Sanmilani* tried to stop the use of more liquor in social ceremonies and in any other group of social activities to save the economic condition and for the progress of the Bodo society⁷.

At the mean-time, the organization seriously took responsibilities to enlarge and to bring consciousness the education among the Bodos for reforming about the socio- political, religious, and economical spirit in the society. Hence,

⁵ Boro Thunlai Afat . *Raithai Buhung*. Kokrajhar: Bodo Publication Board, 2007.Vol-II. p.235

⁶ Uzir, Nilo Zalo. *Jwhwlaopurini Thandai (a souvenir)*. Baksa,,Naokata: 2010.pp.124-125

⁷ Op-cit, pp. 125- 126

the organization heartily forwarded to fulfil its objective through the various steps in respond of the Bodo nationality and the society. *The first conference of the Maha Sanmilani was held in 1921 at the Bhaoraguri of Gosaigaon, the second was in 1925 at the Rongia of Kamrup and the third was held in 1929 at the Roumari Jyoti Ashram of Bongaigaon.*

It was actually to be held early according to the regulations of the first conference of the organization. But it could not go as per the regulation and held the next two conference after four years gap due to some unavoidable problems at the mention places, each conference was successfully ended by the support and help of the mass Bodo people where the Moha Sanmilani discussed thoroughly about the various problems and issues of the Bodos and adopted the regulations and action plans mentioned bellow for the solution of existence problems and to illuminate the social evils for the development of the Bodo community. The adopted action plans were⁸

1. *That a magazine should be published for the spread of knowledge and creative writing among the Bodo boys and girls.*
2. *Resolved that the action be initiated for the establishment primary and meddle school in the Bodo dominated areas.*
3. *Resolved that the use of liquor in marriage and other social ceremonies be stopped.*
4. *Resolved that the boys and girls must be provided educational equally. Only then Bodo society can progress.*
5. *Resolved that the consumption of liquor be stopped and volunteers should move from village to village to keep an eye on this and break the utensils used for making the country liquor.*
6. *Resolved that to ensure the honour of the Bodo women folk be prevented from going to public places in unclean dresses.*
7. *Resolved that hence forth pigs should not be reared by the Bodos as they are unhygienic spoils the surrounding and cause disease.*
8. *That the fee to be paid at the time of daughter's marriage is fixed Rs-51 and any individual violating the rule would to be penalized.*
9. *Resolved that animal sacrifice should be banned in the Bodo society and only the Brahma religion be accepted their religion.*
10. *Resolved that the child marriage and forcefully illegal marriage should be banned in the Bodo society.*
11. *Resolved that the Brahma religion shall be the one and only religion that will be practised by the Bodos, since the Bathou and other religions that had been followed by them so far have failed to bring about any improvement in their lives. By following the Brahma religion it is possible to usher in unity and progress among the Bodo people.⁹*
Like that, the Boro Maha Sanmilani has tried to unite the Bodo people through the adopted resolutions and march towards the path of progress in of the society.

⁸ Ibid, p. 125

⁹ Op-cit. p. 125

Kalicharan Brahma was optimistic about the role of the Boro Maha Sanmilani. Being satisfied with the success of conferences of the Sanmilani he anticipated that the resolution adopted would go a long way in eliminating the social evils plaguing the Bodo society to progress and to bring in the respectable position. He saw that the Bodo society. He thought these would lead the Bodo society as stagnant society reluctant to accept the currents and challenges of the time. Ignorance and illiteracy have made them cling to the decadent social custom, manners and traditions, his felt- *The Bodo must be persuaded to renounce their bad habits like the addictions to liquor, habit of animal sacrifice in the worship, force marriage, rearing pig and internal feud and so on, he thought*¹⁰.

He knows that, the Bodo Maha Sanmilani played a great role in this ground. So he wanted the Maha Sanmilani to be instrumental in spreading the message of the reform movement along with the preaching of the Brahma Religion. So, the Maha Sanmilani specially must stress for the rebuilding of the Bodo society through the Brahma Religion among the Bodos.

2.3.3 Assam Plains Tribal Leagues

This *socio-political* association came into existence in 17 April, 1933 among the Bodo tribal community of Assam under the guidance of the tribal leaders like Rupnath Brahma, Jadab Chandra Kakhary Rabi Chandra Kochary, Dhirsing Deory, Kark Chandra Dole and Bhimbar Deory¹¹. At the very beginning nomenclature of this organization was Tribal Songha.

At the time, the Tribal Songha was a social organisation of the tribal of Assam. But in which year the tribal Songha was formed, it has no record, no any clear-cut record has been found. At the time, there were two Songha among the tribal of Assam, these were Sodhou Assam Sonowal Kochary Sanmilani and Sodou Assam Kochary Sanmilani. At the last moment, both the two Songha has joined hand and jointly held the first conference of the Songha in 1933, 17 April at Roha of Nogaon District¹². The chair person of the conference was a Bodo leader Jadab Chandra Khakhary. At the conference, through the discussion, the Songha's nomenclature has changed to the *Assam plains tribal league* as '*socio-political organization*'.

It was mentionable that, the tribal were politically exploited in Assam as well as in India, they had no right to participate in politics; on the other side, the constitutionally recognized many tribal areas or which is called tribal belt and block were politically occupied by the Govt and illegally interned by the migrated people without any restriction or by the politicians for their political benefit. Due to this reason tribal were deprived and more backward in the society. Hence, the Bodo and other tribal of Assam thought about the necessity of political organization to compete in politics and thought to uplift the socio-political problem through the politics, where was prolong discussion happened regarding this issue in the conference of the Songha.

Hence, at the conference, the *Songha was dissolved and a league was formed as the first political organization of the tribal in Assam*. In this regard, so many Bodo leaders were involved in the league and took role to abolish political crisis among the Bodo, as well the league leaders strongly played role to save gourd the Bodo tribal areas through the socio-political organization. After that, the league actively participated in the politics for the development of the tribal society by establishing the Political identity.

¹⁰ Op-cit, p.125

¹¹ Swargiary, Khatindra. *Boroni Jarimin Arw Swmaosarnai*. Guwahati: Binod Nath Book Land, 1992. p.105

¹² Ibid, p.83

But after the independence of India, disunity on ideology and dilemma, inactiveness has been arise among the leaders of the tribal league. As a result, the leader of the Songha, the political organization tribal league was changed to the social organization. In this regard, dissolving the tribal league, the Tribal Songha was again formed *as non political and independent socio-cultural organization of the Bodo tribal. Sill the organization is staying among the tribal and taking role for the welfare of the tribal in Assam*¹³. Now the Songha is from the very beginning safe guarding the Bodo Tribal's and helping to stand as the tribal community in India as well as in the Assam through their activities.

2.3.4 Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)

After dissolving the tribal league, under the initiative of Samar Branma Choudhury, Birswan Dole, Charan Narzary and Binoy Khungur Basumatary the Bodo tribal leaders were forming the second another Socio-Political Association with the named *PTCA in 1967, 27 February at the Kokrajhar Town*¹⁴ (undivided Goalpara district). After forming the association, the leaders of the association took vital role to fulfil the political crisis of the Bodo tribal through Association in Assam. *The main goal of the PTCA was to fulfilling the socio- political crisis and for the socio-economic development of the Bodo tribal by creating separate Udayachal state within the Assam.*

Hence, at the time, the association organized and guiding the long period political movement among the Bodo Tribal by demanding to create the *Udayachal* state for the Bodo Tribal (a separate state for the tribal) in Assam of North East India. It has mentionable that, the PTCA was only the first political party to stand for creating a separate state for the Bodo tribal community of Assam In these regard, newly formed the All Bodo student Union (ABSU) was also taking vital role supporting with the PTCA simultaneously. But dreamed of the PTCA did not come in true.

Though the party did not gate the mass people support and could do nothing about the *Udayachal*. But after doing long steps of movement, disunity arises among the leaders and then split in the three factions. At the same time, ABSU was also withdrawing the support, due to inactivity of the leaders. Impact, due to lack of mass support and worker crisis, the PTCA became weak and defang. Due to this reason PTCA never back to fulfil the goal¹⁵.

But after the PTCA the ABSU took responsibility of the political movement for creating the separate state for fulfilling the socio- political crisis of the Bodos in Assam which is presently standing as the main issue of the ABSU for the greater interest of the Bodo nationality.

2.3.5 Dularai Boro Aijw Afat (All Bodo Women Association)

This organisation came into existence in the year of 1976 on may 9 in the field of Julimwidan of Boroma at Kamrup District now Baksa¹⁶. This organisation is specially organisation of the Bodo women. *The aims and objectives of the Association was to standing-up against Bodos who use more liqueur, and to appeal to women for taking education and to oppose the others on impact of Daoury system in the Bodo society.*

Bodos were used the Jou (rich bear) which is coming from the forefather and it has now become the culture in the society. In every social function and occasion Bodos used to the jou at Without Jou nothing occasion is success. In this

¹³ Op-cit, p.109

¹⁴ Ibid, p.84

¹⁵ Op-cit, p. 110

¹⁶ Ibid,p.110

chance personally is also used it more at home or anywhere in the social activities. On the other sides, there is no Daory system among the Bodos, there was little bit of *Phon* system. But later it has become converted to big amount of Daory system by the influence of others society. Impact, both of the causes, the Bodos become more backward in the society. Hence the association has actively played role to stop use of Jou and stand against anti drugs along with the Daory system of the society. In this regards the Association took many steps to reform the society.

2.3.6 All Assam Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF)

The rise of consciousness Bodo women as contrasted against the feminist movement in the world is not worthy. Gender biasness or injustice is not known in Bodo society. The group of women had got its background in the injustice and human rights violation committed by police force upon Bodo women during the movement period. In this background under name All Assam Tribal Women's Welfare Federation has been formed in 1986, 14th July under the leadership of Promila Rani Brahma (as the founder president) and Konika Daimary (as the founder Secretary) under the banner of the all Bodo Student Union. But later the organisation was named as the AABWWF (All Assam Bodo Women's Welfare Federation)¹⁷ in a conference held at Tamulpur on 6th November 1993.¹⁸ *The aims of the organisation was to look after the interest of the Bodo women, their economic problems, civil rights and overall development shouting with the Bodoland movement of ABSU.*

The organisation played an important role in awakening consciousness of Bodo women and their involvement in the Bodoland movement from the very beginning. The organisation help in pioneering works of social reformation related to the issue of Bodo women in addition to its active involvement in the struggle of the Bodo people. As an example-The ABWWF fought in Guwahati court against Assam police over the notorious Bhumkha gang rape cases which shocked the entire world and the organisation won victory in a remarkable ways.

During the Bodoland movement many innocent girls as well as women lost their chastity and some even their lives due to the widespread incidents of rape and sexual harassment by police force. The ABWWF readily came forward to raise voice against such brutalities and made its outmost effort to help the victims and save their dignity. The other contribution of the ABWWF was to play the role of information carrier during the movement period .On domestic from two it rendered very valuable service. The members of the organisation are still active for the development of Bodo women besides raising children and looking after their families. The organisation today protest against injustice regardless of cast creed in the society.

2.3.7 Boro Women Justice Forum

This Forum has been created on 3th Oct, 1992 at the Dwifham of Nolbari of Darrang District which presently in Udalguri District under the leadership of Phutuli Dwimary (as the founder president), Golapi Basumatary (as the founder secretary) and Anjali Daimary (as the speaker).¹⁹ *The aims and objectives of the organisation were to stand against the Indian Arm forces' unconstitutional harassment on the men and women .Another aim was to, inspire the Bodo women to take education and to inspire the women to be conscious of the politics.*

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.113-114

¹⁸ Brahma, Yamao Zwhwlaio .*Bodoland movement, A Dream and Reality*. Kokrajhar: 2001. p.17

¹⁹ Ibid, p.115

Bodos are politically looser and constitutionally deprived. Hence especially some socio-political organizations have come into existence in the Bodo society to demand constitutional rights for fulfilling the Bodos political rights which is still to be democratically going on. But man as well as women was politically not conscious in the society. At that time, taking with the innocence and ignorance of the people as opportunity the govt. Police personal and the Army and military harassed the innocence man and women of Bodo people without having justice. Many women were raped by the police forces and men had to stay under custody without being guilty. Like that, Bodos were victimized in the society in that time.

Hence, in this regards the role of the forum was the great .The Forum had stood against unconstitutional activities on the innocence Bodo people; along with that the forum had actively participated to bring educational awareness among the women for giving alertness regarding the field of political and constitutional rights .This is the importance of forming of the Women Justice Forum in the Bodo society.

Finding: *After flourishing the written and contemporary Bodo literature and launching educational reform movement in the society, the ideology of the Bodo people has changed and they became conscious in their existence and change has come in the society.* The people tried to think about their genuine existence problem of the society. So the Bodo people analysed to find the causes and consequences of the backwardness of the Bodos and tried to find out the ways of developments to go ahead and reform the society by abolishing the immeasurable problems of the society.

Impact of that, with the major roles of the Bodo students' organisations, personalities and help of the mass people , various, *literary ,socio- educational, economic, cultural, religious , and Socio-political organizations were came into existence among the Bodos to eliminate the backwardness of the society.* These social organizations actively participated in mobilizing the educational and social reform movement in the society through their aims and objectives from deferent angles. The aims and objectives of the organizations were almost same and related to one cause which was only Bodonise, for reforming the people as well as the society.

During the period education was the major factor of backwardness which had to be brought among the Bodos for reforming the society. Like that, in the area of education, the Bodo Chatra Sanmilani actively participated to make aware the society regarding the education. At the same time, the Bodo Literary Club, Boro Maha Sanmilani, Habrakhat Boro Moha Sanmilani, Ansai Afat, Boro *Thunlai Afat, Laimwn Afat, Jewary Afat, All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) etc.* were looking back towards the literature, religion, culture, nationality and society to save the Bodos as well as to focus on the heritage to the Bodo people make ready for a new future. As a result, some of antisocial activities and habit of using more liquor in every social and religious function were necessarily reformed in the society by the initiative of the organizations. And Bodos were also developing in the area of, education, economic, religion and also in the field of political in the society²⁰. As a result, they were becoming energetic and nationalised and tried to think up their political rights and justice to establish the Bode nation and also to think up regarding the separate identity in the country for building the great Bodo nation along with the society.

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² Boro Thunlai Afat. Raitai Bihung. Kokrajhar: Publication Board, 2007.Vol-I.

²⁰ibid,pp.95-96

³ Uzir, Nilo Zalo. *Jwhwlaopurini Thandai (a souvenir)*. Baksa,,Naokata: 2010.

⁴ Swargiary, Khatindra. *Boroni Jarimin Arw Swmaosarnai*. Guwahati: Binod Nath Book Land, 1992

⁵ Brahma, Yamao Zwhwlaao .*Bodoland movement, A Dream and Reality*. Kokrajhar: 2001

