# STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND

## A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**SANKAR DAS**

**MZU REGISTRATION NO: 1600627**

**Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO: MZU/Ph.D./1487 of 02.11.2020**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DECEMBER, 2023**

# STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND

**BY**

**SANKAR DAS**

**Department of Political Science**

**SUPERVISOR**

**Prof. K. V. REDDY**

**Submitted**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**in Political Science of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**
**AIZAWL: MIZORAM**
**www.mzu.edu.in**

Post Box No. 190
Gram : MZU
Phone : (0389) 2345211 / 2341725
Fax : 0389 - 2345211/

---

*Department of Political Science*                    *F. No. MZU/(Pol.Sc)/21/M.Phil/2016/*
*Prof. K.V. Reddy,*                                   *Dated :* **December, 2023**

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND",** submitted by SANKAR DAS for the award of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**, is a research work, done under my supervision and guidance. The thesis, submitted by him has not formed the basis for the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the thesis represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

Place: Aizawl                                         Prof. K. V. REDDY

Date:                                                SUPERVISOR

i

<div align="center">

**DECLARATION**

**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**

**DECEMBER, 2023**

</div>

I **SANKAR DAS**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university/institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.**

<div align="center">

**SANKAR DAS**

</div>

**Prof. AYANGBAM SHYAMKISHOR**                                     **Prof. K. V. REDDY**

  **Head of the department**                                                   **Supervisor**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AAPTL | All Assam Plains Tribal League |
| AASU | All Assam Students' Union |
| ABAVP | Akil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikash Parisad |
| ABMSU | All Bodoland Minority Students' Union |
| ABSU | All Bodo Students' Union |
| AGP | Asom Gana Parishad |
| AGSU | All Gorkha Student Union |
| AIGL | All India Gorkha League |
| AKRSU | All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union |
| BAC | Bodoland Autonomous Council |
| BDO | Block Development Office |
| BJP | Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) |
| BLT | Bodoland Liberation Tigers |
| BPAC | Bodo People's Action Committee |
| BPF | Bodoland People's Front |
| BPPF | Bodoland People's Progressive Front |
| BSF | Bodo Security Force |
| BSS | Bodo Sahitya Sabha |
| BTAD | Bodoland Territorial Area Districts |
| BTC | Bodoland Territorial Council |
| BTR | Bodoland Territorial Region |
| CPI | Communist Party of India |

| | |
|---|---|
| CPI-M | Communist Party of India – Marxist |
| CPRM | Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists |
| DDCC | Darjeeling District Congress Committee |
| DGHC | Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council |
| EIC | East India Company |
| GATA | Gorkha Adivasi Territorial Administration |
| GJM | Gorkha Janmukti Morcha |
| GLP | Gorkhaland Personnel |
| GNLF | Gorkha National Liberation Front |
| GTA | Gorkhaland Territorial Administration |
| GVC | Gorkha Volunteer Cell |
| ILTA | Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association |
| INC | Indian National Congress |
| MLA | Member of the State Legislative Assembly |
| MLLDB | Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NDFB (P) | National Democratic Front of Bodoland(Progressive) |
| NDFB | National Democratic Front of Bodoland |
| OSS | Obodo Surakshya Samiti |
| PM | Prime Minister |
| PTCA (P) | Plains Tribal Council of Assam (Progressive) |
| PTCA | Plains Tribal Council of Assam |
| SC | Scheduled Castes |

| | |
|---|---|
| ST | Scheduled Tribes |
| TMC | All India Trinamool Congress |
| UNTLF | United National Tribal Liberation Front |
| UPP | United Peoples' Party |

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

The first chapter covers an overview of the subject matter of study. It includes the demographic characteristics of Assam and Darjeeling. Additionally, it provides a concise overview of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The chapter incorporates review of literature, statement of problem, scope of the study, significance of the study, objectives and research questions and methodology.

## Introduction

Governments is classified into unitary and federal models based on the type of ties between the national and regional government. The founders of Indian constitution made the decision to create a federal structure based on two primary factors: the large geographical expanse of the nation and its significant socio-cultural heterogeneity. Nevertheless, the word 'federation' is conspicuously absent from the Constitution of India.[1] The establishment of federal structure is driven by the significant concept of reconciling national unity with regional autonomy. The concept of regional autonomy is closely linked to the notion of 'statehood' within the context of federal system in India. The reorganization of states is not considered unlawful or contrary to national interests, since the Indian constitution outlines a well-established method for this via Article 2 and 3.[2] The justification for the rearrangement of states in India is based on legal and constitutional grounds. The

---

[1] When Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee of Indian Constitution presented the Draft Constitution to the Constituent Assembly, he described the Constitution proposed to be federal, even though the word used in Article 1 was Union and the word "federal" was never mentioned in the Preamble or any other provision. Dr. Ambedkar clarified that though India was to be a Federation, the Federation was not the result of an agreement (or a contract) by the States to join a federation, and that the Federation, because of not being the result of an agreement, no State had the right to secede from it. The Federation was a Union because it was indissoluble. ("Constituent Assembly Debates - Constitution of India," accessed December 8, 2023, https://www.constitutionofindia.net/constitution-assembly-debates/.)

[2] Article 2 of Indian Constitutions outlines about the admission and establishment of new state. Whereas the article 3 talks about formation of new states and alteration of areas, boundaries, and name of existing state.

concept of autonomy is closely intertwined with the notion of statehood. However, it would be erroneous to just analyze the restructuring of statehood or the aspirations for statehood from the standpoint of autonomy or power sharing between the state and the central authority. The process of redrawing states and explaining the claims for statehood in India has been significantly influenced by socio-cultural variety and several factors, including language, ethnicity, identity, and development.

When India gained independence in 1947, it was comprised of over 500 princely states that were not cohesive. The territorial divisions of India were temporarily categorized into states known as Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D.[3] Shortly after achieving Independence, there was a significant call for the restructuring of states based on linguistic considerations. The demand for the linguistic reorganization of states in India, voiced by the Indian National Congress during the liberation movement, was based on sound grounds and had been promised to the people after independence.[4] In June 1948, the Government of India established the Linguistic Provinces Commission, led by S.K. Dhar, with the purpose of assessing the practicality of restructuring states based on linguistic considerations. The report was presented by the committee in December 1948, whereby it advocated for the rearrangement of states based on administrative convenience rather than linguistic considerations. There was demonstration and call for the restructuring of states on the basis of linguistic criteria. In response to the widespread public discontent with the Dhar report, the Congress took the initiative to establish a Linguistic Provinces Committee (referred to as the JVP committee) in December

---

[3] After India got Independence, the existing territories were classified into 4 category- part A included Former British provinces. ( Assam, Bihar, Bombay, East Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal). Part B included former princely states or groups of Princely states. (Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Travancore-Cochin). Part C included Ajmer, Coorg, Cooch-Behar, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Vindhya Pradesh and Tripura. And lastly part D included Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

[4] In 1920, the members of the Indian National Congress reached a consensus on the linguistic restructuring of the Indian states as a key political objective of the party. The party established the Provincial Committees on this foundation in 1920. In 1927, the Congress proclaimed its dedication to "the reorganization of provinces based on linguistic criteria" and reaffirmed this position several times, notably in the election manifesto of 1945-46."Linguism Trap - Frontline," accessed December 8, 2022.

1948.[5] This group was tasked with conducting a thorough examination of the matter. The newly formed JVP committee shown a lack of support for a language foundation in the process of state reorganization. The responses and attitudes shown by prominent officials of the Congress party over the subject had generated significant discontent among the populace in India, particularly in the southern region. The state of unrest and protest were persisted.

Andhra Pradesh was the first linguistic state to be formed when the Telugu-speaking areas were divided from the State of Madras in 1953. Following an extended period of societal turmoil, a series of events unfolded after the demise of Potti Sriamulu, who passed away as a result of a 56-day hunger strike.[6] The creation of Andhra Pradesh brought a fresh perspective to the discussion on reorganization of states according to linguistic factors. In response to the increasing number of requests for linguistic-based states, the Government of India established a committee led by Justice F. Fazl Ali, with H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar as members. The purpose of this commission was to thoroughly examine these demands. The report was submitted in September of 1955. The recommendations put forward were duly acknowledged with some alterations, leading to the enactment of States Reorganization Act in 1956. Consequently, the previous fourfold distribution of States was substituted with a total of 14 States and six Union Territories by the implementation of the Seventh Constitution Amendment. The agitation and protest persisted after to the implementation of State Reorganization Act, as a means of advocating for the establishment of additional states. The splitting of existing states was a consequence of the desire for the establishment of additional states based on linguistic or cultural homogeneity. The political landscape of India has undergone a

---

[5] The name "JVP Committee" was derived from the initials of the three leaders who served as its head. They were Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, and Pattabhisitaramayya. The JVP Committee also known as the "Three Ministers Committee" was set up to study the recommendations of the Dhar Committee.

[6] Potti Sreeramulu sacrificed his life for creation of separate Andhra state from Madras state. Historian Ramachandra Guha best describes Sriramulu's legacy which, in many ways, shaped modern India: "Sadly, outside Andhra, he is a forgotten figure now. This is a pity, for Sriramulu had a more-than-minor impact on history, as well as geography of our country. For his fast and its aftermath were to spark off a wholesale redrawing of the map of India according to linguistic lines. The Andhras might even claim that Potti Sriramulu was the Mercator of India." (Rinchen Norbu Wangchuk, "Potti Sriramulu: Little-Known Freedom Fighter Who Sacrificed His Life for Andhra!," The Better India, August 5, 2019.)

series of ongoing transformations leading to its current state. Currently, the nation of India is comprised of a total of 28 states and 8 Union Territories (UTs). The persistent pursuit of statehood is ongoing in India. The demands for Gorkhaland and Bodoland are examples of how factors such as ethnicity, identity, economic stagnation, and language play significant roles in the articulation of their demands and aspirations for separate statehood.

The primary goal of the Gorkhaland Movement is to establish Gorkhaland[7], which is now part of West Bengal, as its own separate state within India. People who speak Nepali in the West Bengal hill districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong[8] constitute the bulk of the Gorkhaland population. The people who live in the hill districts of West Bengal, there are linguistically and culturally distinct from the Bengalis who constitute the majority in West Bengal. The colonial government is largely responsible for the current movement for Gorkhaland demand. Darjeeling, an unsettled region, was under Chogyal of Sikkim's control until the 1780s. The Gorkhas attacked and occupied a large portion of Sikkim, including the cities of Darjeeling and Siliguri. For 35 years, they were in charge of it. However, the destiny of the Gorkhas was altered when colonial government was invaded and they became part of the British Empire. The Gorkhas made several attempts to express their desire for autonomy, but their wishes were not granted. Following India's independence, the region fell under the direct control of West Bengal. Gorkhaland movement has persisted in the region ever since, addressing difficult problems including linguistic diversity, economic stagnation, and cultural division. The evolution of movement through its many stages has brought it to its current state. The evolution of movement into its current form can be traced back to a number of factors, including shifts in the political environment in both West Bengal and the centre, the personalities of movement's leaders, government responses to the Gorkhaland issue, the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), violence during the early stages of the movement, civil society's and political parties' roles, and the creation of

---

[7] The land of Gorkhas. The term 'Gorkha' is used by Nepali speaking population of Indian origin to identify themselves

[8] Kalimpong district was carved out from Darjeeling district in 2017. Earlier it was administered as a subdivision of the Darjeeling district.

Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). However, the desire for Gorkhaland persists in the area and has far-reaching effects on its sociopolitical framework.

The concept of Bodoland pertains to the aspirations expressed by the Bodo community residing in the state of Assam. Assam is recognized as a region that encompasses a diverse array of ethnic groups, each contributing to the rich cultural variety of the area. The Bodo people represent the largest ethnic group inhabiting the plains of Assam, a state located in northeastern India. The Bodos is believed to have undergone a migratory event during the ancient era, relocating to the geographical region of Assam. The Bodo tribe has been widely acknowledged as one of the earliest indigenous communities to have settled in the region. Over the course of time, the Bodo tribe has experienced a decline in its regional significance. The concerns regarding rights and identity in the region originated from a combination of colonial and post-colonial developments. These include illegal immigration, imposition of chauvinistic cultural norms, and rejection of recognition for ethnic and language differences. The movement, which aimed to safeguard their identity, was initiated in 1929 when the tribal leaders of Assam effectively communicated their demands to the Simon Commission. Since that particular time period, it has been observed that the Bodo community had expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the fulfilment of their demands pertaining to equality, identity, and development.

The plain tribal communities residing in Assam, notably the Bodos, were not afforded any specific protective measures during the period of colonial administration. In the context of post-independent India, the government has adopted various strategies to tackle the challenges faced by the Bodo community. The Bodos, as per demographic analysis, constitute the most populous ethnic group within the region. The Bodo ethnic group encompasses approximately 12% of the overall tribal population of Assam. The movement for separate statehood in 1987 was spearheaded by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). The proposed statehood was given with the term 'Bodoland' by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). The Bodoland movement, initiated by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), has undergone various stages of development. Various measures were implemented by

both the central and state governments at different stages of the movement in order to address the concerns pertaining to the Bodo community. The Memorandum of Agreement on Bodo Autonomous Council (1993), Memorandum of Agreement on Bodoland Territorial Council (2003), and Memorandum of Agreement on Bodoland Territorial Region (2020) represent significant administrative measures implemented by the Government in direct response to the demands and concerns raised by the Bodo community. However, it is worth mentioning that the notion of establishing a separate Bodoland continues to hold relevance within the region.

**Demographic Profile of Darjeeling**: The anticipated state of 'Gorkhaland' is located in the Darjeeling region of West Bengal, India. An overview of the Darjeeling district is provided in the chapter.

Darjeeling district, located in the northernmost region of West Bengal, consists of four sub-divisions: Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong, and Siliguri. In 2017, the Kalimpong sub-division was established as an independent district, while Mirik was designated as a sub-division within the same year. The Darjeeling district is bordered by Nepal to the west, Jalpaiguri to the south, and Bhutan to the east. The northern region is encompassed by Sikkim and the Himalayas. The 2011 census reveals that the district has a population of 1,846,823 individuals and a total land area of 3,149 square kilometres. According to the 2011 census statistics, the district has a total population of 11,23,859, with 7,18,175 people living in urban areas and the remaining 4,05,684 people living in rural areas. Out of the total population, 60.58 percent reside in rural areas and 39.42 percent reside in urban cities. The sex ratio in the district, according to the 2011 census, is 970 females per thousand men. The district's literacy rate is reported as 57.62 percent.[9]

The district is physically separated into two parts: the hills and the plains, which together make up the whole area. Around 40% of the population, particularly

---

[9] "Darjeeling District, Government of West Bengal | Queen of the Hills | India," accessed September 17, 2022, https://darjeeling.gov.in/.

624,061 individuals, reside in the hilly areas.[10] A semi-autonomous administrative body has been established by the West Bengal government to oversee the administrative affairs of the hilly area. The administrative entity was established as the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA).

The Lepchas or the Rongpa (the ravine people) were the first people to live in the Darjeeling heights. Subsequently, several other tribes, including Limbu, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Thami, Chettri, Bahun, Kami, and Dami, began to settle in the area. Since the 1950s, a significant number of Tibetans have relocated to the hills of Darjeeling. The majority of hill-dwelling people, despite their many ethnic backgrounds, primarily identify themselves as Gorkha and communicate in Nepali as their native language. While Bengalis constitute the majority in the plains of Darjeeling, there are also considerable populations of Gorkhas, Adivasis, as well as migrants from Bihar, Marwar, and Punjab residing in the region.

The linguistic statistics from the 2011 census reveals that 39.88% of Darjeeling's population speaks Nepali, 26.51% speaks Bengali, 10.95% speaks Hindi, 6.19% speaks Rajbongshi, 5.38% speaks Sadri, 2.52% speaks Kurukh, 1.50% speaks Bhojpuri, and 1.15% speaks Santali as their first language. Bengali is the officially recognized language of the district, although Nepali is the co-official language.[11]

**Brief introduction of GTA**: The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was created in 2012 and is a semi-autonomous council made up of three hill subdivisions: Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Mirik. It also includes parts of the Siliguri sub-division of Darjeeling district and the whole Kalimpong district. Essentially, GTA was established as a substitute for Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), which was established in 1988.

---

[10] "Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density," accessed November 24, 2023, https://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/1-darjiling.html..

[11] Ibid.

The linguistic similarity and underdevelopment have led to a growing desire for the creation of a distinct state called Gorkhaland for the Indian Gorkha ethnic group, who mostly speak Nepali. This demand includes the districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and the Dooars area in West Bengal. The desire for a distinct administrative entity in Darjeeling has persisted from the pre-independence period. However, throughout the 1980s, under the guidance of Subhash Ghisingh, led by the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), the aspirations for an independent Gorkhaland state escalated into acts of violence. The protracted conflict, marked by considerable loss of life, was resolved with the establishment of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). However, the DGHC failed to achieve the objectives of the Gorkha community, resulting in the decline of Subhash Ghisingh's leadership. Consequently, a new political party called the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) arose in 2007, with Bimal Gurung at its helm.

The newly formed Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) initiated a subsequent campaign for the formation of an independent Gorkhaland state. Following three years of persistent advocacy, the GJM reached a consensus with the West Bengal government to establish a partially self-governing entity for the Darjeeling Hills. Hence, the Memorandum of Agreement for Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was formally executed on July 18, 2011, in the presence of the former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the former Darjeeling Lok Sabha MP Jaswant Singh, and leaders of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. Consequently, a bill passed in the West Bengal legislative assembly on September 2, 2011. Subsequently, Pratibha Patil, who was the President of India at that time, approved the GTA Bill of West Bengal on March 7, 2012.

**Demographic Profile of Assam**

The Bodoland movement originates in the state of Assam. Bodos have a substantial population over the whole area of Assam. It aims to provide a concise summary of the demographic details of Assam. Assam, with a total size of 78,438 square kilometers, is located in the northeastern region of India. Assam now occupies 2.93 percent of India's entire geographical area. There are two foreign countries and

seven Indian states that border the state. Assam has borders with Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh on the north; it borders Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur on the east; Mizoram and Meghalaya border the state's south; and West Bengal, Bangladesh, and Tripura border the state on the west. Typically, the state could be categorized into two distinct river valleys: the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley. The two river valleys of Assam include not just plains but also encompass many hills and plateaus, as indicated by the literal meaning of the name. (Asom refers to topography that is characterized by hills and valleys rather than being completely flat.) The Brahmaputra plain spans an area of 58,315 square kilometers, whereas the Barak plain comprises 6,962 square kilometers.

The population of Assam, as recorded in the 2011 census, is 31,205,576. This represents a growth rate of 17.07% over a period of 10 years. The male population is 15,939,443, while the female population is 15,266,133. The sex ratio in Assam in 2011 was 958 females per 1000 males. The state's literacy rate has had an approximate 10% rise over the span of a decade, rising from 63.3% in 2001 to 72.19% in 2011. The male literacy rate in 2011 was recorded at 77.85%, while the female literacy rate was 66.27%.[12]

In addition to the three districts of Barak Valley, namely Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi, where Bengali is the designated official language, Assamese and Bodo are the official languages of Assam. According to the 2011 census, 48.38% of people speak Assamese as their first language and the remaining people speak it as a second language. This means that there are around 22 million speakers of Assamese, with more than 15 million claiming it as their mother tongue. However, in Assam, there are individuals who communicate in several indigenous tribal languages, such as Santali, Karbi, Tiwa, Deori, Koch, Rabha, Garo, Mishing, and others.[13]

**Brief introduction of BTC:** The emergence of Bodoland, formally known as the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), can be attributed to a series of statehood

---

[12] "Home | Assam State Portal," accessed December 26, 2022, https://assam.gov.in/.
[13] "Assam Population Census 2011, Assam Religion, Literacy, Sex Ratio - Census India," www.censusindia.co.in, accessed December 23, 2022, https://www.censusindia.co.in/states/assam.

aspirations, conflicts, and subsequent agreements. The presence of linguistic and cultural disparities within the region, coupled with limited infrastructural development and economic underdevelopment, have consistently given rise to demands for regional autonomy over the course of time. Following the unsuccessful attempt by PTCA (The Plains Tribes Council of Assam) to establish Udayachal, a proposed region encompassing the Bodo and other plain tribes, the ABSU (All Bodo Students' Union) assumed a prominent role in initiating the Bodoland Movement in 1987. This movement sought to address the demand for the creation of a distinct state known as Bodoland. The demand for autonomy by the Bodo community was addressed through the signing of the Bodo Accord in 1993, which subsequently led to the establishment of the Bodoland Autonomous Council. The Autonomous administrative unit, which spans an expansive area of 8,795 square kilometers, was officially established in accordance with the provisions outlined in memorandum of Agreement in 1993.

Subsequent to the signing of the 1993 agreement, a subsequent peace agreement was entered into in 2003, leading to the establishment of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under the provision of sixth schedule of Indian Constitution. The council's operational activities commenced on the 7th of December, 2003, with a preliminary composition of twelve council members. In 2005, a bye-election was conducted to establish the composition of Legislative Council, which consisted of 46 members. This council comprised 30 seats designated for Scheduled Tribes, five seats allocated for non-scheduled tribes, and five open seats. Additionally, the Governor of Assam nominated 6 members to serve on the council.

The Bodoland region encompasses four districts, namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, and Udalguri, with a combined population of 3,151,047 individuals, as recorded in the 2011 census. In January 2020, a significant peace agreement was reached between the Central and State Governments, as well as the NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland), the ABSU (All Bodo Students' Union), and the United Bodo People's Organization. This agreement, which holds great importance,

entails the addition of new districts and a revision of boundary of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The primary objective of these modifications is to ensure that the Bodo-speaking population constitutes a majority within the region. As per the 2011 census 31.5% of the people living in Bodoland speak Bodo language. The agreement reached in 2020 has resulted in recognition of Bodo as an associate official language of Assam.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Monirul Hussain (1993) in his work "The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity" published by Manak Publication in association with Haranand Publiction , New Delhi studied 1979-85 movement that held in Assam from sociological perspective.Hussain's research investigated into the multifaceted dimensions of the movement, exploring its sociological underpinnings and shedding light on the complex relationship between class dynamics, ideological frameworks, and the construction of identity within the context of Assam. The author provides a comprehensive analysis of the Assam Movement, delving into its historical context to enhance our understanding. The analysis also places significant emphasis on the broader societal and historical context within which the movement is situated. The utilization of robust conceptual categories such as "class," "ideology," and "identity" is evident in the author's work. The intricate dynamics of the social structure in Assam have been comprehensively elucidated, encompassing significant factors such as the waning influence of the Ahom aristocracy, the deliberate colonial policy that fostered large-scale immigration, the uneven competition faced by the Asamiya Middle Class, and the consequential alterations in Assam's demographic composition resulting from the incorporation of densely populated regions into its territory. The study also undertakes an analysis of the transformative shifts that occurred in the social fabric of Assam subsequent to the attainment of independence and the partition of the nation. Additionally, it delves into the emergence of a recognizing and self-aware Asamiya middle class, exploring its intricate dynamics with the ruling elites at the national level, and ultimately examining the disillusionment that ensued. This study effort serves to enhance our comprehension of the societal dynamics within the

studied region. The inclusion of a comprehensive historical account of the region, along with an analysis of its social stratification, provides valuable insights for examining the complexities of ethnicity from a novel and distinct vantage point.

Sudhir Jacob George (1994), in his article 'The Bodo Movement In Assam: Unrest to Accord' Published in Asian Survey, vol.34, No10, Oct, by University Of California Press posits that the region of North East India is primarily characterized by the presence of various ethnic groups. The study is involved in the analysis and management of various stages within the Bodoland movement, as well as the examination of the activities undertaken by different organizations. These organizations share a common objective, which is to address and resolve the Bodo problem. The researcher endeavors to ascertain the primary factors contributing to the observed phenomenon. The author highlights the salient economic concern and proceeds to analyze the impact of both internal and external migrations on the demographic composition of Assam, specifically focusing on the declining proportion of the Bodo population within the region. In order to substantiate his argument, the individual in question presents a comparative analysis of census data from the years 1947 and 1971. This examination reveals a notable decline in the proportion of individuals identifying as Bodo within the specified region, with figures dropping from 49% to 29%. In the realm of economic causes, the author additionally posits an argument pertaining to the land issue and unemployment. In addition to the aforementioned factors, Jacob also highlights the influence of language and identity, as well as political causes, in contributing to the emergence of the movement. George's research contributes to the investigation aimed at elucidating the underlying factors that have led to the emergence and progression of the Bodoland Statehood Movement. The research contributes significantly to the field of study by providing valuable insights into the intricate complexities associated with the structural aspects of statehood movements.

Sanjib Baruah (1997), in his article, ' Politics of Subnationalism : Society versus State in Assam', published in 'State and Politics In India', edited by Partha Chatterjee, Oxford University press, New Delhi, highlights the issue of assam from

sub nationalist perspective. The attitude and response of government is analyzed in his work and its impact on society of Assam is critically examined. The issues like underdevelopment, illegal immigration are highlighted to understand the structural issues of Assam. The role of civil society with focusing on Bhupen Hazarika's songs provides a critical outlook to analysis the growth of sub nationalism in Assam from Gramscian perspective. The use of social space and organizing capacity to penetrate the consciousness of sub nationalism in Assamese society is also emphasized in his work. The work helps the study to understand structural issue of assamese society and moreover the use of social space and role of civil society in process of growing subnationalism consciousness is a useful for analyzing and making a comparative study on both concerned area of study.

Myron Weiner (1997), in his article, 'India's Minorities: who are they? What do they want?', published in 'State and Politics In India', edited by Partha Chatterjee, Oxford University press, New Delhi,delves into the complex dynamics surrounding the minority groups within the Indian context. The study explores into the complicated relationships between minority and majority groups in India. The individual in question perceives the notion of self-identification, as well as the objective distinction thereof, to be intrinsically connected to the construct of minority within the context of India. The analysis of issues surrounding the proclamation of minority status involves examining various factors such as distinctive identity and discrimination. These factors play a crucial role in categorizing individuals or groups as minorities. The researcher conducts a comprehensive analysis of linguistic, religious, tribal, and caste minorities, focusing on their respective issues and demands. The present study contributes to the existing body of research by examining the overall status of minority populations in India and their corresponding demands. Furthermore, the present study offers a substantial foundation for investigating the intricate dynamics between minority and majority groups, with a particular focus on the interplay of symbol sharing, language, ethnicity, and identity, among other pertinent factors.

Dipankar Gupta (1997), in his article 'Ethnicity and Politics', published in 'Politics in India', edited by Sudipta Kaviraj, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, deals with the issue of ethnicity and its implication on politics. He examines the success of Indian state as nation state, although the doubt prevails at the initial stage of independence. Gupta tries to take account of historical account to conceptualize the idea of unity of India. Gupta analyses India as imagined communities and tries to articulate different demands and movements from perspective of language, natives and regional perspective. He views the linguistic, nativist and the more contemporary regional movement, are all expressions of an original and restless cultural disaffection in the breast of different 'nationalities' forced to cohabit in the Indian nation state. In his analysis, he points out primordial elements and its uses, the role of elite, the concept o son of soil, roles of leaders in parliamentary politics. In addition, his analysis on regional movements deals with the issue power politics of parties as well as centre and state. The work helps the study to understand the idea of ethnicity and issues of language, natives and regional politics and its impact on socio-political structure of the region as well as the whole India.

Atul Kohli (1997), in his article, 'Crisis of Governability', published in 'Politics in India', edited by Sudipta Kaviraj, Oxford University Press, New Delhi - deals with change in power structure and its impact on governance. He examines the shifting of power from party base to personal base in Indian political system. He also analyze the issue of shifting legitimacy from earlier political establishment to new emerging political centre, which are viewed as outside of the established political channels. He also analyses the role of civil society, phenomena of increasing political violence, electoral competition, ethnicity, role of leaders to understand the structural issues of governance process in India. The study helps the work in understanding the emerging issues and its impact on governance process. The shifting of political power and its consequences can be examined with help of this study.

Atis Dasgupta (1999), in his article 'Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling' published in Social Scientist, Vol. 27, No. 11/12, deals with the ethnic paradigm of Gorkhaland and the changing nature of demands of autonomy

from time to time and organization to organization. Dasgupta explains the historical roots of Gorkhalnd and its demands for autonomy. The article explains the demographic change of the region by taking account of process of migration from pre colonial era to the present time. The culture and literary movement among Nepali people of the region and its impact on the course of autonomy movement has been highlighted in the work. The diverse demand of the autonmy is also critically evaluated by the author. The work helps the study to understand the demography of the region as well as the diverse demands of autonomy and reason for it in due course of the time.

Chandan Kumar Sharma (2002), in his article 'Tribal Land Alienation: Government's Role', published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 52, deals with the issue of the land alienation among the tribal population in Assam and highlights the role of government in the colonial period and post independence in response to the issue. Sharma analyzes the policy of colonial phase and their implication in the life of tribal population of India in general and in Assam in particular. He explains how the tribal population of Assam has lost or compelled to displacement due to the colonial policy on land. He also focuses on the waves of migration which cause to the displacement of tribal population of Assam. Moreover, the political scenario has been critically analyzed in the article to understand the structural roots of the marginalization of tribes in the region. He also elaborates the role of the government in post colonial phase and their attitude to address the plight of tribal people with emphasizing on the land issue. The work helps the study to analyze the structural roots of dissatisfaction of tribal population of the region and their demand for autonomy. In addition, the work is also helpful for evaluating the role of the government in the past and the present time.

Sanjib Baruah (2005) in his book 'Durable Disorder, Understanding the Politics of North East India' published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi examines the root reasons and strives to figure out the political relevance of ongoing political violence. Ethnic violence and internal displacement are foregone conclusions, he argues, due to the current political economy of northeast India and its

relationship with a sense of ethnic homeland. Baruah also calls for new policies that can address the particular challenges posed by northeast India. In addition, he establishes connections between these policies and a fresh perspective on India's South and Southeast Asian ties. The book aids in understanding the meaning of democracy in the context of this region, as well as the nature of federalism and the ethnic character of the area.

Samir kr Das (2005) addresses the topic of conflict resolution strategies used by Indian states in the northeast in the wake of globalization in his paper "Globalization, Ethnicity and Conflict Resolution in North East India: Proposals for a Paradigm Shift," which was published in North East India Studies, Vol. 1, June. The author posits that while non-ethnic conflicts do indeed occur in the region, they are often overshadowed by ethnic conflicts, primarily due to the significant influence and prominence of ethnicity in the region. He also expresses worry about the globalization process, which has a big impact on how the people in the area live their political, cultural, and economic lives. In addition to the aforementioned points, Das further highlights the concern of ethnic minorityisation by drawing parallels to the Assam movement. In the final analysis, Das expounds upon potential approaches aimed at fostering peacefulness and concord in the North East region of India. The author advocates for the implementation of short-term strategies within the area, with the dual objective of averting the potential erosion of the state and optimizing the future agency of both the ethnic groups residing in the region and the Indian state as a whole. This study aims to examine the potential strategies and limitations of current policies in the given region. This study critically examines the impact of state policies during the period of globalization on the ethnically diverse Northeastern region and the subsequent ethnic movements that have emerged in the region. The analysis presented in this article aims to shed light on the complex relationship between state policies and the socio-political dynamics of the region, particularly in the context of globalization. The elucidation provided by the individual regarding the matter of ethnic minoritysation within the framework of the Assam movement contributes to the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of xenophobia prevalent among ethnic minority communities in the North East region of India.

Chandan Kumar Sharma (2005), in his article 'The Indian State and Ethnic Activism in North East India' published in North East India Studies, Vol-1, June explores into the notion of self-rule within the ethnic dimension and its growing prominence in the context of North East India. The researcher also posits that the theory of 'one nation and one state' is not a welcomed phenomenon in regions where ethnic dominance is prevalent. Sharma highlights the distinctive nature of ethnic phenomena observed in the North-East region of India, emphasizing their divergence from the overarching concept of Indian Nationalism. The author additionally addresses concerns pertaining to majoritarian politics and cultural homogenization as means of distinguishing the ethnic phenomena within the region. In the final analysis, Sharma examines into the centralist policy and its ramifications on the North-East region of India. These factors contribute to the development of a cohesive connection between the historical context of the region and the current state of affairs in the region. The present article undertakes an analysis of ethnic phenomena within the Northeastern region, specifically focusing on the disparities in ethnicity between the Indian state and the North East India. The article serves as a valuable resource for the research, aiding in the articulation and conceptualization of the distinctiveness of ethnicity within the context of North East India. Sharma's analysis of majoritarian politics provides valuable insights into the study's exploration of community-based majoritarian politics and its significance within the ethnically diverse North East region.

Apurba Kumar Baruah (2005) addresses the topic of violent traits that ethnic groups in Assam have acquired to protect their identity in his paper "Communities and Democracy: a Northeast Indian Perspective," which was published in North East India Studies, Vol. 1, June. The researcher also endeavors to assess the dearth of effective governance policies implemented by authorities, which have resulted in significant detriment to both human development and the democratic framework within the region. Baruah's research primarily centers around the complex processes of nation-building and its consequential effects within ethnically diverse regions, such as the state of Assam. In addition to the aforementioned points, it is imperative to undertake a critical examination of the issue of peace within the

context of the Bargaining Insurgency. The research conducted provides valuable insights into comprehending the distinctive position of the region within the broader context of ethnic phenomena. This article serves as an evaluation of the process of policy making and its impact on states such as Assam and West Bengal, with a particular focus on nation building.

Subrat K. Nanda(2006), in his article 'Cultural Nationalism in a Multi-National Context: The Case of India' published in Sociological Bulletin ,Vol. 55,No. 1, deals with the concept of cultural nationalism and its impact on the multi-national set up of one country. He tries to conceptualize the idea of nationalism and tries to analyze the implication of it in multi cultural world of the third world. The author explains the formation of nationalism at macro level, which he categorizes as political form and at micro level, where emphasis has been given to the cultural base of the society. He focuses on the case of India and tries to explain different steams of nationalism exist in India. The work helps the study to analyze the concept of nationalism. Moreover, the work helps the study to evaluate the growth of the process of nationalism in multi-national context of India and to understand its socio-political implication in the region.

Nani Gopal Mahanta (2007), in his article 'Ethnicity, State, and Identity: From Confrontation to Co-existence.' Published in Problems of Ethnicity in the North East India, edited by B.B Kumar, Astha Bharati, Delhi, talks about how confrontation could be transformed into co-existence in North East India. This scholarly work examines into the intricate dynamics of the North East India region, specifically focusing on the potential for converting confrontational situations into harmonious co-existence. The author highlights the matter of nation-building process and additionally observes the occurrence of ethnic exclusion within the region. The researcher also explores the notion of identity and posits that identity is a complex construct, consisting of multiple layers, which allows individuals to identify themselves across various ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, the researcher conducts a critical examination of the current structure of the Indian political system, specifically focusing on the utilization of the 'first past the post' electoral system and

its implications within ethnically diverse states such as Assam. Subsequently, Mahanta posits that the absence of efficient communication within communities also serves as a catalyst for conflict in the region. The individual suggests the creation of a platform that would enable the amplification of diverse perspectives and ensure inclusivity in the expression of opinions. The research conducted by Mahanta sheds light on the ethnic phenomena observed in the region, providing valuable insights into the underlying factors contributing to the growing demand for distinct identities within the local population. The suggestions and recommendations put forth by Mahanta contribute significantly to the analysis of the Government's role and potential alternatives for addressing the ethnic issues prevalent in the North East region of India.

Suryashika Pathak (2010) in her article 'Tribal Politics in the Assam: 1933-1947' published in Economic and Political Weekly, vol XLV no 10, deals with the socio-economic and political dimensions of the tribal society in Assam during the phase of 1933 to 1947. Her analysis of the role of colonial administration in addressing the issue of plain tribes in Assam gives a clear-cut picture of the situation of tribals during the colonial era. She examines the politics of Assam before 1933 regarding the tribal population. The role of organizations in the advent of the Simon Commission was mentioned in the study. The role of the tribal League in building consciousness among plain tribals is thoroughly discussed in her article. In the study, the question of land alienation among the plain tribes, the political debate on the protection of land to the tribals, and its impact on the political environment of Assam have been examined. In addition to this, issues like linking the tribal identity with religion and its socio-political implications, and the awareness on the part of education among tribals have been discussed. The article is helpful for the study of understanding the social circumstances of that period in Assam. Her analysis of land alienation among tribals and the social position of plain tribes helps the study to find the relevance of the Bodoland movement.

Louise Tillin (2011), in his article 'Questioning Borders: Social Movements, Political Parties and the Creation of New States in India' published in

Pacific Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 1, Experiencing the State : Marginalized People and The Politics of Development in Contemporary, published by Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia, deals with social movement and its changing nature in Indian political system. The article explains the shift of the nature of social movements in present time. The author tries to intertwine the post 1970s social movement with political parties and the state to bring the demand for statehood to central stage. He focuses on the statehood movement of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttrakhand to explain the connection. The work helps the study to critically evaluate the interconnection among social movement, demand of statehood, political parties and state system.

Jayanta Krishna Sarmah (2011), in his article 'An Alternative Formulation for Autonomous Councils in Assam' published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 46, No. 35, analyses the idea of autonomy and reason for the demand of it. He tries to establish principle of minority and indigenous rights and the right to self determination with the concept of autonomy. Moreover, the protective and promoting provisions of culture through autonomy also highlight to understand the reasons for the demand of autonomy. He focuses his study on Assam and correlates the concept of autonomy with democracy. The hegemonic relationship in the society in colonial administration is also analyzed to understand the structural reason of the demands. He provides some alternative formula to deal with the demands to ensure the peace and development of the region besides the existing structure of autonomous councils in Assam. The work is helpful to critically analyze and understand the concept of autonomy and the reason behind the demand of it. The structural reality of Assam, which has been explained in the work, helps the study to evaluate the existing system and its efficiency in dealing with issue of autonomy.

C. Townsend Middleton (2011), in his article 'Across the Interface of State Ethnography: Rethinking Ethnology and its subjects in multicultural India' published in American Ethnologist, Vol. 38, No. 2 deals with the idea of formation of ethnic or tribal identity in India onset of securing their position in the list of scheduled tribe in India. In this article, Middleton tries to explain the ground reality

of Darjeeling and the effort of 'Gorkha' community to categories themselves to ensure ST status in India. He elaborates the concept of reservation, government benefit, as well as economic and political wellbeing of the people with the idea of ST status. He analyzes the psychological dimension of belonging sense to India by Gorkha people with the help of their ST status in India. The manipulation and role of organization in the region is critically evaluated from his real life experience in the process of ensuring ST status in India. The work helps the study to understand the formation or manipulation of ethnic identity in multicultural India. Moreover, the issues like development, sense of belongingness, preservation of culture, sense of autonomy can be critically analyzed with the help of the work.

Ramesh K. Chauhan (2012), in his article 'Federalism, Governance and Demand for Smaller States In India' published in the Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 73, No. 2, deals with the federal structures and the experience of post independence Indian states and make arguments in favor of smaller states to address issues like administration , democracy, development, governance etc. The work questions on the viability of large states and justifies the demand of smaller states. The nature of Indian federalism is critically evaluated as well the representation among the states in the federal structure is compared to justify the support for smaller state in India. The work helps the study to understand the demand of smaller states from different paradigms and tries to give idea about the issue of large size state and the federal structure of India in dealing with such demands.

Anuradha Rai (2012), in her article 'State Reorganization in India: Real-Politicking or Electoral Politics, published in The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 73, No. 4, deals with the demands of state reorganization in India. She analyzes the factors that instigated the demand for state reorganization in India. The author explains different phases to elaborate the process of reorganization of states that took place in India. Rai also emphasizes on the reason and rationality behind such demands. The paradigms like identity issue, development, governance, peace has been critically analyzed in the article to justify the rationality behind such demands. Moreover, a critical analysis has been done to interlink the demands of state

reorganization with the electoral political set up of the country. It tries to explain the impact of such movements or demands on the electoral scenario of the country in general and the region in particular. The work helps the study to analyze the demands of state reorganization in India and their rationality and viability in future. In addition, the work helps the study to understand the process of such demands from electoral perspective also.

Udayan Mishra (2014), in his book "India's North East Identity, Movements, State and Civil society" published by oxford university press, Delhi deals with socio-political scenario of Northeast. By drawing parallels between the identification movement and its historical foundations and its perspective on the Indian federal system, he analyzes the character of the movement. The book also emphasizes the many methods in which states have responded to these movements, such as via repression and negotiation. This book is useful for tracing the origins of the ethnic conflict in Assam to its historical context. The government's reaction and the autonomy debate in the area are discussed, which aids in the study's critical analysis of the ethnic demographics of the area.

Swatahsiddah Sarkar (2014), in his article 'Gorkhaland and beyod analysis', published in Himal Southasian,Colombo, Sri Lanka deals with the issue of state responses in addressing the Gorkhaland demand. He examines the reasons for the quest of self-governance in Darjeeling by stating mainly due to recognition of the collective social and cultural rights of Gorkhas who identifies themselves as different from Bengali and self-governance without hampering the idea of national sovereignty. He also argues the bases of articulation of the demands for self-governance from Primordial and civility perspective. He critically evaluates the history of the movement and tries to analyze the relevance of it in the light of present context. The work helps the study to analyze the state response in addressing Gorkha issue and as well its impact and interlinkage with other paradigms as peace, ethnicity, rights, development.

Jaikhlong Basumotary (2014), in his article 'Quest for Peace in Assam: A Study of the Bodoland Movement' examines the Bodoland Movement from a

number of angles. He began his writing with a little background on Northeast India. He describes the Bodo people in general terms. According to him, all of North East India's mobilization has been centered on themes of ethnicity and identity. He explains that the movement got its start when the Bodo people's hopes and dreams were disregarded. He also sees the movement as the Bodo people's attempt to advance economically, socially, and culturally. He also details the progression of the movement from its inception in 1933 to the present day, with distinct stages occurring between 1967 and 1986, 1987 and 1992, 1993 and 2003, and 2003 and beyond. Basumotary also emphasized the significance of many groups within the movement. In addition, he discusses non-bodos and the effect of mobility on them. This article is useful for putting into words the work that has to be done to show how Bodoland's needs and activities have evolved at various points in time.

Miriam Weinner (2015), in her thesis 'Monopolising a statehood movement: Gorkhaland between authoritarian parties and 'aware citizen', University of Zurich, deals with idea of aware citizen as conscious people regarding their dream about Gorkhaland. She extensively writes about the changing of regimes, state as well as local level and their way of dealing with the issue of Gorkhaland. Her examination on government responses, initiative, and ethnic consciousness on the issue of Gorkhaland helps the study to analyse the movement from different perspective. The issues like identity crisis and class analysis of the movement are also helpful for the study to critically evaluate the nature of the movement. The presentation on political performance of different parties in her work helps the study to understand the relevance of the movement from electoral political framework of the country.

Bivek Tamang and Sangmu Thendup (2015), in their article 'Demerger' and Statehood: Similarities between Gorkhaland and Telangana' published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 50, No. 38, deals with the issue of statehood demand in India with focusing on the policy of demerging. In the article, they analyze the historical background of the demand of Gorkhaland. The emphasis has been given from colonial phase and their policies to the present time in dealing with

the issue of Gorkhaland. The authors try to establish the concept of demerging from the origin state to effectively deal with the issue of statehood. In this case , they take the example of Telengana and find the similarities between Gorkhaland and Telengana. The work is helpful to make a comparative analyze to the demands of statehood movement in India. It helps to find out the similarities and possible strategies to deal with the issue. Moreover, the historical analysis on the demand of Gorkhaland helps the study to analyze the quest for Gorkhaland from historical perspective.

Subungcha Mwshahary(2016), in his thesis 'Bodoland Movement: A Study in Ethnicity and Political Development among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 TO 1993, talks with numerous aspects that were associated with the movement. His theoretical work is an attempt to define ethnicity and nationalism and a description of Assamese ethnic phenomena. He introduces the Bodo people and discusses the commonalities shared by the various Assamese tribal communities. He analyzes the beginnings, development, and motivations of the movement, as well as its many stages. He also investigates ABSU's leadership and how they've been using their influence inside the movement. The possibility of an independent Bodoland state is also investigated by Mwshahary. He elaborates on the effects of the Bodo Accord on Bodo society and government. He also attempts to dissect the ideological conflict between various Bodo extremist organizations over the idea of Separate Bodoland and its deadly consequences. The work assists the study to understand the nature of the movement. The analysis benefits from his elaboration on the roles of various organizations in the Bodo movement.

Samrat Sinha (2017) in his article ' The Strategic Use of Peace: Non-State Armed Groups and Subnational Peacebuilding Mechanisms in North Eastern India' published in Democracy and Security, Vol 13, No.4 examines a diverse set of subnational peace processes and policy instruments in the context of India. The article emphasizes the insurgency that exists in Northeast India and its impact on other aspects. The article examines three different strategies that have been exercised by state authorities in reducing the violence in the aforementioned region. Each

strategy and its interlinkage have been thoroughly explained in the article with examples of different peace accords that had been witnessed in Northeast India. Gorkhaland and Bodoland, both movements have an ethnic dimension and witnessed severe violence in due course of the movements. The article helps the study in articulating the role of state authority in reducing the violence that took place due to these two ethnic assertion movements.

Bhupen Sarmah (2017) in his article ' India's Northeast and the Enigma of the Nation-state ' published in Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Vol 42(3) analyses the confrontation of India's process of nation-building in the northeastern part. The article describes the history of colonial annexation of the northeastern part of India and subsequent policies of colonial administration that created the dichotomy between the hills and valleys population. He explains the post-colonial administrative arrangement in dealing with Northeast India. In addition to this, his explanation on new power politics where the construction and reconstruction of ethnic identity became the means of bargaining with the nation state helps the study to evaluate the new contest for political power in North East. Moreover, the development paradigm and its impact on the nation building process is explained in the article which is helpful for the study in analysing the paradigm of development in the concerned region of both Gorkhaland and Bodoland movement.

Soham Das (2019) in the article 'Ethnic Conflict in the Indian Subcontinent: Assessing the Impact of Multiple Cleavages' published in the Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, Vol 6 No. 3, examines the ethnic conflict in Indian Subcontinent through different aspects of cleavages. The analysis of regional conflicts based on ethnic identity has been stated in the article. By emphasizing the role of different elements that lead the division in society, an argument has been made in the article that there was an existence of overlapping cleavages that further heighten the conflict among people. Theoretical analysis of ethnic conflict from different perspectives such as primordial and instrumentalism helps the study in understanding the ethnic dimension in the separate statehood movement. In addition to this, the analysis of elements of cleavages in society including the language,

religion, ethnicity, and their role helps the present study in analyzing the quest for a separate statehood movement in India.

Jairam Ramesh (2019) in his article 'Reorganisation of States and Thereafter' discusses the historical background of the reorganization of states in India and how it has impacted the social and political arenas. The author examines the Congress's stance on the reorganization of states based on linguistic principles during the colonial period. Later, after the withdrawal of commitment, massive protests and public outrage ensued. The author analyzes the recommendations made by the State Reorganization Commission and how it affected India's political climate. The author emphasizes three waves of state reorganization in India and the political implications of each, which helps in understanding the historical perspective of the statehood movement. Additionally, the study looks at recent developments surrounding the statehood movement, as well as the role of political parties in addressing the demands for statehood, providing insights into the political dimension of statehood movements in India.

The earlier studies on the issue of statehood movements did not cover the present context of the movements. A comparative analysis has not been done properly. Examining the role of civil society, political parties, and movement activists has not been analyzed critically to find out similarities and dissimilarities to understand different statehood movements in India in general, Gorkhaland and Bodoland in particular. State response and socio-political analysis by taking account of both movements provide the idea about the issues like on ethnic, identity and language and its impact on such movements. The study also explains the present status of the movement and its relevance among the people and in the region so that paradigms like peace, socio- economic development can be examined thoroughly.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The present study aims to examine the characteristics and dynamics of statehood movements in India. The primary focus of this study is directed towards the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements, specifically. The analysis focuses on

examining the evolution and current state of the movements from various perspectives in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their nature. This enables a critical evaluation of the different phases of the movement and their influence on various paradigms such as peace, development, ethnicity, and identity. Both movements have undergone various stages of development and are currently ongoing in the region. Various measures have been implemented by state actors in response to these movements. The aforementioned actions exert a direct influence on the trajectory of the movements. The present study aims to examine the role of government in effectively addressing the complex challenges associated with the statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The present study aims to conduct a comprehensive examination of the demographic context within the concerned region, with a specific focus on the roles played by civil societies, political parties, and movement activists in these respective movements. Furthermore, this research endeavour seeks to undertake a comparative analysis between the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of the intended investigation is to be limited to the geographical region encompassing Assam and West Bengal, with particular attention directed towards the locales where the Gorkhaland and Bodoland concerns hold significant influence. The proposed study uses a comparative approach in order to assess and analyse the patterns and trends of movements. The present study aims to provide a concise overview of the reactions exhibited by both state and central government entities in response to the various movements that have taken place in the region. Additionally, it seeks to explore the socio-political impacts that have arisen as a result of these movements.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research work holds considerable significance in the context of ongoing statehood movements in India. It sheds light on various dimensions such as ethnicity, identity, language, autonomy, and societal structure, which are closely

intertwined with these movements. Given the rich diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups in India, it is crucial to acknowledge that any demand or request made by one particular group can potentially have an impact on other groups within the region. The statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland have been characterized by a significant degree of violence. The study aims to investigate potential solutions that may be mutually agreed upon in order to foster peace within the region. The present study aims to conduct an analysis on the efficacy of government initiatives in order to comprehensively assess their direct and indirect influence on various societal movements. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge the significant contributions made by political parties, movement activists, and civil society in facilitating and advancing the progress of these movements. Therefore, the present study undertakes a comprehensive comparative analysis to elucidate the characteristics and patterns of these movements.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1.  To study the nature of statehood movements in India.

2.  To analyse the reasons for emergence of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements.

3.  To analyse state responses in dealing with these two movements.

4.  To make a comparative study on the process of these two movements

5.  To examine on the socio-political implications of these two movements in the region.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions-

1.      What is the nature of statehood movements in India?

2.      What are the reasons for the quest of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements?

3.      What are the state responses towards these two movements?

4.      What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements?

5.      What are the socio-political implications of these two movements in the region?

**METHODOLOGY**

The present research work is a comparative study particularly confined to the people in living in hill region of Darjeeling district, West Bengal and Bodoland Territorial Region, Assam. The study has combined both qualitative and quantitative research where primary and secondary sources of data have been used. The primary sources have been collected through field study and observation method. The field study has been based on sampling method of survey research.  In the field study, for collecting primary data a detailed questionnaire was prepared and circulated among the respondents. The Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements, although has basic components in its course but in regard to the question on political parties and their influence on the respective areas are varies from each other. That is why some questions are limited to particular region to obtain the opinion regarding political parties and their response towards the movements.

Depending upon the nature of study, the non-probability methods of sampling has been used. The respondents were purposively selected using the criteria of sex, age and occupation. The sample size of the present research is 200. From each movement 100 respondents have selected. So far as age is concerned, it was categorized into youths (15-24) and non-youths. In the question of occupation, the research classified the respondents in to 5 categories of representatives: service holder, members of political parties, member of civil society organization, students and business person.  From each category, 20 respondents have selected for each movement.

Secondary data is collected through available literature on the topic, magazines, newspapers, various publications of the central, state and local governments, reports and publications of various associations connected with the theme of the research.

Regarding data analysis, different methods are used in analysis the collected data. The researcher relied upon the use of analytical and descriptive methods in the study. Moreover, the researcher has used tables, charts and graphs to analyse the data statistically.

## CHAPTERIZATION

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter covers the introduction of the topic, demographic profile of Darjeeling and Assam, brief overview of GTA and BTR, significance of study, statement of the problem, review of literature, research questions, and methodology.

## CHAPTER II: STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The second chapter deals with the nature of statehood movement and try to analyze the process of such movements from different perspective. The chapter gives a brief introduction to the statehood movements of India. The nature of such movements is explained in order to critically evaluate the objectives of the movements.

## CHAPTER III: GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS

The third chapter discusses the nature of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movement. The chapter deals with the reasons for the community's quest for Gorkhaland and Bodoland. In this chapter, focus is given to analyze the different phases of both the movements. The chapter also highlights the status of the movements in the present context.

**CHAPTER IV: STATE RESPONSES: STATE AND UNION GOVERNMENTS**

The fourth chapter deals with the state and union governments' responses and attitudes towards the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movement. Different measures and initiative of governments is critically discussed to find out the effectiveness of the same in regard to addressing of the demands of Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The present development of state actions in response to the movements is also discussed in the chapter.

**CHAPTER V: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS**

The fifth chapter makes a comparison of the both movements highlighting evolution of the movements, reason of continuity of movements, nature of movements, and reaction to the different initiatives of the state actors towards the movements. The chapter analyses the different phases of the both movements and try to critically examine present context of the movements.

**CHAPTER VI: SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TWO MOVEMENTS**

The sixth section of this study examines the socio-political implications associated with the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements in the region. The analysis and critical examination of the impact of movements on paradigms such as peace, development, and violence in the region involves a comprehensive exploration of various issues. These issues encompass language, ethnicity, the role of civil society, political participation, political parties, and political development. The interplay between these factors and the aforementioned paradigms is carefully scrutinized, aiming to shed light on the mutually reinforcing effect between the movements and these fundamental aspects of societal dynamics.

**CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION**

The last chapter summarizes the study. It also includes concluding remarks as part of its findings.

**Conclusion**

The Indian constitution consists of two types of governments: unitary and federal. The federal model was established to reconcile national unity with regional authority, with the concept of regional autonomy closely linked to statehood within the federal system. The reorganization of states in India is not considered unlawful or contrary to national interests, as the justification for this is based on legal and constitutional grounds.

The restructuring of states in India has been significantly influenced by socio-cultural variety and factors such as language, ethnicity, identity, and underdevelopment. The political landscape of India has undergone several transformations, leading to its current state of 28 states and 8 Union Territories (UTs). The persistent pursuit of statehood in India is influenced by factors such as ethnicity, identity, economic stagnation, and language.

The Gorkhaland Movement aims to establish Gorkhaland, now part of West Bengal, as its own separate state within India. The Gorkhaland population, who speak Nepali, is linguistically and culturally distinct from the Bengalis. The colonial government is largely responsible for this movement, which has faced challenges such as linguistic diversity, economic stagnation, and cultural division. The movement's evolution can be traced back to factors such as political shifts, leader personalities, government responses, the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), violence during early stages, and the creation of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA).

The concept of Bodoland refers to the aspirations expressed by the Bodo community in Assam, a region with diverse ethnic groups contributing to the region's rich cultural variety. The Bodo people, one of the earliest indigenous communities in the region, have experienced a decline in regional significance led to concerns about rights and identity.

The Bodo community, which constitutes approximately 12% of the overall tribal population, was not afforded specific protective measures during colonial

administration. In post-independent India, the government has adopted various strategies to address the challenges faced by the Bodo community. The Bodo Autonomous Council (1993), Bodo Territorial Council (2003) are significant administrative measures implemented by the government to address the Bodo community's demands. However, the notion of establishing a separate Bodoland continues to hold relevance within the region.

**CHAPTER II**

**STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Indian state has been confronted with the challenge of addressing calls for separate statehood, mostly rooted in linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious factors. Subsequently, rationale behind the calls for statehood predominantly transitioned towards the pursuit of improved governance and increased involvement of general population in democratic system. The desire for establishment of new states is often perceived as a means to safeguard and uphold the distinct identity rooted in ethnicity, culture, and language. Furthermore, proponents of the establishment of new states argue that the challenges pertaining to limited citizen engagement in democratic processes, low voter turnout, ethnic and cultural conflicts, as well as issues related to development and governance, could be effectively mitigated by the creation of new states. Hence, the need for establishment of new states has been advocated by diverse political factions and individuals residing in different regions periodically.

The concept of establishing new states is closely linked to the principle of regional autonomy. The factors of language, ethnicity, and identity significantly contribute to the mobilisation of these demands. The act of reorganising states is not perceived as unconstitutional or contrary to national interests, as the Constitution of India includes a well-established provision for it, specifically outlined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Indian constitution. This chapter aims to present a theoretical framework for understanding the statehood movements in India. This chapter explores the nature of statehood movements and aims to understand the processes involved in such movements from many perspectives. This chapter critically evaluates the elements contributing to the increase of these demands, the underlying reasons for this growth, and the feasibility of adopting such an approach.

**NATURE OF STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

Some social movements in India have used regional identity sets in electoral politics as well as sought political autonomy in the shape of statehood

underneath the federal system. This is in the context of country's multi-ethnic federal system, which acknowledges the country's cultural diversity. The effective mobilization of identity framing by social movements has been facilitated by the establishment of new states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and lately, Telengana.[1] The success of such movements indicates rising interlink between institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics, and between social movements, electoral politics and the state. Statehood movements are not merely challengers outside the state, as the conventional picture of social movements implies as their actors, fates, and organisations are often closely associated with political parties. It is no more viable to separate statehood movements from "normal politics" in most parts of the globe. Movements and politics are inextricably connected, as Sidney Tarrow argues, with the political climate having a significant impact on the tactics and outcomes of social movements.[2]

India's neutral political framework in relation to grassroots movements has been able to endure since the 1970s because of the growth of new social movements.[3] This attribute was a direct result of the fact that the movement originated inside India's preexisting political structure during a time of major instability in politics.[4] The development procedures in many places in India have come under scrutiny as a result of these movements. These movements might be seen as a reaction to the failure of traditional opposing organisations like political parties, labour unions, and left-leaning academics to adequately represent the needs and interests of those on the margins.

---

[1] The new states of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand were formed on the 1st, 9th, and 15th of November 2000, respectively. It changed the count of Indian states from 25 to 28. On 2 June 2014, the area was separated from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state of Telangana, with Hyderabad as its capital.

[2] Sidney Tarrow, "Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[3] New social movements include issues like identity, human rights, ecological concern. Unlike its predecessor, it focuses on social aspect rather than class and economic one.

[4] Decline of dominance of congress party, and emergence of new political parties to compete for power in late 1970s.

A shift towards a broader understanding of decentralized development and democratic rule[5], in which regional issues have become the main point of political activity, is responsible for the growth of new movements, argues Rajni Kothari.[6] The study of societal movements in India is usually performed in separation from political factions due to their inception being intimately related to an instability in the Indian party structure. This fact demonstrates that studies of political parties and studies of social movements constitute separate scholarly traditions. Many people look to social movements as an alternative to effect change in society. Concerns about being co-opted are a common source of anxiety for social activists who want to remain politically neutral. Social movement theory provides a useful lens through which to examine the statehood movement, revealing that such movements could possibly be seen as evidence of the spread of democracy and a heightened awareness of people' basic rights at the grass-roots level.[7]

The study looks at the characteristics shared by current social movements, with a focus on those advocating for autonomy and statehood at the national and regional levels. It argues that social movements might give rise to a wide range of political institutions that allow for more citizen participation in the policymaking process.[8] Samaddar says that the need for autonomy was linked to the rise of new political subjects that questioned state power by claiming their autonomy.[9] From his point of view, the symbol stands for the developmental structures of emerging political spheres that included ideas of rights and justice.[10] An important expression of public emotion and the denial of the ruling authority, in Kothari's view, is the call for regional autonomy. A radical change in perspective and a growing awareness of personal rights in relation to the state are the foundations upon which this new power in politics was rising.[11] In Kaviraj's opinion, the 1980s grassroots regionalist movements might be seen as a reaction to the centralising

---

[5] Atul Kohli, *The Success of India's Democracy*, vol. 6 (Cambridge University Press, 2001), P. 1-19
[6] Rajni Kothari, "The Non-Party Political Process," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1984, 216–24.
[7] Kothari.(1984) *Op.cit*. p 220
[8] Sudipta Kaviraj, "*Crisis of the Nation-State in India*" 1994,"
[9] Ranabir Samaddar, *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experiences* (Sage, 2005),.p.9-34
[10] Samaddar.(2005) *Op.cit* 15
[11] Kothari,( 1984) *Op.cit*.

initiatives of the Indian government. The pursuit of autonomy may be seen as a democratic effort to create a government and social structure that were more open and distributed power.[12]

New sorts of social movements evolved in India in the 1970s, and a critical study of the statehood movement and its growing link with the political party and state represents a break from these prior conceptualizations. According to Bebbington, social movements are "processes of spatially and temporally diffuse collective action that is sustained over time and framed within a shared identity and set of programmatic commitments".[13]He said that while there were many different groups and concerns, social movements are not immutable entities but rather changeable and difficult to classify. Because of this fuzziness, some authors have proposed replacing the term "social movement" with "contentious politics", which refers to "concerted, counter hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge the dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries".[14] Such an examination may be extended to include the statehood movement, whose members fought for the right to self-determination that they were being denied by the established order.

There are multiple perspectives that highlighted the distinction between political parties and social movements, they coexist. According to Schlesinger, the primary objective of political parties is "to gain the control of the government in the name of the group by winning election to public office."[15] Kitschelt says that political parties invested more into their organizational structure, define membership roles, have a clear division of labour, and function along change of command. The parties use the institutional channels of the political system and involved in electoral politics. In contrast to this, the social movements concentrate their protest outside of

---

[12] Sudipta Kaviraj,(1994). *Op.cit.*

[13] Anthony Bebbington, "Poverty Reduction and Social Movements: A Framework with Cases," *Background Paper for UNRISD Report on Combating Poverty and Inequality*, 2009,.p.8

[14] Helga Leitner, Eric Sheppard, and Kristin M. Sziarto, "The Spatialities of Contentious Politics," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographer*s 33, no. 2 (April 2008): 157–72.

[15] Joseph A. Schlesinger, "The New American Political Party," *American Political Science Review* 79, no. 4 (1985): 1152–69.

such channels, e.g. through street politics.[16] According to Wenner, this perspective on societal movements and parties is not an indication that they are separate entities.[17] Parties within the context of social movements have been present in India's statehood struggle, and at times they have been the movement's primary motivating factor. The party is included as a "Social Movement Organisation" in existing literature on social movements. Only organisations like NGOs, Churches, and parties can channel the monetary, human, social, and other resources necessary for movements to succeed. The movement to continue for a long period, the only ideology is unable to afford it. But in the long term, the existence of social movement organisations in the course of movements can make it sustainable.[18] Political parties are often seen as helpful to social movement organisations because they provide the movement more organisational power. The inclination of political parties to the movement is due to the increase of their ideological credibility among the masses.[19] Basu said that "social movements may eventually become formalised as parties or that parties could spark movements."[20] It is noted that non-party political groups sometimes put-up barriers to prevent party politicians from using their public areas for political purposes. Anup Kumar makes a distinction between the party movement and the non-party popular movement in his research on Uttarakhand.[21] This kind of opposition, according to Baruah[22], has been experienced throughout the Assam movement as well. The point at which the identities of the movement and the political groups that supported it diverge.

The analysis of social movement as not party-political phenomena in a rigid sense might not be taken into account in the case of social movement in India, especially the statehood movement. For instance, Tillin's in-depth analysis of the

---

[16] Herbert Kitschelt, "Movement Parties," *Handbook of Party Politics 1* (2006): 278–90.

[17] Miriam Wenner, "Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens"" (PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015).

[18] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977): 1212–41.

[19] Amrita Basu, "The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism," *The Success of India's Democracy* 163 (2001): 89. P.163–189.

[20] Basu.(2001). Op.cit

[21] Anup Kumar, "The Making of a Small State: Populist Social Mobilisation and the Hindi Press in the Uttarakhand Movement," (Orient Blackswan), 2011.

[22] Sanjib Baruah, *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

events leading up to the formation of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand in 2000 reveals that such movements should not be seen in isolation from the local, regional, and national party-political setting in which they arose. The demarcation between party politics and social movements is indistinct. She asserts that diverse organisations, such as social movements and regional as well as national political parties, sought differing ideals for the states to be given, thus statehood became the least commonality among them. This "compromise politics" meant silencing part of the social movements' ideological substance. When political parties were involved in previous statehood movements, their attitudes towards the movement's ideological substance represented a middle ground between competing views of what the state should be.[23]

On the nature of parties in the course of social movements, Basu argues about the 'dual tactics of political parties.' She states that there was no clear-cut distinction between movements and parties. Political parties can itself combine two identities one of an active social movement and the other is a moderate political party. She claims that while 'a social movement tended to stress belief and ideologies and was rather uncompromising about its objective, a political party attempted to garner votes for electoral success making it more compromising on its principles.'[24] Kitschelt provides his concept of 'movement parties' which are defined as a 'coalition of political activists who emanate from social movement and try to apply the organization and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition'.[25] This definition of movement parties indicates the presence of political parties in the regime of social movements and there is no such clear-cut distinction between social movements and political parties.

The demands of statehood movements, according to Baruah, are formed inside the framework of the Indian nation-state, hence they are not separatist but sub-national.[26] The state's failure to provide what individuals see as their due had contributed to the growth of such movements. As a result of the state's inability to

---

[23] Louise Tillin, *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins* (Hurst Publishers, 2013).
[24] *Basu, "The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism."* p.164
[25] Kitschelt, "*Movement Parties.*" P. 280
[26] Sanjib Baruah, "*Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India,*" 2007.

meet citizens' expectations for either symbolic or material benefits, groups for autonomy and statehood have emerged. Symbols signify the acceptance of ethnic identities and ways of life. And material content is development and welfare. According to many experts in the social sciences, the rise of autonomy, regional, and statehood movements may be traced back to the failure of federal government to fulfil the expectations of the people.[27] It has been noted that the primary demands of the Indian groups fighting for a separate state were the affirmation and defence of their ethnic identities and the redressed of their socioeconomic plights. The enhanced autonomy, either in the shape of a regional council or statehood, was seen by the movement's leaders and populace as being able to realize their goals.

The fight for statehood is also seen through the lens of class perspective. The push for autonomy or a separate state is seen as a kind of elite manipulation. This approach is based around an instrumentalist conception of ethnic identity. According to the instrumentalist view of elite identification, 'ethnicity is a social and political creation of elites who compete for state resources and community power'.[28] The concept of a statehood movement is based on the desire of local elite to consolidate their authority. It is more or less like elite competition to gain power. Mawdsley claims that regional mobilisation, like other social movements, might disguise partial and elite interest and manipulation.[29] According to Shah's research on the Jharkhand movement, notion of statehood meant various things to different people.[30] When examined from this viewpoint, the social movement's class dynamics become clearer. The statehood movements in India and the results of such movements showed that the misery of the ordinary people was not addressed. Despite several government attempts to appease the public's desire for autonomy, the

---

[27] Expert like Sudipta Kaviraj, Sanjib Baruah, Rajni Kothari argued that the failure of federal government to fulfil the expectations of regional concern led to the statehood movement in India.

[28] Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison (*New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1991).

[29] Emma Mawdsley, "Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 40, no. 3 (November 2002): 34–54.

[30] Alpa Shah, "Who Cares for a New State?: The Imaginary Institution of Jharkhand 1," in The *Politics of Belonging in India* (Routledge, 2011), 217–30.

majority's complaints have not changed. In some ways, the elite nature of statehood movements is reflected in the government's top-down approach to dealing with them.

Regardless of the causes of social movements, the history of their activity in India since the 1970s points to a mutually reinforcing relationship between the growth of these movements, the Congress Party's shift from being the country's dominant political party, and the rise of new political parties, many of which have politicised caste-and/or region-based identities and taken up some of the issues brought up by the 1970s social movements. Over time, a large number of non-party movements have been inclined to tilt towards the electoral political spectrum. With changes in electoral politics that reflect various forms of mobilisation by marginalised people, it has been supported more. The trend is seen in Indian statehood movements and the growing demand for autonomy. In India, party politics and the state are clearly involved in shaping the direction of statehood initiatives. The statehood movements, which were first sparked with the intention of guaranteeing identity, progress, and the preservation of culture and language, have evolved to adopt new paradigms connected to state and electoral politics. A few instances of how state and electoral politics have impacted the statehood movement in the region are the creation of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).[31]

**NATIONALISM AND STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS**

Sovereignty is intrinsically tied to the notion of nationalism. The idea of political self-determination, exemplified by nationalism, always leads to the establishment of an independent nation-state, as shown by this fact. It is possible to note that in multicultural societies, national emotion is utilized to secure political autonomy so that citizens might safeguard their identity and their culture and language. Cultural nationalism is one phrase for this phenomenon. Multicultural India's aspirations for separate political representation within the country's federal structure may be seen in this light. People from many different countries and cultures

---

[31] GTA and BTR are institutional setup in response to demand of Gorkhaland and Bodoland respectively.

live together in a multi-national state. Countries all around the globe struggle with varying degrees of national identity, leading to conflicting demands for citizens' allegiance. In such nations, patriotism to the central government often clashes with patriotism to one's country of origin. In these situations, people's civil-political identities tend to coexist alongside their cultural ones, rather than being discarded or moderated. One or more nations may feel objectively or subjectively disadvantaged if the framework is altered in any way.

The political notion of nationalism originated in modern European nations before spreading to other parts of the world over different periods. India's historical experience of colonisation by Europeans, similar to other regions, diminishes its exceptionalism. It is crucial to acknowledge that, unlike Europe, where nationalism arose with the objective of establishing modern, sovereign nations based on national identity in alignment with the principle of one-nation, one-state[32], nationalism in diverse India was conceptualised in distinct ways depending on the prevailing circumstances. Nationalism in India emerged as a political consciousness characterised by opposition to colonial rule and a fervent desire for self-governance and liberation from foreign domination. Cultural awareness at the regional level is seen as a strategy to protect distinct cultural populations living in their own historical habitats. The former represents the cultural expression of nationalism, whilst the latter signifies the political dimension of nationalism. The inherent paradoxical nature of nationalism did not draw much criticism until the advent of colonial domination.

Political nationalism in India has been essential in freeing the country from foreign domination since it is rooted in a common experience of colonialism. Independence, however, caused the situation to rapidly escalate. With independence came the challenge of reorganising provinces or states, which had not been addressed by the colonial government since it had not followed any precise procedures to determine the boundaries of provinces. Cultural nationalists have pushed for competing claims to redraw or rearrange India's state boundaries. The idea that there

---

[32] Establishment of state based on one nationalism. After the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the modern Europe was constructed on this principle.

was a struggle between various cultural nationalisms was incorrect. Instead, one needs to look at the nationalism issue from both a "statist" and an "ethnicist" standpoint.[33] The statists interpret nationalism from the perspective of the dominant culture and the state itself. The ethnicists, who are sensitive to the concept of cultural difference, are emphatic that the country and nationalism be acknowledged within the context of the multicultural setup. The proponents of statism argue for the integration of many cultures into the dominant mainstream culture. Ethnicists, on the other hand, oppose assimilation because they fear it would result in the erosion of local traditions and languages. It might also cause a social hierarchy to form, with the dominant culture at the top and the minority cultures that practiced cultural separatism at the bottom. It might also mean that different cultural groups don't have the same chances for economic success.

Different arrangements have been created in post-independence India to satisfy the demands of cultural nationalism. Accommodation of cultural nationalism within the federal structure of the country can be seen in the reorganisation of states in 1956 along linguistic lines, the redrawing of state boundaries along ethnicity in north east India, and the creation of new states like Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand in 2000 and Telangana in 2014 by considering the protection of culture, language, and regional development. There is still a call for an independent state in certain parts of India. Lack of competent administration, decent governance, economic and infrastructural development, and the like also contribute to the rising demands for new states in contemporary India, which are only partially explained by cultural nationalism based on language, culture, and ethnicity.

## DEMAND OF AUTONOMY AND STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS

The idea of autonomy is connected with demands of statehood movement. Statehood movements are designed and guided within the federal structure of the country to ensure and attain the degree of autonomy, which in result would strengthen the position of democracy. The idea of autonomy is based on the

---

[33] Subrat K. Nanda, "Cultural Nationalism in a Multi-National Context: The Case of India," *Sociological Bulletin* 55, no. 1 (January 2006): 24–44.

principles of minority and indigenous rights and the right to self-determination for a community or a region to bestow it substantial administrative, fiscal policy and other powers. The idea of autonomy also enlists the concept of decentralization by highlighting the idea of self-legislation. The demand for statehood emphasizes the idea of autonomy as it perceived autonomy is vital to protect the identity, language and culture and to ensure development and effective governance. The federal structure of the country also allows having such autonomy from legal perspective. The concepts like autonomy, the federal structure and the demands for statehood are interlinked to each other.

## REORGANIZATION OF STATES IN INDIA

The history of demand for reorganization of state on linguistic line was soon followed after the independence of India. The demand for statehood and their accommodation in the federal structure of India can be classified into three phases. In the first phase, there was demand of reorganization of states on linguistic line. The Government of India appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K. Dhar to examine the feasibility of reorganization of States on linguistic basis in June, 1948.[34] The commission submitted the report on December, 1948 and recommended the reorganization of states on administrative convenience rather than on a linguistic basis. However, the protest and demand for reorganization of states on linguistic basis was continued. Realizing the resentment of public against Dhar's report, a new Linguistic Provinces Committee (JVP committee)[35] was appointed to examine the issue by the congress in December, 1948. The new JVP committee did not favour a linguistic base in reorganizing of states. However, in 1953 the first linguistic state came into being for Andhra Pradesh, created by separating the Telugu speaking areas from the State of Madras. This followed a prolonged agitation and the death of Potti Sreeramulu after a 56- day hunger strike.

---

[34] In June 1948, the Government of India appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission under the chairmanship of S.K. Dhar to examine the feasibility of reorganization of states on linguistic line.

[35] The recommendations submitted by the Dhar Commission created much resentment and led to the appointment of another Linguistic Provinces Committee by Congress in December 1948.This new committee consisted of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya and was popularly known as JVP Commission.

The creation of Andhra Pradesh[36] added the new shape to the demands of reorganization of states on linguistic basis. As there were several more demands for states on a linguistic basis, a commission was set up under Justice F.Fazl Ali with H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar, as members to study the demand by Government of India. It submitted its report in September, 1955. Its suggestions were accepted with modifications and the States Reorganization Act was passed in 1956. As a result, the fourfold distribution of States was replaced by 14 States and six Union Territories vide the Seventh Constitution Amendment.[37]

Second phase of state reorganization started with the demand of new states on ethnic differences in the north-east region of the country. The ethnic dimension in North east India is peculiar to the rest of India. From the colonial period itself, different measures were taken to deal with the administration of North East India. Soon after independence, the government of India also looked into the matter and separate provisions were made to address the issue of self legislation or autonomy in the regions and also for effective governance. Later on, one has witnessed the demand for autonomy rising for statehood to sovereign state was made as objecting the measures were not sufficient enough to protect and ensure their uniqueness in terms of their ethnic identity. Nagaland was carved out from Assam and granted statehood in the year 1963. Nagaland was the first state to be established on ethnic line. A major redrawing of state boundaries was occurred in North east India in 1970s. North-east was split up and the Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura were created through North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act,1971.[38] This was followed by statehood to Arunachal Pradesh, as well as Mizoram.[39] However, the problem in northeast is not settled yet and demand for autonomy and statehood is still a recurrent phenomenon in the region.

---

[36] Andhra Pradesh got statehood on 1st November, 1956. It is the first state based on linguistic line.

[37] The states were Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Mysore, Madras, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Bombay, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa.The UTs were Delhi, Tripura, Manipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Himachal Pradesh, and Lacadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi islands.

[38] An Act to provide for the establishment of the States of Manipur and Tripura and to provide for the formation of the State of Meghalaya and of the Union territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh by reorganisation of the existing State of Assam on 30 December 1971.

[39] Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram got the status of State from Union Territory on 20th February in 1987.

The third phase of state reorganization in India led to the creation of three new states of Chhattisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal out of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand out of Bihar in 2000. The issue of development and cultural difference has been viewed as major reason for the creation of these three states. Recently, the creation of Telengana in 2014 also paved the way of analysis of viability of such demands from the economic, cultural, development perspective. The role of political party and the state in the course of the statehood movement has been increased which is evident from the movement laid in the region above mentioned four states. The demand for statehood in India is a continuous phenomenon. Right from the independence to present day, the demands are mobilized and framed by taking account of different paradigms like ethnicity, language, development.

## REASONS FOR THE DEMAND OF STATEHOOD

Some other factors are also responsible for instigating such demands of statehood in India. An analysis has been made to point out some factors for causing such demands. During the colonial period, the establishments of provinces were purely for administrative and business convenience. The ground reality of Indian society was not considered as base of creation of provinces. The diversity of Indian society in terms of religion, language, culture, and ethnicity was not taking account of. In the post colonial period, the demands were made to create provinces or states more or less in Indian way by taking account of diversity of Indian society. But the accommodation of such diversity in the political set up is not welcomed from the administrative perspective. Although an effort has been made to provide ground of satisfaction to accommodate cultural nationalism but it is difficult task to treat all nationality in the same and equal way. This exclusive benefit of having statehood is apple of discord between the two, who got their statehood and who did not. So those, which are viewing statehood is an only option to ensure and protect their cultural nationalist identity continuing their demands for the statehood.

One of the major factors in contributing to the demands of statehood movement in India was due to ineffective implementation of democratic and decentralized system of governance. The concentration of authority and resources at

central and state level has created the problem of developmental imbalance and neglect the interest of certain sections of population. Further, the issue of having a state language on the basis of majority paved the way for the linguistic minority of a specific state to demand equal representation of their language via creation of new state as they felt it would lead the way of their submission to alien language and their identity would be in risk. In addition, the attitude and role of the government in dealing with the issue of development of region and population also caused the demand for new states in India. Indian government failed to pay equal attention towards the development of all the regions and help to promote a balanced growth of all the states. By considering the issue of development and attitude of the government in addressing the same, the movement of statehood gained momentum in the recent period.

**RATIONALITY OF STATEHOOD DEMANDS**

The traditional view of the centre about the creation of new states is that it would lead to the emergence of parochial and anti-national tendencies in the country. Furthermore, it would weaken the position of central government and political nationalism of the country may be at risk. The supporters of demand for new states also point out some arguments in support of the rationality behind such decision. They view that the reorganization of states on cultural, ethnic and language grounds would help to promote the democratic ethos. Reorganization of states and creation of new states has been advocated in India on the basis that it would ensure greater participation of the marginalized sections of population and promote democracy. Those groups which remained suppressed by the will of majority will get a chance to express their views in a state represented by them and they would come in the mainstream of the political process. In addition to this, smaller size would be more administrative convenient and ensure good governance in comparison to a large state. The economic viability can be also ensured with the process of reorganization of state and it will help to address the specific development target for population of the region as there are similarities in the development needs of the sub region.

**PRESENT STATUS OF STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

Some prominent ongoing statehood movements in India are discussed below. The word 'prominent' is used by considering the impact of such movements in socio-political, economic life of the people and the region. The following statehood movements have not found the desired destiny of statehood yet- Harit Pradesh (Western Uttar Pradesh), Purvanchal (Eastern Uttar Pradesh), Bundelkhand, Vindhya Pradesh, Bodoland (Northern Assam), Saurashtra (Southern Gujrat), Gorkhaland (Northern West Bengal), Kongu Nadu (Southern Tamil Nadu), Vidarbha (Eastern Maharashtra), Konkan. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to provide a short introduction of different statehood movements of India. The statehood movement of Gorkhaland and Bodoland has been discussed in details in the following chapter.

*Vidarbha*: The North-eastern part of Maharashtra (comprising two other divisions- Nagpur Division and Amravati Divisions) is known as Vidarbha. The total area of this region is almost 95,391 sq. K.M. and population is approximately 2.30 Crore.[40] Almost all major religions are practiced in Vidarbha- Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Though this region is a Marathi-speaking area but to preserve the rich and distinct culture of the land— which essentially means the amalgamation of Marathi culture, Telegu, the central Indian culture and a particular tribal culture of Chhattisgarh—the people of Vidarbha demanded a separate statehood. Vidarbha is rich in mineral resources and forest resources and also notable for cotton and orange production and power generation capacity. Despite being a region which is rich in mineral resources, Vidarbha remains one of the most backward and underdeveloped regions in Maharashtra. Thus, besides a different cultural identity, the demand for a separate statehood for Vidarbha can also be related to the land's slow progress. In comparison with the Western part of Maharashtra, Vidarbha region is much worn out by severe drought, Maoist problems and farmers' suicide.

---

[40] Census Report of 2011

The State Reorganization Commission, formed on December, 1953, under the leadership of central government of Congress, recommended the formation of Vidarbha. But, Vidarbha was merged with Maharashtra state on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1960, under the Nagpur Pact. Before every election different political leaders of different political parties used the issue of a separate statehood for Vidarbha as the sole poll agenda. Madhav Aney and Raje Vishveswarraowon won Lok Sabha seats of Nagpur (in 1962) and of Chandrapur (in 1977) respectively on the sole poll plank of separate statehood for Vidarbha. Devendra Fadnavis, won the Lok Sabha election in 2014, from Maharashtra, on the basis of same key poll issue. But the central government has signaled little hope to carve a new state out of Maharashtra. In reply to a journalist's question—whether steps would be taken or not to make Vidarbha a separate state—the Union Minister of State for Home, Nityanand Rai said, "No such proposal is under consideration with government. Creation of a new state has wide ramifications and has a direct bearing on the federal polity of our country. The government takes a decision on the matter of formation of new states after taking into consideration all relevant factors, and only when there is a broad consensus on the issue." But, the demand for a separate statehood for Vidarbha is still going on time to time represented by various individuals and organizations. Recently, during the COVID-19 vaccination campaign for the age group of 18-45, the private hospitals of Vidarbha have undergone a serious crisis of vaccines, and this incident has renewed the demand again, as the people of Vidarbha felt neglected by the central as well as the state government.

_**Delhi:**_ The National Capital Territory, Delhi is neither a proper Union Territory nor a full-fledged state. Though the NCT has a self-elected government, but the lack of self autonomy induced a separate statehood demand for Delhi among people. Delhi NCT region occupies approximately an area of 1,484 sq K.M. and according to 2011 census, population is about 16.8 million, covering over 11 million people from the proper city of Delhi. Political parties demand the separate statehood for Delhi while acting as opposition parties. But as soon as power shifts and the opposition parties form the government, they abandon the idea of the separate statehood routinely. In 1911, Delhi got the honor of being the capital city of British

India.[41] Thereafter, under the Government of India Act 1919 and 1935, Delhi got the status of Chief Commissioner's Province, which was ruled by the Governor-General with the help of a Chief Commissioner. But the most prominent step to make Delhi autonomous in regard of politics and administration was taken in the month of July, 1947. The then newly formed Pattabhi Sitaramayya Committee, suggested, Delhi must have autonomy and self-governance as a National Capital Territory. But, notable members of the Constitution drafting committee like B.R. Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru protested against the suggestion of Pattabhi Sitaramayya Committee by arguing, that the National Capital of India could not be managed only by the administration of a local government.[42] In 1951, The Government of Part C States Act was passed which allowed Delhi to have a Legislative Assembly, Council of ministers and a Chief Minister. As a result, in 1952, Chowdhury Brahm Perkash of INC won the election and became the first CM of Delhi.

Through the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1991, Delhi received Special Status among UTs. But, the power of public order, police, Municipal Corporation, land is still within the domain of central government. Thus, the Kejriwal Government recently claimed that his party was going to renew one of the AAP's[43] pre-electoral promises, i.e., the demand for statehood for Delhi.

*__Bundelkhand:__*   Bundelkhand is a hilly region pervaded between two states—Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The region includes 7 districts of Uttar Pradesh and 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh. Bundelkhand is comprised of almost 70,747 sq. km and total population is about 18,335,044. Languages spoken in this region are primarily Bundeli and Hindi.[44]

The movement of separate statehood for Bundelkhand is led essentially by The Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha. Some spokesmen who supported this movement include, the actor cum crusader Raja Bundela and BSP chief Mayawati in the recent

---

[41] Prior to 1911, Calcutta was designated as capital of India.
[42] "Constituent Assembly Debates - Constitution of India."
[43] Aam admi party (AAP). It was founded in 2012. Currently AAP is holding the power in Delhi Assembly.
[44] "Bundelkhand," Bing, accessed November 24, 2023.

time. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, known as the architect of Indian Constitution, also recommended the division of Uttar Pradesh in his book called 'Bhashayi Rajya'. The BSP chief, Mayawati, for the first time in 2007, kept in the fore, the demand of creating four separate states out of Uttar Pradesh, mainly on linguistic differences. She suggested the division of four different states from UP—Harit Pradesh (Western UP), Poorvanchal (Eastern UP), Bundelkhand and Awadh. Her resolution was supported by the two major political parties—Congress and BJP. But after losing power in 2012, her demand was waned. Nevertheless, organizations like Bundelkhand Ekikrit Party[45] and Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha[46], are still demanding a separate statehood for Buldenkhand.

Bundelkhand's economy is largely dependent on agriculture, more than half of the population of Bundelkhand is plagued by deep poverty. The poor-quality soil and irregular rain in this area make agriculture difficult. Despite being the central part of Madhya Pradesh, the underdeveloped condition compelled the people of this region to raise a demand for separate statehood for Bundelkhand. Dividing U.P. into four different parts would definitely help to quicken the pace of development in the region. A leader of Bharatiya Janata Party, Uma Bharati during her election campaign in 2014, promised the people of Bundelkhand for a 'separate statehood for Bundelkhand'. So, this promise has more or less revived the demand anew.

***Saurashtra:***    Saurashtra is situated on the verge of Arabian sea coast, mainly covers the Southern peninsular part of Gujrat, and includes 11 districts of Gujrat with Rajkot as the capital city. The original name of the formerly existed state was the United States of Kathiawar. Around 200 tiny Princely States were added together to form the state. The earlier state of Saurashtra was formed in 1948. Before merging the state with Gujrat in 1960, this region was merged with Bombay state.

The demand for a separate state of Saurashtra was pioneered by Advocate Ratilal Tanna, in 1972. He was a close assistant of the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai. More than 300 organizations across Saurashtra are expressing themselves out

---

[45] "Bundelkhand Ekikrit Party (BEP) Protesters Demanding Separate Statehood | Bundelkhand Research Portal," accessed November 24, 2023.

[46] " Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha - Bundelkhand Research Portal,". Accessed November 4,2023.

loud for the sake of creating Saurashtra as an autonomous state. Besides the linguistic barrier, the historical differences between Gujrat and Maharashtra make the Intra-state debate more complex. Because these two states were divided on the basis of linguistic identity—Marathi-speaking region was named as Maharashtra whereas the Gujrati-speaking region was names as Gujrat—the injustice was done on Saurashtra. Though the languages of Saurashtra and Gujrat are one, but these two regions vary in many other aspects. Saurashtra was merged with Gujrat in the year 1961.[47]

Since India's independence, the country has faced calls for independent statehood, primarily rooted in linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious factors. The rationale behind these calls has shifted towards improved governance and increased involvement. The establishment of new states is often seen as a means to safeguard and uphold the distinct identity rooted in ethnicity, culture, and language. Proponents argue that the challenges pertaining to limited citizen engagement in democratic processes, low voter turnout, ethnic and cultural conflicts, and issues related to development and governance could be effectively mitigated by the creation of new states.

The concept of establishing new states is closely linked to the principle of regional autonomy, with factors such as language, ethnicity, and identity significantly contributing to the mobilization of these demands. In the context of a multi-ethnic federal system, some social movements in India have drawn on regional identity frames in electoral politics and demanded political autonomy in the form of statehood within the federal system. The statehood movement in India might be seen as manifestation of the expansion of democracy and the increased consciousness of citizens at the grassroots level regarding their rights. Contemporary social movements, particularly those advocating for statehood and regional autonomy, have the capacity to foster diverse political structures that facilitated and increased involvement of the general public in the process of government.

---

[47] Prior to 1961, Saurastra was part of Bombay.

In India, the statehood movement has witnessed the presence of parties within the scope of social movements, sometimes acting as the main driving force on the course of the movement. The presence of social movement organizations can lead to movement in the long run, providing organizational strength and increasing ideological credibility among the masses. However, the analysis of social movements as not party-political phenomena in a rigid sense might not take into account the case of social movements in India, especially the statehood movement. The boundaries between social movement and party politics are fuzzy. There is no clear-cut distinction between movements and parties in the course of social movements. The statehood movement is also viewed from the class perspective, with the demand for autonomy or statehood being regarded as an elite manipulation phenomenon. The idea of statehood is about the local elite gaining political power, and regional mobilization can mask partial and elite interest and manipulation.

The conventional perspective about the opposition of the central authority towards the establishment of new states posits that such a development may potentially foster parochial and anti-national inclinations, undermine the strength of the central government, and pose a danger to political nationalism. Nevertheless, proponents contend that the restructuring of governments based on cultural, ethnic, and linguistic factors might potentially foster democratic principles, enhance the involvement of marginalised communities, and establish effective governance. Smaller states has the potential to exhibit enhanced administrative and economic viability, therefore enabling them to effectively cater to the unique development objectives of the people within their respective regions.

**Conclusion**

India has witnessed demand for separate statehood since its independence, primarily due to linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and religious factors. The idea is to improve governance and increase citizen involvement, addressing challenges such as limited citizen engagement, low voter turnout, ethnic and cultural conflicts, and issues related to development and governance. The concept of establishing new states is closely linked to regional autonomy, with factors such as language, ethnicity, and

identity contributing to the mobilization of these demands. Contemporary social movements in India have the capacity to foster diverse political structures and increased public involvement in government. However, the boundaries between social movements and party politics are blurred, and the demand for autonomy or statehood is often viewed as an elite manipulation phenomenon. It is argued that restructuring governments based on cultural, ethnic, and linguistic factors could foster democratic principles, enhance marginalized communities' involvement, and establish effective governance.

# CHAPTER III

## GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS

The issue of demanding additional states in India is not a recent one. The statehood movements in India have undergone many stages throughout time. The pursuit of regional autonomy is driven by the desire to solve several concerns, including as identity, ethnic uniqueness, socio-economic disparities, and political marginalisation. These factors significantly influence the characteristics and objectives of such movements. These movements have undergone a process of evolution, acquired distinct traits and adopted specific strategies in order to fulfil the requirements for achieving statehood. The influence of governmental reactions, strategies, and the political and non-political environment on the development and growth of social movements is significant. This chapter aims to undertake an analysis of the nature of two significant statehood movements in India, namely Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The chapter also aims to address the underlying motivations behind the community's pursuit of aforementioned initiatives. The chapter provides an analysis of the many stages of both movements, with a particular focus on the current environment in which these movements are occurring.

The recognition of postcolonial consciousness and the quest for self-identification often transcend a mere national affiliation, including narrower and more appropriate collective identities rooted on similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and tribal attributes. A significant facet of the complex history of India is the migration that occurred under colonial rule. Widespread "intra-national" and "international" migration undoubtedly prompted the concern of "fitting in".[1] At the outset, a significant portion of the local populace did not see the migrant community as a source of concern, primarily due to its composition mostly consisting of individuals from the less educated labouring class. Over time, within the context of their settlement in the "new land," the immigrant community gradually assimilated the cultural practises and values of the host nation, a phenomenon that was facilitated

---

[1] 'Fitting in' refers to the process of assimilation of migrant groups to the new land as well as new culture and practices.

by advancements in education. Currently, both groups are undergoing an identity crisis, which has ignited a conflict aimed at preserving their unique traits. Consequently, these groups often express the need for establishment of a new nation-state as a means of safeguarding their distinct culture and customs. In the light of acknowledging their own marginalised status, those who self-identify as minorities now want comprehensive safeguarding within the framework of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

The presence of cultural practices and values that are comparable among a group of people who predominantly share a language is what helps facilitate the formation of an ethnic identity.[2] Their notion of acknowledging themselves as members of a distinct ethnic group originates, principally, in the non-recognition that is forced upon them by the "others". There is a strong connection between religion, language, tribe, and ethnicity. As a result, it is common for ethnicity to expand its reach and include a number of a division sects that shared linguistic and geographical similarities. This kind of "inclusion" eventually encourages numerous intergroups to emerge out as a large community that asserted their collective voice and demand for recognition. This is because of the way that the various intergroups were included. Due to the fact that the problem of ethnicity was almost confined to a certain location, in order to address the issues that were specific to that region, it is typical for some regional political parties to constitute themselves as the voice of a marginalised group.[3] Sometimes, the central government stays focused on significant national concerns and, as a result, ignores the challenges facing the regions. As a result, those ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and tribal minority areas continue to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Because of this, those formerly unrecognised minority groups are now demanding social legitimacy in addition to administrative and political authority.

---

[2] Sankar Das, "Bodoland Statehood Movement: A Study on The Role of All Bodo Students' Union (Absu)," 2017. . P. 26

[3] Most of the major regional party in Darjeeling hills based on ethnic line. For example, All India Gorkha League (1943), Gorkha National Liberation Front (1980), Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (2007) Bharatriya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (2021), Hamro Party (2021). In Bodoland context also, the influential regional parties are based on ethnic line, like Bodoland People's Front (2005), United Peoples's Party Liberal (2015).

## GORKHALAND STATEHOOD MOVEMENT

The areas of West Bengal known as Darjeeling[4], Kalimpong[5], and Kurseong[6] and Mirik[7] constitute the proposed Gorkhaland. The desire for state of Gorkhaland has been documented back to 1907 and recognised as one of the earliest statehood movements in India. Initially, they wanted the area to be recognised as separate administrative entity, but as time went on, their demands took on other forms. The prevailing demand throughout the movement was for the formation of a separate state operating within the democratic structure of the Indian Union.[8] Currently, Gorkhaland is demanding not only Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong, but also 398 mouzas in the neighbouring Terai and Dooars districts of Siliguri and Jalpaiguri.[9] In contrast to West Bengal, where Bengalis constitute the majority population, the proposed state is dominated by Gorkha or Nepali citizens of Indian origin. The Gorkhas, a Nepalese minority in West Bengal, believe that only statehood could ensure the survival and flourishing of their language, culture, and identity. Their fight for statehood is complicated by historical reasons, social and political factors, and economic concerns. Proponents of the idea believed that the unique identity of Gorkha people as Indians would be protected in a Gorkhaland state. In the present context, the movements and its supporters had no desire to separate from India but only from its parent state, West Bengal.

---

[4] Darjeeling sadar subdivision is a subdivision of the Darjeeling district in the state of west Bengal, India. The headquater of the division is Darjeeling. The area consists of 921.68 km2. According to census report 2011 the population is 429,391.

[5] Kalimpong sub division is the sole subdivision of the Kalimpong district. It was initially formed as a subdivision of the Darjeeling district in 1916 under British India on 14 February 2017 the subdivision was promoted to a district, becoming an independent Kalimpong district. The subdivision has its headquarters at Kalimpong Town and consists of the hilly areas annexed from Bhutan at the end of the Anglo-Bhutanese War in 1865.

[6] Kurseong subdivision is a subdivision of the Darjeeling district in the state of West Bengal, India. Its headquater is situated at kurseong. The area is 377.35 and population is 136,793.

[7] Mirik subdivision is a subdivision of the Darjeeling district in the state of West Bengal, India. It was declared a subdivision on 30 March 2017

[8] The demand of Gorkhaland is varies from one another. The most dominant among them is demand of separate statehood, namely Gorkhaland. But some other alternatives are also existed there. Such as merger of Darjeeling district with Sikkim and form union territory, formation of greater Nepal.

[9] Swatahsiddha Sarkar, G*orkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response* (Concept, 2013).143

Darjeeling, located in the northern region of West Bengal, serves as the domicile for the majority of Nepalese speakers residing in India. Nearly 90% of Darjeeling's population speaks Nepali.[10] The Darjeeling hills are famed for its tea, lumber, and tourism. The district is bordered by Bhutan to the east, Nepal to the west, and the state of Sikkim to the north. Those advocating for independence have maintained a consistent narrative: that the area was never a part of Bengal. Darjeeling was administratively merged with West Bengal after independence by the Absorbed Areas (Laws) Act, 1954.[11]

**HISTORY:** The proposed state of Gorkhaland encompasses the regions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, as well as a significant portion of the Terai and Dooars areas. Darjeeling was once included under the territorial boundaries of the state of Sikkim. The Kalimpong area was annexed by Bhutan in 1706 and continued to be an integral territory of Bhutan until the occurrence of the Anglo-Bhutanese war in 1864[12]. Except for the Kalimpong area, Nepal governed all of Darjeeling from 1780 on. The Treaty of Sugauli, which was signed on March 4, 1816, between Nepal and the East India Company, marked the formal conclusion of Nepalese authority[13]. The Treaty of Titaliya, signed in 1817, facilitated the transfer of administrative authority over Darjeeling from the company to the Raja of Sikkim, therefore, restoring Sikkim's governance over the region. By deed of grant, the Company was bestowed with legal jurisdiction over the land in 1835, thereby establishing a foundation for subsequent progress.[14] In 1861, the British government officially recognised Sikkim as a de facto protectorate via a declaration made by the

---

[10] Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Archived from the original on 9 August 2022. Retrieved 22 November 2022.

[11] An Act to extend certain laws to the areas which, prior to the commencement of the Constitution, were administered as excluded or partially excluded areas and which, on such commencement, were absorbed in certain States. Absorbed Areas (Laws) Act, 1954 (bareactslive.com) ,Retrieved in 25 November, 2022

[12] Amiya K. Samanta, *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism* (APH Publishing, 2000). p. 34-35

[13] Subba Tanka Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development: A Case Study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling*" (New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications in association with Vikas Publications House, 1992)..

[14] History of Darjeeling | Darjeeling District, Government of West Bengal | India, retrieved on 26 November, 2022

company[15]. Furthermore, the territorial expansion of aforementioned entity included the annexation of Sikkim, including the Sikkim Terai into the expanding district, now recognised as the Siliguri sub-division.[16] The incorporation of present-day Kalimpong sub-division into the district occurred in 1865 subsequent to the conclusion of Anglo-Bhutanese conflict and the ratification of Treaty of Sinchula[17]. Since its inclusion in the Bengal presidency in 1866, namely as part of the Province of Bengal, the district has been geographically divided into four distinct subdivisions, namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, and Siliguri. Prior to Indian Independence, the district remained under the control of the governing authority of Bengal province.

The rapid expansion of the tea business, which created new jobs, coincided with a wave of migration both within and across countries. In addition to this, the recruitment of soldiers in British army was opted as opportunity for Nepali communities to have a better economic and social life.[18] In quest of a better living and economic stability, Nepalis, mostly agricultural laborers, began migrating to Darjeeling beginning in 1856, under the rule of British. The region's flourishing economy also drew individuals from other regions, such Marwari and Bihari. The Bengalis were already working there in different government offices like—teacher, clerk, administrative officials.[19] As a result, the newly constituted Gorkhas discovered themselves to be a linguistically, culturally, and ethnically distinct people group. The Gorkhas developed an aware ethnic identity, on the foundation of which they requested for an autonomous government, when they realized that their identity differed from the 'others' and that they had not found any sense of belongingness. As a result, there was an ethnic rivalry between the 'plainspeople,' who included the

---

[15] In 1861, the EIC annexed and added the Sikkim Terai to the emerging district (today's Siliguri sub-division), and in addition made Sikkim a de facto protectorate of the British government (Treaty of Tunlong), mentions in Samanta (2000), p. 34-35

[16] *Ibid*

[17] History of Darjeeling | Darjeeling District, Government of West Bengal | India, retrieved on 26 November, 2022

[18] Bahadur,(1992)." *Op. cit* P.45

[19] Atis Dasgupta, "Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling," *Social Scientist*, 1999, 47–68.

Marwari, Bihari, and Bengali, and the 'hillspeople,' who included the Nepali, Bhutia, and Lepcha.[20]

The manifestation of ethnocentrism within the Gorkha population played a pivotal role in instigating the demand for autonomy in Darjeeling. Prior to the implementation of the Morley-Minto reform[21] in 1907, the Gorkha Samiti, which was created in 1906, unequivocally advocated for regional self-governance in the Darjeeling region.[22] On November 8th, 1917, prominent figures such as Sardar Bahadur Laden La, K.B. Chettri, and Yensingh Sitling asserted their territorial claims over Darjeeling district and the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri district. This development led to a formal request for the "establishment of an independent administrative entity" made to Montague and Lord Chelmsford.[23] In the year 1919, the Hillmen's Association[24] reiterated its demand for the inclusion of Darjeeling and Dooars under its designated administrative jurisdiction. The Hillmens' Association, which pushed for a unique administrative status for the aforementioned territory, rapidly gained the backing of other societies with similar aims. The establishment of Hill People's Council Union in 1934 aimed to enhance and strengthen the sense of Gorkha pride. The council's slogan, "Ne-bu-la," represented the inclusion of Nepalis, Bhutias, and Lepchas communities. This saying neatly illustrates the dynamic nature of ethnic identity among the Gorkha minority community.[25]

The most positive development during the days prior to independence regarding boost to ethnic awareness of Gorkhas was the formation of  All India

---

[20] The Bhutias and the Lepchas constitute one of the mongoloid tribal populations of eastern Himalayas widely distributed in the Darjeeling district. They were considered as early settlers of the region.(G.D. Kumar, "Morpho-Physical Variability of the Bhutias and the Lepchas of Darjeeling District," *Indian Anthropologist* 10, no. 1 (1980): 41–54.)

[21] The Indian Councils Act 1909, commonly known as the Morley–Minto or Minto–Morley Reforms, was an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that brought about a limited increase in the involvement of Indians in the governance of British India

[22] Alina Pradhan, "Politics of Separation: The Case of the Gorkhaland Movement," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 2012, 683–90, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41858876..

[23] Edwin Samuel Montagu, secretary of state for India (1917–22), and Lord Chelmsford, viceroy of India (1916–21).(Moktan, "Sikkim: Darjeeling. Compendium of Documents", (2004).p. 90)

[24] Hillmen's Association, which was composed of members of the local elite, who claimed to represent Darjeeling's Nepalis, Bhutia, and Lepcha.

[25] Pradhan, "*Politics of Separation*.".

Gorkha League in 1944 at Darjeeling.[26] Among AIGL's goals is the release of all Gorkhas being held as political prisoners by the British government, as well as the recognition of Gorkhas as a distinct minority community, representation in provincial legislatures in areas where they have settled, and representation in interim governments.[27]In addition, AIGL sought to bring together Nepali speakers from all across India to advocate for themselves as a minority in need of equal rights.[28]

In an effort to protect the affected minority in Bengal, the CPI proposed on April 6, 1947, to merge Darjeeling district with Nepal and Sikkim, thus establishing Gorkhasthan[29]. In 1949, the AIGL's leaders pushed for a new province that would include Darjeeling, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar which would be known as Uttarakhand Pradesh[30]. In April of 1954, the CPI made a more acceptable demand—the creation of regional autonomy to better support the hilly regions—which was accepted by the Congress party and the AIGL.[31]

The demand for Gorkhaland may be traced back to the year 1980, when the Pranta Parishad[32] first voiced this issue. However, the Gorkha National Liberation Front[33] (GNLF) and its commander Subhash Ghising played a significant role in garnering substantial support for the cause of Gorkhaland. The desire for Gorkhaland included the establishment of a distinct state by separating the Darjeeling

---

[26] The party had first been established in 1923 in Dehradun. (Subba 1992,84)

[27] Nahar Singh and Kirpal Singh, "History of All India Gurkha League, 1943-1949," 1987. P. 87

[28] Dasgupta, B (1981): Significance of Gorkhaland Demand, Mainstream, Delhi.

[29] Gorkhasthan", an independent nation comprising today's Nepal, Darjeeling district, and Sikkim. Supported by the State-level leadership, in 1947 the Darjeeling District Unit of the CPI formulated the demand in a memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru (at that time Vice-President of the interim government) and Liaquat Ali Khan (leader of the Muslim League) by claiming that the people of the envisaged country constituted one nation (by sharing geographical, cultural, and linguistic characteristics) and, therefore, had the right to national self-determination. Cited in Samanta 2000, p. 255.

[30] The demand was jointly formulated by representatives from the Helmen's Association and the Cooch Behar Praja Congress, along with people from Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and Sikkim. This demand expressed the fear of losing political representation in Bengal, and stressed on the similar "nature and habit", racial characteristics, geographical affinity, and shared history of the people of the envisioned "Uttarakhand State. Cited in Singh and Singh 1987, 87.

[31]Bahadur, "Ethnicity, State, and Development." P.91

[32] In 1980, under the presidency of Indra Bahadur Rai, the Pranta Parishad of Darjeeling wrote to the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi with the need to form a new state in Darjeeling.

[33] It was formed in 1980 by Subhash Ghising with the objective of demanding a Gorkhaland state within India.

district and the adjacent regions of the Dooars, located on the southern periphery of Bhutan. Ghising argued that the establishment of a distinct statehood was essential in order to ensure the Gorkhas' recognition as an Indian community and to safeguard their ethnic and cultural heritage. The realization of aspirations of the hill people of Darjeeling District was contingent upon the fulfilment of the dream of Gorkhaland.

During the mid-1980s, and starting from 1986, the movement underwent a transition towards a more violent phase. Subsequently, the state administration and union government arrived at a consensus to provide a kind of regional autonomy by establishing a regional council for the Darjeeling district. In 1988, Ghising entered into a tripartite arrangement with the State and national government to create the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC)[34]. The council consisted of three hill sub-divisions of the Darjeeling district, namely Kalimpong, Kurseong, and Darjeeling, together with some adjacent territories of the Siliguri sub-division. The elected hill government was granted certain administrative responsibilities, while financial support was provided by both the national and State governments.

Following the establishment of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) emerged victorious in all subsequent five-yearly elections held by the DGHC. Subhash Ghising, the head of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), maintained his position as chairman of the council, exerting complete control over the council via the GNLF and its councilors for a period of about 20 years[35]. For an extended period, Subhash Ghising exerted influence over the council and political landscape of the area. However, his inability to effectively facilitate development, accusations of corruption and suppression of opponents, coupled with his reluctance to address the demand for Gorkhaland, generated widespread discontent among the populace. Despite facing widespread public opposition, the individual in question managed to maintain his undisputed

---

[34] Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC; 1988–2012), also once known for a short period of time as Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council, was a semi-autonomous body that looked after the administration of the hills of Darjeeling District in the state of West Bengal, India. DGHC had three subdivisions under its authority: Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong and some areas of Siliguri subdivision.

[35] 1988 to 2008

authority as the king of Darjeeling. The political landscape of hills saw a significant shift with the emergence of Bimal Gurung and his political party, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha[36].

This development posed a threat to GNLF and its leader, Subhash Ghising, in their claim to be the uncontested leaders of the area. Gurung and his political party, the GJM, strategically used the growing public discontent against Ghising, ultimately resulting in their assumption of power, displacing the GNLF. Bimal Gurung has once again rekindled the call for establishment of Gorkhaland in the area. Bimal Gurung coordinated the mobilisation of a significant number of individuals in support of the Gorkhaland movement, asserting that the establishment of Gorkhaland was the only means by which the aspirations of the hill population could be realised.

Bimal Gurung and his political organisation, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), spearheaded the Gorkhaland struggle during that period. Subsequently, following a prolonged four-year period of agitation, the GJM ultimately reached a tripartite agreement with the State and national government to establish a new council. As a consequence, the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration[37] was established in 2012, effectively replacing the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC). Currently, the administration of GTA remains in operation. Nonetheless, there persists a desire for the establishment of a distinct state within the territory. Various factors like as leadership, political alliances, power struggles, and identity continue to exercise significant effect on the trajectory of Gorkhaland movement.

## CAUSES OF GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

The Gorkhas' claim to a separate statehood, which they referred to as Gorkhaland, has been supported by a variety of historical and other issues, including linguistic and identity crises, economic deprivation, unjust treatment, and state

---

[36] The party was launched on 7 Oct,2007.
[37] The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration is a semi-autonomous council for the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal..

responses. These factors collectively contributed to the formation of movement in its current form.

## *Historical Reasons*

An examination of the Gorkhaland movement from a historical point of view makes it evident that one of its primary objections was to the colonial administration's linking of the territory with Bengal. The objection was voiced by a few educated hill people from Darjeeling who submitted a memorandum in 1907 prior to the Morley-Minto reform. The memorandum demanded the creation of a separate administrative status for Darjeeling that was outside of Bengal's jurisdiction but still within the framework of the British Indian empire. The Hill Men's Association took the next significant step by submitting a petition for a distinct administrative body for Darjeeling on November 8th, 1917. This demand was sent to Edwin Monrtague, who was serving at the time as the Secretary of the State to the Government of Bengal. According to the memorandum, the people who lived in the Darjeeling area had no parallels with the people who lived in Bengal in terms of language, method of life, racial construction, demographic look, and other factors. In addition, the memorandum claimed that the inclusion of Darjeeling in the Bengal region was only coincidental. The fact that the area was a part of the Presidency of Bengal was "completely recent," and the only reason that it had been that way was because the British ruled both of these locations at the same time. Since that time, proponents of the movement have continually called attention to the historical differences between the area and Bengal and have pleaded for the creation of a distinct state.

## *Language issue*

The function of language has been of considerable importance in the restructuring of the Indian state. The approval of statehood in the initial phases of India's independence was based upon linguistic considerations. In West Bengal, Bengali is the prevailing language, whereas in the anticipated region of Gorkhaland, Nepali has the majority linguistic position. The Nepali language has substantially

affected the Gorkha's process of identity development. During the colonial period, the Nepali language originated in Darjeeling and served as a means of ethnic and cultural cohesion among many migrant communities residing in the area. The Lepcha and Bhutia communities, traditionally regarded as the indigenous residents of the area, have progressively embraced the Nepali language throughout time, despite their linguistic and religious differences from the Nepali community. The 'Jatiya Bhasa', the Nepali language served to bring together the Nepali, Lepcha, and Bhutia hill populations in the area, providing them with a unique linguistic identity. In the wake of India's post-independence linguistic restructuring of states and the subsequent assimilation of Darjeeling into West Bengal, the issue of linguistic identity insecurity arose as a prominent worry.

Moreover, the exacerbation of their anxiety occurred in 1956 when B.G. Kher, the chairman of Language Commission, officially designated Nepali as a non-indigenous language. In light of these circumstances, those of Nepalese origin living in India have come to recognise that the acknowledgment of their language is a fundamental need for their identity to be accepted within the Indian context. Some advocates made efforts to get legal recognition for their language by using the West Bengal Language Act of 1961 to establish Nepali as the official language in the areas of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong, which are mostly inhabited by those of Nepalese descent. Moreover, the inclusion of Nepali in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution in 1992 had a substantial impact on the Nepali-speaking minority in India. Despite the acknowledgment by the state of West Bengal of Nepali as a secondary official language, advocates of the movement argue that the preservation of their linguistic identity can only be effectively ensured via the formation of Gorkhaland as a separate state.

## *Identity issue*

Gorkhas' identity dilemma is a significant factor in the motivations for the autonomy movement. The hill population of the proposed land asserts a distinct identity in contrast to the plain regions that surround it. It would be incorrect to assert that the Gorkhas' identity was formed along a unifying path. However, the

foundation of identity was established upon the Nepalese language and culture. In post-independence India, national leader statements and objections to the Nepali language's inclusion in the 8th schedule of the constitution of India occasionally caused a psychological setback for the region's inhabitants. In addition, the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty made no such explicit distinction between citizens of Nepal and India who were of Nepali descent. Gorkha individuals of Nepali descent have been granted every right, with the exception of the right to vote. These rights include the right to education, employment, property ownership, and establishment of a business. Furthermore, as a consequence of this treaty, an error has emerged among the Indian populace regarding the citizenship of Indian Nepalis in Nepal. The aforementioned misunderstanding has resulted in the conception of a "Double Homeland[38]," which has caused them to experience an identity crisis.

Furthermore, animosity towards non-indigenous populations and ethnopolitical mobilisation had spread throughout nearly every state in North East India. Son of the Soil[39] theory inspired the anti-immigrant movements in the northeastern region of India. As a result of the Assam Movement[40] against foreigners, numerous Nepalese families were displaced in Assam. An estimated 7,000 Gorkhas were forced to escape the Meghalaya in a single day to the hamlet of Byrnihat on the Assam-Meghalaya frontier in 1986[41]. Moreover, in the year 1980, direct assaults were launched against Nepalese inhabitants of Manipur, compelling them to seek refuge in more secure regions. The Gorkhaland movement's leaders posited that in light of such instances of inequitable treatment towards Nepalis, the establishment of a separate statehood was the sole means to safeguard and preserve the authentic identity of Gorkha people.

### *Role of the educated elite and middle class*

---

[38] As citizen of Nepal and India, the Indian Gorkha fought for their own identity as origin of India.

[39] Sons of the soil is a term that can refer to a concept that ties people to their place of birth and gives them some rights and responsibilities

[40] Assam movement period from 1979-85

[41] https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19860630-gnlf-wages-a-determined-movement-for-a-separate-state-called-gorkhaland-800996-1986-06-29, retrieved on 8th December, 2022

In the process of identity assertion and articulation of the demand for separate statehood, the educated elite and middle class from the Gorkha community play a pivotal role. The ethnic exclusiveness of Gorkhas and demand for autonomy was first articulated by the retired Nepali army and police officers, who were supported by the Nepali landed aristocrats and rich traders. The first memorandum in regard to the demand for creation of separate administrative unit from Bengal was submitted by the above mentioned sections in 1907 to the British Government. Later on, the elitist Nepalis were supported by small group of aristocrats from the Lepcha and Bhutia Communities. They all together formed Hillmen's Association and fought for realizing their objective of separate administrative unit in the last phase of colonial era. Although their demands were not fulfilled. But the identity as Gorkhas has evolved in greater way with their activities, which later on provided the support base to the movement. In addition to the rich and elite class, the middle class from the Gorkha community also played an important role in building the support base for the Gorkhaland movement.

## *Economic issue*

The Gorkhas have a negative view on Bengal Government. Because, in their opinion, it consistently undervalues their ethnic and regional cause and also ignores the economic progress. The state government had already taken advantage of the district's forest resources, and in addition to this, the locals were constantly forced to contend with a lack of available water supplies. However, despite the fact that Darjeeling's tourism sector and tea farming played a significant part in the region's financial supplement, the problem of unemployment in the area has not been resolved. Language is another contributor to the problem of unemployment in Bengal, in addition to the government's inaction on the matter. They need to be proficient in Bengali in order to get job in the plain areas. Therefore, even in their home state, individuals did not feel as if they have a "sense of belongingness." Because of this, the demand for a separate statehood was fuelled not only by an ethnic reason but also by a damaged economy.

In conclusion, the Gorkhaland movement for separate statehood is supported by historical and other factors such as linguistic and identity crises, economic deprivation, unjust treatment, and state responses. The movement originated from the objection to the colonial administration's linking of the territory with Bengal, and has been fueled by the Gorkhas' distinct linguistic and cultural identity. The Gorkhas have faced challenges in preserving their language and have experienced an identity crisis due to misunderstandings about their citizenship. Additionally, animosity towards non-indigenous populations and inequitable treatment towards Nepalis in other states have further motivated the demand for a separate state. The educated elite and middle class from the Gorkha community have played a significant role in articulating and supporting the demand for autonomy. The Gorkhas' negative view of the Bengal government has also been influenced by economic issues such as the exploitation of resources and lack of employment opportunities. Overall, the Gorkhaland movement is a response to a combination of historical, linguistic, identity, and economic factors.

## BODOLAND STATEHOOD MOVEMENT-

The Bodo community is a significant ethnic group within the region of Assam. The aforementioned group is officially recognised as Scheduled Tribes (plains)[42]. The Bodos, comprising 34% of the overall tribal population of Assam, are one of the several tribes inhabiting the region[43]. The origins of their aspirations for identity assertion may be traced back to a significant period in the past. Currently, there is a growing desire for the establishment of separate statehood among the Bodos.

### Brief introduction of Bodo

The Bodo people are linguistically classified as belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family, while they are ethnically categorised as belonging to the Indo-Mongoloid race group. From a linguistic perspective, the Bodo community encompasses a significant population that comprised speakers of Tibeto-Burman

---

[42] Scheduled tribe(plains) refers to those tribal population who reside in the plain area of Assam.
[43] Census Report of 2011

languages in the regions of North and East Bengal, Assam, and Burma.[44] According to Sidney Endle, the Bodos exhibit striking similarities to individuals of Mongolian descent in terms of their physical characteristics and overall look. This observation suggests that the ancestral origins of the Bodo people might be traced back to Tibet and China.[45] The origin of Bodos is uncertain. The scarcity of reliable materials pertaining to the origin of Bodo people has led scholars to provide several explanations based on their own perspectives. The presence of references to Bodo people might also be seen in Hindu sacred texts such as the Mahabharata. In the Mahabharata, the Bodos community was referred to as kirata. The Kirata ethnic group is classified as one of the Mongoloid tribes that historically inhabited the regions around the Himalayan boundaries.[46]

Regarding the migration of Bodo people, S.K. Chatterjee wrote that "different branches of the great Sino-Tibetan speaking people which had their place near the head-waters of the yang-tsze-kiang and the Hoang-ho rivers, to the west of China pushed south and west, probably from 2000 B.C. onwards and these tribes infiltrated into India mostly along the western course of the Brahamaputra. The great Bodo tribe appear to have been established over the valley of the Brahamaputra fairly early and to have extended into the North and East Bengal and into North Bihar".[47] The presence of peoples from the Bodo-Kachari stock in Cooch Behar, Rangpur, and Dinajpur district of North Bengal and even North Bihar help to understand the map of their migration in line with the statement.

Maheswar Neog said, "In the Brahamaputra Valley and its neighboring hills and forests the Tibeto-Burman Bodo people have been dwelling from ancient period. They are mainly 'Chutiya, Mech, Rava, Tipra, Garo and the Hajong of the Moimensingh district'. They also ruled the state in different periods and in different places for a long period. The ruling period of the Bodos is the longest of all the

[44] Kameswar Brahma, "A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Ceremonies of the Bodos: With Special Reference to the Bodos of Kokrajhar District,", 1992.p.1.
[45] Sidney Endle, *The Kacharis* (Macmillan and Company, limited, 1911).p.3.
[46] Brahma, "A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Ceremonies of the Bodos."p.6.
[47] Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, "The Place of Assam in the History and Civilization of India," Gauhati University, 1970.p.9.

ruling groups of the same stock. The Bodo name of the places and rivers may prove this that they maintained their powers as a ruling class for a long period."[48]

The term "Kachari" is used to refer to the Bodo tribe. However, throughout time, other tribes have emerged from the Kachari fold, seeking to establish their own identity as different groups based on their unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. The name "Kachari" is a broad designation including many tribes that shared a dialect or language and claim a shared legendary lineage.[49] The Kacharis are considered to be the indigenous people, sometimes referred to as aborigines, who have historically inhabited the Brahmaputra Valley.[50] Over the course of time, the ethnic groups associated with the Kacharis lineage underwent a process of division, resulting in the formation of several tribal groupings. It is widely acknowledged that the ethnic borders of different groups were not rigidly set, but rather susceptible to the ongoing processes of division and merger.[51] Despite this, numerous communities of the region maintained some linguistic similarity and shared cultural characteristics to some extent.The main habitat of Bodos in Assam is now on the northern bank of river Brahamaputra, starting from Dhuburi and Kokrajhar district, Goalpara district in the west, Dhemaji sub-division of Lakhimpur district to the east.

## *Bodoland Statehood Movement*

The Bodo people are the largest indigenous community in the region, and their quest for a separate state has taken several forms throughout the years. A long time ago is when the identity assertion movement began. There was more of a focus on self-affirmation during the early stages of Bodo movement. The reform movement within Bodo society, led by Kalicharan Brahma,[52] was essential in fostering a sense

[48] Neog, Maheswar: *Purani Asamiya Samaj Aru Sanskriti*, Guwahati, New Book Stall, 1957 (Assamese), p.2.

[49] James Drummond Anderson, *A Collection of Kachári Folk-Tales and Rhymes* (Assam secretariat printing Office, 1895).

[50] Edward Gait, *A History of Assam* (Thacker, Spink & Company, 1906).P. 247.

[51] Burmon, *Tradition to Modernity*. P.2.

[52] Kalicharan Brahma (1860-1938), originally Kalicharan Mech, was a 20th century social and religious reformer of Bodo society. He estalblished a new religion called Brahmo Dharma around 1906.

of self-awareness among the Bodo people. He had a profound impact on the youth of Bodo community, helping to raise their consciousness of their shared history and culture.

In 1928, Kalicharan Brahma took charge of a group that communicated with the Simon Commission and ultimately submitted a memorandum to the panel.[53] Goalpara District Community was represented by Kalicharan Brahma as team leader, while Jadav Khaklari, in his role as Secretary of the Assam Kachari Juba Sanmelan, delivered a second memorandum to the Simon Commission on behalf of the entire Bodo population of Assam.[54] The memos pushed for the government to provide the Boro-Kachari group its own electoral grouping in upcoming Assembly and local board elections. They also demanded that youngsters from this group were required to attend public elementary school at no expense to their families. The importance of the census's inclusion of a Bodo category and the creation of a Bodo Regiment within the British Army were both underlined.[55] To prevent the transfer of Goalpara District of Assam to the province of Bengal, the Dhubri Bodo Jubak Sanmilani and a delegation representing the Bodos, Garos, and Rabhas of the Goalpara Sub-Division have pleaded with the Government.[56] This was considered as the first time that Assam's plain tribal peoples had ever filed a memorandum advocating for the protection of their unique culture and language.

The desire for a separate electorate for the Bodo community, as well as the identification of Bodos as a distinct group in the census report, demonstrates their heightened knowledge and care for their cultural and ethnic identity. Although the plain tribes of Assam were denied their own electorate, the Government of India Act of 1935 did contain a quota for them. The Assam Legislative Council set up five total seats for native communities.[57]

---

[53] Endle, *The Kacharis*.
[54] Subungcha Mwshahary "*Bodoland Movement: A Study in Ethnicity and Political Development among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 TO 1993*", (Guwahati, 2016) p. 65
[55] Mwshahary Subungcha. *Op.cit*. p.65
[56] Mwshahary Subungcha. *Op.cit*. p.65
[57] Ved Prakash Col, "*Encyclopedia of North East India*" (Atlantic Publishers and Distributors New Delhi, India, 2007).p 687-688.

In 1933, the plain tribes banded together to form the All Assam Plain Tribal League, a political movement whose mission was to promote plain tribes' inclusion in India's governing institutions. Before Assam's independence, the party had a major role in the state's politics. However, in the post-independence period, the leader of League finally allied with the Congress party, culminating in the disintegration of League and its transformation into a Tribal Sangha. As a result, the group's influence inside the state's political system diminished.

The largest plain tribe in Assam, the Bodos, have successfully developed a middle class, which has led to fresh takes on traditional tribal issues. Concerns about language, culture, and customs sprang to the forefront. The plain tribes in the region were more conscious of their heritage due to their exclusion from the purview of 6th schedule of Constitution[58] on the eve of independence.[59] Despite the coming together of a number of notable indigenous tribes, the Bodo community's numerical superiority has sometimes led to their issues being given less weight than they deserve. The Bodos are more organised than the surrounding plains tribes and claim that they all had a common ancestry as part of the larger Bodo-Kachari family.[60]

In 1952, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) was formed to help revive and advance the Bodo language.[61] The Sabha is a powerful group that fought for Bodos to be recognised Bodos as a separate language. Indian regionalism relies heavily on language as the basis for the restructuring of states. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha actively

---

[58] The sixth schedule contains provisions related to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of certain tribal areas as autonomous entities. The provisions of the sixth schedule are provided under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Indian Constitution.

[59] Hiren Gohain, "Bodo Agitation and Ideological Blinkers," Economic and Political Weekly, 1989, 2271–72.

[60] The claim of Bodos is also supported by some historical facts. The Census of 1881 listed 12 subgroups of the clan, whereas Endle counted fifteen of them. Grierson identified nine communities as members of the Bodo speaking group. The combination of lists presents the list of eighteen groups, eg. Bodo, Dimasa, Lalung, Madani, Mech, Rabha, Saraniya, Hojai, Garo, Rajbongshi or Koch, Chutiya, Moran, Hajong, Triperra, Mahalia, Dhimal, Solaimiya, Phulguriya. (Goswami, Madhurima "The Bodos: Culture and Society", Journal of Bussiness Management & Social Science Research, vol 1, no1, oct 2012, p.88.)

[61] Bodo Sahitya Sabha was founded in 1952 under the presidency of Joy Bhadra Hagjer in 1952. It promotes the Bodo language and Bodo literature. It consisted of representatives of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, and Nepal in abroad. Dr Surath Narzary hold the presidentship of Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

works to enhance and preserve the Bodo language because of the role that language played in building and maintaining cultural identity. In the early 1970s, the Sabha worked closely with the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU)[62] and other groups that spoke for the Bodo tribes to promote the use of Roman script for the Bodo language. After much persuasion, the Indian government adopted the Devanagari script as the standard for writing Bodo. The Plain tribes in Assam became more self-aware as a result of criticism directed at the state administration.

The campaign for Bodoland might also be seen as a movement for autonomy. Concerns have been raised regarding the motives of Government of India due to the exclusion of plain tribes of Assam from the scope of Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The aforementioned plan set up a separate administrative structure to manage the hill tribes in India's northeast. The goal of instituting this system was to reduce outside interference in the internal affairs of these communities. On the other hand, no particular approach was applied in regard to plain tribe communities.[63] The aforementioned growth generated awareness among indigenous groups in the region about their self-governance and authority over numerous local problems. Lack of strong leadership hampered indigenous people's growing sense of self-determination, which in turn prevented them from making their voices heard. The then-Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, made a historic declaration in 1965 about the federalization of Assam. With this declaration, the issue of autonomy once again became central to the political climate of Assam. In 1967, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)[64] emerged as two of the most visible groups representing plain tribes.

The ABSU members as a whole refrained from engaging in overtly political behaviour. The PTCA was formed as a political party with an intent of

---

[62] The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) was founded on the 15th February, 1967 at Kokrajhar Tribal Rest House with a view of comprising all the students of the Bodo Groups of the world.

[63] The 1952 report of the Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes states that the dwelling place of tribals are either the 'forests; or the 'hills'. The Constitutional provisions under the Sixth Scheduled for forming autonomous districts councils, therefore, extended only to the hill tribes of Assam, it did not cover plain tribes under this provision.

[64] In 1966, the PTCA launched an agitation for a separate for the plains tribal communities of Assam state called 'Udayachal' under the leadership of Samar Brahma Chowdhury and Charan Narzary, President and General Secretary of PTCA respectively.

participating in overtly political endeavours. The Plain Tribes Council of Assam (PTCA) has long pushed for the creation of a separate union area named Udayanchal, which would be reserved for the plain tribes of Assam. Several plain tribal groups supported the PTCA as they began organising a campaign for Udayanchal. Meanwhile, the proclamation of a national emergency in India pushed Udayanchal's demand to the background in Assam.[65] The Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) allied with the Janata Government in both the 1977 general elections and the 1978 provincial elections in Assam. Charan Narzary, the lone Bodo representative in Parliament and former general secretary of the PTCA, announced the withdrawal of the Udayanchal demand in order to preserve the PTCA's positive and productive relationship with the Janata Government. As a consequence of this decision, tensions emerged among the Assam Plain Tribal Council. Disagreement within the PTCA arose from members' various interpretations of the Udayanchal demand. A considerable number of leaders voiced their unhappiness towards the choice of PTCA leaders to cease their pursuit of Udayanchal. Udalguri native Benai Khungur Bosumotary officially split out from the People's Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) to form a new political group called PTCA (Progressive). PTCA (P) targeted the plain tribal people of Assam in their efforts to promote the creation of a separate Udayanchal province.[66] A Union Territory called "Mishing Bodoland"[67] was proposed in 1980 by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (Progressive). Within the framework of the newly formed political party United Tribal Nationalist Liberal Front (UTNLF)[68], an attempt was made to bring together PTCA and PTCA (P). However, the proposal for self-governance failed to get widespread support since leaders from different groups had widely divergent views about the proposed zone and its features.

The ABSU became the campaign's primary leader in 1987. Upendra Nath Brahma, previous president of the ABSU, said that the only way to ensure the

---

[65] National emergency was declared in1975 and existed till 1977

[66] Sankar Das, '*Bodoland Statehood Movement: A study on the Role of ABSU*',(MZU, 2017) p 39-40

[67] Mising Bodoland' demand was raised by PTCA (P). The demand was to establish separate homeland for Mising and Bodo tribes of Assam. Mising are the second largest plain tribes in the region.

[68] Mwshahary Subungcha (2016), *op.cit* .p.74

survival of Bodo culture was to create a separate state. The movement for statehood has been running strong since 1987 and has evolved through a number of phases to reach its present iteration. The government has taken steps to increase the Bodos' independence so that they could respond to the threats they faced. As an example, the Bodoland Autonomous Council and the Bodoland Territorial Council were both established in accordance with the sixth schedule of Indian Constitution after the Bodo Accord of 1993 and the Bodo Accord of 2003, respectively.

In spite of this, the ABSU, a renowned Bodo student organisation, is pushing for the creation of a separate Bodoland homeland. There are proponents who contend that the formation of an autonomous Bodoland state was imperative to ensure the protection and conservation of its unique identity. They think that the problems the Bodo people were having could not be fixed until they had their own state. There was also criticism levelled at the Indian central government and the Assam state government for their perceived lack of interest in and care for the needs and ambitions of Bodo people.

On January 27, 2020, a tripartite Bodo Accord was reached in answer to the demands of Bodoland. The Assam State Government, the Federal Government, and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, ABSU all participated in the accord. The initiative's principal purpose was to confront and lessen the separatist ambitions of Bodo community so that peace and harmony might flourish. On March 22, 2021, the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, announced a commitment to the speedy implementation of conditions contained in the Bodo Agreement, assuring its fulfilment within a period of two and a half years.As part of the peace deal, the Bodoland Territorial Area District was renamed the Bodoland Territorial Region on January 27, 2022. The districts of Udalguri, Kokrajhar, Baksa, and Chirang in the Indian state of Assam make up what is known as the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The agreement is an effort to strengthen the Bodo Territorial Region's position in the areas of lawmaking, administration, and finance.

The push for Bodoland to become its own state is typically seen as an effort to boost economic growth in the region. Scholars disagree on how much the

violent and nonviolent actions taken by those supporting Bodoland's autonomy contributed to the region's lack of progress. However, others argue that the region's lack of development was to blame for the Bodoland movement's continued existence. The Bodo population is largely agrarian and demonstrates a deep attachment to their land. However, non-Bodo people, especially Bengali Muslims, flooded into the region before independence, when the Sadullah Ministry ruled Assam. Even in the decades after independence, this trend has not abated. This study focuses on the role of Bengali Muslim peasants in the displacement of Bodo population and the subsequent change in the demographic makeup of the region. People who aren't Bodo are viewed with suspicion by the locals since they might pose a danger to their way of life. Critics of the government process say it hasn't done enough to stop the exodus of Bengali Muslim peasants from the region. Moreover, a demand has been made for the establishment of a separate state due to the absence of a comprehensive development programme of the region primarily inhabited by the Bodo people within the framework of government-led development initiatives.

## CAUSES OF MOVEMENT

### *Historical Reasons*

One of the first groups of people to settle in Assam were the Bodos. Cacharis (also known as Bodos) are the purported indigenous inhabitants of Assam.[69] Both Anderson and Gait agree that the Bodo people were among the first people to settle in the Brahmaputra Valley. Over time, the Bodos gradually became a marginalised minority in Assam. The arrival of people from outside the area raised awareness of the locals' place in history and culture. They felt the Colonial government had abandoned them in their time of need. They said that their disadvantage was due to the Hindu caste system. Plain tribes complained to the Simon committee that "in spite of our large numbers all advantage of the reforms are being enjoyed either by a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, or a Sudra."[70]

---

[69]Endle, *The Kacharis*. Op.cit
[70] Basumatari B.K.(edited): "*Plain Tribal Before the Simon Commission*", p.44

Andrew Clow, the Governor of Assam from 1942 to 1946, noted that despite public displays of concern for the tribes, both caste Hindus and Muslims in Assam had neither studied the issue nor had any empathy for the people of those communities. As a result, local organisations like the Cachari Sanmilan, Koch Rajbonshi Sanmilan, Chutia Sanmilan, and the Matak Association sprung up throughout the region to address the needs of these marginalised people. In the 1930s, many separate tribal organisations in the assam plain came together to establish the All Assam Plain Tribal League (AAPTL).[71] Even when India gained its independence, the plain tribes continued to be treated with the same disregard. Bodos' needs and problems with respect to culture, tradition, and identity were given little attention.

As a result, the desire for ethnic assertion among the plain tribes found fertile root in the creation of a new force of plain tribes in opposition to the continued deprivation of plain tribes in the sociopolitical environment of Assam. Separate statehood is now a central demand of the movement, which has helped solidify the group's identity and goals.

According to the ABSU memorandum, "Whoever and whatsoever name the Bodos may be known to others now, after all, the allied tribes belonging to the great Indo Mongoloid living in the proposed Bodoland territory are often same Bodo groups,"[72] as was submitted by the Bodos to the Bhupinder Singh Committee appointed by the Centre to study the Bodo issues. The bulk of the people living in the proposed Bodoland area have an ethnic identity and history that were unique from those of the Assamese.[73] This phrase is representative of the Bodo community's attitude towards the Assamese people and culture. Its members placed Bodo identity before Assamese identity.

---

[71]Basumatari B.K. op.cit. p.44

[72] A Memorandum to the three-member Expert Committee Under Dr. Bhupinder Singh, on Bodo issues- by All Bodo Student Union -1991.

[73] ibid.

## *Alienation of land to tribal people*

Before attaining independence, the British colonial administration in Assam encouraged substantial migration for economic reasons. The colonial government established the new arrivals in the areas formerly inhabited by the plains tribes. The colonial authorities invited the freshly emigrating farmers of Bengali Muslim to cultivate the wastelands of area. To labour on the tea estates in the area, many people from other regions of India were sent there. Under the 'More Food Campaign'[74] strategy instituted in 1941 by the Sadullah ministry of Assam province government, many Muslim migrant peasants from Bengal moved into the region of plain tribes. The Plains Tribes were outraged by the ministry of Sadullah's stance, and the Tribal League eventually stopped backing Sadullah as a result. As the land was increasingly threatened, the plains tribes felt uncomfortable.

In order to protect the tribal lands, the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 was revised in 1947. In accordance with the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (1886) Amended Act 1947, the state government has implemented the establishment of 37 Tribal Belts and Tribal Blocks in regions predominantly occupied by tribal and backward communities. These communities, characterized by their socio-economic deprivation and limited access to education, face challenges in securing sufficient land for their well-being and sustenance.[75]

The plains tribes of Assam applauded this move, but the restricted areas were still not adequately safeguarded. Non-tribal people continued to move into these places, thereafter. Therefore, it is understandable that the Bodos would take precautions to prevent the further settlement of outsiders, especially Muslims of Bengali ancestry, on their designated territory. As a result of this growing sense of fear, a campaign was launched to protest the government's inaction on their designated belongings.

---

[74] The More Food Campaign in Assam was started with the objective to grow more food during the phase of Second World War The prime motive behind the campaign was to provide war assistance to British soldiers. In Assam, Sadulla ministry was in Assam and they supported the campaign. In the name of campaign, a large scale migration of Bengali peasents was advocated by the Saduulah Ministry to grow the muslim population in the state

[75] The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (1886) Amended Act 1947, Section 161 of Chapter X.

## *Assamese Chauvinism*

The report of Bordoloi Committee, which was established as an Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minority and Tribal and Excluded Areas with the responsibility of addressing matters pertaining to the tribal peoples of Assam, failed to cover the concerns of plain tribes of Assam. The Bordoloi committee determined that the plain tribes of Assam would be considered a minority for all intents and purposes and excluded them from the jurisdiction of a distinct administrative mechanism under the sixth schedule of Constitution. The committee's stance on plain tribes was predicated on the fact that the assimilation of these tribes into the composite Assamese culture did not require an excessive amount of time. However, the Bodos believed that assimilation with the culture of non-tribal groups would eradicate their distinctiveness, culture, and tradition. Consequently, the plain tribes began to assert their distinct identity in the same manner as the hill tribes. Furthermore, the Bodos considered the imposition of Assamese culture upon them to be an existential and grave threat to their identity. They placed the responsibility for an oppressive cultural attitude towards them on the Assamese people.

Since the authority of state administrations rested with the Assamese people, it was evident that their resentment towards the government was also perceived as an attempt to impose their will through the use of state mechanisms on the plain communities of Assam and the Bodos in particular. The apparent disinterest exhibited by both state and central governments towards the Bodo language movement, particularly in favor of the Roman script (Devanagri script, which was subsequently imposed unilaterally). Additionally, the perceived indifference of government mechanisms towards Bodo issues, coupled with the omission of any provisions for the protection and preservation of the identity of plain tribes in the Assam Accord, has further contributed to the growing opposition.

Furthermore, the decision made by the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government to mandate Assamese paper in secondary schools served as a catalyst for the Bodos to organize themselves in opposition to the imposition of Assamese hegemony. These series of events had collectively fueled the Bodo community's

resistance and strengthened their resolve against the perceived dominance of the Assamese language and culture. These issues about the Assamese people's motives worried Bodos. Consequently, they made the decision for separate homeland in order to avoid the injustices that had been done to them.

*Inadequate policy to address tribal issues*

Bodos raised against the system because the governments failed to provide the necessary laws to address their identity concerns. The governments' lack of interest in safeguarding and promoting the distinctiveness of the Bodo people caused them to become aware of their own existence. India used colonial policies to address the tribal problem in the northeast after gaining independence. The Indian Constituent Assembly established a distinct administrative framework to oversee the tribes, allowing them the greatest degree of autonomy in handling their own affairs. The hill tribes of the area were the main beneficiaries of the particular adjustment carried out by the colonial authorities. There was no specific method used to the plain tribes. The plain tribes were feeling left out and worried about their survival since there was no unique mechanism in place. Furthermore, the Bodoland statehood movement was sparked by the administrations' inability to guarantee regional development. There was constant criticism about the state of law and order in the area. The Bodos held the state administrations' pro-Assamese stance responsible for the underdeveloped status of their language, customs, and culture. There was a great deal of anger among tribal peoples due to the government's incapacity to keep non-tribal people out of their reserved lands, particularly Muslim peasants of Bengali ascent. Additionally, the government illegally gave pattas to non-tribal people in those reserved territories.

The Bodos protested against the system because no policy had been put in place to adequately address their structural problems. The government in Delhi was unaware of the existence of independent tribes in the Indian countryside. The inability of government strategy to address the underlying causes of conflict in Bodo-dominated regions is shown by the collapse of the BAC agreement (1993) and the backlash against the Bodo Peace agreement (2003). Moreover, strategies were

established with greater emphasis on leaders of different organisations and their organisational need. But the views of ordinary people were not integrated. Therefore, the movement is sustained due to the lack of appropriate inclusive policies.

## *Absence of effective leadership*

The push for statehood in Bodoland has undergone many stages. The movement had difficulties due to the lack of a well defined and articulated purpose. The movement has also had a period of violence, which was widely denounced by the general public. On several occasions, the pursuit of individual aspirations has delayed the attainment of the overarching goals of the movement. The lack of a strong leader resulted in the division of almost every plain tribal organization. The pursuit of a separate homeland is facing challenges due to lack of an inclusive strategy for the diverse population dwelling in the proposed Bodoland region. Furthermore, some leaders possess the capability to effectively rally the general populace towards an entirely new course with regard to the aim of the Bodoland separatist movement.

In the current setting, two prominent organisations, notably the Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF) and the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), possess distinct goals in spearheading the campaign. The absence of shared goals and divergent perspectives on the issue of separate statehood demand has resulted in individuals advocating for the movement from their respective union perspectives. A significant portion of the Bodo community has a preference for aligning themselves with the Bodo Peoples' Front (BPF) political party, demonstrating their support via electoral participation. Conversely, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) possesses its own cadre, which actively criticises the existing governmental framework inside the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). The ABSU advocates for establishment of an autonomous region as their desire for a separate homeland, while the BPF endeavours to safeguard the existing structure of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) due to their involvement as signatories to the BTC deal in 2003. National political parties and other political entities saw the provision of support to distinct Bodo communities as a potential strategy to attain majority party status. The political

situation in Bodo-dominated regions has been influenced by the lack of strong leadership, resulting in the emergence of several factions with differing agendas seen to be leading the movement. The movement experiences obstacles in achieving widespread agreement, leading to its continuous evolution in form and essence. Consequently, the movement exists without a predictable destination in the immediate future.

## *Emergence of Bodo Middle class*

One of the main grounds for the plain tribes' and the Bodos' quest for a separate homeland is the rise of the Bodo middle class. A middle class emerged in Bodo society around the turn of twentieth century. In the first decade of twentieth century, a reform movement was started by Kalicharan Brahma in Bodo society. Bodo Chatra Sanmiloni was founded in 1919 by Kalicharan Brahma's supporters. Meanwhile, the Bodo intellectual elite also helped establish Bodo Mahasanmiloni as the society's primary meeting place. Both Mahasanmiloni and Chatra Sanmiloni were instrumental in the establishment of Bodo society and the development of Bodo identity during the period. They used to convene conferences at times and thereby making major decisions.

In 1929, a demand was presented to the Simon commission as the first formal effort by plain tribes to declare their identity in the face of colonial authority at a political level. Among the Bodo people of Western Assam, the middle class has emerged for two primary reasons, according to Sharma. First, the introduction and widespread use of the cash economy in Bodo society during the colonial era brought about significant changes to the social and economic fabric of the tribe. Second, a religious reform movement spearheaded by Kalicharan Brahma among the Bodos emerged, which extended beyond the realm of religion to encompass aspects of society, politics, and economy. Because of this 'renaissance' in schooling, many

young Bodos were able to enter the colonial labour market, giving rise to a new Bodo middle class.[76]

Sushmita Sen Gupta analyses the role of Middle class of Bodos and argues that the Middle class has been helpful in expressing aspirations of the Bodos in the different eras.[77] She cites the rise of Bodo middle class and its influence on the development of Bodo people's unique ethno-linguistic identity as well as the altered dynamics of plain tribes' demands. She argues "Since the issues of language and script were integral to identity assertion of the Bodos in the initial phase, the middle class was apparently articulating the Bodo ethno-linguistic identity as distinct from the larger Assamese linguistic identity. The subsequent phases which focused more on territorial autonomy signaled towards the emergence of a distinct Bodo regional identity. The demand for a territorial unit of all plains tribes of Assam was supposed to be an inclusive political arrangement, but the Bodos, being numerically larger and its middle class leadership being more organized than its counterparts among other tribal groups, were likely to assume a predominant role within such an arrangement. This was followed by a more aggressive assertion of Bodo exclusivity which centered on the demand for a separate Bodoland, thereby indicating the transformation of Bodo ethnic, linguistic and regional identity into a distinct national identity.".[78] Various Bodo groups have been called out for allegedly neglecting the common concerns of plain tribes including peace, development, and land rights. This includes the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (1952), the All Bodo Students' Union (1967), and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (1967), among others.

It is argued that the Bodo middle class is using these organisations to organise the general populace in support of a separate statehood. While their opinions on a distinct homeland vary from organisation to organisation, they all

---

[76] Chandan Kumar Sharma, "Bodo Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class and the State," *Political Dynamics of North East India*, New Delhi: South Asia Publishers, 2000, 128–42.

[77] Susmita Sen Gupta, "Transformation and Consolidation of Bodo Identity: An Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class," *The Standard International Journals*, 2014.

[78] Gupta.(2014) *Op.cit*

concur that the movement's main goal was autonomy. They demand equal power relations within the state and autonomy in the governance process. Because of this, it is thought that the rise of middle class Bodos, who saw Assamese and non-Bodos as possible threats to their way of life, spearheaded the effort to secure their place in the sociopolitical and economic realm of the area.

The Bodo people, one of the first groups to settle in Assam, have become a marginalized minority in the region. They feel abandoned by the government and disadvantaged due to the Hindu caste system. This has led to a desire for ethnic assertion and the demand for separate statehood. The government's inadequate policies to address tribal issues and protect tribal lands have fueled the movement. But lack of inclusive policies and strong leadership has hindered the movement's progress. The rise of the Bodo middle class has played a significant role in expressing the aspirations of Bodos and shaping their unique identity. The movement seeks autonomy and equal power relations within the state. Overall, the Bodoland movement is driven by a desire to protect their culture, land, and way of life.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements are driven by historical, linguistic, identity, and economic factors. The Gorkhas' demand for a separate state is fueled by their distinct linguistic and cultural identity, as well as economic deprivation and unjust treatment. The Bodo people, on the other hand, feel marginalized and disadvantaged due to the Hindu caste system and government neglect, leading to a desire for ethnic assertion and autonomy. Conclusively, the ethnic phenomena seen in Gorkhaland and Bodoland might be classified within the constructionist theory of ethnicity. The forms of both movements are shaped by factors such as past experiences of exploitation, land alienation, chauvinism of dominant groups, government inability to handle identity concerns, and the rise of middle class. The movement is a result of Bodo and Gorkha people's awareness of their identities. By bringing up the concerns that the rights to identity, culture, language, tradition, and politics of the people who have been claimed were still unassailable and unprotected, the drive for independent statehood has been pursued

in both regions. Both movements highlight the need for inclusive policies and strong leadership to address the grievances of these marginalized communities.

**CHAPTER IV**

**STATE RESPONSES: UNION AND STATE GOVERNMENTS**

The manner in which the union and state governments have addressed the demands of statehood movements has significantly influenced the character and trajectory of those movements. The approach of governments towards any such social movement, whether it is supportive or repressive, significantly influences the direction of movement. The government has implemented various actions and policies in response to the statehood movement as a whole, with specific attention given to the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state's response to the movement, it is necessary to trace its course from the colonial era to the contemporary setting. The evolution of the demands for a separate administrative unit in the region, up to the current desire for statehood, has passed through many phases. The government has implemented several efforts in response to the movement, which have had an influence on its trajectory. This chapter aims to assess the state's response to Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements, covering since the colonial era to the present, including the actions taken by both the union and state governments.

**STATE RESPONSES TO GORKHALAND MOVEMENT**

**Colonial period:** The colonial period gave rise to the region's aspirations for regional autonomy. At first, the call for a distinct administrative entity for the Darjeeling hills was used to express the desire for regional autonomy. Colonial authorities established a distinction between hill people and plain people based on what was convenient for them.[1] Subsequently, policies such as the backward tract, scheduled area, excluded area, partially excluded area, were implemented with the intention of delineating borders between the plains and the hills. The notion of distinction between the hill people and the plain people is deeply rooted in these exclusionary policies, which have had a significant influence on the psychological

---

[1] Romit Bagchi, *Gorkhaland: Crisis of Statehood* (Sage Publications India, 2012).p. 85

makeup of the hill people.[2] In 1907, the British strategy of excluding the hill people led to a demand for distinct administrative entity in the area. Prior to scrutinising the calls for autonomy, it is essential to have an in-depth understanding of Darjeeling's historical background.

The Darjeeling area took its present shape in 1865 after the treaty of Sinchula.[3] Before the treaty, it has gone through some other treaty, which provided the background of the Darjeeling administration. The Darjeeling was earlier controlled by Chogyal of Sikkim. There after Nepal under the reign of Prithvinarayan Shah annexed the region and captured and controlled the same for a brief period. From 1780 onwards it was controlled by Nepalese but ultimately British annexed the region following Anglo-Gorkha war[4] and treaty of Sugauli.[5] Later on, British handed the control of the region to Chogyal in 1817 following the Treaty of Titaliya.[6] Later on in 1835, British again took control of the region through grant of deed.[7] But it was only controlling the Darjeeling region. The bench mark has set on 1864 following Anglo-Bhutan war[8] and tretaty of Sinchula which gave the control of region to the British. Moreover, the Darjeeling region added areas like Kalimpong to it, which is the present shape of the Darjeeling district.[9]  The British administration in initial

---

[2]Swatahsiddha Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response* (Concept, 2013). P.42

[3] Amiya K. Samanta, *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism* (APH Publishing, 2000).p. 34, 35

[4] From 1814-1816

[5] Bahadur, (1992). Op.cit

[6] The Treaty of Titaliya was signed between the chogyal (monarch) of the Kingdom of Sikkim and the British East India Company (EIC). The treaty, which was negotiated by Captain Barre Latter in February 1817, guaranteed security of Sikkim by the British and returned Sikkimese land annexed by the Nepalese

[7] General Lloyd was accordingly deputed to start negotiations with the Raja of Sikkim for the transfer of Darjeeling in return for an equivalent in money or land. The negotiations ended in the execution by the Raja of Sikkim of a Deed of Grant on the lst of Feb. 1835.

DEED – 'The Governor General, having expressed his desire for possession of the Hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages,the Sikkim puttee Raja, out of friendship for the said Governor General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Co. that is, all the land South of the Great Rangeet River, East of the Balason, Kahail and Little Rangeet rivers and West of the Rungno and Mahanadi Rivers', History of Darjeeling | Darjeeling District, Government of West Bengal | India, retrieved in 20 Dec, 2022.

[8] 1964-1965, Anglo- Bhutan war

[9] History of Darjeeling | Darjeeling District, Government of West Bengal | India, retrieved in 20 Dec, 2022.

phase after annexing the Darjeeling district, prior to 1861and from 1870-74 it was administered as non regulated area. In the period 1862-1870, it was administered as regulated area. The term non regulated area was changed and incorporated as scheduled district in 1874. In the year1919, the region was declared as backward tract. The status of partially excluded areas was given to the region in 1935 and it continued till independence of the country.[10]

In 1907, the elite of area produced a statement demanding a distinct administrative entity, although the proposal was not well formulated. Hillmen's Association did some methodical work and submitted it before the GOI legislation of 1919. In 1935, calls for a new governmental structure outside of Bengal revived. The Colonial authorities proposed the concept of partially excluded area in response to a need for a distinct administrative entity. The Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) order, 1936 stipulated that the areas to be excluded or partially excluded must be inhabited predominantly or to a considerable extent by aboriginals, and the Secretary of State for India issued instructions to that effect. Since the final days of colonial rule, the Darjeeling region has had the status of partially excluded areas. The main feature of partially excluded areas was that they were not excluded from the purview of the provincial Ministries as like Excluded areas nor was the expenditure on them fell outside the scope of respective state legislature.[11]

Darjeeling district was ruled with an exclusionary motive by colonial rule, especially after 1874 and up until the eve of independence, when different administrative setups like backward tract and partially excluded areas were established to protect the indigenous population from outsider exploitation. Colonial authorities governed Darjeeling and its people in different ways due to a number of factors, including protecting the interests of European tea planters, keeping the Tibetans at bay, and containing a rising freedom movement.[12] The Gorkhas' ability to

---

[10] Bahadur,(1992) "*Ethnicity, State, and Development.*"
[11] Government of India(Excluded and Partially excluded areas) ORDER, 1936. (Hansard, 25 February 1936) (parliament.uk), retrieved on 22 dec, 2022
[12] Samanta(2000), *Op.cit*.p. 74

adapt to diverse forms of government laid the groundwork for their subsequent shared identity and complicated their relationship with the new Indian state.

**Post- Independent period:** The Government of India established a sub-committee shortly after India's independence to give suggestions on " Excluded and Partially Excluded areas of the provinces other than Assam."[13] According to the report on excluded and partially excluded areas (other than Assam), there is no good reason to treat the Darjeeling district as separate from the rest of West Bengal and administer it in a different way than the rest of the state, so the current special administration for the district should be maintained.[14] Dambar Singh Gurung[15] argued in the Constituent Assembly for a return to the colonial-era system of distinct administrative arrangements for Darjeeling, but the government ultimately decided to integrate the district into West Bengal. The district has been a part of West Bengal since 1866, although it wasn't really merged into Bengal till India gained its independence.

---

[13] Soon after independence Government of India in making recommendations for 'partially excluded areas' of the provinces other than Assam (particularly of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Central Provinces, Bihar and United Provinces) has formed a sub-committee. The sub-committee of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly had been constituted of seven members and five co-opted members.

[14] The report states that 'The partially excluded areas of Bengal consist of the District of Darjeeling and certain police station areas in the Mymensingh district which border on the Garo Hills of Assam. The Darjeeling District is shown to contain 141,301 (37.54%) tribes out of a total population of 376,369 in 1941. The tribal population of the district seems to consist largely of labour employed in the tea gardens and some Lepcha and Bhotia. Actually, the latter are only about 20,000 in number. The prominent community in Darjeeling is the Gurkha or Nepalese community which numbers about 2.5 lakh. A good many are employed in the tea gardens and the local police force also contains a high proportion of them. The Gurkha are not regarded as a backward tribe and the thirteenth schedule to the Government of India (Legislative Assemblies) Order does not include Gurkha They feel, however, neglected so far as other ranks of Government service are concerned and, in the trade, and business of the place, the Marwari has the upper hand. Ou the other hand, the small community of Lepcha (12,000) finds itself dominated by the Gurkha and one of the complaints is that their land (the Lepcha claim to be the original inhabitants) has been gradually taken away from them by Nepalese immigrants. The partial exclusion of Darjeeling was recommended by the Government of Bengal not because it was considered as backward area but because it was felt that safeguards were necessary in the interests of the hill people. The fact that Darjeeling was the summer capital of the Government of Bengal and the existence of European tea-planters may have played some little part The 1941 census shows that even among the tribals (mostly tea garden coolies) there was 16,450 literates out of a total population of 141,301 and 2,571 of these were women. The local bodies (Municipality and District Board) are not wholly elected bodies and the Deputy Commissioner is the President of the Municipality. Undoubtedly the land the hill tribes need to be protected from the maw of money lenders but there is little case otherwise for continuing partial exclusion or special administration'. [Sub-Committee Report 1947: Annexure III (Appendix D)].

[15] Dambar Singh Gurung of Darjeeling was the sole representative in the sub committee referred for partially excluded areas other than assam of the 30 lakh of permanently domiciled Gorkhas spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. (Sarkar, 2013)

The first elected administration of West Bengal under the leadership of Bidhan Chandra Roy[16] had confronted two key concerns linked to Bengal. Both the refugee issue brought on by the partition and the need to link the southern half of West Bengal with the northern section (Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar) required a solution. The line between West Bengal and East Pakistan was drawn incorrectly by the Redcliff line Commission[17]. This northern section of Bengal lacked a connection to the rest of West Bengal till the amalgamation of Islampur sub division of Purnea district of Bihar with West Bengal created the connectivity.[18]

In India, the redrawing of states on the advent of independence was substantially influenced by the language issue. The language was first prioritised and promised by INC to serve as the foundation for redrawing the states of India after independence.[19] With independence came the misery of partition and the difficult undertaking of building India into a country. The INC leaders maintained an unyielding stance regarding the linguistic assertions of regional distinctiveness, perceiving this as an obstacle to the concept of nation-building. The INC leaders were against creating new states along linguistic lines. As a result of widespread public outcry, the federal government reluctantly appointed the SRC in December 1953. It issued its report and recommendation the following year, in 1955. The States Reorganisation Act of November 1956 codified the commission's recommendations, with a few alterations here and there. The SRC has given India's fledgling democracy a much-needed boost, altering the trajectory of country's politics. Language, originally a cultural medium, has evolved into a tool for political expansion,

---

[16] Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy  (1 July 1882 – 1 July 1962) served as Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1948 until his death in 1962.

[17] The Radcliffe Line was the boundary demarcated between the Indian and Pakistani portions of the Punjab Province and Bengal Presidency of British India. It was named after Cyril Radcliffe, who, as the joint chairman of the two boundary commissions for the two provinces, had the ultimate responsibility to equitably divide 175,000 square miles (450,000 km$^2$) of territory with 88 million people.

[18] Nitish K. Sengupta, "Bengal Divided: The Unmaking of a Nation, 1905-1971," 2007.

[19] INC in its Nagpur Session 1920 had accepted the principle of linguistic reorganization of the State and reiterated the same position in the election manifesto of the party during 1945-46 which "stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis" (A. M. Zaidi and S. G. Zaidi, "The Encyclopedia of Indian National Congress, Vol. 12, 1936–1946," New Delhi, 1981, 162.)

inspiring regional groups to push for autonomy on the basis of linguistic principles. The desire for statehood continues to be articulated via language politics in the present day. Neither Bodoland nor Gorkhaland is special in any way. Understanding the development of Gorkhaland movement requires a careful examination of the politics of language. In fact, the language provides the primary impetus for expressing the notion of Gorkhaland and its demand.

The politics of language deserves particular attention in the light of the Gorkhaland claim. Nepali language has been essential in shaping the direction of the Gorkhaland movement and the creation of Gorkha ethnic identity. The Nepali language may be seen as a significant factor in the formation of political community, as well as a symbol of cultural difference. The desire for Gorkhaland, or a separate administrative set up different from the rest of West Bengal, gained strength after the approval of the linguistic concept for State reorganisation in postcolonial India. During the colonial time, claims of linguistic uniqueness from the rest of West Bengal were made. But, with the reorganisation of states based on the idea of language, linguistic identity became a politically feasible aspect for the initiative of Gorkhaland.

The hill people's ability to articulate their demand on the basis of language had previously been established by the linguistic solidarity movement that took place under the umbrella of the Nepali Sahitya Sammelian,[20] then again by the All-India Gorkha League in the pre-colonial era. On 6th April 1947, the then-undivided Communist Party of India submitted a memorial addressing the hill's linguistic concerns, in which it was argued that Nepali should replace English and other languages as the official language of government and education in the hill, as well as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges.[21] With the post-colonial development, the language demand was intensified, especially in the mid-fifties with the appointment of Official language Commission with B.G Kher as Chairman in 1955 and that of the State Reorganization Commission in 1953.

---

[20] Nepali Sahitya Sammelan 'Nepali Literature Conference' is an organisation dedicated to promotion of Nepali literature in India. It was formed on 25 May 1924 in Darjeeling, a Nepali speaking town in West Bengal state of India.
[21] Pranta Parishad (1986) *Why Gorkhaland*?, p.35

Postcolonial development created an environment where diverse hill masses could demonstrate their solidarity with the community and acknowledge the Nepali language as a signifier of their ethnic identity and distinctiveness. Additionally, it inspired the local masses to engage actively in local political demands. The hill people believed that their language would determine their fate and provide them a foundation for demanding special treatment in government. After the West Bengal Assembly denied N.B. Gurung and B.B. Hamal's request to make Nepali the official language of Darjeeling in the late 1950s, the language campaign acquired widespread support. According to Gurung, the recommendations put forth by the SRC (State Reorganization Commission) in their report, (page 212, paragraph 784) proposed that if a district's population consists of 70% or more of a minority group within the state, the official language of that district should be the language of the minority group rather than the language of the state. Gurung argued that these recommendations should be upheld. The utilization of this approach could be observed in the context of the Darjeeling district. The government of West Bengal, under the leadership of Bidhan Chandra Roy, opted to dismiss the proposal. This decision was primarily influenced by the census data from 1951, which indicated that a mere 26% of the population in the Darjeeling district were Nepali speakers.[22]

Various political groups and organisations united, contending that the available facts were insufficient to establish Nepali as the predominant language spoken in the region. Consequently, they organised extensive protests in the form of demonstrations, strikes, and public gatherings. In 1961, the Bhasa Manyata Samiti, also known as the Darjeeling District Hill Peoples' Language Implementation Committee, was established.[23] In the Census, individuals were instructed to identify the Nepali language, rather than their sub-ethnic vernaculars, as their primary mother tongue. The assessment of the movement's level of success could be conducted through an examination of the findings presented in the 1961 census report. This report unveiled a notable increase in the proportion of individuals who spoke the

---

[22] Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development*." p. 94
[23] Bahadur.(1992) *Op.cit* p.94

Nepali language, reaching a significant 60% within the district.[24] Nepali was subsequently included into the West Bengal Official Language Act of 1961 as an official language in the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling district, which are mostly inhabited by Nepali-speaking communities. However, the implementation of statute was delayed for a period of 12 years.[25] One of the primary objectives of the language movement was to advocate for the inclusion of Nepali into the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution. In the year 1992, the Nepali people were granted constitutional status. The language movement might be classified as primarily social in character rather than political. The movement transcends partisan politics. The battle for the Nepali language may be seen as a manifestation of the collaboration between various political parties and intellectuals, which perhaps had a more significant influence on the development of ethnic consciousness in comparison to the that of autonomy.

In India after independence, the desire for regional autonomy was expressed at various points of time by various political parties. The call for formation of Gorkhastan by the CPI and the Congress unit of Darjeeling also favouring regional autonomy (not statehood) were just a reflection of the popular sentiment in the area, as was the AIGL's proposal for the creation of Uttarakhand. This resolution for regional autonomy in the district was finally approved in 1967 by the West Bengal administration, which at the time was governed by the Leftist United front. Due to the resolution's vagueness on the nature and scope of regional autonomy, it was dismissed as a political ploy.[26] Samanta believes this is an effort to win over the AIGL, a United Front ally.[27] The Darjeeling Hill Areas Development Council Act, 1976 established the Hill Development Council in 1976 at the behest of the DDCC to prepare and carry out development plans for Darjeeling. Because of an imbalance in its democratic representation, it was also unable to fulfil the hopes of its people.[28]

---

[24] *Ibid*

[25] Miriam Wenner, "*Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens*"" (PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015). p. 100

[26] Samanta, (2000) *Op.cit.*p. 94

[27] Samanta.(2000*) Op.cit,* p. 85

[28] Subhas Ranjan Chakrabarty, "Silence under Freedom: The Strange Story of Democracy in the Darjeeling Hills," *The Politics of Autonomy. Indian Experiences.* New Delhi, 2005, 173–95. P. 183

The Left Front returned to power in West Bengal in 1977, and in 1978 and September, 1981, they presented the Indian government with resolutions demanding regional autonomy for the three Darjeeling hill sub division only and the inclusion of Nepali in the 8th Schedule in the Indian Constitution, respectively.

The demand for Darjeeling's separation from West Bengal during the late 1950s underwent a transformation, evolving into a desire for regional autonomy inside the state. The formation of movement was influenced by the electoral alliance and party compromise. The desire for autonomy persisted throughout the 1970s. The desire for self-determination saw a resurgence in the early 1980s and transformed into a tumultuous and violent endeavour aimed at achieving statehood. In 1980 Pratna Parishad, consisting of politicians, language activists, and academics, advocated for the establishment of a separate state called Gorkhaland. The issue of statehood has once again emerged as a prominent demand in the political landscape of Darjeeling. The statehood claim of Pranta Parishad was endorsed by the radical youth in the region. In 1981, the Parishad corresponded with the Prime Minister, expressing their desire for the establishment of an autonomous region for the Nepali-speaking population residing in the northern region of Bengal.[29] Despite garnering support from urban youth, the parishad was unsuccessful in attracting inhabitants from other demographic groups. The collapse in Parishad's popularity was rapid due to internal conflicts among its members and a lack of external backing. Nevertheless, this event sparked a resurgence in the statehood drive for Darjeeling.

Following the dissolution of Pranta Parishad in the mid-1980s, the subsequent course of the movement became ambiguous and lacked any direction. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), a budding political entity, spearheaded the Gorkhaland movement in 1986. The creation of the GNLF coincided with that of the Pranta Parishad. However, the awareness of its existence in Darjeeling did not emerge until the mid-1980s. During the early 1980s, Ghising dedicated his efforts to the establishment of his political party. By 1985, Ghising had created a substantial support base for his political party, which enabled him to

---

[29] Moktan, R. (ed.) (2004): *Sikkim: Darjeeling. Compendium of Documents*. Kalimpong: R. Moktan Sumaralaya. P. 143

effectively address and mitigate the ongoing violence in the region of Gorkhaland. By 1985, Ghising had established a total of six frontal organisations, including the Gorkha National Women's Organisation, Gorkha National Youth Front, Gorkha National Students Front, Gorkha Volunteer Cell, Gorkhaland Welfare Organisation, and Gorkha National Ex Serviceman Organisation. These groups had a wide range of followers and activities, although they were unified by a common objective, namely the pursuit of Gorkhaland's interests.[30]

The Gorkhaland movement in 1987 was just as violent as it had never been before. Massive demonstrations were held against the federal and state governments because of their inability to implement effective measures to address the issue of Gorkhas. New life had been breathed into the movement after the 1987 assembly election. The Gorkhaland National Liberation Front and its allies urged their supporters to boycott the assembly election. The Darjeeling populace mostly agreed with the boycott demand, and just 7% of eligible voters cast ballots.[31] This event demonstrates the public's support for the cause. From 1987 onward, both the federal and state governments worked to maintain order, prompting a number of conferences to discuss possible solutions for the area. By the end of June 1987, the state and the central governments had settled on a resolution in favour of a development council with the necessary level of autonomy for the Darjeeling hills after numerous rounds of discussions. On July 22, 1987, the GNLF delegation, together with representatives from the state and national governments, met in Delhi for a tripartite conference. Nothing substantial came of the GNLF delegation's efforts to put up their demands and submit the memorandum they had prepared. The government was responding about the choice of hill council instead of independent state. The previous strength of movement was impacted by the inability of GNLF leaders to pursue their objectives. In 1988, Darjeeling was once again rocked by widespread violence. Clashes among interparty members as well as against the military person produced trouble to the usual condition of the area. The government, seeing the need of maintaining peace and order and restoring normalcy to the area,

---

[30] Sarkar,(2014) *Gorkhaland Movemen*t.p 69
[31]Sarkar. *Op.cit*, p. 72

convened a series of discussions before settling on the decision to establish the Darjeeling Hill Development Council. In the process of reaching on creation of development council there was debate on the nature of the council as well as the nomenclature of the council. And, there were debates on other issues like allotment of departments and funds. At the end in August 22, 1988 the DGHC accord was finally signed by Subhash Ghising, CG Somaiah[32], and Rathin Sengupta[33].

There was another agreement was signed in Delhi between Somaiah and Subhash Ghising in the presence of the home minister Butta Singh on the next day where it was agreed to drop the demand of the separate state of Gorkhaland. In response to the Accord most of the hardliners had rejected the idea of hill council and they disagreed with the settlement. After creation of hill development council namely the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), the election was held during December 10 -15, 1988. The GNLF had a sweeping victory in the first ever DGHC election.

In reaction to the brutality of Gorkhaland movement, the state and central governments adopted divergent paths, although they both aim for the same place. In the initial phase, the government played the blame game to each other i.e., Central and state government. The state administration made an effort to label the movement as hostile to national and constitutional values. The union government, however, criticised the state administration for failing to fulfil the hopes of hill people and labelled the uprising as an act of defiance against the state government. Both the State and the Union Government were accused of being politically motivated in their claims and counter-allegations against one another. Meanwhile, both governments agreed that an independent administrative organisation at the substate level was the best vehicle for satisfying the needs of warring parties.

From the DGHC's founding until his replacement by the state government in 2008 as its caretaker, Subhash Ghising retained control over the council. Severe allegations of corruption, nepotism, and suppression of opposition voices were levelled against the administration during his tenure. In the meanwhile,

---

[32] CG Somaiah joined the agreement as the representative of the Central Government.
[33] The then chief secretary of West Bengal. He participated in the treaty as representative of state government.

the Prasant Tamang event of 2007[34] aided Bimal Gurung in rapidly increasing his reputation among the local populace. Subhash Ghising delayed the DGHC election intentionally, knowing that the public was against him, making him seem even more autocratic and unpopular. When Subhash Ghising made his distinct demands about the inclusion of a council in sixth schedule of the Indian constitution, an attempt was made to enlist every hill community to identify as a tribe. But this did not work out well for him. Long-awaited DGHC elections were pressurised by members of all social circles and political parties at the local level to effect the necessary change. Ghising was serving as the council's caretaker since there was no elected representative present. The government was additionally in good spirit for appeasing Ghising, who was widely regarded as the most influential leader in the hill politics. The union cabinet approved of the 6th Schedule status and announced the formation of a new 'Gorkha Hill Council' once the parliament passed the bill on 1st October, 2007.[35] This decision was in response to the demand of GNLF to include the district under the purview of sixth schedule.

The GNLF was celebrating the decision but Bimal Gurung as well as other parties of the hills such as AGSU and the AIGL were rejecting the idea. The AGSU, AIGL along with Bimal Gurung opposed the inclusion of district governance under 6th schedule and supported the statehood demand. They proposed that there would be no alternative except the statehood. On 7th October, 2007, unimpressed with the decision of union cabinet, Bimal Gurung founded Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) at a public meeting at Darjeeling. The new front revived the demand of statehood which was supported by Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Anushuti Jati Sangha and AIGL. Meanwhile, GJM was able to extend its base all over the district. in the following months people joined the new outfit 'like a wave'. Popular anger and dissatisfaction with the GNLF also helped the new outfit to gain popularity among masses in short span of time. On the one hand GNLF pressurized the union government to take speedy measure for 6th schedule status and on the other hand

---

[34] Prashant Tamang, a Darjeeling-based police officer, participated in the Indian Idol reality show, attracting millions of fans worldwide. Bimal Gurung, a GNLF leader, financially and organizationally supported the Prashant movement, which eventually became a platform for opposition to Subash Ghisingh, despite initially being non-political.

[35] The Telegraph, 2.10.2007

GJM protested against the inclusion of 6<sup>th</sup> schedule and Subhash Ghising's governance.

The clash between the two parties, GNLF and GJM again disturbed the normalcy of the region. At this juncture, the union government decided to place the Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha on November 30, 2007, which sought to amend the Constitution to include DGHC in the Sixth Schedule. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee of Home Affairs, with Sushma Swaraj as Chairperson. Swaraj invited the Darjeeling parties for a hearing to Delhi, where GJM along with other hill parties, supporting the creation of Gorkhaland submitted their memorandum in support of the creation of Gorkhaland. Back in Darjeeling the Morcha continued with its protest which included the launch of non – cooperation movement. The CPRM[36] lent its support to the movement which broadened the base of the movement. Eventually as there was gripping of anti Ghising and Anti DGHC sentiment was rising, the then West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattarcharya withdrew his support to Subhash Ghising. On February 29, 2008, Ghising had to accept the State government's condition to tender his resignation as "caretaker "of the DGHC by March 10. The same day, the central parliamentary standing committee recommended a re-assessment of the draft bill of 6th Schedule, and returned it to the State government, thereby postponing the process indefinitely. Confronted with the State government's withdrawal of support and the Centre's disapproval of inclusion of DGHC under the purview of 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule, eventually Ghisingh gave in. On March 5, 2008, he resigned from his post as the care- taker of DGHC, ending a nearly 20 years lasting rule. The State government placed IAS officer B.L Meena as caretaker to look after the affairs of DGHC.

From 2007 onwards, the subject matter of Gorkhaland was spearheaded by the increasingly popular Gorkha Janamukti Morcha. Gorkha Janamukti Morcha

---

[36] Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM) is a political party based in the Darjeeling District and Kalimpong District of the Indian state of West Bengal. CPRM was formed in 1996 by Communist Party of India (Marxist) dissidents (a major group of the local CPI(M) leadership in Darjeeling) like former State Minister and Rajya Sabha MP Tamang Dawa Lama, Lok Sabha MP R.B. Rai and others, who were dissatisfied with the peace settlement the Left-Front government signed with the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF).

leader Bimal Gurung took many initiatives to bring together the ordinary folk behind the Gorkhaland movement. This time around, the uprising was mostly calm. There were instances of violence at this stage of the campaign, despite the fact that some measures were characterised as nonviolent and shown as Gandhigiri manner. The new leader was in a position to determine the future of Darjeeling feeling when the assembly election was planned. In addition, political parties were capitalising on the chaos. Trinamool Congress (TMC), led by Mamata Banerjee visited to Darjeeling in 2010 and announced host of development projects. Alliance was made between TMC and GJM as it was evident from public announcement of GJM to lend unconditional support to the TMC across the dooars and Terai for the forthcoming assembly election. The public support for GJM was reflected as it won three assembly seats from three hill constituencies. In the assembly election 2011, TMC formed the state government. There appeared to be political goodwill, as an invitation to discuss the Gorkhaland issue was extended.

After several rounds of talks the GTA Accord was signed among central government, state government and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha.The Accord laid down the objectives, aims, the power and functions of administrative setup. The provision of accord still exists in Darjeeling hills. The demand of statehood is not finished yet. In 2017, once again the movement was revived with the demand of statehood against the decision of West Bengal government to make Bengali language as compulsory. Although the government withdrew such decision but the political parties as well as the political bargain still push the issue of Gorkhaland in the main scenario of Darjeeling hills.

The conclusion drawn from the input is that the demand for Gorkhaland, a separate administrative set up for the Darjeeling district in West Bengal, is primarily driven by the politics of language and the desire for regional autonomy. The movement gained strength after the linguistic concept for state reorganization was approved in postcolonial India. The Nepali language has played a significant role in shaping the Gorkhaland movement and the creation of Gorkha ethnic identity. The movement has seen various phases, starting with a demand for regional

autonomy within West Bengal and eventually evolving into a demand for statehood. The issue of statehood continues to be a prominent demand in the political landscape of Darjeeling. The recent revival of the movement in 2017, sparked by the issue of language imposition, indicates that the issue of Gorkhaland remains a prominent one in the region.

**STATE RESPONSES TO BODOLAND MOVEMENT**-

India is home to an estimated 104 million indigenous people.[37] Indian tribal communities were divided into two broad groups on the basis of their geographic location, the plains and highlands in the centre and south, and the northeastern states that border China and Burma. The Indian Constitution's Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule provide separate legal structures for two categories of Indian tribes.[38] To facilitate comprehension of the Bodoland movement's current condition and its evolving nature, this chapter offers an analysis of the state and federal administrations' responses. The chapter also critically explores the actions of colonial administration to provide background for the introduction of specific administrative measures for Northeastern indigenous people and their influence on the Bodoland statehood movement. The responses of union and state administrations to Bodos' initiatives in relation to their concerns are discussed in this chapter.

The Indian Constitution has a section on the sixth schedule specifically for the northeastern tribes. The Plain tribes and the Hill tribes are the two main categories of tribes found in Assam.[39] A significant percentage of the ethnic people lived in Assam prior to ethnicity being the basis for formation of new states in the area. At present, Assam is home to 23 tribal communities, which account for

---

[37] Census of India 2011

[38] The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India deals with the administration and control of scheduled areas and Scheduled Tribes in India. The Fifth Schedule covers tribal areas in nine states of India – Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Odhisa, and Rajasthan. The Sixth Schedule is a self-contained code for the governance of the Tribal Areas. The Sixth Schedule provides the tribal people with administration, which would safeguard their customs and way of life. The provisions of the Sixth Schedule assure the tribal people autonomy in the management of their own affairs. Presently, it functions in four north eastern states, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram

[39] The hill tribes are mostly made up of people who make their home in mountainous locations, whereas the plain tribes originated from the original inhabitants of the Assamese plains

approximately 12.40 percent of the state's overall populace. 35% of the Assamese tribal population comes from the Bodo tribe, which is the biggest plain tribe in the region.

Table 1: Population of Major STs

| Sl No. | Name of Scheduled Tribe | Total Population | Proportion to the Total ST Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | All ST | 38,84,371 | 100% |
| 2 | Bodo | 1,363,414 | 35.1 |
| 3 | Miri/ Mishing | 680,541 | 17.52 |
| 4 | Mikir (now recognized as Karbi) | 431,165 | 11.1 |
| 5 | Rabha | 295,212 | 7.6 |
| 6 | Sonowal Kachari | 252,484 | 6.5 |
| 7 | Lalung (now known as Tiwa) | 201,987 | 5.2 |
| 8. | Garo | 163,143 | 4.2 |
| 9 | Dimasa | 124,299 | 3.2 |
| 10 | Others* | 372,122 | 9.58 |

Source -Census Report 2011

*includes Deori, Hajong, Thengal Kachari, Khasi, Jaintia, Mech, Chakma, Mizo, Hmar, Kuki tribes, Naga tribes, Barmans (in Cachar), Man (Tai speaking), Khampti and Singhpho tribes.

There have been numerous stages of the Bodoland statehood movement among the Bodo population of Assam. Several plains-dwelling ethnic groups, in

addition to the Bodo, are said to be part of the movement. With a long history of exploitation, neglect, and discrimination within the area, the fundamental goal of this movement is to win justice for these tribes. Backers of the Bodoland cause have seen that weak policies and corrupt government institutions threaten the identity and way of life of the plain tribes. They believe that the construction of a distinct Bodoland state is vital in order to ensure and defend the core prerequisites of their cultural life.

**Response of Colonial Administration**: Colonial government tactics for controlling indigenous populations had an enduring impact in the years after independence. Many provisions of the Indian Constitution, especially those dealing with tribal problems in the Northeastern area, show the lasting impact of colonial practises. The colonial administration in Assam instituted a policy during the colonial period that separated hill tribes from those lived in the plain regions of state. The British legitimised their actions by arguing that they were necessary to (1) prevent the plains from being overrun and plundered by hill tribal communities between 1873 and 1900, (2) safeguard the hill tribes from exploitation by the plainsmen between 1900 and 1928, and (3) advance a progressive public policy aimed at ensuring the survival of the hill tribes' cultural traditions and customs between 1928 and 1947.[40] The British put in place a number of limitations meant to affect the actual implementation of these programmes.

Many areas, including as Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgaon, Sivsagar, Lakimpur, Garo hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga hills, and Cachar, started adhering to the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873[41] on November 1, 1873. According to the Act's regulations, anybody without special permission from the British government was barred from entering the aforementioned areas.[42] It was widely believed that the British government had enforced this law in order to slow the growth of nationalist groups in areas that were hostile to British rule. There was also a severe lack of channels of information exchange, and each native group had its own system of government in place. Therefore, the British government took the

---

[40]Nani Gopal Mahanta, "Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2013, 49–58, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23527211., p. 50.

[41] Popularly known as Inner Line Permit or Regulation

[42] Bengal Eastern Frontiers, Regulation 1873 (bareactslive.com), retrieved on 3rd December, 2022

conscious decision to intervene as little as possible in the day-to-day activities of these tribes. The reorganisation of Bengal region and the incorporation of Kamrup, Darang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur into the jurisdiction of newly formed commissionership constituted the Chief Commissioner Province of Assam in 1874. Furthermore, the province underwent partial incorporation of the Khasi and Jantia Hills, Naga Hills, Cachar, and Garo Hills.[43] The use of Inner Line Permit (ILP) continued unaltered throughout the aforementioned districts.

To indicate their position as undeveloped territories where ordinary administration tasks were not viable, the Schedule District Act of 1874 designated some districts as Scheduled Districts. All areas marked by tribal control and socioeconomic underdevelopment were included in this law.[44] After enforcing the Chin Hills Regulation from 1896, the British government could force out of the hills anybody they regarded a threat to society. The colonial government of India took the monumental decision to exclude these areas from the application of Indian law in an order issued under the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation of 1880.[45] These elements acted as barriers to the spread of nationalist ideas in these areas, keeping them mostly untouched by nationalism.

British colonial authorities in India enacted a key piece of legislation in the form of the Government of India Act, 1919. Subsequently, the Government of India Act 1919 published a notice referring to the designation of some designated districts as the Backward Tracts, providing wide jurisdiction to the chief commissioner in order to aid the improvement and advancement of these territories.[46] Some regions were designated as "backward tracts" by the Governor-General. British policy regarding the Backward Tracts was predominately predicated on the region's degree of development. Rather than taking into account the physical characteristics of the land, including its hilly or plain terrain, the particular protection measures

[43] https://en.m.wikipedia.org>wiki>Chief_Commissioner%27s_Province. Retrieved on 5th December, 2022.

[44] Rann Singh Mann, *Culture and Integration of Indian Tribes* (MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1993).p. 77-78

[45] Nani Gopal Mahanta (2013), op.cit. p. 50.

[46] Section 52 A (2) of the Government of India Act 1919. Cited in Guha, A (1977).: "*Planter Raj to Swaraj-Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam*, 1826-1947", New Delhi, p.213.

were developed depending on the degree of development. Because of British measures such as the Inner Line Permit (ILP), the Scheduled Act of 1874, and the Chin Hills Regulation of 1876, the hill tribes of the Northeastern area were more remote and undeveloped compared to the plain tribes.

On the other hand, the plain tribes residing in Assam participated in interactions with non-tribal communities and experienced a modest level of socio-economic progress. This legislation prioritized the hill communities and their regions. As a consequence, a considerable proportion of the plain tribes were excluded from the British-implemented protective measures. This occurrence served to heighten the plain tribes' consciousness regarding their cultural and ethnic heritage. The plain communities underwent a heightened state of awareness concerning their shared cultural heritage and sense of identity. There was widespread anxiety among individuals regarding the potential compromise of their identity, culture, and traditions in the absence of adequate protective measures. Their increased consciousness motivated them to lodge their complaints with the Simon Commission[47] in 1929. The young Bodo leaders took the initiative to convey their demands to the Simon Commission, thereby assuming an active role.

The Simon Commission served Assam from 1928 until January 1929. Memos were being sent to the commission. Indigenous groups like the Bodos delivered their memorandum via different organisations. Kalicharan Brahma led a group and delivered a memorandum before the commission. Kalicharan Brahma led the Goalpara District people delegation, while Jadav Khaklari, Secretary of the Assam Kachari Juba Sanmelan, gave a supplementary memorandum on behalf of the whole Bodo people in Assam. The memorandum urged the government to provide Boro-Kachari a separate electorate in Assembly and local board elections.[48] They

---

[47] The British conservative government under Stanley Baldwin to report on the working of the Indian constitution established by the Government of India Act of 1919, formed a commission namely the Simon Commission on November, 1927. The commission consisted of seven members—four Conservatives, two Laborites, and one Liberal—under the joint chairmanship of the distinguished Liberal lawyer, Sir John Simon, and Clement Attlee, the future prime minister. Its composition met with a storm of criticism in India because Indians were excluded. The commission was boycotted by the Indian National Congress and most other Indian political parties.

[48] Col, Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East India.*"p. 687-688.

also advocated for free, obligatory elementary education for this community. Also highlighted were the creation of a Bodo Regiment in the British Army and a census category for Bodos.[49] The Dhubri Bodo Jubak Sanmilani and a coalition of Goalpara Sub-Division Bodos, Garos, and Rabhas have urged the government not to move the district to Bengal.[50]

The 1935 Government of India Act was a landmark law. The Indian people rejected the Simon Commission report, but the British government took many of the study's suggestions into account when forming a responsible government. The findings and public uproar against inadequate governance led the Indian government to reconstruct governance on self-governance and provincial autonomy. In 1935, the GOI Act allocated five State Assembly seats to Assam plains tribes.[51] Under the Government of India Act of 1935, steps were once more made to safeguard the interests of hill tribes. The Act included measures customised for the tribes of the Northeast. The isolated and underdeveloped tribes' difficulties were more emphasised. Hence it was evident that the advantage flowed to isolated hill tribes, resulting from past actions of the British. They divided the tribal lands into two major groups. excluded and partially excluded areas. The first option was intended for remote indigenous communities without the resources to implement standard administrative procedures. Partially Excluded Areas, on the other hand, were those where routine administration could be carried out to a lesser level.[52] The Government of India Act 1935, defined the hill districts in such a fashion that there was no representation in provincial assembly and the Governor was tasked to oversee these territories which fell within the scope of excluded areas. The people of the partially excluded areas were still allowed to elect members to the provincial legislature, but

---

[49] Col Ved Prakash.Op.cit p. 687-688

[50] Anwesha Dutta, "The Politics of Complexity in Bodoland: The Interplay of Contentious Politics, the Production of Collective Identities and Elections in Assam," South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 39, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 478–93.

[51] Bodolandwatch, July, 2015, op.cit.

[52] Government of India act 1935 in part III, chapter V, NO 91 and 92 categorized tribal areas in excluded and partially excluded areas.

the legislature's laws were not binding on them without the assent of Governor of the province.[53]

The plain tribes of Assam were not a priority in the Government of India Act of 1935. While the Government of India Act (1935) did provide five seats for plain tribes in the Assam provincial assembly, it made no mention of making any specific provision for the administration of the territories where these plain tribes lived. The colonial government of Assam did not feel any need to make any specific accommodations for administering the territories inhabited by the plain tribes, as they did for the hill tribes. Because of their frequent interactions with non-tribal people, the British authorities thought, plain tribes will eventually become integrate with non-tribal people. Therefore, the British only guaranteed them a few of seats in one Assam provincial assembly to have a say in the state's politics.

In the 1937 Assam Provincial assembly election, a party called the Tribal League stood for the plain tribes' representation. The League has on the occasion lent its support to different groups on the condition that the hopes of plain peoples would be met. During the period, issues of tribal identity were in the forefront of minds of indigenous peoples. Even more troublesome for simple tribal people was the influx of newcomers to their territory. Settlements of non-tribal origin in regions inhabited by plain tribes have resulted in a hazard to the land and culture of the plain tribes. The plain tribes withdrew their support for the Muslim League after the Sadullah Ministry's decision to facilitate the migration of Bengali Muslim peasants in the guise of its 'More Food Campaign' on the eve of World War II.

On August 21, 1945, the Government of India made a decision to conduct general elections, on January 6, 1945. The Congress party emerged triumphant from in those elections, and with the assistance of the Tribal League and Gopinath Bordoloi at the helm, they established a government.

---

[53] The excluded areas included North East Frontier Tract,(Sadiya, Balipara and Lakhimpur), the Naga Hills District, the Lushai Hills District and North Cachar Hills sub-division of Cachar District, The Partially Excluded Areas included the Garo Hills District, the Mikir Hills in the Nowgong and Sibsagar District, the British portion of the Khasi and Jantia Hills, other than Shillong municipality and the cantonment.

In the undivided Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi, who chaired a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, Minority, and Tribal and Excluded Areas to analyse provisions for tribal communities of north eastern state. The committee presented its findings and made the case for the hill tribes of northeastern India to have a distinct status. The Assembly debated the report from a variety of perspectives.[54] Finally, the Indian Constitution Assembly accepted the sixth schedule clause and approved the Bordoloi Subcommittee's suggestion. As predicted, the plain tribes of Assam saw little consideration for their causes and problems throughout the process. Members of the Constituent Assembly held the view that the plain tribes had been more amalgamated with non-tribal plain people over the years. For all intents and purposes, the Bordoloi Sub-Committee believed the plain tribes should be classified as a minority group.[55]

**Post colonial period:** The 15th of August, 1947, was the day India gained its independence. The Indian National Congress served as the interim government in the state of Assam. The government was led by Gopinath Bordoloi. As the plain tribes requested, the government revised "The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886" to further safeguard their lands. The Congress party amended the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 to include a clause protecting tribal lands. The state government divides Assam into 33 tribal belts and blocks in line with Section 161 of Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 Amendment Act, 1947.

According to a survey conducted in 1952 by the Commission of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it was found that the majority of plain tribes tend to be located in either hilly or forests-covered regions. The Indian Constitution's Sixth Schedule allows for the creation of autonomous district councils, although these councils were exclusively applicable to hill tribes. The authority to form

---

[54] The report's sixth schedule provision for self-government under regional and district councils was criticized for potentially creating permanent separation of North East Indian tribal people from the rest of India by Rohini Kumar Choudhury, Brajeswar Prasad, Kuladher Chaliha, Lakshmi Narayan Sahu, Prof. Shibben Lai Saxsena. However, it was welcomed by Rev. Nichols Roy, B.R. Ambedkar, and Gopinath Bordoloi, who argued for separate treatment to protect their culture and ensure development.

[55] Bordoloi sub-committee report cited in Das, Sankar (2017), Bodoland Statehood Movement: A study On the Role OF ABSU, p. 88-89.

autonomous district councils had been delegated to the hill tribes of Assam residing within the state by the Government of India. As a result of feeling ignored, the plains tribes took initiative to get their needs heard.[56] The plain tribes were more self-aware as a consequence of the bias offered to them.

The political climate of Assam saw a major shift in the second half of the 1960s. Ethnic identity has been a major driving force in the political development of India's north-eastern region. Nagaland was founded in 1963 and was the country's first to be founded mainly on ethnic grounds. This change occurred as a direct result of pressure from the Naga people. As a result of this, nearby tribes in the area started making demands for a homeland based on their unique cultural background.

**Demand for Autonomy and Governments' Response:** Prime Minister Indira Gandhi assured All Party Hill Leaders Conference participants on January 23, 1967, that Assam would be restructured federally.[57] Several indigenous groups supported the message. Assam's plain tribes lacked a strong political body to represent them and demand their rights. The Tribal League became the Tribal Sangha, limiting its purpose to socioeconomics.[58] In the light of Assam's changing political environment, young student leaders created a forum to unite plain tribes. Thus, in 1967, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam emerged as significant plain tribal groups in Assam.

The North Eastern Area (Reorganisation) Act was introduced by the Indian government in 1971 with the express purpose of resolving issues pertaining to the maintenance and protection of the ethnic and cultural identities of those who live in the country's northeast.[59] Additionally, the legislation aimed to encourage and support the region's general growth. The primary purpose of the Act was to reorganise Assam in order to create the states of Manipur and Tripura, as well as the

---

[56] Gohain, Hiren (1989) op. cit, p.645-646.
[57] ABSU, (2017), Op.cit, p.7.
[58] The All Assam Plain Tribal League (AAPTL) was founded in 1933 to represent Assam's plain tribes in politics. Five Assam provincial legislative assembly seats were reserved under the 1935 Government of India Act. The AAPTL won plain tribal votes in their seats. Congress dominated after independence, overshadowing the league. The group was disbanded in 1956 and its leaders joined Congress. The league became All Assam Tribal Sangha.
[59] www.lawyerslaw.org/the-north-eastern-area-reorganizations-act-1971/, retrieved at Jan 18, 2023.

states of Meghalaya and Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh as union territories. Under this act, no provision was made for the plain tribes. The Assamese plain tribal communities had once again voiced a feeling of official neglect. The proposal for formation of Udayanchal as a distinct union territory has come from the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), a newly formed political group that represents the plain tribal peoples of Assam. The purpose of this demand was to address the unique issues and difficulties that the Assamese plain tribal people were being faced with.

In the time frame spanning from 1974 to 1975, the Bodo intellectual community, in conjunction with various plain tribal organisations, took the lead in initiating a movement aimed at promoting the acknowledgment and safeguarding of their language. The proponents had put forth a request advocating for the adoption of Roman script as the writing system for the Bodo language. The requests presented by the citizens were not adequately taken into account by the authorities at both the central and state government levels. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha, an organisation founded in 1952 with an objective of promoting Bodo literature and culture, played a pivotal role in instigating a protest movement in response to what they perceived as the government's neglect of their demands. The endorsement of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha has been expressed by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). The implementation of stringent measures by the government aimed at suppressing the movement led to the regrettable loss of 18 lives within the Bodo community. Following a series of events, it was observed that the central government took the initiative to impose the utilisation of Devanagari script exclusively for the Bodo language, without seeking consensus or input from relevant stakeholders. The approach adopted by the government during the movement has been the subject of critical analysis and evaluation. The Plains tribes exhibited a notable degree of unease regarding their cultural identity, thereby intensifying their attentiveness and admiration for their unique customs and traditions. The incident has elicited apprehensions regarding Assamese nationalism within the region, consequently intensifying the Udayanchal movement among the plain tribes, particularly the Bodos.

In 1975, PM Indira Gandhi declared a national emergency in India, thereby setting aside the priority of 'Udayanchal'. This led to the formation of alliances between the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and the Janata Party for participation in the general election of 1977 and the provincial election in 1978. The Janata Government, in collaboration with the PTCA, pledged to undertake comprehensive efforts for the holistic development of plain tribal communities of Assam. During the tenure of Janata government, improvements and laws were implemented to partially address the desires of plain tribes. The Assam Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Reservation of Service and Post) Act of 1978 was enacted by the Assam Legislative Assembly, garnering positive reception from the tribal communities residing in Assam.[60] Charan Narzary, the former general secretary of PTCA and the sole Bodo representative in Parliament, revealed the abandonment of Udayanchal demand, leading to a division among the Plain Tribal Council of Assam.[61] Benai Khungur Bosumotary, a prominent member of the PTCA (Plain Tribal Council of Assam), based in Udalguri, made the decision to depart from the party and establish a new faction known as PTCA (Progressive). The primary objective of this breakaway group was to advocate for the establishment of a separate region called Udayanchal, specifically catering to the needs and interests of plain tribal communities residing in Assam.

In 1980, both PTCA (Progressive) and the ABSU (All Bodo Students' Union) joined forces and jointly called for the creation of a Union Territory named 'Mishing Bodoland'. The Mishing community, the second largest indigenous people residing in the plains of Assam, did not express any desire for a separate homeland from Assam but rather sought increased autonomy in the government of regions

---

[60] The Assam Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Reservation of Service and Post) Act, 1978 was enacted in order to provide for reservation of vacancies in services and posts for the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who were the Backward Classes of citizen and were not adequately represented in the services and posts in the affairs of the State within the State. The act provided the provision of reservation at seven percent for Scheduled Castes and ten percent for Scheduled Tribes (Plains) and five percent for the Scheduled Tribes (Hills) in case of direct recruitment and promotion in state offices. The Act was published in the Assam Gazette Extraordinary, dated 28th May, 1979. (https://vlex.in/vid/assam-scheduled-castes-and-545553450/, retrieved on September 24, 2022.)

[61] Singh, Bhupinder (2002): "The Bodo Movement", Autonomy Movement and Federal India, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, p.85

where they constitute a majority. The ABSU attempted to foster consolidation between PTCA and PTCA (P) by establishing the United Tribal National Liberation Front (UTNLF). However, the UTNLF had a lack of popular support and subsequent demise due to the absence of a cohesive policy framework among its members. A collective of PTCA members expressed that the proposition for a separate homeland that was based on the division of Assam in a 50-50 manner[62] was not feasible due to the dispersal of numerous tribal communities throughout Assam. Recognizing the significance of prevalent circumstance, the ABSU assumed the role of spearheading the effort of separate statehood. Under the guidance of ABSU, socio-political dynamics of the movement underwent a transformation, marking the commencement of a new era.

In 1985, AASU leaders and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the Assam Accord, marking the culmination of Assam movement[63] that had been supported by ABSU and other plain tribal organisations. The Accord didn't take into account the worries of plain tribal groups at all. Plain tribal groups felt disregarded, and it questioned the AASU's leadership for failing to take into account the hopes and dreams of ordinary tribe members.[64] The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) was founded by Assam Movement leaders from AASU when the Accord era ended, and it went on to win the provincial election in Assam and assumed power in the state.

As soon as the AGP took power, they mandated that all students in secondary schools take the Assamese language paper in government schools. Non-Assamese organisations and ABSU alike have spoken out against the plan, seeing it as an effort to impose Assamese on students who are not exposed to it at home. In 1986, the Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) issued a circular that

---

[62] Divide Assam 50-50 was slogan of Udayanchal movement. They demanded to bifurcate Assam and establish Udayanchal. In present today the slogan is used by THE ABSU in support of their separate Bodoland movement.

[63] Assam Movement was launched in 1979 and existed till 1985. Assam Accord was result of six year long movement. Movement was launched to ensure protection of indigenous communities of Assam from illegal migrants.

[64] The Bodos were dismayed at the Assam Accord, particularly for its clause 6 where the constitutional, Legislative and administrative safeguards were demanded to protect language, cultural heritage, and identity issues of Assamese people. there was no mention in it of the tribal identities which are also a part of composite society and culture of Brahamaputra valley.

contained the provision of making Assamese language mandatory, which was violently opposed by the Bodos (headed by ABSU) and the Bengali minority. Additionally, the plain tribal groups said that the Assam government did not do enough to reserve government employment for members of scheduled tribes. They also expressed concerns with the government's handling of the problem of non-tribal individuals acquiring property in the 33 tribal belts and blocks where doing so was illegal.

Despite appointing a committee headed by Durga Das Boro on 21 January 1986 to improve the situation of Assam's ST and SC minorities, the AGP administration did nothing to implement its recommendations. As stated in their April 1986 report to the Government of Assam, the tribal belts and blocks did not fully adhere to Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1947. Additionally, illegal immigrants were not evicted from these belts and blocks, and pattas were not distributed to the wider tribal community. However, the Governments' apathy towards tribal concerns raised doubts about their commitment to improving the lot of indigenous people.

The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) initiated a movement in 1987 to establish a seperate statehood called Bodoland, based on their discontent with the government's handling of the Bodos' grievances. The newly elected president, Upendra Nath Brahma, played a significant role in spearheading the plain tribes movement due to his charismatic leadership and the limited presence of well-established organizations advocating for the rights of indigenous communities in the region. In January 1987, the ABSU presented a comprehensive Charter of Demand consisting of 92 points[65] to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, with the primary objective of advocating for a separate statehood for the Bodo community. In February 1987, the ABSU presented their demands to key

---

[65] The ABSU submitted a 92-point charter of demands to the Assam government in 1987, with 27 demands specifically related to the Bodo language. While there were some demands for plains tribals in general and non-tribal sections of the population, the focus was primarily on Bodo demands and not those of other tribal groups. The ABSU claimed to represent all plains tribals, but their charter did not include any demands for the language and culture of the Rabhas or the Mishings. Cited in Misra, Udayan, "Bodo Stir: Complex Issues, Unattainable Demands', Economic and Political Weekly, May 27, 1989, p.1148.

political figures in India, including Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Home Minister of India, and the President of India.

The movement for sepearte statehood, Bodoland was initiated on March 2, 1987, and focused on three pivotal political demands:

1. Establishing an independent state on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra,
2. Establishing an autonomous council on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, and
3. Creating the Karbi Anglong regional council to provide representation and address the needs of non-Karbi tribal communities.[66]

The ABSU designated "Bodoland" for their envisioned state and established the Bodoland Peoples' Action Committee (BPAC) to further advance their pursuit of statehood. Supporters of the movement orchestrated various forms of civil disobedience, such as protests, agitations, rallies, and hunger strikes, to capture the attention of national leaders.

The impact of movement was felt throughout the region, but it was particularly pronounced in areas predominantly inhabited by the Bodo community. The Assam state administration responded to the movement in a repressive manner, leading to violence and the loss of numerous young individuals. To foster peace within the region, both the state government and central government have proposed engaging in tripartite discussions with the leaders of ABSU and the Bodo People's Action Committee.

On August 28, 1989, the Central government, the state administration, and the ABSU-BPAC representative group convened the first tripartite meeting in New Delhi. As on the seventh round of discussions, no satisfactory result had reached. The central government recommended that a committee consisting of three

---

[66] ABSU (2017), *op.cit*, p. 9-10

people was to be formed to investigate the Bodo problem at the negotiations in September 1990. Three members of an expert committee were appointed by the federal government on January 25, 1991, while Assam was under President's control. The committee was formed, with Bhupinder Singh as its head and KS Singh and A.M. Gokhale as its other two members. Examining the Bodo problem and enabling them to evaluate the viability of financial, legislative, and administrative methods within a self-governing framework was the committee's main goal.

Two separate Autonomous Councils were recommended in a report submitted by the Bhupinder Singh committee on March 30, 1992. There was a time lapse between the establishment of the two councils, one of which was located in the western central region and the other in the eastern region. The group also proposed a new territorial administration for the native communities. It was recommended that the areas inhabited by indigenous tribes would adopt a three-tiered system of self-governance, with a village-level governing body, a cluster-level governing body, and an overarching coordinating body. There was also a proposal to create a second chamber of legislature to deal only with tribal issues, with substantial jurisdiction in some areas related to tribal self-governance and the maintenance of cultural and social autonomy among different ethnic groups.[67]

The ABSU said that the expert committee's solutions wouldn't adequately meet their needs, thus they rejected their recommendations.[68] On January 7th, 1992, the federal administration, led by PM P.V. Narasimha Rao, resumed the tripartite talks that had previously been held. Unfortunately, it was not possible to achieve a favourable conclusion. Protests and agitations by the ABSU and BPAC in Assam continued to disturb normal life for the local population. Seeing the complexity of situation, former Home Minister S.B. Chavan assured the Bodo leaders that action would be done to address their worries.

Rajesh Pilot, who served as the Home Minister at that time, was appointed to supervise the Bodoland matter in 1993. On January 20, 1993, S.K.

---

[67] Reports of Three Member Committee on Bodoland Issues (1992), p.119-124.
[68] Col, Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East India*."p. 698-699

Bwiswmuthiary, President of the ABSU, met with Rajesh Pilot for a talk. On February 10 of that year, Pilot met with Assam's the then chief minister, Hiteswar Saikia, to address the issue. In the end, a final resolution was achieved to the problem at hand. The Bodoland Autonomous Council was established as part of a legal agreement signed on February 20, 1993.[69] During this particular time, there was a noticeable presence of Bodo issues and individuals within the context of the movement of plain tribes. The Bodos were the most prominent indigenous tribes on the plains of Assam, exhibiting a higher degree of organisation compared to other tribes in the region. Since the inception of struggle involving plain tribes, the Bodo community has consistently occupied a prominent position. However, it is worth noting that during this period, the leadership of Bodo leaders had been subject to scrutiny and challenge from other plain tribes. Various indigenous groups had expressed their concerns and pose inquiries regarding the essence of movement. It is noteworthy to notice that the process of Assaminisation varied among different plain tribes. The demands posed by the individuals towards the government exhibited notable variations.

**Memorandum of Settlement (1993)**

The Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) Act was enacted by the Government of Assam in May 1993 to facilitate self-governance for the Bodos, promoting their progress in social, economic, educational, ethnic, and cultural domains. The Act established a Bodo Autonomous Council, consisting of villages with a predominant Bodo population in the geographical region between the Sankush River and the Mazbat/Pansoi River. The council would consist of 35 elected members and 5 nominated members, with one serving as the chief executive member.

Financially, the BAC would be allocated as a distinct sub-category within the state budget, with grant in-aid eligibility and restricted authority to generate financial resources and oversee commercial activities within its designated territories. The executive council of the BAC was granted judicial powers pertaining

---

[69] Memorandum of Settlement (Bodo Accord) 1993.

to customary law, practices, and land ownership within the BAC territory.[70] A temporary Bodoland Executive Council was inaugurated in Kokrajhar within three days after the legislation's passage, with S.K. Bwiswmuthiary as the Chief Executive Member and Premsingh Brahma as his deputy.

The Bodo Security Force, a radical group that supported the creation of an independent homeland, had publicly opposed the accord and had been violent in the area as a result. In October 1993, a conflict broke out between Bodo and Muslim communities, killing and displacing many people. In July of the same year, in the Bashbari relief camp in the Barpeta region, there was a major violent event. After first surrendering in the wake of Accord, the Bodo Volunteer Force returned to armed activity out of dissatisfaction with the political development. Conditions in law enforcement and public safety were chaotic and unpredictable in BAC areas. The BAC locations where peace may be possible were spread out across a large area.

After initially supporting the Accord, the ABSU eventually decided to abandon it in 1996 and instead renew its campaign for statehood. The ABSU had voiced its opposition to the government's announcement about the establishment of BAC area limits. Within six months of the establishment of a temporary executive council, the Accord stipulated, the BAC elections would be held. Non-Bodo residents in the BAC region had concerns about the deal's power imbalance. The Government's failure to hold executive council elections in BAC was a significant argument against the Accord's continued legitimacy

Law and order could not be maintained to their usual standards because of the circumstances. There was a lot of violence associated with the movement at this time. Both the federal government and the state administration had stated their willingness to talk to Bodo leaders about the issue of Bodoland in light of the growing unrest, which has included riots and strikes. The BLT's unilateral ceasefire and pro-Indian statements prompted the Indian government to negotiate with them since their demands did not involve pursuing national independence. The group was vocal about its support for creating a separate state inside India itself. India and

---

[70] Memorandum of Settlement (Bodo Accord) 1993.

Pakistan were at war, and the BLT showed their support for the Indian government by calling for a unilateral halt during the Kargil war. The Government of India (GOI) has shown an interest in discussing the Bodoland problem after the Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) took positive steps. The discussions eventually led to the Bodo Accord, which was signed in 2003. The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) backed the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) during their talks with the Indian government.

**Memorandum of Settlement, or Bodo Peace Accord (2003)**

On February 10, 2003, the Assam government, the union government, and the Bodo Liberation Tigers signed the Memorandum of Settlement on the Bodoland Territorial Council in New Delhi. According to the terms of agreement, BTC would have legislative authority over 40 different topics. The objectives of agreement are:

1. To create an Autonomous self-governing body to be known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) within the State of Assam and to provide constitutional protection under the Sixth Schedule to the said Autonomous Body;
2. To fulfil economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos;
3. To speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area.

Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) is the name given to the four districts that make up the BTC region in Assam.[71] The area under those four districts has been estimated as follows.

---

[71] "Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)," accessed November 24, 2022, https://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/documents/papers/memorandum_feb02.htm.

Table 2: BTAD area and its population.

| Sl. No | Name of District | Area in Sq. KM | Population (Census 2011) |
|--------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Kokrajhar | 3,169.20 | 887,142 |
| 2 | Chirang | 1,069.96 | 482,162 |
| 3 | Baksa | 3,056.89 | 950,075 |
| 4 | Udalguri | 1,673.93 | 831,668 |
| | Total | 8,969.98 | 3,151,047 |

Source: Census Report 2011.

According to Para2 (1) of the Sixth Schedule, the BTC can have up to 46 members, with 30 reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities, and 6 to be nominated by the Governor of Assam from unrepresented communities for BTC area.The Indian Constitution's Sixth Schedule empowers the BTC. For BTC legislation, 40 topics were moved. For transferred topics, the BTC has executive, administrative, and financial authorities.

The Constitution (Ninety-second Amendment) Act, 2003 includes Bodo in Devanagari Script in the Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Bodo became BTC's official language under the stipulation that Assamese and English remain official. The Indian government provided the BTC with a lot of money to build socioeconomic infrastructure after the Accord. Hagrama Mohilary was chosen to lead the council's temporary executive as its chief executive. The ABSU leaders and ex-BLT members founded the Bodoland Peoples' Progressive Front (BPPF) to run in the first council election. After the election, BPPF constituted a council with Mohilary as BTC Chief executive member.

**Response on Recent Development**

The occurrence of two significant ethnic conflicts subsequent to the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) has raised concerns regarding the overall stability of peace in the BTC region. The interethnic conflict that occurred in 2008 between the Bodo and Bengali Muslim communities in the Udalguri area resulted in significant loss of life and property. The violent confrontations resulted in a death toll over 50 individuals. Additionally, arson and mob attacks directly impacted 54 villages, leading to the entire or partial destruction of 2,505 dwellings. Furthermore, the inhabitants of 150 other villages were compelled to evacuate their residences. More than 212,000 individuals sought refuge in relief camps.[72] Again in 2012, an interethnic conflict between the Bodo community and Bengali Muslims occurred, resulting in significant repercussions not only within the local region but also throughout the entirety of Assam. The series of violent event in the BTAD reflected that the structural issues were not addressed in effective way which led to breakdown of such events time to time. In addition to this the lack of proper presentation of democratic institution and existence of armed groups in the region were responsible for such bloodshed in the region. The state of law and order in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) continued to be a matter of concern. The ABSU attributed responsibility to the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), the governing body of BTAD at that time, for its failure to ensure peace in the region. The BPF authority was criticised by additional opposition groups of the BPF for their alleged incompetence, corruption, and nepotism during the BPF's administration.

The announcement made by the Government of India on the establishment of t new state of Telangana further intensified the call for attainment of separate statehood. The resurgence of separate statehood movement has been revitalised by the recent declaration of the formation of Telangana, a new state. The ABSU raised concerns on the Government of India's failure to address their request

---

[72] "2008 Riots: Probe Panel Blames MUSA, Assam Police Intelligence Wing - The Hindu," accessed November 24, 2023.

for the establishment of a separate state. The ABSU recommenced its endeavours towards the establishment of a separate Bodoland, driven by the belief that only via the creation of a separate homeland could the preservation of the cultural, traditional, and ethnic identity of the plain tribes, specifically the Bodos, be guaranteed. The Bodoland People's Front exerted influenced in support of the establishment of a separate Bodoland region. In response to the such demands, the Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi, declined the requests for the division of Assam. He emphasised the need for fostering unity among all cultures and groups, advocating for their coexistence under a shared Assamese identity in the entire state, spanning from Sadiya to Dhuburi. The operations pertaining to the demand for Bodoland are currently ongoing in the region.

On April 25, 2017, the National Democratic Alliance government, under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, initiated discussions on the matter of Bodoland. These discussions involved the Government of India, the Government of Assam, and various Bodo representative groups, including the ABSU, National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Progressive)[73], and People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM)[74]. The Bodo delegation expressed their desire for a prompt resolution to the Bodoland problem through democratic means.

Later on, another memorandum of settlement was signed named as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Accord and dubbed as the Bodo Peace Agreement signed on 27 January, 2020 among the Government of India, Government of Assam, All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), various factions of National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and United Bodo People's Organization (UBPO). The objectives of MoS included enhancing the area and powers of the Bodoland Territorial Council, addressing issues relating to Bodos residing outside the BTAD, promoting and protecting their social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities, providing legislative safeguards for tribal land rights, accelerating tribal

---

[73] National Democratic Front of Bodoland – Progressive is one of the factions of NDFB. This NDFB (P) faction is now in ceasefire and in peace talks with the Government of India. The prime objective of this group is toto carve out a separate Bodoland from the state of Assam.
[74] PJACBM is an organization that was formed by different bodo organizations to intensify their struggle for Separate Bodoland.

development, and rehabilitating NDFB factions. A commission would be appointed to examine and recommend changes to the Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) and the Government of Assam.[75]

The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) in Assam was set to have more legislative, executive, administrative, and financial powers within 90 days. The Principal Secretary of BTC can have monitoring powers of the Registration Department within the BTAD area. Amendments to Article 280 and the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution had been initiated to improve the financial resources and administrative powers of BTC. Executive functions of BTC were to be exercised through its Chief Executive Officer, not below the rank of Principal Secretary to Government of Assam. Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of districts within BTAD were to be placed normally in consultation with the Chief Executive Member of BTC. Deputy Commissioners in BTAD can report to the Chief Executive Member of BTC through the Chief Executive Officer regarding all developmental activities in their districts. A tripartite mechanism was to set up to periodically review the status of all laws/regulations passed by BTC and sent to the State Government for assent of the Governor of Assam.

The Government of Assam can set up a Bodo-Kachari Welfare Council for focused development of Bodo villages outside BTAD, and an Advisory Committee can be set up to identify specific developmental needs of Bodo villages outside BTAD and advise the State Government. The government can also take effective measures to confer rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 on tribals living in forest areas outside BTAD. The government of Assam might consider enacting special legislation to provide adequate safeguards to land rights of STs living outside tribal Belts and Blocks in areas outside BTAD. They can also take measures to protect khas land, grazing land, and water bodies from illegal encroachment.

The MoS aimed to rehabilitate the NDFB factions by abjuring the path of violence, surrendering weapons, and disbanding their armed organizations within one

---

[75] Bodo peace accord 2020.

month of its signing.[76] The Government of India and the Government of Assam can take measures to rehabilitate cadres, including lump sum payments, funding economic activities, trade/vocational training, and recruitment in appropriate government jobs.[77] A committee can assess rehabilitation needs based on age, educational qualifications, and general area of residence. Criminal cases registered against NDFB factions for non-heinous crimes can be withdrawn, while those for heinous crimes can be reviewed case by case. The Government of Assam can earmark Rs. 250 crores per annum for the development of areas under BTC, with the GoI contributing an additional amount. Bodo youth can be considered for recruitment in Army, Paramilitary forces, and Police, and pre-recruitment training rallies can be organized. A Joint Monitoring Committee will be constituted to monitor the implementation of this MoS. In addition to this, the existing Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) renamed as BodolandTerritorial Region comprising area covered under BTAD.[78] The success of the new peace accord (2020) solely depends on the goodwill of authorities who are in power.

**Comparative analysis**

In the study, an attempt has been made to analyze the response of governments regarding the movements from a quantitative perspective. The study respondents were asked to submit their opinion on the response of union and state governments regarding the concerned movements. The governments dealt with both the movement in repressive and accommodative ways. Different mechanisms were established and initiated to deal with the demands of the concerned movements. In the case of Gorkhaland, it was observed that the respondents responded to the question of the union government's response towards the movement as repressive with 45% of the total population. 20% of them responded that the union government responded to the movement in an accommodative way. Following this, the other 15% stated as neutral and 20% as an indifferent attitude of the government to the statehood movement. To a question on state government response, the respondents

---

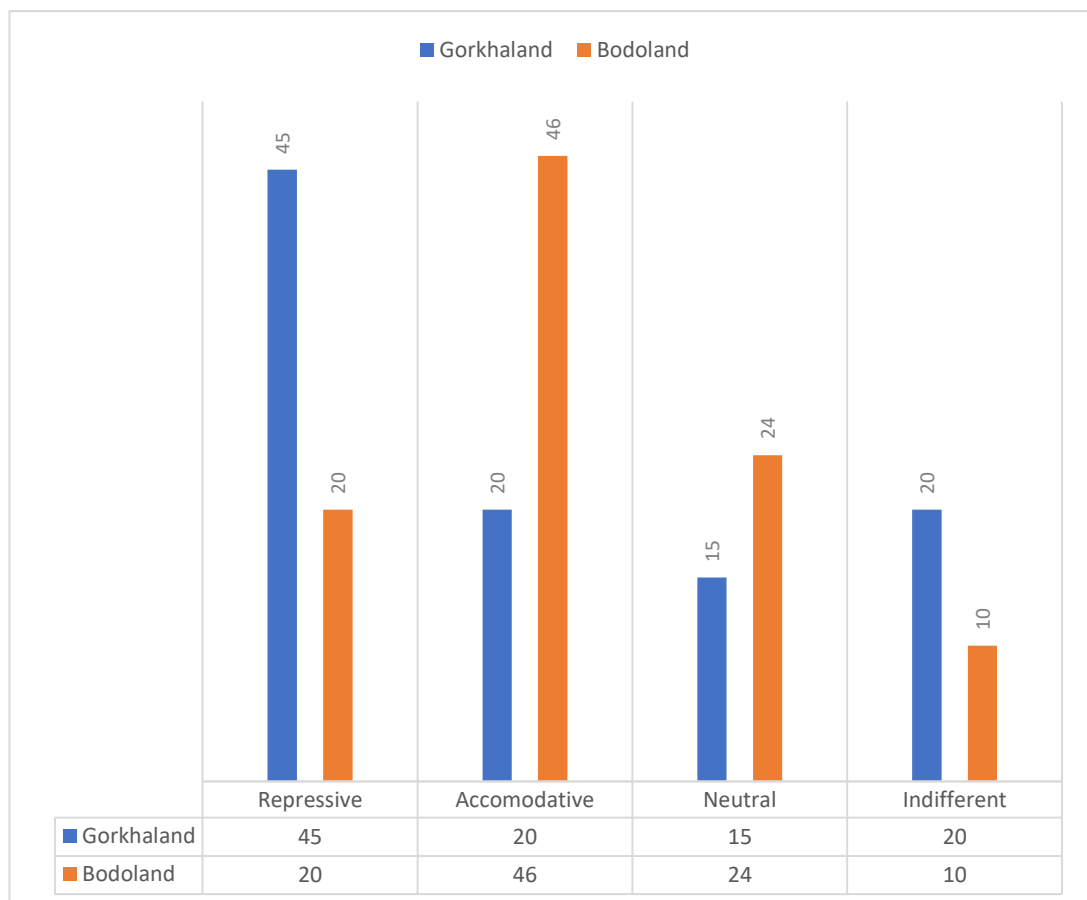[76] "The Third Bodo Accord: A New Deal," Frontline, February 20, 2020.
[77] "The Third Bodo Accord." *Op.cit*
[78] "The Third Bodo Accord." *Op.cit*

accounted for 52% as repressive and 25% as accommodative. The other 15% and 20% respondents viewed that the state government looked into the movement neutrally and indifferently, respectively.

In the case of Bodoland, the majority of respondents (46%) responded that the union government's response to the movement was accommodative. On the other hand, among the remaining population, 20% responded as repressive, 24% as neutral and 10% as indifferent. When the population was asked about the State Government's response, they came up with different opinions. The majority of respondents (52%) viewed accommodative as the response, 23% as repressive, and the other 17% as neutral. The remaining 8% stated an indifferent response to the state government concerning the movement.

Figure 1: Response of Union Governments



| | Repressive | Accomodative | Neutral | Indifferent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gorkhaland | 45 | 20 | 15 | 20 |
| Bodoland | 20 | 46 | 24 | 10 |

Source- Data Collected from Field study.

Figure 2: Response of State governments.



| | Repressive | Accomodative | Neutral | Indifferent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| gorkhaland | 52 | 25 | 6 | 17 |
| Bodoland | 23 | 53 | 17 | 2.8 |
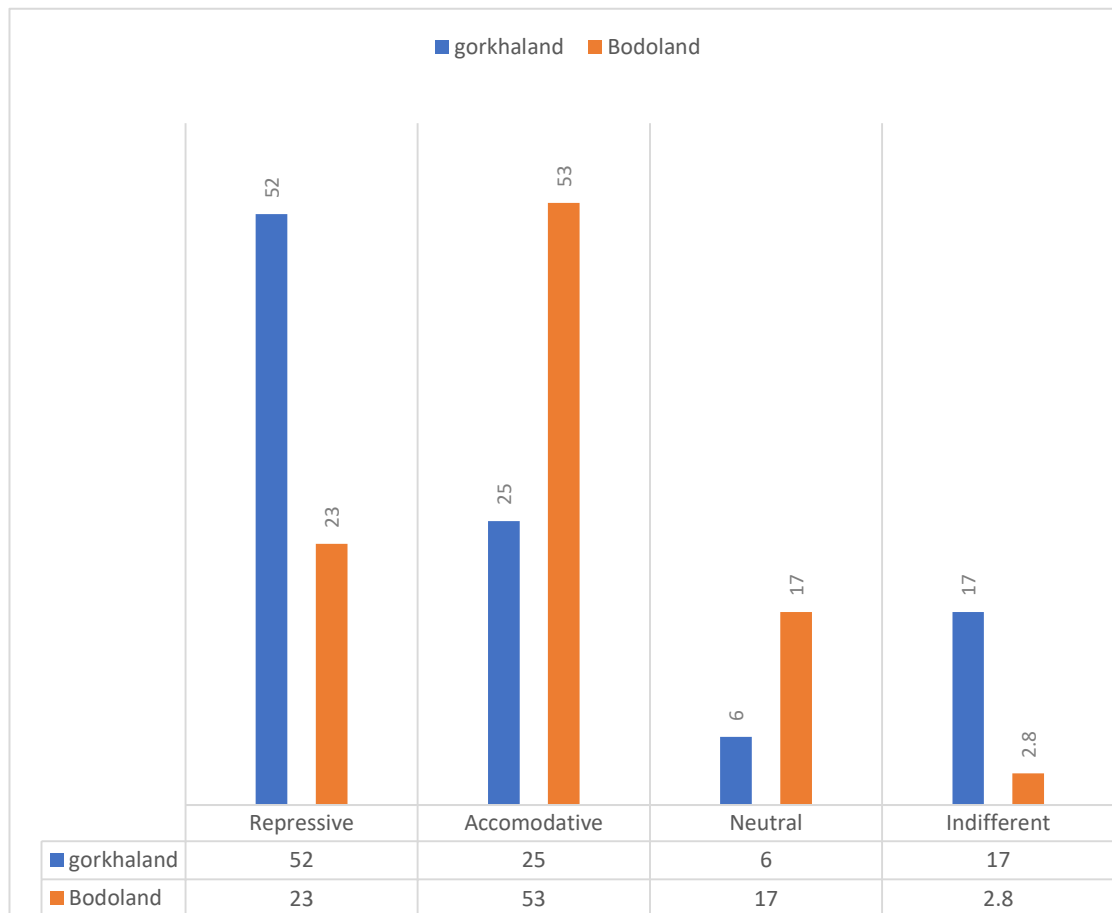
Source- Data Collected from Field study.

The data indicates that in comparison to the Gorkhaland movement, the Bodoland movement had a positive response from the population on the government's attitudes towards the movement. The critical analysis reveals that the positive response that gathered in connection with the Bodoland movement is highly based on the people's hope about the recently concluded peace accord. The study found that any treaty or accord gives a positive outlook among the population about the government's response in the context of these movements.

Furthermore, the Bodoland movement had a favourable reception from governments, states, and unions since the BTR area was included in the sixth schedule. Comparing the Indian Constitution's sixth schedule status to another council that was exempt from, the former offers more autonomy. In 1993, 2003, and

124

2020, the state reacted to the Bodoland movement with three peace accords. Additionally, the administrative structure of the GTA was not governed by the sixth schedule, thereby constraining their degree of autonomy. Furthermore, in relation to the Gorkhaland movement, just two treaties had been signed. 2011 marked the final one, during which the DGHC was superseded by the GTA. The general public expected that the agreement and arrangement would be reviewed in light of the evolving conditions, since the area has seen many changes in its sociopolitical landscape starting in 2011. The administration was able to get a favorable reaction from the public about the Bodoland movement because to the recent peace settlement that was concluded in 2020.

The governing bodies' responses are additionally influenced by the factors that hold authority. A detailed examination of the political landscapes in both regions showed that a peace agreement and successful resolution of the problem would be possible if the same party controlled both the state and the federal level. Since the two parties have similar outlooks, the NDA administration headed by the BJP is now in power in both the state of Assam and the federal government. This helps the government in its efforts to make progress on the Bodoland demand problem. Conversely, the West Bengal state administration is under the leadership of the TMC. It is noteworthy that the party's stance on the Gorkaland issue differs significantly between the central and state levels. The process of taking adequate initiative in resolving the problem was delayed by the struggle between the two parties to mobilize popular support for electoral benefit in the region by having divergent viewpoints. Furthermore, it led to public discontent with the administration. The same rationale was apparent in the data given in Figure 1 and 2.

A variety of organizations from both movements have voiced disapproval of the government's attempts to resolve their problem with fairness. After analyzing both movements, it is determined that government policies were unable to protect the linguistic, cultural, and identity characteristics of both the Bodo and Gorkha communities. Nevertheless, the absence of a well-defined plan had complicated their attempts. The failure of the DGHC, the return of Gorkhaland agitation in the post-

GTA accord era, the Bodo Accord (1993), and the survival of the Bodoland movement in the years after the Peace Accord (2003) all served as evidence of the government's incapacity to adequately address the underlying structural concerns related to the Gorkhaland and Bodoland demand.

The Bodoland movement received a positive response from the population compared to the Gorkhaland movement due to the government's attitudes towards the movement. The positive response was based on the hope for a recently concluded peace accord, which offered more autonomy to the BTR area. The government responded to the Bodoland movement with three peace accords in 1993, 2003, and 2020. The Gorkhaland movement had only two treaties, and the final one was signed in 2011. The public expected the agreement to be reviewed in light of evolving conditions, as the area has seen significant changes since 2011.

Governing bodies' responses are also influenced by factors holding authority. The NDA administration, led by the BJP, is in power in both Assam and the federal government, helping the government make progress on the Bodoland demand problem. However, the West Bengal state administration, led by the TMC, has divergent views on the Gorkaland issue, leading to public discontent.

**Conclusion**

Hence it is concluded that different union and state administrations responded differently to the relevant movements. The people of Gorkhaland thought that the state government's reaction was just as oppressive as that of the union government in their struggle for Gorkhaland. However, in the instance of Bodoland, most people saw the answers from the state and union administrations as accommodating. These findings suggest that both governments had employed different approaches when dealing with movements, and thus the perception of the population towards these responses seem to be different.

The Bodoland movement received a positive response from the population due to the government's attitudes towards it, largely due to the recent peace accord. The movement was influenced by the inclusion of the BTR area in the sixth schedule

126

of the Indian Constitution, which offered more autonomy. The government responded with three peace accords in 1993, 2003, and 2020. The Gorkhaland movement had only two treaties, and the final one was signed in 2011. The NDA administration, led by the BJP, is in power in Assam and the federal government, helping the government make progress on the Bodoland demand problem. However, the West Bengal Government led by TMC's stance on the Gorkhaland issue differs from the central government significantly, leading to public discontent and delayed progress.

# CHAPTER V

# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS.

The statehood movements of Bodoland and Gorkhaland have significant prominence within the context of India. Both movements possess their own distinct heritage and historical backgrounds. Currently, each movement is persisting in its particular territory. Both movements have undergone many stages of development in order to arrive at their current state. It would be erroneous to assert the movement's success or failure in a single statement. Factors such as ethnicity, culture, language, identity, and development have influence on social movements, and conversely, social movements may also have an effect on these factors. This chapter attempts to compare the two movements from various angles. An examination of themes such as evolution, nature, state responses, and socio-political consequences facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the desire for statehood in India, including its feasibility and its potential effects on the democratic framework of the nation.

## A COMPARISION: EVOLUTION

### GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

The Gorkhaland Movement is a movement in the state of West Bengal, India, that seeks the creation of a separate state called Gorkhaland. The demand for Gorkhaland stems from the ethnic, cultural, and language differences between the Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong hill districts of West Bengal and the majority Bengali community. The roots of the demand for a separate state can be traced back to the colonial administration, with the region having a history of changing hands between Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and British.[1]

---

[1] The Darjeeling district, which was previously controlled by the Chogyal of Sikkim, was annexed by Nepal under Prithvinarayan Shah, then by Nepalese forces from 1780. The British annexed the region in 1817, and in 1835, they took control again through a grant of deed. The current shape of the Darjeeling district was established in 1865 after the Anglo-Bhutan war and treaty of Sinchula.

During the colonial period, there were demands for regional autonomy in Darjeeling, and the colonial administration responded by providing different administrative setups for the governance of region.[2] After independence, there was no special provision for the Darjeeling district, and it was attached to West Bengal with normal governance mechanisms. The demand for Gorkhaland was first raised in 1980 by the Pranta Parishad, but it gained significant impetus from the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and its leader Subhash Ghising. Ghising believed that only a separate statehood would guarantee the Gorkhas a recognized Indian identity and protect their ethnicity and culture.

In the mid-1980s, the movement turned violent, leading to a tripartite agreement in 1988 between the GNLF, the state government, and the central government.[3] This agreement established the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), which granted certain administrative powers to an elected hill government and received funding from the central and state governments. However, Ghising's control over the council and allegations of corruption and repression of rivals led to growing dissent against him.

Bimal Gurung and his party, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), emerged as challengers to the GNLF and Ghising's leadership. Gurung revived the demand for Gorkhaland and mobilized the masses in support of the cause. After a four-year agitation, the GJM signed a tripartite agreement in 2012, leading to the creation of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) to replace the DGHC. The GTA currently administers the region, but the demand for separate statehood still exists.

The movement continues to be influenced by various factors such as leadership, political alliances, competition for power, and identity. The Gorkhaland

---

[2] Colonial administration initiated measures like Scheduled District Act 1874, Backward tracts in GOI 1919, and implemented provision of Partially excluded areas under GOI act 1935.

[3] The phase from 1986 – 1988 was considered as the most violent phase of the movement. During this period, the movement had witnessed clashes between pro Gorkhaland element and anti Gorkhaland element.

Movement remains present in the region today, with the demand for a separate state still being advocated by different groups and individuals.

*BODOLAND MOVEMENT*

The Bodoland statehood movement is a long-standing movement by the Bodo tribe in Assam, India, to assert its identity and demand autonomy and development in their region. The movement has gone through different phases and has been influenced by various factors.

The initial stage of Bodo movement focused on identity assertion. Kalicharan Brahma, a prominent leader, played a significant role in raising awareness about Bodo identity among the youth. In 1928, Brahma led a delegation that met the Simon Commission and submitted a memorandum, demanding a separate electorate for the Boro-Kachari community, compulsory free primary education, a Bodo Regiment in the British Army, and a separate category for Bodos in the census report.[4] This was the first time the plain tribes of Assam presented their demands for identity.

Although the demand for a separate electorate was not accepted, a reservation provision was incorporated in the Government of India Act 1935, reserving five seats for the plain tribes in the Assam Legislative Council. The plain tribes also formed the All Assam Plain Tribal League in 1933 to represent their interests in the political framework of the country.

In the post-independence period, the Bodos focused on language, culture, and tradition as key elements of their identity. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha was formed in 1952 to revive the Bodo language and ensure its development. The Sabha fought for the use of Roman script for the Bodo language, but the government imposed the Devanagari script instead, leading to criticism and increased consciousness among the Bodos about their unique identity.

---

[4] Col Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East Indi*a." P. 687-688

The Bodoland statehood movement can also be categorized as a movement for autonomy. The exclusion of plain tribes from the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which provided a separate administrative mechanism for hill tribes, raised consciousness among the plain tribes about their own autonomy in governance. In 1967, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) were formed, with the PTCA demanding a separate union territory called Udayanchal for the plain tribes. However, the demand was overshadowed by the national emergency declared in India.
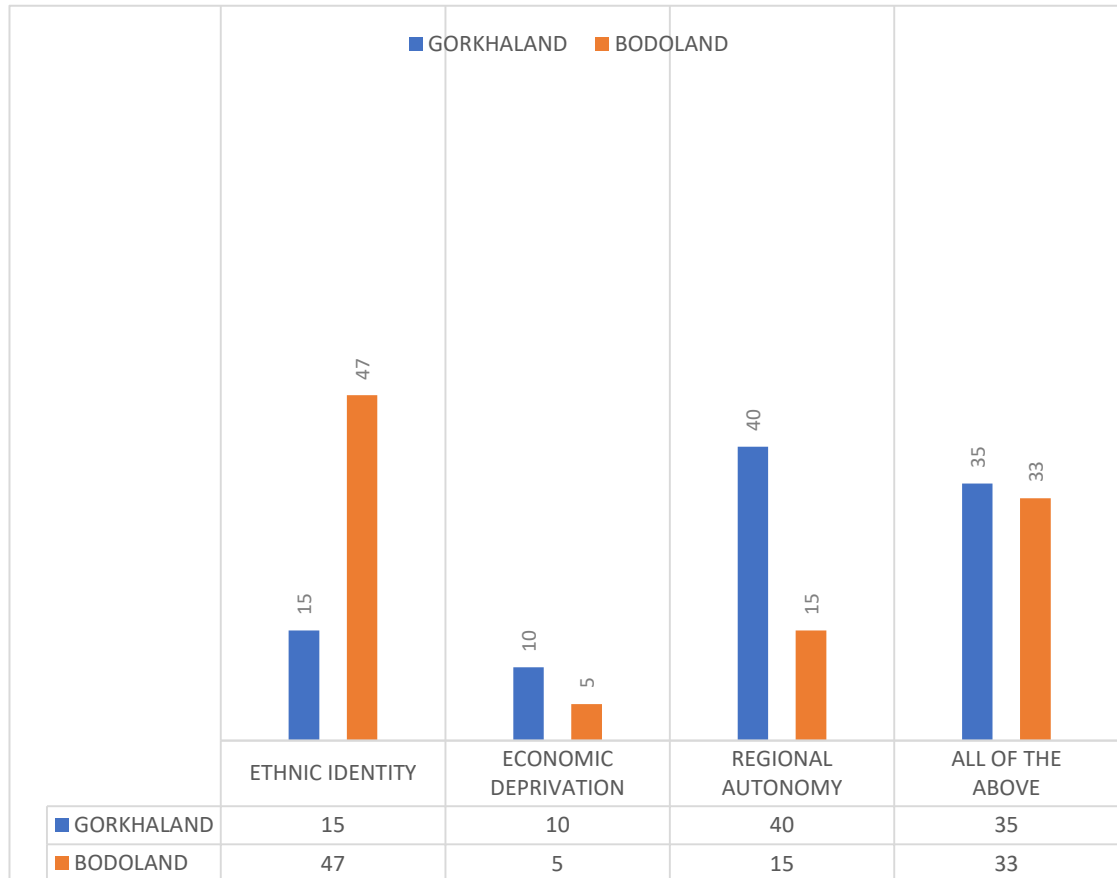
In the 1980s, the ABSU took the lead in the movement for separate statehood. They argued that only a separate state could protect the identity of Bodos. The movement had passed through different phases and has seen the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council in 1993 and the Bodoland Territorial Council in 2003. However, the ABSU continues to demand a separate homeland for the Bodos, criticizing the current authorities for corruption and mismanagement. Recently in 2020, another peace accord was concluded among Bodo groups and government authorities to enhance the legislative, financial and administrative powers of the council. The accord in its implementation stage so the people are hopeful about that this accord can able to fulfil the aspiration of Bodo peoples which is neglected for a long time.

The Bodoland statehood movement is also seen as a movement for development. The Bodo society is agrarian, and the influx of non-Bodos, particularly Bengali Muslims, has led to a change in the demographic outlook of region. The Bodos blamed the government for failing to stop this influx and for the lack of development policies in their region. Overall, the Bodoland statehood movement is a complex movement that encompassed demands for identity, autonomy, and development. The Bodos continue to fight for their rights and assert their unique identity in the region.

The present study examines the underlying factors driving the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements from several theoretical perspectives. The research demonstrates that factors such as ethnic identity, economic distress, and

regional autonomy serve as fundamental drivers for both movements. The research posits that although the underlying causes for both movements are mostly similar, their respective degrees of influence on the trajectory of each movement vary. When considering the example of Gorkhaland, it can be seen that 40% of the respondents attributed regional autonomy as the primary motive and basis for their desire for a separate state. Subsequently, it was found that 15% of respondents attributed the movement to ethnic identity, while 10% identified economic deprivation as the primary factor. Furthermore, 35% of the respondents said that it considered all of the aforementioned factors to be the primary cause of the movement. Conversely, in the context of the Bodoland movement, a significant plurality (47%) saw the ethnic identity as the primary catalyst for the movement. Subsequently, 15% and 5% of the respondents expressed support for regional autonomy and economic hardship as their primary concerns, respectively. The remaining 33% of individuals affirm that all of the aforementioned reasons are the primary contributing factors to the expansion and sustainability of the movement.

Figure 3: Major causes of movements



| | ETHNIC IDENTITY | ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION | REGIONAL AUTONOMY | ALL OF THE ABOVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GORKHALAND | 15 | 10 | 40 | 35 |
| BODOLAND | 47 | 5 | 15 | 33 |

Source- Data Collected from field study

The research suggests that ethnic identity, economic distress, and regional autonomy are the key factors driving the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. While the importance of these factors varies between the two movements, they all play a significant role in shaping the trajectory and sustainability of each movement.

The findings of the study indicated that there exist notable distinctions in the primary motivating factors behind the Bodoland movement and the Gorkhaland movement. In the analysis of the Gorkhaland movement, it is evident that various factors played a role in shaping its trajectory. However, it is noteworthy that the aspiration for regional autonomy emerged as a prominent factor within this context. In contrast, it has been observed that the Bodoland movement exhibited a predominant motivation rooted in ethnic identity. Upon conducting a comprehensive

examination of both movements, it has come to light that the development of ethnic identity among Gorkhas within the Darjeeling Hills region is a relatively recent phenomenon, particularly when compared with the well-established ethnic identity of the Bodo community. The role of language in shaping the identity of the Gorkha ethnicity was of significant importance. The foundational notion of the martial race played a significant role in shaping the ethnic identity of the Gorkhas. However, it was the influence of language that ultimately molded and defined their collective sense of self. The migration of Gorkhas to the region of Darjeeling could be attributed to a colonial endeavor.

The recruitment policy implemented by the colonial administration in both the Army and newly established tea plantations resulted in a significant influx of Gorkhas to the region. This migration was primarily driven by the desire to access economic opportunities and escape the social constraints associated with the caste system prevalent in Nepal. The Gorkhas who migrated to the region exhibited a notable lack of homogeneity, as they comprised various distinct sub-castes, including but not limited to Magar, Bahadur, Chetri, Thapa, and Bahunas. The establishment of linguistic unity among these groups was primarily facilitated by the adoption of the Nepali language, which was widely embraced as their native tongue. For this reason, in the setting of Darjeeling, the development of ethnic identity among Gorkhas is seen to be a new phenomenon.

The prevalence of the demand for regional autonomy in the hills can be attributed to the notable disparities between the hill-dwelling population and the plain-dwelling population in terms of cultural practices, linguistic variations, and physical characteristics. Bengalis comprise the majority of population of West Bengal. The hill region was hesitant to join Bengal after India's freedom since they had also been subjected to the exclusive policies of the colonial government. Numerous petitions were submitted to the colonial administration, advocating for the exclusion of a particular entity from the province of Bengal. In response to the aforementioned demands, the colonial administration undertook the implementation of a specialized administrative body.

Following India's attainment of independence, the integration of Darjeeling with the Bengal State prompted a notable discontent among the local populace, leading to their fervent plea for a distinct administrative separation from the Bengal administration. The concept of regional autonomy, as exemplified by the Gorkhaland movement, was perceived as a potential avenue for enabling the hill population to actively participate in the governance process and have a voice in decision-making.

Within the framework of the Bodoland movement, the focal points of concern revolved around the preservation and safeguarding of ethnic identity, which were widely acknowledged as pivotal triggers for the movement's inception and subsequent development. The Bodos, an ethnic group residing in the region, have historically been recognized as early settlers. However, their societal importance and influence in the region have experienced a decline over time. This decline can be attributed to various factors, including the perceived neglect by colonial administration during the colonial era, as well as subsequent actions or policies implemented by both the union and state governments.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that the influx of immigrants, particularly those belonging to nontribal communities, during both the pre- and post-independent eras has sparked a heightened sense of concern among the local population regarding their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. According to the Bodos, the preservation of their ethnic identity depends upon the establishment of a distinct statehood, as they perceived that without such a political entity, their cultural distinctiveness might gradually erode. The Bodoland movement could be interpreted as a movement primarily motivated by ethnic considerations, in addition to other factors that potentially include concerns such as economic underdevelopment and aspirations for self-governance.

The key differences between the movements reveal that ethnic identity is a more critical factor for Bodoland than for Gorkhaland, where regional autonomy holds more weight. Economic distress is a relatively minor concern for both, but it is notably less significant in Bodoland. The combination of factors is also more prominent in Gorkhaland.

Historically and socially, the Gorkhaland movement's ethnic identity has developed more recently, influenced by migration, colonial recruitment, and the adoption of the Nepali language. The movement's push for regional autonomy reflects a long-standing dissatisfaction with Bengal's governance post-independence. Conversely, the Bodoland movement's ethnic identity is deeply rooted, with the Bodos being among the original settlers. Concerns about ethnic identity have been heightened by perceived neglect during colonial rule and pressures from immigration. While economic and regional issues are important, they are secondary to the preservation of ethnic identity for the Bodos.

In cultural and political terms, Gorkhaland reflects a quest for political recognition and self-governance amidst historical grievances and evolving ethnic identity. On the other hand, Bodoland is driven by a well-established ethnic identity and a desire to protect it from external threats and historical neglect. In conclusion, while both movements are influenced by ethnic identity, economic issues, and regional autonomy, their primary drivers and trajectories differ significantly, shaped by their unique historical and cultural contexts.

## A COMPARISION: REASON OF CONTINUANCE OF THESE MOVEMENTS

The expansion and maintenance of the movement in the area have been attributed to a variety of reasons. This research aims to compare the many causes of movement's expansion in the area. One of the primary forces determining a movement's trajectory is its leadership. Subhash Ghising and Bimal Gurung are two of the most influential figures in the Gorkhaland movement. In fact, the movement's zenith occurred in 1986, when Subhash Ghising was at the helm. The regional council is proposed as a means of consolidating the demands of the hill people, since the administration of India and the state administration would eventually have to address the demand of a distinct homeland. Subhash was elected council chair but failed to provide the hill residents with the improved infrastructure and responsible

leadership he had promised.[5]  Subhash Ghising remained as council chairman and then DGHC caretaker till Bimal Gurung emerged as a political leader on the hill.[6]

Subhash Ghising and the GNLF were deposed by Bimal Gurung and his party, the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM), which went on to become the dominant force throughout the Gorkhaland struggle. Bimal Gurung and his party, GJM, fought for the seperate Gorkhaland for four years before reaching an agreement with the federal and state governments.[7] In 2012, the agreement's implementation brought in the formation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). Other leaders such as Madan Tamang[8] of AIGL, R.B Rai[9] of CPRM also affected the path of Gorkhaland movement but were not as effective as Bimal Gurung and Subhash Ghising. Anit Thapa-led Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha[10] now oversees GTA administration. Many regional leaders, across political lines, have stated that the GTA cannot provide for the needs of hill people, and that Gorkhaland is the only viable option for protecting the hill people's unique identity and way of life. So, it's easy to see how the movement's leaders and their followers influence its trajectory going forward. Both precedent and development pointed in that direction.

The leadership of Bodoland movement has considerable influence in moulding its character. Until the year 1987, the Bodo movement was classified as a pursuit for political autonomy. Since 1987, the ABSU had assumed a prominent role in the movement. Under the guidance of Upendra Nath Brahma, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) initiated an intense public mobilisation campaign,

---

[5] Subhash Ghising was the chairman of DGHC from its inception, 1988 to 2008.

[6] The fourth DGHC elections were due in 2004. However the government decided not to hold elections and instead made Subhash as the sole caretaker of the DGHC.

[7] GJM was founded in 2007 and from its inception it fought for the cause of separate Gorkhaland and eventually a treaty was signed among government authorities and GJM to address the issue of Gorkhaland in 2011.

[8] Madan Tamang was an Indian politician and the president of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League/ All India Gorkha League (ABGL), a moderate faction of the Gorkhaland movement.

[9] Ratna Bahadur Rai is an Indian politician. He was elected to the Lok Sabha (1996-1998), from Darjeeling, West Bengal as a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Later on due to the dissatisfaction with Left Front Government of West Bengal over Gorkhaland issue, he along with other members founded a new political party namely, Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM) in 1996.

[10] Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) is a political party based in Darjeeling district and Kalimpong district of West Bengal in India. BGPM was founded on 9 September 2021.

advocating for a range of political objectives, most notably the establishment of a separate Bodoland state. Upendra Nath Brahma effectively galvanized public emotion in support of the Bodoland struggle. The prevailing public endorsement and feeling towards the Bodos exhibited a favourable disposition towards the establishment of Bodoland within the area. ABSU, under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma, implemented several provocative tactics that disrupted the regular functioning of daily activities in the area.

In response to the prevailing public attitude and taking into account the ethnic aspect of the Bodo community, a sequence of meetings was convened between 1989 and the eventual signing of the Bodo Accord in 1993.[11] Despite the unfortunate demise of Upendra Nath Brahma on May 1st, 1990, his leadership played a pivotal role in establishing the groundwork for the Bodoland struggle. In the period after the deal of 1993, the area had a significant increase in violence, which persisted until the signing of new pact in 2003. The signing of new treaty took place between the central government, state administration, and the Bodoland Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF)[12], resulting in the establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council as outlined in the sixth schedule of Indian Constitution.[13]

Subsequently, the administration of the BTC failed to fulfil the anticipated needs and desires of the Bodo community, resulting in a movement advocating for the establishment of a separate territory known as Bodoland within the area. The ABSU spearheaded the aforementioned effort, with Pramod Boro[14] at its helm, advocating for the partitioning of Assam in a 50-50[15] manner to establish the region of Bodoland. In a recent development, the Ministry of Home Affairs

---

[11] On August 28, 1989, the Central government, the state administration, and the ABSU-BPAC representative group convened for the first tripartite meeting in New Delhi

[12] BLTF was earlier known as Bodo Volunteer Force. It renamed to BLTF in 1995

[13] The council is known as Bodoland Territorial Council, and the area under its jurisdiction was known as Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD). The council is under the purview of sixth schedule of Indian Constitution. ( Memorandum of Agreement, 2003)

[14] Pramod Boro (born 1 March 1975) is an Indian politician serving as the president of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) since 2020 and the 2nd and current Chief Executive Member of the Bodoland Territorial Council since 2020 representing Koklabari. He was the former president of All Bodo Students Union from 2009 to 2020.

[15] Divide assam 50- 50 is one of the major slogans of Bodoland movement which seeks division of assam to carve out new statehood for Bodos.

(MHA), the Assam government, and the Bodo groups have entered into a tripartite agreement. This agreement aims to undertake the redrawing and renaming of the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) in Assam, as well as modifying the existing power-sharing arrangement within the region.[16] The agreement entails the provision of more legislative, executive, and administrative autonomy within the framework of the Sixth Schedule to the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), as well as the enlargement of the BTC's territorial jurisdiction as an alternative to the attainment of statehood.[17] The ABSU expressed its support for the deal. In a recent development, Pramod Bodo, the head of ABSU, made the decision to align himself with the UPPL party and participate in the 2020 election for the BTC. The formation of the administration in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) by the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) in alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) resulted in the replacement of Hangrama Mohilary and his party, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF).[18] Although there isn't much of a desire for a separate homeland within India at the moment, the direction the movement takes in the future will depend on the government's stance towards the aspirations of Bodo people and its leadership.

The sentiment of alienation is widely acknowledged as a significant catalyst in garnering widespread support for the pursuit of a separate territory. The British government's rule of Darjeeling was characterised by exclusionary policies such as the establishment of backward tracts and partially excluded areas. These actions created a backdrop against which the hill people began to see themselves as distinct from the subjects of plain areas during the pre-independence era. Furthermore, the Hillman's Association voiced a desire for the establishment of a distinct administrative entity for Darjeeling in the year 1907. The Hillman's Association has articulated the need for implementing distinct protective measures for Darjeeling due to its recognised distinctiveness in terms of geography, society, history, religion, and language.

[16] "Bodo Peace Accord," accessed November 24, 2023,
https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1703510.
[17] "Bodo Peace Accord 2020,"
[18] "Assam BTC Election Result: BPF Wins 17 Seats, UPPL Bags 12, BJP Gets 9; CM Announces New Chief," India Today, accessed November 24, 2023.

While the Government of India did provide a certain degree of autonomy in 1919 and 1935, the prevailing desire was for total separation from the province of West Bengal. The All India Gorkha League (AIGL), established in 1944, advocated for the acknowledgment of Nepali population, inclusion in provincial laws and the interim administration, and the formal recognition of the Nepali language.[19] The All India Gorkha League (AIGL) advocated for the establishment of a separate council in Darjeeling to represent the Nepali community. Alternatively, they recommended the administrative seperation of Darjeeling from Bengal and its amalgamation with Dooars into Assam, therefore becoming a new province. This proposition was driven by concerns about potential persecution faced by the Nepali community from the Bengali population.[20]

During the process of drafting the constitution of India, an additional request was made to establish the state of 'Uttarakhand', which would include the regions of Darjeeling, Sikkim, Coochbehar, and Jalpaiguri. The demand articulated concerns over the potential loss of political participation in Bengal. It emphasised the common "nature and habit," ethnic attributes, geographical proximity, and historical ties among the inhabitants of the proposed "Uttarakhand" state.[21] The proposal for establishment of the state of Uttarakhand was rejected, resulting in the incorporation of Darjeeling into the state of West Bengal in post-independence India. The West Bengal State and Darjeeling exhibit notable distinctions in several aspects, including language, ethnicity, and culture.

The continuous demands for autonomy in post-independence India by the hill people might be attributed to their apprehension at the dominance of Bengali culture and language. Furthermore, the terror experienced by the Nepali populace is greatly influenced by their identification as citizens of Nepal. The leaders of Darjeeling, in recognition of their Nepali identity within the Indian context, embraced the notion that establishing a distinct homeland was necessary to safeguard their identity and assure a secure and protecting future. Hence, the sentiment of

---

[19] Nahar Singh and Kirpal Singh, "*History of All India Gurkha League, 1943-1949*,", 1987.
[20] Miriam Wenner, "*Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens*"" (PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015)., p. 72
[21] Singh and Singh (1987), *op.cit* p. 87

alienation has been seen as a significant catalyst for the proliferation of social movements inside the area.

In the context of Bodoland, it is noteworthy that the region was under the governance of British government, which enacted policies such as the designation of backward tracts and the establishment of partially excluded areas. These practises have had a role in fostering a feeling of alienation among the general populace in contrast to other segments of society. Even during the pre-independence period, individuals residing in this region expressed their aspiration for self-governance and the establishment of autonomous political structures to safeguard the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic legacy of the broader population. The Bodo people were classified as a plain tribe in India at the country's independence. However, it is important to note that plain tribes did not get any specific provisions or special treatment from the government. The leaders and groups of the Bodo community often articulated their aspiration for self-governance and defensive measures as a means to convey their concerns with Assamese chauvinism. Furthermore, due to their alienation from land, they exhibited a heightened awareness of their ethnic identity.[22] Subsequently, the general population was led into subscribing to the notion that the only means of safeguarding and perpetuating their ethnic identity, culture, and language was the establishment of a separate state.

The response of government, state, and union to the statehood movement has shown a dual approach, characterised by both repressive and reconciling measures. Various policies and programmes were devised by the government in response to the statehood movement in the area. The aforementioned policies and initiatives exerted influence on the trajectory of movement. The establishment of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988 was a significant development in addressing the desire for Gorkhaland, since it sought to address this demand by

---

[22] The phenomenon of alienation to the land among tribal population is due to migration of non tribal population to the land of tribals, especially the Muslim population with Bengali ascent. In Saddula government's initiative of 'more food campaign' in 1941-42 led to the huge migration of muslim population to the land , inhabited by plain tribes. Eventually, the protection of tribal belt and block in post independent India is also not taking seriously by the concerned government authorities, which raise the concern of identity among the plain tribals.

creating a regional council that would possess a certain degree of autonomy. The absence of adequate explanation about the authority and independence, coupled with a reluctance to prioritise democratic mechanisms inside the DGHC, finally resulted in the council's downfall. The assertion of corrupt practises, favouritism, disregard for public opinion, and repeated cancellation of elections had once again catalysed the call for the establishment of Gorkhaland.

The inception of the GTA in 2012 instilled a sense of hope among the populace, as many anticipated that their dreams would be fulfilled by this newly formed organisation. However, an act of burning the GTA Accord by the signing party at that time, namely the GJM, effectively highlighted the deficiencies inherent in the Accord. In the year 2017, the whole of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) council members tendered their resignations, citing the inability of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) to meet the collective hopes and desires of the populace.[23] The West Bengal government designated Binay Tamang[24] as the GTA's acting chairman. Subsequently, Anit Thapa assumed the role of acting chairman for the aforementioned council.[25] Even after the GTA election in 2022[26], several of Darjeeling's main parties had criticised the Accord for failing to live up to their expectations.

Three peace accords have been signed by the government to settle the Bodoland movement.[27] The Bodo people's hopes for the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC), which was founded in 1993, were not realised. The foundation of BAC's collapse was eventually planted by the ambiguity around problems like funds,

[23]"GJM's Decision to Quit Political Drama, GTA's Tenure Ends in 10 Days: GNLF | India News - The Indian Express," accessed November 24, 2023., retrieved on 4th feb, 2023

[24] Binay Tamang (also Binoy Tamang; born 28 December 1965) is an Indian Politician and a former leader of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha political party. He joined All India Trinamool Congress in 2021 and Left party in 2022. He was replaced by Bimal Gurung as Chief Executive of GTA in 2013. Again in 2017, when the movement was revived, there was split in GJM. Binay Tamang was appointed as the chairman of GTA in 2017 with the help of west Bengal Govt , led by Trinamool Congress.

[25] Anit Thapa's party BGPM is leading the GTA administration at present. The party is in alliance with TMC

[26] The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) elections took place after 10 years in the hilly terrains of Darjeeling in West Bengal on 26th June, 2022. A total of 318 candidates are in fray for the 45-member GTA, which is a semi-autonomous body formed in 2012.

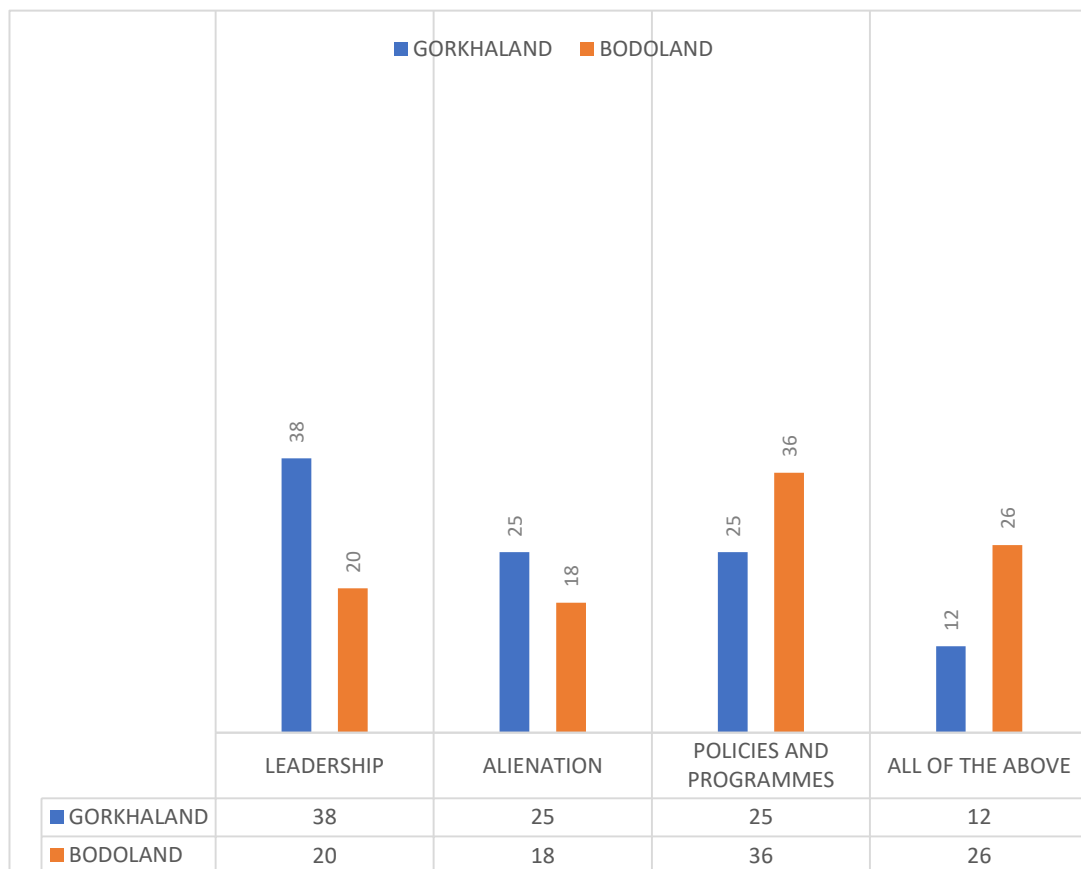[27] Bodo accord(1993), Bodo Accord (2003), Bodo Peace Accord(2020)

autonomy, and boundaries. In 2003, with the signing of yet another treaty, the Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) came into being. The Accord was criticised on the grounds that it did not grant too much autonomy. The Accord's opponents said it didn't provide the council enough power, which was one of their main complaints. Concerns have also been raised about the council's ability to raise funds. During Hagrama Mohilary's stay as chief executive member of BTC from its formation in 2003 until 2020, the BPF party he headed faced allegations of corruption and nepotism from his political opponents. A new peace accord was signed in 2020 with the goal of meeting and exceeding the expectations of the Bodo people. This was done in an effort to rectify the problems that had plagued the 2003 Accord. The success of the new treaty rests on the goodwill of the government authorities and those who are in power in BTR[28] . Concerns about the new treaty's potential are rooted in the government's history of ineffective policies and projects. The demand for statehood is not very prominent in the area at the moment, but if the treaty does not deliver on its promises, it may rise to the forefront once again.

The findings of research indicate that in the statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland, factors such as leadership, a sense of alienation, and inadequate policies and programmes significantly influence the trajectory of these movements. The aforementioned reasons are regarded as significant contributors to the expansion of movements within their respective regions. The examination of data yields a comprehensive understanding of these components and their respective influence on the trajectory of movement. The present research examines the Gorkhaland movement and identifies leadership as a significant factor contributing to 38% of the movement's development in the area. Subsequently, a sense of alienation experienced by the general population, together with insufficient policies and plans, constituted a proportion of 25% each. A further 12% of the people said that they see all of the aforementioned elements as equally accountable for the expansion and persistence of the movement. In the context of Bodoland movement, the variable of leadership is attributed a weightage of 20%, while the factors of alienation and

---

[28] The area of BTC, earlier known as BTAD is renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region under Bodo Peace Accord 2020.

insufficient policies and programmes are given weights of 36% and 18% respectively. A significant proportion of the population, namely 26%, expressed the view that all elements played an equal role in contributing to the development and sustainability of the movement.

Figure 4: Reason of Continuance



| | LEADERSHIP | ALIENATION | POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES | ALL OF THE ABOVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GORKHALAND | 38 | 25 | 25 | 12 |
| BODOLAND | 20 | 18 | 36 | 26 |

Source- Data collected from field study

The research findings suggest that leadership, a sense of alienation, and inadequate policies and programmes are significant factors influencing the trajectory of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements. These factors contributed to the expansion and persistence of the movements in their respective regions. The weightage assigned to each factor varies, with leadership being a more influential factor in the Gorkhaland movement and inadequate policies and programmes by authority in the Bodoland movement. Overall, these findings provide a

comprehensive understanding of the components that shape and drive these statehood movements.

In the context of the Gorkhaland, prominent figures such as Subhash Ghising and Bimal Gurung assumed leadership roles and played a pivotal role in spearheading the movement. They actively engaged in various negotiation processes with the government, thereby exerting significant influence over the direction and outcome of the movement. The sentiment of alienation is a commonly recognized aspect within both of these movements, as they experienced a sense of detachment from their parent state as a result of the injustices they endured.

The study additionally analyzed the various policies and programs implemented by both union and state governments. The findings indicate that despite these efforts, the underlying structural challenges faced by both movements remain unresolved. In the study, it was observed that a significant number of respondents acknowledged it as the primary force behind the persistence of statehood movements. Furthermore, it is worth noting that both movements have been observed to attribute equal responsibility to all factors involved in the continuation of both movements.

The findings obtained from the respondents' feedback regarding the Gorkhaland movement indicate that the movement has sustained its momentum primarily due to the influential role played by leaders, who perceive the movement as a means to attain political power within the hilly region. The pivotal contribution of the elite class in shaping the trajectory of the movement cannot be understated. The persistence of the Bodoland movement in the region can be attributed to the historical and ongoing failure of state authorities to implement effective policies and programs that adequately address the concerns of the Bodo community. The Bodo Peace Accord of 2020 instilled a sense of optimism within the general population, as it held the potential to fulfill the long-standing aspirations of the Bodo community. Henceforth, it can be speculated that the current state of affairs has resulted in a notable decline in the level of engagement exhibited by the aforementioned movement.

The comparative analysis of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements highlights the intricate dynamics shaping these regional struggles for autonomy and identity within India. Both movements have been significantly influenced by leadership, a sense of alienation, and the effectiveness of government policies and programs.

In the Gorkhaland movement, leadership has been a crucial determinant of the movement's trajectory. Subhash Ghising, as the leader of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), initially directed the movement towards its peak in 1986. However, his failure to deliver on promises regarding infrastructure and governance led to his eventual replacement by Bimal Gurung and his party, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM). Gurung's leadership marked a new phase, culminating in the 2011 agreement with the Indian government that led to the establishment of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in 2012. Despite this, the GTA's inability to meet the aspirations of the hill people has fuelled ongoing discontent and demands for full statehood.

Conversely, in the Bodoland movement, leadership under Upendra Nath Brahma of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) significantly shaped the movement's early phase, leading to the 1993 Bodo Accord and the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). The subsequent failure of the BAC to meet Bodo expectations led to further unrest and the 2003 establishment of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The BTC's shortcomings in autonomy and governance resulted in the 2020 Bodo Accord, which sought to address previous failures by providing greater autonomy and expanding the BTC's jurisdiction.

A shared factor in both movements is a deep-seated sense of alienation. For the Gorkhaland movement, historical grievances and a perceived marginalization by the West Bengal state government have driven the demand for a separate state. Similarly, the Bodoland movement has been fuelled by the Bodo community's sense of neglect and ethnic marginalization, exacerbated by the historical policies of the British government and the post-independence state's inadequate provisions for plain tribes.

Government responses to these movements have varied. In the Gorkhaland context, the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) and later the GTA were attempts to address demands for autonomy but fell short due to governance issues and unmet expectations. In Bodoland, the repeated failures of the BAC and BTC to deliver on their promises led to the 2020 accord, which aims to rectify past mistakes but faces scepticism about its efficacy.

In conclusion, both movements demonstrate how leadership, historical grievances, and policy inadequacies shape regional struggles for autonomy. The Gorkhaland movement's persistence is largely driven by leadership and a deep sense of alienation, while the Bodoland movement is significantly influenced by a combination of historical injustices and ineffective governance. The future trajectory of these movements will depend on the ability of both state and central governments to address the underlying issues and deliver on their promises.
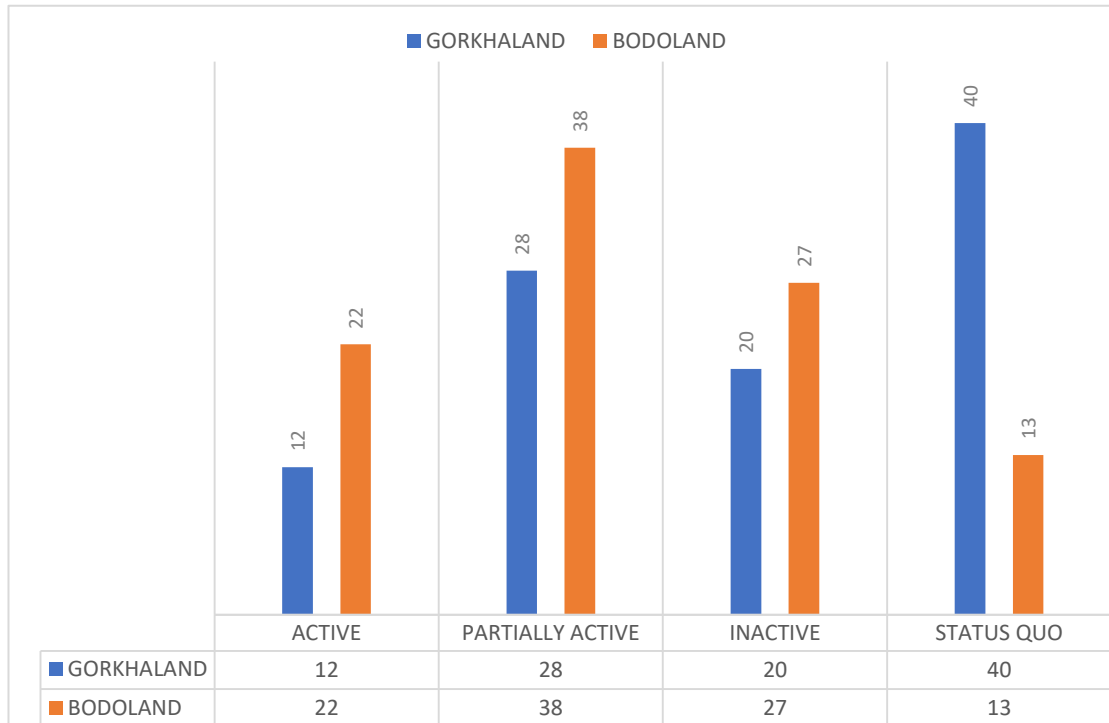
## A COMPARISION: PRESENT STATUS OF MOVEMENTS

The present work aims to analyse the current position of both statehood initiatives. The survey indicates that the reaction to the Gorkhaland movements was explicitly articulated, suggesting that the movement was content with the prevailing status quo, garnering a support of 40%. Given that the economy of the hill mostly relied on the tourist industry, the local inhabitants are averse to any disruptions that might jeopardise their means of sustenance under the guise of mobility. Furthermore, the populace has the perception that they were deceived by the leader under the guise of a movement, resulting in their inability to effectively implement any tangible measures to achieve their desired goals. Recognising this reality, a significant portion of the populace holds the view to maintain the existing state of affairs within the current framework of the movement. A total of 20% of the participants expressed complete disapproval towards the existence of movement inside the area. Another 28% of the population indicates that the current state of movement was only somewhat active, with activities such as Bandh, agitation, strike, and large rallies not being held in support. However, there are still underlying currents of support for the movement. The remaining 12% of individuals feel that the movement remained

active inside the area. They see that the political alliance and the competition for power and leadership were all intricately linked to the issue of Gorkhaland.

In the context of Bodoland, it has been discovered that a significant proportion (38%) of individuals held the view that the current state of the movement in the area might be characterised as partially active. The Bodo Peace deal, which was recently concluded in 2020, has instilled optimism among the Bodo population and their leaders about the potential fulfilment of their ambitions. However, given the past failures of previous accords, there remains scepticism regarding the ultimate success of current deal. Hence, it is evident that a significant portion of individuals hold the viewpoint that granting the movement a partly active status was favourable. Subsequently, a survey revealed that 27% of respondents said that the Bodoland movement was inactive inside the area. Both the state administration and the union government had exhibited a lack of inclination towards the division of Assam and the provision of statehood. However, they may be open to considering the element of granting autonomy. Thirteen (13%) percent of individuals hold the perspective that the movement aligned with the existing state of affairs, while an additional twenty-two percent maintained the belief that the movement remained operational within the area. The contention posits that the political aspirations of the populace had not yet been acknowledged and taken into account, resulting in the previous breakdown of peace negotiations. The majority of the challenges in area are intricately linked to the subject of demands for statehood. Figure 5 demonstrates the above data in the chart format.

Figure 5: Present context of movements.



| | ACTIVE | PARTIALLY ACTIVE | INACTIVE | STATUS QUO |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GORKHALAND | 12 | 28 | 20 | 40 |
| BODOLAND | 22 | 38 | 27 | 13 |

Source- Data collected from field study.

The comparative analysis of the current status of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements reveals distinct trends and public sentiments toward each initiative.

In the Gorkhaland movement, survey data indicates a complex and divided reaction from the populace. A significant portion, 40%, expresses contentment with the current status quo, suggesting a degree of satisfaction or resignation with the existing framework. This response is influenced by the local economy's heavy reliance on tourism, making residents cautious about any disruptions that could threaten their livelihoods. Additionally, there is a prevailing sentiment of disillusionment among the people, who feel deceived by past leadership promises that failed to deliver tangible results. This dissatisfaction is reflected in the 20% of participants who completely disapprove of the movement's existence and the 28% who view it as only somewhat active, noting a lack of major activities such as strikes or rallies. Despite these challenges, 12% of respondents believe the movement

remains active, connecting ongoing political dynamics and leadership competition to the Gorkhaland issue.

In contrast, the Bodoland movement exhibits a different pattern of engagement and sentiment. The recent Bodo Peace Deal of 2020 has generated a sense of optimism among 38% of the population, who view the movement as partially active and potentially promising for achieving their goals. However, scepticism persists due to the failures of previous accords, leading to a cautious outlook on the current deal's effectiveness. Approximately 27% of respondents consider the movement inactive, influenced by both state and union government reluctance to support statehood and the focus on autonomy instead. Thirteen percent perceive the movement as aligning with the current state of affairs, while 22% believe it remains operational, highlighting ongoing issues and unaddressed political aspirations. This division underscores the movement's continued relevance and the public's frustration with past negotiation failures.

Overall, the Gorkhaland movement is characterized by a mix of resignation and cautious support, driven by economic concerns and leadership disillusionment. The Bodoland movement, on the other hand, is marked by a blend of optimism and skepticism, with recent developments providing some hope for progress but also highlighting persistent issues and past failures.

## A COMPARISION: MAJOR BASES

The Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements have undergone many stages of development to reach their current state. It is argued that both movements had garnered significant public support in their pursuit of establishing a separate statehood. During the mid-1980s, there was a significant surge in the momentum of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. The mass basis of movements was derived from the support base for the demand and active engagement of organisations. The findings of research indicate that although both movements had an increase in popularity throughout the mid-1980s, their primary sources of support exhibited notable distinctions. In the context of Gorkhaland issue, the prevailing

sentiment aligns with political parties, with a significant 60% support base attributed to the movement. The first proposal for regional autonomy was put out by the Hillman's Association, but it was the All India Gorkha League (AIGL) that effectively expressed a consolidated stance within the Gorkha community. In 1980, the Pranta Parishad made the first petition for establishment of Gorkhaland. The Pranta Parishad's efforts to garner widespread popular support were not met with any significant success.

The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) effectively spearheaded the Gorkhaland movement starting in 1986, with Subhash Ghising serving as its commander. Subsequently, many political parties expressed their respective positions on the matter of Gorkhaland. The idea of a distinct homeland was also subject to the perspectives of national and state political parties. The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, established in 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, was a prominent political entity that significantly influenced the trajectory of Gorkhaland movement. Currently, many regional political parties in Darjeeling, including as the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha, Hamro party, Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxist, GNLF, GJM, and AIGL, have significant influence over the Gorkhaland movement. The influence of political parties and their supporters significantly shape the direction of a given political movement. Subsequently, the present research examines the active involvement of civil society and student groups in spearheading the Gorkhaland movement. 20% of the total goes towards the groups representing students, while the remaining 10% goes towards the local civil societies, which serve as the movement's primary source of support.

In the context of Bodoland, it is often perceived that student groups play a pivotal and central role in supporting and driving the movement. Among the whole pool of respondents, a majority of 63% expressed a preference for the student's organisation. The All Bodo Students' Union spearheaded the Bodoland movement starting from the year 1987. Under the guidance of Upendranath Brahma, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) successfully garnered popular support for the Bodoland cause. Subsequently, individuals like as Pramod Bodo and other prominent

figures assumed the mantle of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and spearheaded the campaign with great determination and influence. According to the survey data, 10% of the respondents hold the perspective that political parties constituted the primary support base of the movement. A further 10% of respondents propose that civic society served as the primary agents of the movement's expression. The remaining 17% of responses are in favour of others since many insurgent organisations are active in the area, which is thought to be the primary source of support for the Bodoland movement.

Figure 6: Major base of movements
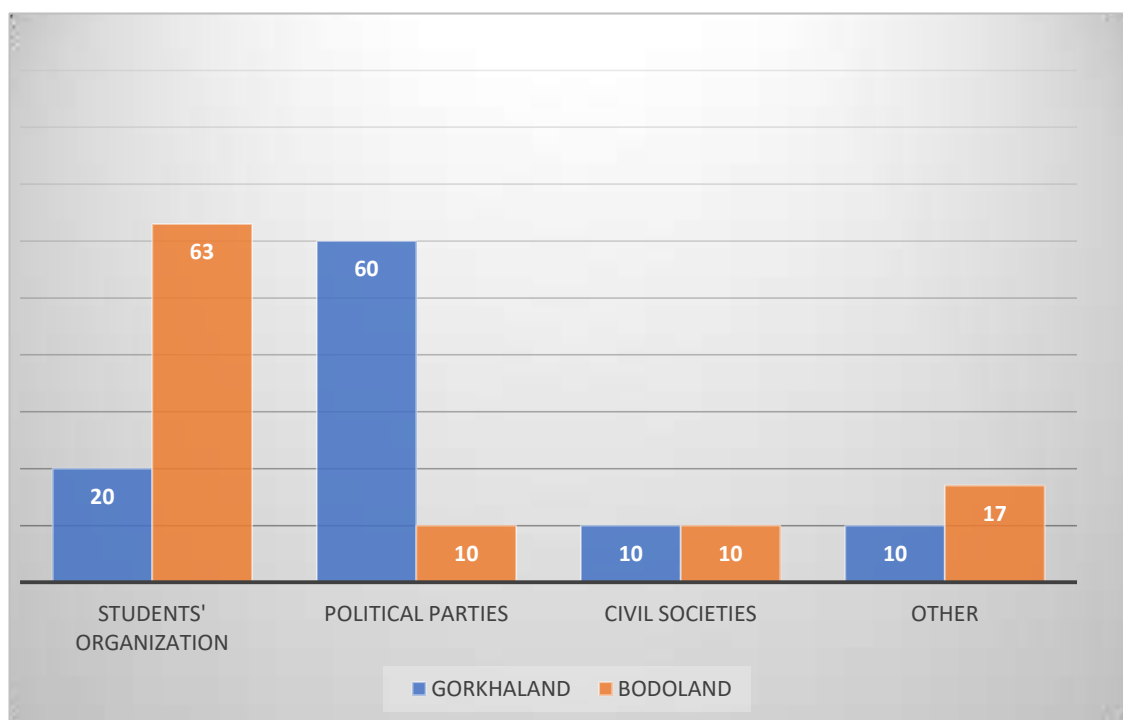


Source- Data collected from field study

Both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements have gained significant public support in their pursuit of establishing separate statehood. The Gorkhaland movement has primarily been supported by political parties. Civil society and student groups also play a role in spearheading the movement. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement is largely driven by student groups, particularly the All Bodo

Students' Union. Political parties, civic society, and insurgent organizations also contribute to the movement's support base.

During the mid-1980s, both movements saw a surge in momentum, largely driven by widespread public support and the active engagement of various organizations. However, the sources of this support differed significantly between the two movements. For Gorkhaland, political parties emerged as the primary supporters, with 60% of the support base attributed to them. The movement initially sought regional autonomy through proposals by the Hillman's Association and the All India Gorkha League (AIGL). Despite early efforts, it was the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), led by Subhash Ghising from 1986, that effectively mobilized the movement. Later, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), founded by Bimal Gurung in 2007, became a major force influencing the movement's direction. Today, regional political parties such as the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha, Hamro Party, and the Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxist, among others, significantly impact the movement. Civil society and student groups also play roles, contributing 20% and 10% of support respectively.

In contrast, the Bodoland movement has been predominantly driven by student organizations, particularly the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), which began leading the movement in 1987 under Upendranath Brahma. This organization has been crucial in garnering popular support for Bodoland. Currently, 63% of respondents view student groups as the primary source of support for the Bodoland movement. Political parties and civil society contribute a smaller portion of the support, each accounting for 10% of the backing. Additionally, insurgent organizations play a notable role, as indicated by 17% of respondents, reflecting a diverse and complex support base for the Bodoland cause.

Overall, while the Gorkhaland movement is primarily sustained by political parties with additional support from civil society and student groups, the Bodoland movement is predominantly driven by student organizations, with political parties, civil society, and insurgent groups also contributing to its support. This comparison

underscores how differing sources of support and leadership dynamics shape the development and current status of statehood movements in these regions

## A COMPARISION: VIOLENT NATURE OF MOVEMENTS

This research aims to provide a comparative analysis of the nature of both movements. Both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements have had turbulent periods throughout their tenure. Regarding the inquiry pertaining to the nature of movements, namely whether they exhibit violent or peaceful characteristics, the respondents' perspectives are varied and contradictory. During the course of Gorkhaland movement, a period of violence followed from 1986 till the signing of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) agreement in 1988. In 1986, under the leadership of Subhash Ghising and the GNLF, the movement entered a critical phase characterised by a sense of urgency and determination. Subhash Ghising spearheaded various forms of protest against both the state and union government, citing their perceived inadequate handling of the Gorkhaland problem.  The occurrence of huge rallies, known as Bandhs, resulted in significant disruptions to the regular functioning of the area. During this temporal period, the inter-party conflicts between the adherents and detractors of the movement propelled it into a phase characterised by acts of violence.  The manifestation of violence ensued as a consequence of a strategic approach aimed at targeting individuals who had shown opposition towards the concept of Gorkhaland. The political landscape in the hills was significantly affected by the conflict between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Gorkha National Liberation Front, resulting in a period of turmoil. During that period, the occurrence of killings and retaliatory killings became a prevalent phenomenon in the hilly region.[29] During the course of upholding regional tranquilly, state armed police forces were deployed and encountered a series of violent incidents, resulting in the unfortunate loss of numerous police officers' lives. The state administration strategically mobilised a substantial number of paramilitary forces, in conjunction with state armed police and the Border Security Force (BSF),

---

[29] Mostly between GNLF and CPI (M) supporters. GNLF criticised CPI (M) supporters for their anti – Gorkhaland stand. At that time the West Bengal government was led by CPI (M).

with the aim of restoring order and stability by the use of force and suppression.[30] In addition to instances of lethal violence and reciprocal acts of violence, a substantial quantity of government infrastructure was subjected to destruction as a means of responding against governmental oppression.[31]

Subsequently, a consensus was achieved among the State Government, Union Government, and GNLF to form a regional council endowed with a certain degree of autonomy. The signing of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) accord is widely regarded as a somewhat successful endeavour in restoring peace to the hill region. In 2007, a significant movement for the establishment of Gorkhaland was emerged, led by Bimal Gurung. This movement has generally been seen as quite nonviolent. The techniques used by the individuals in question included elements of Gandhian principles, while it is evident that violent actions were also utilised in order to quell resistance to the cause[32]. In the latter part of 2017, resurgence of the Gorkhaland demand in the political landscape of the hill region was not predominantly characterised by violence. However, the state administration saw this period as a challenge to the prevailing law and order situation rather than a significant outbreak of violence.

From 1987 onwards, there was an increased prominence in the desire for separate statehood among the plain tribes in the instance of Bodoland. The push for separate statehood was spearheaded by ABSU, with Upendra Nath Brahma at its helm. The Assam Bodoland Students' Union (ABSU) undertook a range of actions that had significant effects on both the social and political landscape of Assam. The campaign for establishment of a separate state gained momentum as a result of the efforts spearheaded by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), which included a series of protests, hunger strikes, and Bandh. The aforementioned circumstance impeded the regular livelihood of those residing in the specified geographical area. During the period of Bandhs, instances of violence were seen, resulting in the

---

[30] Swatahsiddha Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Response* (Concept, 2013).
[31] Sarkar. op.cit
[32] Biaml Gurung in his public speech announced that the struggle for Gorkhaland under the banner of GJM would follow the gandhian techniques of resistance, but there was incident in the region which reflected the presence of violence in the struggle.

unfortunate loss of several lives. The state administration used some harsh measures in order to maintain control over law and order within the area. The confrontation between law enforcement personnel and those supporting the bandh exacerbated the challenges in achieving calm inside the area.

The commencement of violent phase of the movement occurred when armed organisations such as the Bodo Security Force (1986)[33] and Bodo Volunteer Force[34] emerged. The two Bodo communities had divergent perspectives on the concept of establishing a distinct homeland. One group advocated for the attainment of sovereign status for their homeland, while another other advocated for the establishment of a distinct homeland inside the borders of India. A novel rivalry has started between the aforementioned factions, each vying to establish their own party as the authentic representation of the Bodo community. These organisations collaborated with other insurgent groups in the North Eastern area, hence exacerbating the complexity of situation. The animosity between two armed factions of the Bodo community resulted in significant human casualties and inflicted severe damage upon the local economy and stability within the area.

The first period spanning from February to August 1989 marked the beginning of a violent phase within the Bodo agitation. During this time, the Bodo movement saw a succession of massacres, kidnappings, and bomb assaults, resulting in a tragic loss of 350 lives.[35] The diminishing significance of ABSU inside the movement was attributed to the gradual decline in the prevalence of violent tendencies. Conversely, the movement had a tendency towards adopting military strategies in order to assert authority over its objectives. Subsequently, in the year 1993, negotiations culminated in a consensus being achieved, leading to the signing of Memorandum on Settlement on Bodo Autonomous Council. This agreement included the participation of Union government, the Assam State administration, and representatives from ABSU-BPAC.[36] The Memorandum included a provision for the

---

[33] Later it was renamed as National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) in 1994
[34] An armed wing, later renamed as Bodo Liberation Tigers Force.
[35] Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (Sage, 2005) . 264
[36] The Memorandum of Settlement was signed in Guwahati and the signatories were K.S Rao (the then Add. Chief Secretary to Government of Assam), S.K Bwiswmuthiary( ABSU), Rabiram

establishment of Bodo Autonomous Council, with the authority to determine the limits of council delegated to the state administration. The ABSU objected to the Assam government's announcement on the borders of the BAC, hence the state government was unable to draw such lines. Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of armed factions and their actions within the context of the Bodoland movement had posed challenges in effectively implementing the provisions outlined in the Accord. Ultimately, it might be argued that the Accord was deemed a failure.

Following the year 1993, the BAC region had a significant increase in incidents of violence. The prevailing condition of law and order was severely disrupted. The Accord was unsuccessful in its efforts to establish and maintain peace and tranquilly in the area. Finally, the agreement was terminated. The conflict between the Bodo and non-Bodo communities has contributed to the heightened complexity of the issue. During that period, the safety and security of human life were compromised. The Bodo-Muslim conflict took place in October 1993. Approximately 3,568 households, including a total population of 18,000 individuals, were relocated as a result.[37] The incident resulted in the unfortunate death of 19 individuals, the majority of them belonged to the Muslim community.[38] In July 1994, a tragic incident occurred in the northern region of Barpeta, resulting in the loss of several lives. This incident included the targeted killing of several hundred individuals of Bengali descent, who identified as Muslims.[39] The Bodo-Santhal dispute took place in the Kokrajhar district in 1996. The disaster encompassed an area of 2,500 square kilometres, resulting in the destruction of 75 communities on both sides. This calamity displaced around 200,000 people, while tragically claiming the lives of 100 individuals.[40]

---

Brahma(ABSU), Subhash Basumotary(BPAC) in the presence of Rajesh Pilot(The then Minister of State (Internal Affairs) and Hiteswar Saikia( the then CM of Assam)

[37] Mahanta, "*Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland*."p. 52.

[38] Col, Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East India*." p. 701

[39] The incident was occurred in the relef camp Bashbari in the Barpeta district on 24th July, 1994 in which more than 100 immigrant Muslims were killed, hundreds of houces were torched and 70000were rendered homeless.(Barooah, R.N.: "The Ethnic Violence in Barpeta", the Sentinel, Saturday, 4th September, 1994.)

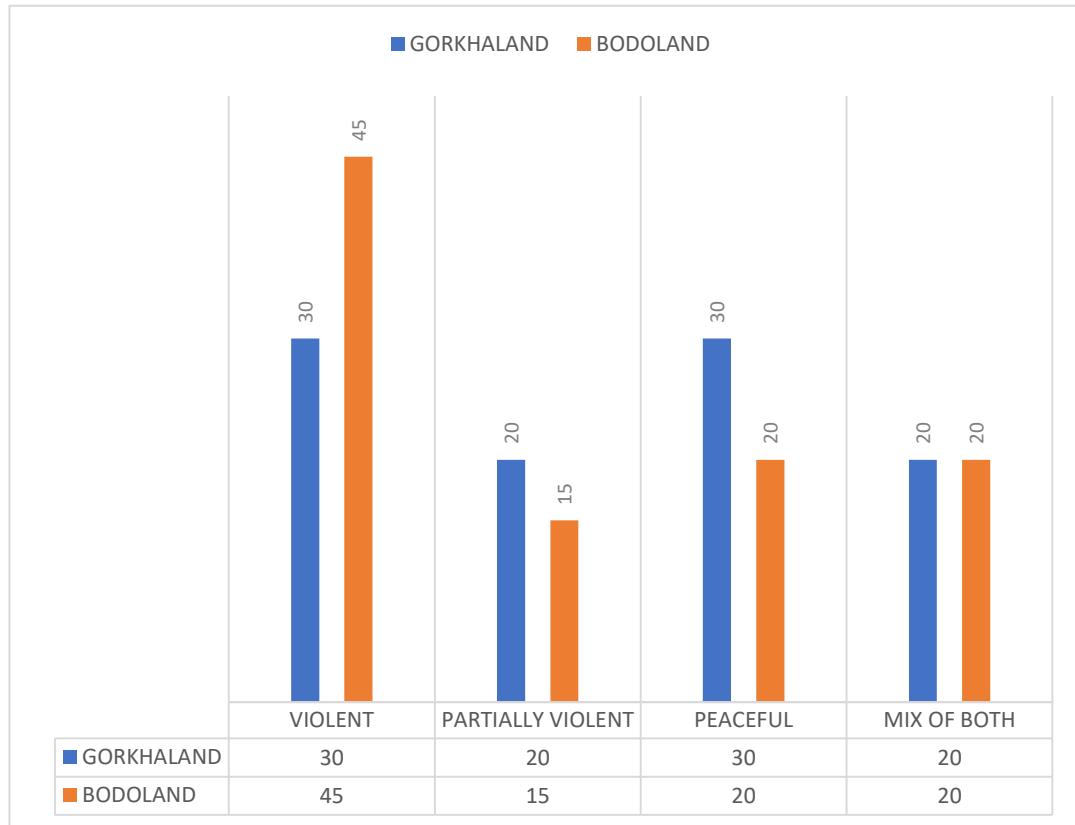[40] Col, Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East India*." P. 705-706

Furthermore, during this particular period, the exacerbation of situation was further compounded by the confrontation between two armed entities, namely the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT). Therefore, throughout that period in the BAC region, there was a constant intertwining of violence and nonviolent politics. The subsequent agreement, reached in 2003, included the Union administration, state administration, and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), with the aim of establishing peace and resolving the Bodoland problem. However, the inadequate handling of structural problems resulted in significant bloodshed inside the BTAD region during the ethnic conflicts between 2008[41] and 2012.[42] In the current day, a new agreement was established in the year 2020 between state governments, union governments, and representatives of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) with the aim of promoting peace and stability in the region. This accord includes provisions designed to safeguard the interests and well-being of plain tribes residing in the area.

The participants were requested to provide their perspectives on the characteristics of movements in the research study. Regarding the Gorkhaland movement, it is observed that 30% of individuals saw the movement as being inherently violent, while 20% perceived it to include partial elements of violence. According to the findings of the Bodoland movement study, 45% of respondents saw the movement as being characterised by violence, while 15% hold the perspective that it was partially violent. According to the respondents, the Gorkhaland movement was seen to be mostly peaceful, with 30% expressing supported for this view. Conversely, 20% of respondents believe that the movement included a combination of both peaceful and violent elements. In contrast, the Bodoland movement elicits a mere 20% endorsement for its peaceful character, while the remaining 20% see the movement as a combination of peaceful and non-peaceful elements.

---

[41] The clashes left over 50 dead. Fifty-four villages were directly affected by arson and mob attacks, in which 2,505 houses were either completely burnt or partially destroyed, while residents of 150 other villages fled their houses. Over 2.12 lakh people took shelter in relief camps. IN Talukdar, Sushanta. '2008 riots: probe panel blames MUSA, Assam police intelligence wing' ,July 21, 2010 , The Hindu.

[42] Assam riots toll rises to 32; more than 70,000 flee homes - "Assam Riots Toll Rises to 32; More than 70,000 Flee Homes | India News - Times of India," accessed November 24, 2023.

Figure 7: Violent character of Movements



| | | VIOLENT | PARTIALLY VIOLENT | PEACEFUL | MIX OF BOTH |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | GORKHALAND | 30 | 20 | 30 | 20 |
| ■ | BODOLAND | 45 | 15 | 20 | 20 |

Source- Data collected from field study

In light of the available evidence, it can be inferred that the Gorkhaland movement exhibits a relatively higher degree of nonviolent tendencies when compared with the Bodoland movement. The prevailing perception among the respondents indicates that the Gorkhaland movement was predominantly characterized by peaceful activities in comparison to Bodoland movement. However, it is noteworthy that a considerable segment of the respondents also acknowledged the presence of both peaceful and violent components within the movement. In contrast, the Bodoland movement is commonly perceived as exhibiting a greater propensity for violence, as indicated by a larger proportion of respondents attributing violent tendencies to it. According to the data collected, it is evident that a relatively low proportion of participants perceived the Bodoland movement to be characterized by peaceful means.

The coexistence of armed groups in association with the Bodoland movement has been observed to contribute to an escalation in its level of violence. However, within the specific context of Gorkhaland, it is important to note that there is a lack of evidence supporting the existence of armed groups actively advocating for statehood outside the established democratic framework of India. Additionally, it is worth noting that the demographic composition of the region played a significant role in shaping the tendency for violence. The geographical region where the Gorkhaland movement is predominantly active can be perceived as a relatively homogeneous area. The primary factor that contributes to the movement is the Nepali language. It has observed that the region had 90% Nepali speakers or Gorkhas. In the specific context of the Bodoland region, it is worth noting that there existed an extensive variety of groups and communities within the region. The region profile exhibits a heterogeneous nature. Thus, the Bodoland area has seen ethnic violence amongst several ethnicities. The violent nature of the Bodoland movement was further fuelled by this specific factor.

The Gorkhaland movement, despite its initial violence, has evolved to include significant nonviolent components, especially in recent years. The relatively homogeneous demographic of the Gorkhaland region, primarily consisting of Nepali speakers, has likely contributed to a more unified and less violent movement. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement, with its diverse ethnic groups and the presence of armed factions, has been marked by a higher level of sustained violence and internal conflict. The heterogeneous nature of the Bodoland region has exacerbated tensions and contributed to the ongoing cycle of violence.

In summary, while both movements have experienced periods of violence, the Gorkhaland movement has shown a notable shift towards nonviolence over time, whereas the Bodoland movement has remained more prone to violence due to its complex ethnic dynamics and armed group involvement.

**A COMPARISION: PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT**

The Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements are widely recognised as significant movements in the post-independence era of India. The roots of both movements are traced back to the colonial period. From the colonial era to the present day, both movements have seen various transformations in their characteristics, objectives, and strategies. The movement advocating for regional autonomy and the separation of a homeland has undergone several transformations throughout its history. Regarding the inquiry about the current success rate of the movement, the answer from the people provides significant factual insights. In the case of Gorkhaland, 18% population in favor of the status that the success rate of the movement was very high. A total of 29% of the population said that the success rate was high, attributing it to the implementation of various mechanisms that had been designed to fulfil the expectations of the hill people. The largest proportion, accounting for 36% of respondents, said that the success rate was average due to the outstanding needs and expectations that had not yet been met. A minority of 17% express scepticism over the potential success of the Gorkhaland movement. Regarding the Bodoland movements, it is noteworthy that a significant majority of individuals expressed a favourable perspective on the movement's average success rate, which stands at 42%. A significant proportion (31%), of the population provided a response, indicating a notable level of success for the cause. Among the remaining population, 22% expressed a belief that the success rate of the movement was significantly high, while 5% of the public holds the perspective that the likelihood of success was comparatively low.

In relation to the question of success rate of the movement, the study tries to make a comparison between the present establishment in the Gorkhaland area and the Bodoland region.

The Gorkhaland movement which was revived again in 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung and his party Gorkha Janmukti Morcha reached its conclusion in 2011 with the signing of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration accord with the state and union government. The GTA Accord provided the provision for

establishment of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) with some amount of autonomy. The GTA replaced the erstwhile DGHC in the region. The major objective of the GTA was to establish ethnic identity of the Gorkhas by expediting the all-round (socio-economic, infrastructure, educational, cultural, and linguistic) development of the people of the region.[43]

As per the accord, the GTA would be formed through direct election subject to a Bill to be introduced in the State Legislative Assembly for this purpose. So far as the composition of the GTA is concerned, it has 50 members in the GTA Sabha. Apart from the fifty members (out of which forty-five members would be elected and five would be nominated by the Governor), the GTA Sabha (Council) would be composed of seven ex-officio members (comprising of the three Hill MLAs, three Hill Municipality Chairpersons, and the single Member of Parliament of the district). Besides the GTA Sabha, there would be an Executive Body having fourteen members (to be nominated by the Chief out of the fifty Sabha members) headed by the Chief Executive, a Deputy Chief (to be nominated by the Chief out of the fourteen members), a Principal Secretary (the Chief would select him/her from a panel prepared by the State Government). There is no specific mention of the policy of reservation in the accord for the women, Scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, non-tribes, non-Gorkhas, religious minorities. [44]

The GTA has not been assigned any legislative power. The agreement, however, affirms in clear terms that the powers to frame rules/regulations, under the State Acts, to control, regulate, and administer the fifty-nine departments/offices and subjects transferred to the new body would be conferred upon the new body. The administrative, executive, and financial powers in respect to the transferred subjects would be vested in such a manner that the GTA might function autonomously. Besides having control over such important departments like education, agriculture, cottage and small-scale industries, rural development, and Touzi (which deals with land records of the tea gardens) as well as control over all unreserved forests in the

[43] "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011," accessed November 28, 2023, http://www.bareactslive.com/WB/wb745.htm.
[44] "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011."

region, the GTA would also have the power to create government jobs in the B, C, and D categories.[45]

In the case of Bodoland region, The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) is an autonomous council for the Bodoland Territorial Region established under the sixth Schedule of The Constitution of India according to the Memorandum of Settlement between the Bodoland Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF) and the Government of India and the Government of Assam.

The BTC has been constituted with 40 elected members and an additional six members who are appointed by the Governor of Assam. With respect to the BTC, a provision was made in Para2 (1) of the Sixth Schedule for increasing the number of members for BTC up to 46 out of which 30 reserved for Scheduled Tribes, 5 for non-tribal communities, 5 open for all communities and 6 to be nominated by Governor of Assam from the unrepresented communities for BTC area.[46]

The area under the BTC jurisdiction is officially called the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD). At present it is renamed as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) under the third Bodo Accord of 2020.[47] The region falls within the geographical map of the least developed region in India. The agro-based economy is the only source of livelihood for the people. Industrialization and other employment opportunities are scant. The Bodoland Territorial Council is headed by a Speaker and the executive committee is chaired by a Chief Executive Member, currently Pramod Boro. The BTC consists of five contiguous districts — Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri, Chirang, Tamulpur[48]- carved out of seven existing districts - Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon,

---

[45] "Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011."

[46] "Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)," accessed November 24, 2023.

[47] "BTR Accord MoS (Bodolandjobnews.Com).Pdf," Google Docs, accessed November 24, 2023.

[48] Tamulpur district, is an administrative district in Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, one of the North-Eastern states of India. The administrative headquartered at Tamulpur. n 2021, the Cabinet of Assam, headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, approved the proposal to make Tamulpur a full-fledged district. On 23 January 2022 Tamulpur was formally created. On 30 December 2022, Assam Government has decided to remerge it with Baksa district and From, 1 January 2023 the district ceased to exist. The decision came before delimitation process in the state.However, on August 25, 2023, the Government revealed a new decision to recreate the district, covering the Tamulpur and Goreswar Assembly seat.

Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang and Sonitpur — an area of 8970 km2 (11% of Assam land area i.e. 78,438 km2) comprising various protected tribal belts and blocks in Assam. Its establishment was under the amended Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The BTC enjoys power and functions under Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution. About 40 subjects were transferred to the BTC to legislate these subjects in BTC. The BTC also have executive, administrative and financial powers in respect of subjects transferred to it.[49]

The administrative structures of both entities vary from one another, although both councils possess a certain degree of autonomy or self-governance to address the concerns and challenges specific to their respective regions. Participants were requested to provide their perspectives on the degree of satisfaction with the current administrative structure of the area. Regarding the Gorkhaland area, 40% of the respondents expressed their support for average satisfaction. Subsequently, 22%, 20%, and 18% of the respondents indicated partial, low, and complete satisfaction, respectively. In contrast, regarding the Bodoland movement, the current administrative structure is capable of partially satisfying 35% of the individuals surveyed. Additionally, 22% of the populace expresses complete satisfaction, while an equal proportion perceives the degree of satisfaction to be poor. The remaining 21% of the population expresses a preference for average satisfaction. Figure 8 illustrates the data below.

---

[49] Memorandum of Agreement 2003/ bodo accord 2003

Figure 8: Satisfaction Level



| | FULLY | PARTIALLY | AVERAGE | LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GORKHALAND | 18 | 22 | 40 | 20 |
| BODOLAND | 22 | 35 | 21 | 22 |
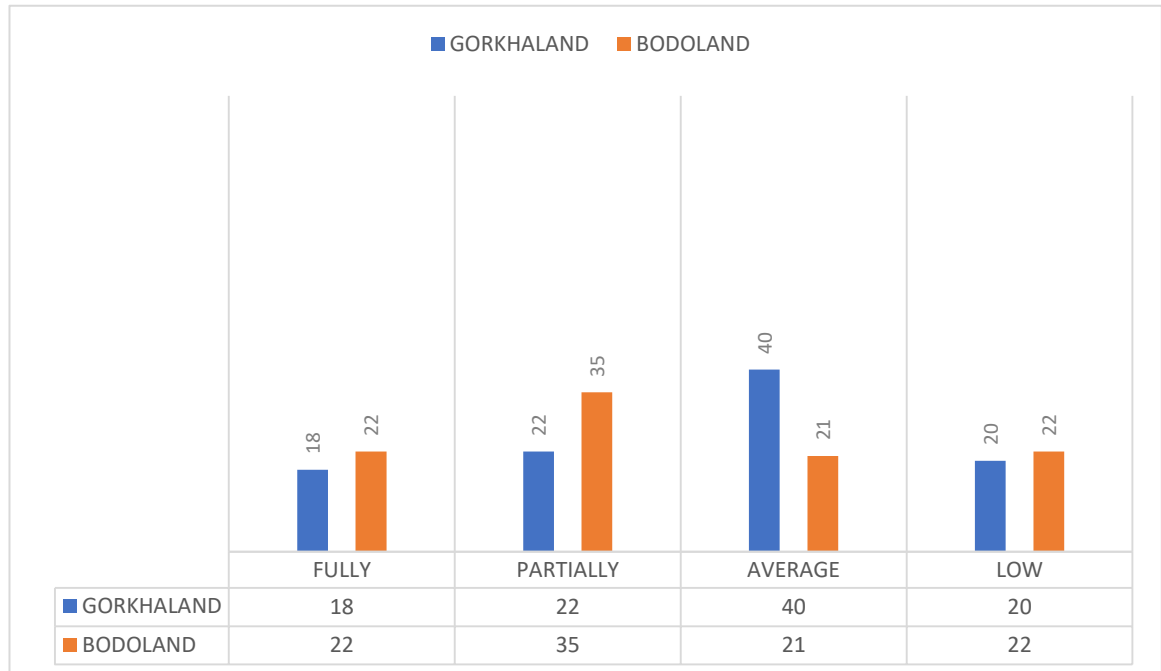
Source- Data collected from field study

The differing administrative structures also play a role in these perceptions. The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, while focused on development and autonomy, lacks legislative power, unlike the Bodoland Territorial Council, which operates with significant legislative authority under the Sixth Schedule. This structural difference may contribute to the variations in public satisfaction and perceptions of success between the two regions.

Both movements have made significant strides but face ongoing challenges. Their differing administrative frameworks and public satisfaction levels reflect the complex dynamics of regional autonomy, governance effectiveness, and the fulfillment of local aspirations.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research indicates that factors such as ethnic identity, economic distress, and regional autonomy were fundamental drivers for both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. However, the degree of influence of these factors varies between the two movements. Leadership, a sense of alienation, and

inadequate policies and programs also significantly influence the trajectory of these movements. In the study, it has been observed that the ethnic identity as major reason for the quest of separate statehood in the case of Bodoland. In regard to the Gorkhaland the prime reason behind the movement is demand for autonomy. The Gorkhaland movement is now content with the prevailing status quo, while the Bodoland movement is characterized as partially active. Political parties and student groups play a significant role in supporting and driving both movements. The Gorkhaland movement is mostly seen as peaceful, while the Bodoland movement is perceived to have more violent elements. Overall, the findings suggest that the aspirations for statehood and autonomy are deeply rooted in the political and social dynamics of these regions.

# CHAPTER VI

## SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

In independent India, the desire for a separate statehood is not a new phenomenon. A separate homeland is seen as the safeguard for preservation of the people's ethnicity, culture, and language. Furthermore, the distinct homeland is regarded as a means of guaranteeing the socio-economic and political advancement of the populace in addition to the surrounding area. The demand for a separate homeland is being carried out by several groups. Such expectations are also accompanied by a variety of viewpoints. Within India and in accordance with the Indian Constitution, some of them are advocating for a separate nation. The others argue that their ideal nation should exist independently of the Indian Union.[1]

There are several statehood movements ongoing in India right now. This research compares and contrasts the statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland in order to draw conclusions about the parallels and differences between these two demands for a separate homeland. The colonial era is the genesis of both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. Both movements have gone through distinct stages before arriving at the current moment. The nature of the movements, the nature of the demands, the methods taken, and the characteristics of the leaders have all evolved throughout time. The movements' paths were altered by a number of factors. In the same manner, the movements also produce a major influence on the social, economic and political landscape of the area in due course of time. In order to compare the two movements' approaches to addressing the social and political conditions of the area, an analysis of the socio-political implications of each movement in its particular location has been attempted in this chapter.

---

[1] Khalistan movement for separate Sikh state in Punjab region, National Democratic Front of Bodoland led the Bodoland movement for separate independent state. At present different factions of NDFB is in peace talks with Government. National Socialist Council of Nagaland for separate Nagaland from India, United People's Democratic Solidarity for separate sovereign nation for Karbi people. Hmar People's Convention- Democracy for independent Hmar state.United National Liberation Front for sovereign and socialist Manipur.

## SOCIO POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GORKHALAND MOVEMENT

The Gorkhaland movement, which originated during the colonial era as a petition for regional autonomy and separate governance independent of Bengal, has experienced many stages of development to arrive at its present condition. The Nepali community residing in Darjeeling constitutes a minority population inside the state of West Bengal in post-independence India, which is mostly inhabited by Bengalis. The career prospects within the British Indian Army for individuals serving as 'Gorkha' soldiers, as well as the emergence of a newly built tea plantation in Darjeeling, have garnered significant interest from a large number of Gorkhas, leading to their migration to this particular location.[2]

There exists a perspective that attributed the labelling of individuals as "migrants" in the area not to the people themselves, but rather to the changes in territorial borders involving the Gorkha kingdom, Bhutan kingdom, Sikkim kingdom, and British administration.[3] Currently, a significant portion of the populace identifying as Gorkhas or Nepalis holds the belief that the establishment of a separate state would provide their complete acknowledgement as Indian citizens, so putting a stop to their alleged mistreatment and disregard by the governing authorities. According to Miriam Wenner, the demand for Gorkhaland may be seen as an expression of the community's increased consciousness of their perceived political entitlements and their desire for justice, which are integral aspects of their subjective experiences.[4] The movement may be seen as a manifestation of public consciousness over the denial of political rights and justice, undertaken in order to save and preserve their identity, culture, and language.

The northernmost district in West Bengal is called Darjeeling district. It is situated between the Himalayas. The district is divided into four subdivisions for

---

[2]Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development.*". p.45

[3] The present shape of Darjeeling district took place in 1865 in the period of colonial administration. Before that it was ruled by Sikkim kingdom, Nepal Kingdom and some areas were under the control of Bhutan Kingdom.

[4]Miriam Wenner, "*Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens*"" (PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015)..

administrative and revenue purposes: Kurseong, Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong[5], and Siliguri. Mirik was declared a subdivision on 2017 following the separation of Kalimpong from Darjeeling district. Darjeeling Himalaya is a region of the eastern Himalayan mountains, which are bordered to the north, west, and east, respectively, by Sikkim, Nepal, and Bhutan. The district has a land area of 3149 square kilometers.[6] According to the 2011 Indian Census, the Darjeeling district has a population density of 586 persons per square kilometre.[7] In 2011, Darjiling had population of 1,846,823 of which male and female were 937,259 and 909,564 respectively.[8] In the Darjeeling district, 60.58 percent of people reside in rural villages, according to the 2011 census. According to the 2011 census, 39.42 percent of Darjeeling's total population resides in the district's urban areas.

From 2001 to 2011, the population grew at a pace of 14.77%. In Darjeeling, there are 970 females for every 1000 men and a 79.56% literacy rate.[9] There are 624,061 people living in the hills, or over 40% of the total population. Various groups, including the Lepchas or Rongpa (also known as the ravine people), Bhutia, Limbu, Rai, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Thami, Chettri, Bahun, Kami, and Damai, are present in the hill area. A sizable group of Tibetan immigrants from Tibet in the 1950s is also present. The ethnic boundaries among the hill people have dissolved over time, and the majority now identify as Gorkha and speak Nepali exclusively as their native language.

From a geographical perspective, the district may be categorized into two distinct sections, namely the hilly region and the plain region. The whole of hilly territory inside the district is under the jurisdiction of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), which operates as a semi-autonomous administrative entity under the governance of West Bengal state government. This region encompasses the

---

[5] It was carved out as a separate district in 2017.
[6] "Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density," accessed November 24, 2023.
[7] "Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density."
[8] "Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density."
[9] "Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density."

three hilly subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Mirik, together with the district of Kalimpong. The region referred to as the Terai encompasses the foothills of the Darjeeling Himalayas, falling under the administrative jurisdiction of the Siliguri subdivision.

A total of 872,839 people, or about 40%, live on the hills.[10] Large minorities of Gorkhas and Adivasis, who came from Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas to work in tea gardens under British rule, live on the plains, while the Bengali population is in the majority. Biharis, Marwaris, and Punjabis are only few of the migratory groups that had settled in the hills and the plains. The 2011 census found that the majority of Darjeeling district residents (76.06 percent) were Hindu, with 9.81 percent also identifying as Buddhist, 6.34 percent as Christian, 6.32 percent as Muslim, and 0.78% as members of some other religion. The percentage of those in a non-state is 0.47%. Both the plains and the highlands are dominated by Hinduism.[11] In the mountains, both Buddhism and Kirat Muddhum are widely practiced.[12] Although the tea tribes in the lowlands are home to a sizeable Christian minority, the majority of Christians live in the mountain regions. Most people who follow Islam live in the plains.

At the time of the 2011 census, 39.88% of the population spoke Nepali, 26.51% Bengali, 10.95% Hindi, 6.17% Rajbongshi, 5.38% Sadri, 2.52% Kurukh, 1.50% Bhojpuri and 1.15% Santali as their first language. 1.04% of the population recorded their language as 'Others' under Bengali.[13] Nepali is the dominant language in the hill divisions, spoken by more than 90% of the people in the Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Mirik subdivisions and the district of Kalimpong.[14] The main language of the Siliguri subdivision is Bengali. It is followed by a sizable number of

---

[10]  The three hill subdivisions, Darjeeling sadar, Kalimpong, and Kurseong (Including the four municipalities of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, and Mirik) have a total population of 872,839 according to the Census of India 2011.

[11] 69% of hill population is Hindu.

[12] 22% of hill population is Buddhist.

[13]  Table C-16 Population by Mother Tongue: West Bengal". www.censusindia.gov.in. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Archived from the original on 9 August 2022. Retrieved 2nd Feb, 2023.

[14]  Table C-16 Population by Mother Tongue: West Bengal". www.censusindia.gov.in. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Archived from the original on 9 August 2022. Retrieved 2nd Feb, 2023.

Kamatpuri or Rajbongshi speakers. Among the Adivasis, Sadri is the main language although some still speak their original languages like Kurukh, Mundari, and Santali.

*DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE GORKHALAND MOVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT*

The Gorkhaland movement which had its origin in colonial administration has impacted the social and economic profile of the region. It is difficult to understand today's situation without accounting for the history of the Darjeeling district. An attempt has been made to discuss the Gorkhaland movement by taking into consideration the history of Darjeeling phase-wise and its impact on the social and political aspects of the region.

**In the colonial period**, The Darjeeling district, formerly under the rule of the Sikkim Kingdom, was ruled by various rulers until 1866 when the East India Company, later on British rule, took its final shape. The district was initially under the control of the Sikkim Kingdom until 1780 when the Gorkha Kingdom conquered it.[15] The East India Company eventually gained power over the region, adding the Sikkim Terai in 1861 and the Kalimpong subdivision in 1865.The district with the four sub-divisions - Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, and Siliguri added to the Bengal and remained part of it till the independence during the colonial period.[16]

The region's economy, social life, and demographics saw significant changes as a result of the British conquest. The demographic makeup of the area was profoundly impacted by the formation of tea business and the recruitment of Gorkhas into the British Indian army in the second half of nineteenth century. The region's earliest inhabitants, the Lepchas, comprised a mere few hundred people.[17] Nepalese migrants, who came to the area as subjects of the British Indian Army and for the tea plantations, quickly outnumbered the indigenous Lepchas. Migrants from Nepal did not have a similar cultural or linguistic background since they came from a variety of diverse ethnic groups with their own traditions and customs. Over time, the Nepali language emerged as a common tongue, serving as a unifying force among people of

---

[15] Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development*."
[16] Bahadur. Op.cit
[17] Chatterji, Aditi (2007),*Contested Landscapes: The Story of Darjeeling*. Kolkata: INTACH.

many backgrounds. According to Chalmers, the development of Nepali as a national symbol began in Darjeeling at the end of the 19th century with the birth of Nepali literature, periodicals, and public theatre.[18] Subba argues that the Gorkha's military past was just as important as their language in shaping their sense of self.[19] During the colonial era, Wenner identified two distinct constructs of Gorkha's identity, one positive and one negative. According to Wennar, the Gorkhas' common awareness of their language, culture, and history is what makes up the foundation of their positive identity. However, the colonial experience fostered the Gorkha identity as a lack of belonging to the Indian nation, a lack of a recognized Indian Identity, and a lack of development, all of which contributed to the construction of an identity based on a sense of ethnic exclusivity.[20]

Under the colonial governance, the Darjeeling was governed differently. Under colonial governance, Darjeeling got the status of non regulated area. In 1874, it became a scheduled district. In 1919, the district was designated as a backward tract and Government of India Act of 1935 it was categorized as a partially excluded area. These exclusionary provisions for the Darjeeling district were not meant only for the protection and preservation of hill peoples from outsiders. The colonial interest was also the driving factor for formation of such exclusionary governance in the district. The security of tea plantations and alienation of hill masses from the national freedom struggle are of them. The district was part of Bengal, but proper administrative integration was not completed till the independence of India. Sarkar argues that colonial governmentality gave the people of Darjeeling Hills 'an early experience of the art of being governed differently'.[21] This resulted into an urge be governed with special treatment even in post-independent India among the people of the hills. In addition to this, the deployment of Gorkhas and their role as subjects of the British army to suppress the freedom struggle raised the question among Indian

---

[18] Rhoderick Chalmers, "Education, Institutions and Elites Building and Bounding Nepali Public Life in Early Twentieth Century India," Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives, 2009, 109–47.p. 109-147

[19] Bahadur, "Ethnicity, State, and Development."p.56

[20] Wenner, "Monopolising a Statehood Movement."p. 67

[21] Swatahsiddha Sarkar, Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Responce (Concept, 2013).. P. 42

people about the loyalty of Gorkhas.[22] Subba argues that these raised doubts among other Indians about the Gorkha's loyalty emerging Indian nation and caused their discrimination. These experiences have left a 'deep sense of insecurity' on the Gorkhas which increased their ethnic consciousness, and their reliance on ethnic solidity for security.[23]

The initial demand for independent government for Darjeeling was launched in 1907 by the Hillmen's Association. Due to its unique location, history, religion, and language, the Hillmen's Association requested further protections for the region. Even before the Government of India Act 1919 and 1935, citizens petitioned the central government to fully separate the district's administration from that of the province of Bengal. There was a proposal of converting what is now Darjeeling and the Dooars and Assam and Arunachal Pradesh into a North East Frontier Province.[24] It was not as if all individuals were expressing same agreement. Others argued that any special treatment given to Darjeeling would only serve to further isolate the area from the rest of India, preventing it from benefiting from modernization and community building.[25]

The struggle that was led by Hillman's Association under the leadership of S.W. Laden La taking into consideration all ethnic communities of the region, Nepali, Lepcha, and Bhutia was getting less importance with the formation of All India Gorkha League (AIGL) in 1944 in Darjeeling. The Lepcha and Bhutia were first left out of AIGL since it was founded on the Gorkha ethnic basis, therefore ending the united fight of hill people. Lepcha and Bhutia people formed an organization to look out for each other's best interests. The AIGL wanted representation in the provincial legislature and temporary government and the formal acknowledgment of the Nepali language. The group also aimed to educate Gorkhas

---

[22] Kaushik, Anupma (2013): *Gorkhaland. A Study of Ethnicity from Peace Approach*. Delhi: Kalinga Publications.p. 41

[23] Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development*."p.61

[24] Wenner, "*Monopolising a Statehood Movement*."p. 70

[25] Groups like Gurkha Memorialists, Darjeeling People's Association, and the Kalimpong Samiti opposed the idea of special provision for Darjeeling. Cited in Middleton, Townsend (2013a): "States of Difference: Refiguring Ethnicity and Its 'Crisis' at India's Borders." In: *Political Geography* 35: 14–24.

on their political rights and combat discrimination against them. The colonial era of the movement ended with an ascent of AIGL, an ethnically based organization in the hill area, the end of the united fight of all the main ethnic groupings, and the persistent uncertainty about the Gorkhas' political destiny. In this stage, the social and political character of the area and the future trajectory of movement are profoundly impacted by the colonial government's exclusionary laws, the development of Gorkha identity, and the desire for regional autonomy.

***Second stage (1947-1986):*** From the late period of colonial administration, the movement for regional autonomy was controlled by the AIGL in the region. The decline of importance of the hillman's association in Gorkhaland politics, made the space for the ethnic-based party AIGL to become a major party in the region.

After the independence of India, the district was linked to the West Bengal state. Fearing Bengali oppression after Independence, the AIGL proposed three options to address the issue: administrative separation from Bengal, merger of Darjeeling and Dooars with Assam to form a new province, or creation of an autonomous Council to secure a proportional representation in state governance of the minority Nepalis.[26] In 1949, AIGL and the Hillman's Association and the Cooch Behar Praja Congress[27] lobbied in India's Constituent Assembly for the establishment of a new state called "Uttarakhand," which would include the regions of Darjeeling, Sikkim, Cooch Behar, and Jalpaiguri. However, the assembly voted rejected the idea because it threatened the country's security.[28] There was no tangible result from the AIGL's second memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru in 1952 proposing a three-way settlement to the Darjeeling issue. The AIGL formed a strong partnership with the Congress Party in early independent India, compromising their position on regional autonomy in the process. Instead of focusing on the issue of autonomy, attention has switched to the advancement of Nepali as a recognized language.

Independent India experienced significant political upheaval in the 1950s, with the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) recommending

---

[26] Wenner, Miriam (2015), *Op.Cit* p. 72
[27] This party had its base over Koch Rajbonshi people.
[28] Singh and Singh (1987) .*Op. Cit* p. 94

reconstructing state boundaries based on language. This led to a language movement in the late 1950s, with the West Bengal assembly rejecting the demand for Nepali as the official language in Darjeeling. The movement gained momentum in 1961 when the population was asked to name 'Nepali' as their mother tongue, leading to a 60% increase in Nepali speakers in the district.[29] The success of movement and the report of census has a social dimension. It gave collective consciousness among the hill masses regarding their identity. The political parties were trying to capture the benefit of emerging phenomena of the hills to expand their base. In the 1950s, the region also witnessed some uniformity on the political front regarding the question of regional autonomy. Darjeeling District Congress Committee (DDCC), along with CPI and AIGL jointly placed a demand for regional autonomy before Nehru in his visit to Darjeeling in 1957.[30]

Only in 1967, the West Bengal assembly, under the United Front government, passed a resolution for Darjeeling's regional autonomy but there was no specification on the nature and extent of the autonomy.[31] Again in 1976, the Darjeeling Hill Areas Development Council Act 1976 provided a provision for the creation of Hill Development Council. But in a short period after the creation of council faced dysfunctionality due to its undemocratic nature.[32] However, some efforts were made by the new Left Front government in 1977, bypassing resolutions demanding regional autonomy of three hill subdivisions and inclusion of the Nepali language in the 8th schedule of the Indian Constitution but nothing concrete came out.[33]

In 1980, Pranta Parishad revived the struggle for a separate homeland, but the Gorkha National Liberation Front led by Subhash Ghising mobilized public support for Gorkhaland, a separate statehood for Gorkhas. Ghising argued against unemployment, underdevelopment, and job losses, and viewed a separate statehood

---

[29] Sarkar, *Op. cit*.
[30] Bahadur, "*Ethnicity, State, and Development.*"p.91
[31] Bahadur. Op.cit. p.91
[32]Amiya K. Samanta, *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism* (APH Publishing, 2000),..p. 85
[33] Wenner, Miriam (2015), *Op.cit* p. 75

as the only solution for securing identity, culture, and language.In addition, the forceful expulsion of the Nepali population from the North Eastern state made the Nepali population more conscious about their belongings. The Ghising along with his party GNLF led the movement from 1986 onwards with a do-or-die attitude.

This phase of movement had a clear impact on the construction of linguistic identity of the Nepalis. In addition to this, the phase is also categorized as significant from a political perspective. The AIGL and its close alliance with Congress made an important shift of interest from regional autonomy. In this phase, there was the existence of a competitive party system in the region, although the AIGL was dominant but communist and Congress party had their base in the region. The emergence of GNLF and the revival of separate homeland demand are also considered one of the major political upheavals of this period.

*The third phase (1986-2007)* of the movement began in 1986 and continued until 2007. During this phase, the movement witnessed different changes in the course of movement and it impacted the social and political aspects of the region. The phase began with the violent struggle led by the GNLF under the leadership of Subhash Ghising. this phase is considered the most turbulent phase of the movement. The GNLF President, Subhash Ghising formally launched the movement with the declaration of an 11-point program of action on March 13, 1986.[34] From then on, GNLF organized different strategies to put pressure on the

---

[34]The 11-point programme of action included the issues like: (1) to observe a 'Black Flag Day' on April 13, 1986 in protest against the alleged atrocities and discrimination faced by the Indian Nepalis; (ii) to declare 72 hours strike during May 12-14, 1986 in order to invite the notice of the Central Government towards their constitutional and just demand for Gorkhaland; (iii) to burn the copy of the Article seven of the India-Nepal Peace Treaty of 1950 which has relegated the Indian Nepalis to the status of immigrants; (iv) to burn the copy of the SRC of 1955 which had unconstitutionally merged Darjeeling along with the adjacent Nepali speaking areas with the State of West Bengal; (v) to launch movement against the Forest Department for indiscriminate felling of trees of the hill areas and sending them to the plains, (vi) to continue the vote boycott stand as a measure to declare that they no longer want to remain within the alien State of West Bengal; (vi) to boycott all the MLAs, MPS, Ministers, and political partues, who are against the demand of a separate state of Gorkhaland, (vum) to stop all the vehicles taking away the valuable boulders of Dudhia (P.S. Kurseong) to the plains as a measure to protest against the policies of the Central Government towards the demand of Gorkhaland; (ix) to launch do-or-die movement in protest against the alleged ill treatment of the Gorkhas by the Indians, (x) to boycott the observance of all national ceremonies like the Independence Day, the Republic Day, Rabindra Jayanti, Gandhi Jayanti, Netaji Jayanti until the Central Government accedes to the demand of Gorkhaland; (xa) to stop

government in connection with the demand of Gorkhaland. Measures such as Black Flag protests, public gatherings, strikes, and bandhs were called to bring the issue of Gorkhaland to the forefront of regional social and political aspects. The protest against the government led to the breakdown of normalcy in the region. Different incidents of violence were reported during the protest. The state government also acted in a repressive way in response to the movement. The incident of Kalimpong in July 1986 vindicated the attitude of the government towards the movement, whereas as many as fifteen livers were claimed due to the police atrocities.[35] Sarkar states that in a certain sense, the Kalimpong killing did mark a point of no return from the demand of Gorkhaland.[36] The GNLF along with other regional political outfits took the movement more aggressively. Towards the end of the year, several incidences of violence, blood-shedding, and destruction of public and private properties were reported. The inter-party clashes between the GNLF (pro-movement) and the CPI (M) (state-backed anti-movement), and clashes with army personnel remained Darjeeling fierce, and tense throughout the year 1986.

In the year 1987, the movement remained a violent one. The clash between pro-movement and Anti-movement groups continued in the region. It was only mid of 1987, that both the state and union governments took an accommodating approach toward the movement. Although a series of negotiations was started between government authorities and GNLF in mid-1987, the region remained and witnessed the violence till the signing of accord in 1988.[37]

---

payment of taxes and repayment of the loans to the Government of West Bengal as a measure to protest against the colonial state of affairs maintained by the State of West Bengal over the Nepali speaking areas of Darjeeling hills and Dooars. (Sarkar, Gorkhaland Movement.p.70)

[35]July 27, 1986 was decided to be the day when the clause 7 of the Indo-Nepal Peace Treaty of 1950 would be burnt in every town and village of Darjeeling hills.Copies of the said clause were burnt on the scheduled date followed by a mass procession at 8th Mile, Kalimpong. Police took resort to lathi charge and ultimately fired indiscriminately at the agitating mob that claimed fifteen lives among whom women and children were in majority .As a reaction to these atrocities Subhas Ghising declared a 108 hours bandh bringing life in the hills to a standstill. The GNLF had also called off the Independence Day celebration in the hills as a measure to protest against the police firing in Kalimpong. However, the decision was withdrawn by the Party President himself just at the eve of the Independence Day (Telegraph dated July 28, 1986)

[36]Sarkar, Gorkhaland Movement., p.71

[37] According to official sources quoted in Samanta, Gorkhaland Movement., there was report of total 292 were killed and 609 person were injured during the time frame of 1986 to 1988( jan-sept).

In 1988, through a series of successful bilateral and tripartite meetings held in Delhi and Calcutta, the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) was formed. The Accord for its formation was finally signed on August 22, 1988, after the agreement of Subhas Ghising, C.G. Somaiah (representative of the Central Government), and Rathin Sengupta (representative of the State Government). As per the provision of the accord, the demand for a separate homeland was to be dropped and Subhash Ghising accepted the provision.[38] This resulted in dissatisfaction among some of the members of the organization. The subsequent DGHC election saw the GNLF emerge victorious, winning 26 out of 28 seats, while the remaining two seats were won by the CPI (M).

The DGHC was administered from 1988 to 2005 for three successive terms by the GNLF with Subhash Ghisingh as the Chairman. Initially, it was believed that the formation of DGHC would bring back normal life to the region as well as ensure peace and development. However, the DGHC under GNLF was labelled with charges of mismanagement of funds, nepotism, authoritative governance, and violence toward the opposition. During the tenure of Ghising, different changes occurred in the course of the movement. The phrase which started with violence and destruction of normal peace and development of the region in the name of Gorkhaland concluded the same in the same position as for the demand of Gorkhaland with less violence. Under the Ghising leadership, there was a major social-political upheaval with the constitutionalising of Panchayati Raj system in India through the 73rd amendment of the constitution of India. There was a conflict of jurisdiction between the DGHC and Panchayati Raj sphere led to a complex working agreement with the district administration and impacted the political participation process of the grassroots population in the region and the development paradigm of the region.[39]

---

Moreover the report provided the data that total 1359 property including houses, vehicles, building, culverts of private and public property were destroyed in during aforementioned time frame.

[38] Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement*. p.77

[39] Administrative overlaps between the DGHC's constituencies and the three-tier panchayat system created an exceptional system of local governance in Darjeeling. The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, Article 243M(3), which ruled out a Zilla Parishad for the district and thus forced a two-tier format—GPs and Panchayat Samitis (PS). A related development was the setting of

In addition to this, Ghising efforts for the status of the sixth schedule for Darjeeling provided a new dimension to the social profile of the region.[40] In December 2005, Ghising signed a tripartite memorandum of settlement in Delhi to bring Darjeeling under the 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution with the hope of extending regional autonomy. Ghising and the GNLF claimed that the sixth schedule would give special political protection and security through its constitutional guarantee. However, the opponents of Ghising and the general public opined that the effort was articulated due to the decline of popularity of Subhash Ghising and DGHC. The GNLF and its leader Subhash Ghising made efforts to persuade people about the benefits of 6th schedule in consecutive months. However, they resorted to forced displays of tribal identity which made people resentful. Furthermore, they tried to interfere in people's religious practices to create a tribal identity for Darjeeling which had political motives, eventually distancing the masses from Ghising. At this juncture, the public mood of dissatisfaction with the GNLF administration was successfully mobilized by Bimal Gurung and led the course of movement thereon.

*The fourth phase* of movement started with the change of power position in the context of political profile of the hill region. The anti-Ghising and anti-DGHC sentiments were successfully capitalized on by the new leader Bimal Gurung. Subhash Ghising acted as caretaker of the DGHC during the emergence of Bimal Gurung as a rising leader in hill politics. The DGHC election was due in 2004 but Ghising was able to manage his power by withholding the election. As of 2005, the state government placed him as the caretaker of DGHC.[41] During his tenure, Ghising had the idea of including Darjeeling under the sixth schedule of Constitution of India. He hoped that this would legitimize his leadership on the DGHC and help him

---

a Mahakuma Parishad for the plains, the Siliguri sub-division of the district, by the state government in 1989. This was intended to put in place an arrangement for participative democracy at the grassroots level in that area. Unlike in the three hill sub-divisions, the Siliguri sub-division has a full three-tier panchayat structure.

[40] Subhas Ghising announced his party's new political stand in 2000, emphasizing the importance of granting the DGAHC areas the status of a tribal region and the Sixth Schedule.(Sikkim Express: September 3-10, 2000) Previously, he refused the Sixth Schedule offer, but now appears satisfied with the same tribal status for his brethren and the region. Ghising announced a tripartite meeting in February 2001 to review the DGHC Accord.

[41] The Hindu dated 20.03.2005

regain popularity among the masses. However, this idea backfired, as the charges against the DGHC regarding its undemocratic nature, authoritative governance, mismanagement of funds, corruption, nepotism, and interference with people's religious way of life, actually set the stage for breakdown of Ghising's regime over the hill region.

There was some presence of different leaders but it was Bimal Gurung who mobilized the anti-Ghising sentiment and overthrew Ghising's regime. He revived the movement of a separate homeland, Gorkhaland in the region. Bimal Gurung founded Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) in October 2007. The GJM under the leadership of Bimal Gurung was critical of the functioning of DGHC. Gurung criticized Ghising for the betrayal of public in the name of Gorkhaland. The GJM was vocal against the decision of Ghising on the inclusion of Darjeeling under the sixth schedule of Indian Constitution. In a short period, the GJM was able to gather public support and extend its base over all the sections of people of the hill. The GJM led an agitation with a demand to replace the undemocratic Ghising administration and also to establish a separate statehood, Gorkhaland for the hill region. The GJM was supported by the other major political outfits of the region in their demand for Gorkhaland. In the initial days, GJM focused on the resignation of Ghising as caretaker of the DGHC. The state government led by CPI (M) realizing the growing pressure against Ghising withdrew their support for him. In the same period, the sixth schedule bill for Darjeeling was sent back for re-assessment and returned to the State Government. Eventually, the failure of Ghising to retain the support of state government and pass the 6th schedule bill for Darjeeling ultimately led to his resignation as caretaker of the DGHC in March 2008.[42] West Bengal government appointed B.L Meena, an IAS officer as caretaker to look after the affairs of the DGHC.[43]

With the ousting of Subhash Ghising from the administration of DGHC, GJM stressed the demand of Gorkhaland. The agitating was called with measures like bandh, strikes, and public gatherings for the cause of a separate homeland.

---

[42] The Telegraph dated 17.03.2008
[43] The Telegraph dated 17.03.2008

Although the claim was made by Bimal Gurung to maintain nonviolence during the agitation, there were several reports of violence heard. In comparison to the period of 1986, the movement under GJM is less violent. Due to strikes, Bandhs, and inter-party clashes (between GJM and GNLF), the normal life of hill was disturbed. It affected the peace and development paradigms of the Hill negatively. There was an effort from the state government to reach some kind of agreement with the GJM from the middle of 2010. In September 2010, the GJM agreed to accept the interim set-up, but with some qualifications. The GJM proposed to name the new arrangement, the Gorkhaland Regional Authority (GRA) and moved forward despite opposition from the CPRM and AIGL. The State Government, which was led by the CPI-M at that time, had even finalized a draft proposal for the formation of what it thought was the appropriate Gorkhaland Autonomous Authority (GAA).[44] It was only in 2011 that the agreement was reached in its concrete form with the signing of GTA Accord among the newly formed State Government, led by Trinamool Congress and Union Government with GJM. The GTA Accord laid the foundation for the establishment of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). It is proposed that the Gorkhaland territorial administration would be formed through a direct election subject to a bill to be introduced in the state legislative assembly for this purpose. The formation of GTA was able to restore peace in the region temporarily. The other political outfits like AIGL, CPRM, and GNLF boycotted the GTA, which was held on July 29, 2012, by considering it as an act of approving the denial of Gorkhaland.[45]

One major issue of debate regarding GTA was the inclusion of territories under GTA purview. The GJM demanded 398 Mouzas from Dooars and Terai but the High Powered Committee[46] in its report recommended only five Mouzas from

---

[44] Sarkar, *Gorkhaland Movement*.p.101

[45] "GTA Polls Pass off Peacefully, 59% Turnout Recorded | Kolkata News - The Indian Express," accessed November 24, 2023., retrieved on 22nd feb, 2023

[46] The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) faced an impasse due to the GJM's push for the incorporation of Gorkha-dominated mouzas in the GTA. GJM pressing for the incorporation of 199 Gorkha dominated mouzas of Terai and 199 mouzas of Dooars in the GTA. The State Government pushed for the earlier Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council area. A joint committee, High Powered Commitee (HPC) was formed, led by former Justice Shyamal Sen, to study the issue.(Hindustan Times dated 25.03.2012)

Dooars and Terai region to the GTA.[47] In recent times, the GJM, Which was one of the signing parties of the accord burnt down the copies of GTA Accord by viewing it as a betrayal of their demand for Gorkhaland in 2017.[48]In this phase of the movement, one has witnessed the emergence of a new party and leader replacing the old one, the change in the power position in the hill politics, and the revival of the demand of Gorkhaland.

## THE RECENT POLTICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The West Bengal government declared that the election for GTA would take place on July 29, 2012. The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha initially threatened to boycott the GTA polls over the Justice Sen-led committee's recommendations on territorial inclusion of the Dooars and Terai, which it had already rejected.[49] After a period of silence, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha finally announced the names of its GTA election nominees. CPRM, ABGL, GNLF decided not to participate in the GTA elections.[50] Both CPI(M) and Trinamool Congress fielded their candidates in the election. The CPI(M) withdrew the nominations of all its 13 candidates from the GTA elections, alleging threats and intimidation by the GJM[51] and the GJM received 28 seats of the GTA uncontested.[52] In the elections of remaining 17 seats of the GTA held on 29 July 2012, the GJM candidates won from all the constituencies. The newly elected members of the GTA were sworn in on 4 August 2012 at Darjeeling in the presence of Home Minister Sushil kumar Shinde and Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee.

---

[47] A meeting was held on March 24, 2012, and both parties GJM and State Government, agreed to abide by the recommendations of the High Powered Committee (HPC). Both parties agreed upon the issue that the elections to the GTA Sabha would be held some time towards the end of June 2012 or in the early July 2012 irrespective of the fact whether the recommendations of the HPC were submitted or not by that time. The HPC's recommendations, submitted on June 8, 2012, included only five mouzas from the Dooars-Terai region, causing political upheaval. Sarkar (2013),op.cit 141

[48]"GJM Members Burn GTA Accord in Hills | India News - The Indian Express," accessed November 24, 2023. retrieved on 25th February, 2023

[49] "Gorkha Janmukti Morcha to Contest GTA Elections," Hindustan Times, June 30, 2012,.Retrieved 16 August, 2021.

[50] Sarkar(2013) , Op.cit 157

[51] Chattopadhyay, Suhrid Shankar. 2012. Walkover in the Hills', Frontline 29 (15) July 28-August 10 retrieved on April 28, 2022

[52] Sarkar (2013), Op.cit p.157

In 2017, there was a protest for the creation of Gorkhaland in the Darjeeling hills. The councilors of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), who belonged to the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), resigned and burned copies of the GTA memorandum of agreement and the GTA Act in June 2017. They claimed that the GTA had failed to fulfil the aspirations of people. On 20 September 2017, the West Bengal government reconstituted the GTA and appointed rebel GJM leader Binoy Tamang as its chairperson.[53] Before the 2019 Darjeeling assembly bye-election, Binoy Tamang resigned as the GTA chairman to contest the assembly bye-election. Anit Thapa was appointed the new GTA chairman.[54]

Before the 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election, the West Bengal government dissolved the Anit Thapa-led GTA Board of Administrators and handed over the administration of GTA to its principal secretary. After running the GTA with government-appointed administrators for five years (2017-2022), the West Bengal government announced that the election for the second GTA Sabha would be held on 26 June 2022.[55] A total of 277 members had contested the election. Out of which 27 members from the Bharatiya Prajatantarik Gorkha Morcha along with five members from Trinamool Congress formed the government in GTA. The newly emerged Hamro party was able to secure 8 seats in the GTA sabha. 5 seats went to the independent candidates.[56] All elected members of the GTA Sabha took the oath on 12 July 2022, in a function that was attended by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

On 14 July 2022, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar administered the oath of office to Anit Thapa as the Chief Executive of GTA. The five members of GTA Sabha nominated by the West Bengal government took the oath on 25 August 2022.

---

[53]Business Standard, "GJM Leader Binay Tamang Appointed as Chairman of New Board to Run Darjeeling Hills," September 20, 2017., retrieved on June 8th , 2022

[54]"Tamang Resigns from Post of GTA Chairman," accessed November 24, 2023., retrieved on June 23, 2022

[55]"GTA Election 2022: Bengal Election Commission Announces Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Poll Dates,". retrieved on 27th September, 2022

[56] "Anit Thapa's BGPM Wins GTA Election 2022 - Siliguri Times | Siliguri News Updates," accessed November 24, 2023, https://siliguritimes.com/anit-thapas-bgpm-wins-gta-election-2022/.

Regarding the Lok Sabha election, the region where the demand of Gorkaland is based falls under the purview of Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency. Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency consists of a total of 7 assembly segments, five assembly segments are in Darjeeling district, one assembly segment is in Kalimpong district and one assembly segment is in Uttar Dinajpur district.[57] In 2009, Jaswant Singh of BJP secured a majority with the support of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. The alliance between GJM and BJP also led to the positive result in the 2014 general elections. S.S Ahluwalia from BJP came out victorious with the support of GJM. Following the fraction in GJM, the Gurung group supported the BJP in the 2019 general election. Raju Bista of the BJP got the public mandate in favor of him in the election and was elected.

The state assembly elections in the Darjeeling region had seen a shift in political dominance from the GNLF to the newly formed GJM. This was evident in the assembly elections in Kurseong, Darjeeling, and Kalimpong, where the GJM gained popular support in the post-accord era. However, the 2021 elections saw a change in public opinion due to the division within the GJM and the inability to deliver on their promises of development in the region. In the 2011 assembly elections, the GJM won three hill assembly constituencies, with Rohit Sharma, Trilok Dewan, and Harka Bahadur Chettri emerging victorious.[58] In the 2016 assembly elections, the GJM won all three hill assembly constituencies of Darjeeling, with Rohit Sharma, Amar Singh Rai, and Sarita Rai winning the election.[59] Amar Singh Rai resigned from the MLA post to contest the 2019 general elections from the Darjeeling assembly constituency, and the by-election was won by Neeraj Zimba of the BJP. In the last assembly election, Kurseong had the popular mandate in favor of the BJP, and Bishnu Prasad Sharma won the assembly election with the help of division of votes between both factions of the GJM. In the 2021 elections, Neeraj Zimba emerged victorious again from the Darjeeling assembly constituency, while

---

[57] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Lok_Sabha_constituency
[58] Rohit Sharma won from Kurseong Assembly constituency in 2011,Trilok Dewan won from Darjeeling Assembly constituency in 2011. Harka Bahadur Chetry won from Kalimpong Assembly constituency in 2011.
[59] Amar Singh Rai from Darjeeling assembly constituency.Sarita Rai won from Kalimpong Assembly constituency in 2016.

Ruden Sapa Lepcha of the GJM (Binay Tamang)[60] faction was able to hold the assembly seat from the Kalimpong assembly constituency.

Panchayat elections were held in the hill district of Darjeeling, West Bengal, after a gap of 23 years on July 8, 2023. A grand alliance, consisting of eight parties, has been formed to contest against the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal and its ally Bhartiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM). The alliance is called the United Gorkha Manch.[61] While all areas in Bengal had panchayat polls for three tiers - gram panchayat, panchayat samiti, and zila parishad - the elections in Darjeeling and Kalimpong were held for two tiers only, i.e. Gram panchayat and Panchayat samiti. The last panchayat elections in the GTA area were held 23 years ago in 2000, but only for gram panchayats, which represent the lower tier. However, the July 8th polls included panchayat samitis as well. The Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) won more than 65% of seats in 112 gram panchayats and six of nine panchayat samites in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts.[62]

The area experienced multi-party competitive electoral politics before the formation of GNLF. The GNLF was positioning itself as the party of Gorkhas, and their grievances transformed the political landscape of the area, creating a dominant political structure in their favor. The election results demonstrated the GNLF's hegemony over regional politics up until 2007. In a similar vein, Bimal Gurung and his GJM party guided the region's political politics. One could see GJM's supremacy as a shift in power rather than an inherent characteristic of it. Until the end of 2010s, the GJM dominated the hill's electoral politics. The region's electoral politics once again became multi-party competitive events as a result of the GJM split, the state government's accommodating approaches towards the new parties in an attempt to

---

[60] GJM was split at that time and one faction of GJM was led by Bimal Tamang.
[61] United Gorkha Manch - the alliance of BJP, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, Hamro Party, Gorkha National Liberation Front, Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists, Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League, Sumeti Mukti Morcha and Gorkhaland Rajya Nirman Party, was formed after a meeting of the leadership of the parties. "Panchayat Polls in Darjeeling after 23 Years, 8 Parties Form Alliance against TMC - India Today," accessed November 24, 2023.
[62] "TMC Ally BGPM Sweeps Gram Panchayats in Darjeeling, Kalimpong," Hindustan Times, July 13, 2023.retrieved on 29th August 2023

regain its foothold in hill politics, and the emergence of other parties based on ethnic lines.

*VIEW OF POLITICAL PARTIES*

During the Gorkhaland movement, the perspective of political parties on the demand for a separate homeland or Gorkhaland impacted the movement. All regional political parties of the hill based on Nepali ethnic identity justify the demand of Gorkhaland. The AIGL, GJM, GNLF, and recently Hamro Party are demanding more regional autonomy or alternatively the Gorkhaland in comparison to the present setup of Gorkhaland to address the issues and problems of Gorkhas. In the study, the respondents were asked to submit their views on the attitude of regional political parties about the movement. The majority of respondents, 53% responded with a positive attitude of the regional parties. It was argued that the regional parties led the movement from the forefront. 36% of the total population responded with a supportive attitude of the regional parties towards the movement in the sense that although the parties are not taking the forefront but support the cause of the movement. Only 9% were viewed as negative or indifferent responses of regional political parties about the movement.[63]

The major political state and national parties' perspectives are taken into account in the study to understand their viewpoints regarding the movement. Both TMC and the CPI (M) are in state power for a long period. The parties are trying to accommodate ethnic aspirations through regional autonomy under the State's authority. They are denying the claim of a separate homeland.

Initially, the CPI-M (previously CPI) proposed the creation of a new state Gorkhastan in 1947, but changed their stand and inclined their attitude in favor of regional autonomy. The party had their popular base in the region not in the idea of ethnic consciousness, rather it was the class consciousness that made them popular, especially in the tea plantation area of the region. The CPI-M leaders stressed that the party generally opposes all statehood movements in India by viewing that it would

---

[63] Data collected from field study

endanger the national unity of India as the statehood movements are based on ethnic lines. In addition, CPI-M argues for strengthening the existing state to balance the influence of national government. The CPI-M government was in bipartite and tripartite talks with the GJM from 2010 onwards during the revived movement for Gorkhaland under GJM. They proposed the creation of an interim council with extended autonomy provision for the hill region but were not successful in concluding the deal. Even ahead of the 2014 general elections the CPI-M approached with the promise of inclusion of the Darjeeling region under the 6th schedule of Indian Constitution.

The TMC government which has been in power of the state government from 2011 onwards rejected the idea of division of West Bengal and proposed the establishment of an institution of regional autonomy against the demand of a separate homeland. Under the TMC government, the GTA accord was signed. The TMC party has its base on Bengali nationalism so it denies the aspect of separation of the region from the State. Moreover, the party considers the demand of Gorkhaland as an issue of developmental concern. The party promises that the grievances regarding development would be addressed effectively so that the notion of Gorkhaland cannot arise with the demand for separation from West Bengal.

Indian National Congress (INC) generally prefers the status quo positions regarding the creation of new states. The ethnic aspirations of Gorkhas are understood from the development perspective which could be addressed with the establishment of regional council. The INC played a major role as a mediator between state government and statehood-demanding groups in the 1986 and 2007 movements.

The BJP party and its official stand on the creation of new states are in favor of Gorkhaland demand. The party views regional aspirations could be addressed through the creation of smaller states which allows more decentralisation and people's participation in governance. The party was supported by the GJM in the 2009, 2014, and 2019 general elections with the hope of bringing some legislation in favor of their demand.

In the study, the respondents were asked to give their opinions on the stand of state/ national Political parties regarding the movement. The majority of total population (44%) opined that the BJP was positive with the demands of the Gorkhaland movement. In the question on the negative stand, most of the respondents (45%) selected TMC as the party which is not in favor of the demands of the Gorkaland movement.

*VIEW OF NON GORKHAS*

The Gorkhaland movement impacts the other groups who are residing in the region. Most importantly, the groups belonging to the Lepcha community, Bengalis, Adivasi, and Rajbongshi have their perspective on the development of the course of movement. The Gorkhaland movement, which is based on ethnic lines has its implication on the social fabric of the region. The region itself is composed of different groups belonging to different ethnic lines. The other communities of region were vocal on the issue of the Gorkhaland movement. The presence of stakeholders of Gorkhaland and counter-Gorkhaland platforms have been significantly visible in the region. An attempt has been made to understand the different versions of these groups regarding the Gorkhaland movement.

The Lepchas, who are considered the indigenous population of Eastern Himalayas, mostly reside in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal and the North District of Sikkim. The indigenous community known as the Lepchas referred to their territory as "Mayel Lyang," a term that conveys the notion of a concealed paradise or a delightful region that served as a dwelling place. In 2001, the Lepcha population accounted for a mere 2% of the overall population residing in the hills.[64] D.C. Roy asserts that the demographic composition of Darjeeling and Sikkim indicated a significant decline in the proportion of 'sons of the soil', who are considered the original occupants of the area. Specifically, these individuals now constitute a mere 2 percent of the overall population in Darjeeling and a modest 7.80

---

[64] Wenner, "*Monopolising a Statehood Movement*."

percent in Sikkim.[65] In the context of a democratic system that placed significant emphasis on numerical strength, the Lepcha community has found itself marginalized by the dominant majority from the era of colonial governance. The demographic dominance of Tibetans over the Lepchas in Sikkim may be attributed to the Tibetan colonial authority, but the mixed population in Darjeeling, which has resulted in the outnumbering of Lepchas, can be attributed to the British colonial control. Consequently, the perspectives and opinions of the Lepchas were disregarded within the context of region's diverse ethnic makeup. There are four notable Lepcha groups, including the Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association (ILTA), the Indigenous Lepcha Forum (ILF), the Lepcha Rights Movements, and the Lepcha Youth Association. These organizations were dedicated to promoting the social, political, and cultural advancement of the Lepchas residing in the region of Darjeeling. Rather than actively participating in the Gorkhaland movement, the Lepchas advocated for the admission of Darjeeling area as part of their ancient Kingdom.

In response to the revived Gorkhaland movement, the Lepcha groups formed the 'Lepcha Rights Movement ', which campaigned for a nonterritorial council for the group. After the agreement of Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) in July 2011, the Lepchas also had been agitating for a separate development council and they have been organizing several rallies and dharnas in Kalimpong and Calcutta. In 18 August 2011, the LRM (Lepcha Rights Movement) submitted a memorandum to the Darjeeling district magistrate, demanding a separate Lepcha Development Council for the protection of their language, culture, and economic development.

On 2nd September 2011, the Chief Minister of West Bengal announced that a "Lepcha Development Council" would be established for the betterment, and advancement of the original Lepcha tribes in West Bengal. Finally, the Cabinet of Government of West Bengal cleared the proposal for a separate Lepcha Development

[65] Roy, D.C. (2010, 06). Melt Down of Lepcha Society: An Assessment. Retrieved 09.08.2022, from www.aachulay.blogpost.in: http://www.aachulay.blogpost.in/2010/06/melt-down-of-lepchasociety-assessment.html

Board (LDB) on 5th February 2013.[66] The Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee argued that the formation of this LDB was based on the GTA memorandum of agreement (MOA) but the leaders of GJM claimed that there was no provision for the formation of this Council or Board. The GJM leader Bimal Gurung threatened to launch a 'violent agitation' for Gorkhaland and had called a 12-hour shutdown on February 9, 2013, to protest against the West Bengal decision to set up an LDB.[67] The GJM leader Bimal Gurung argued that he was not against the development of any communities in the region but without the proper functioning of GTA, LDC would be a tool to divide people in the Darjeeling hills. Binay Tamang, the Assistant Secretary of GJM argued that this council would destroy the social and secular fabric of the hills and it would create confusion in the hills once again.[68]

On the other hand, the Lepcha Rights Movement and ILTA (Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association) launched an indefinite hunger strike in Kalimpong Town Hall and Tricon Park on 7th February 2013 in support of the formation of an LDB by the state government. Finally, the ILTA called back its hunger strike on 12th February 2013 after the assurance had been given by North Bengal Development Minister, Gautam Deb, who pointed out that LDB would be implemented without any delay under the 'backward classes welfare department'. On 12 February 2013, the state backward classes department issued a resolution for setting up of Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board for the development of the Lepchas under its administrative control and outside the purview of GTA.[69]

One of the major groups that had a significant presence in the region is the Adivasi group. The Gorkhaland demand includes some areas from Terai and Dooars where the Adivasi has a significant presence. There were several issues involved in the political battle of Gorkhas to include Dooars and Terai in the proposed Gorkhaland and on the other hand the communities of Dooars and Terai

[66] "The Lepcha Development Board – Another Step for Development of the Hills – All India Trinamool Congress," .), Retrieved on 7th Aug, 2023
[67] Kaushik Das & Anushuya Pal, The Lepchas in Darjeeling and the Demand for a Separate Development Board, p.9
[68] Bhutia, Ugen. (2013, 02 11). Create forums, not battlegrounds. Retrieved 07. 08, 2023.
[69] "Nod to Lepcha Board - Govt Passes Resolution Hours after Lepchas Call off Fast - Telegraph India," accessed November 24, 2023.

tried to save the region from Gorkha's dominion. The main Adivasi organization in the Dooars, the Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikash Parishad (ABAVP)[70] has a split opinion on the Gorkhaland demand. Initially, the organization opposed the idea of Gorkhaland and its demand for the inclusion of dooars and the Terai region into the proposed homeland, rather it demanded sixth schedule status for the belt. Yet, in October 2011, a faction led by tribal leader John Barla agreed to demand the "Gorkhaland Adivasi Territorial Administration" (GATA), an extended GTA, which would include the Dooars under its direction, John Barla[71] justified this joint demand concerning the need to deliver something (ie. work, employment.) to his people because otherwise, they would feel betrayed. After the government-appointed Sen Committee's recommendations to not include the Dooars under the GTA, however, the alliance between Barla and the GJM faded.

The other group, Bengali in the concerned region opposed the idea of Gorkhaland and viewed the region as an integral part of Bengal and it would remain so. The Rajbanshi of the plains has their own version of statehood. There is a territorial claim by the Rajbanshi people to create Kamatapur. The imagination of Kamatapur has a boundary clash with the idea of Gorkhaland.

The Gorkhaland movement, initiated in the colonial period, aimed for regional autonomy and separate administration from Bengal. The demand for Gorkhaland is seen as a response to their perceived exploitation and neglect by the government. The Gorkhaland movement, which had its roots in the colonial administration, had a profound impact on the Darjeeling district's social and economic profile. According to the findings of the survey, majority of respondents (69%) believe that the movement's impact on the social fabric of region had been fully actualized. This was discovered when the respondents who were concerned with the movements were asked to express their thoughts regarding the impact of the

---

[70] Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikash Parishad (ABAVP) can be traced back with a Delhi based NGO working for the social cultural uplift of the Adivasis in the country. It has significance presence on Adivasi inhabited dooar and terai region of Darjeeling district.

[71] John Barla is a Adivasi leader who was associated with Akhil Bharatiya Adivasi Vikash Parishad. He is inducted into the Minister of State for Minority Affairs under the government of West Bengal since 2021. He is also a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha from Alipurduars Constituency since 2019. Barla is affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

movement on the social fabric of region.  There is a view held by 23% of the whole population of the concerned movement that was partial. An additional 8% of people are of the opinion that the movement had either no impact at all or a very low impact on the social profile of region. According to the data, the movement has a considerable impact on the social life of the area, which is something that had already been broken down phase by phase in the chapter.

## SOCIO POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BODOLAND MOVEMENT

The plain tribes of Assam engaged in a struggle to assert their rights in order to safeguard and uphold their distinct cultural heritage. The conflict originated in the distant past and persists in the region to this day. Despite the efforts made by both state and union governments to address the concerns, a significant portion of the plain tribes remains skeptical and critical of these measures, questioning their feasibility.

The colonial administration in Northeastern India categorized tribal areas into hill and plain groups, aiming to protect their cultural and ethnic heritage.[72] The use of protective measures by colonial authority resulted in the isolation of plain tribes, leading to an increased awareness and consciousness of their distinct identity. The Plains tribes felt concerned regarding the potential erosion of their cultural, traditional, and ethnic distinctiveness as a consequence of assimilating into non-tribal communities. Plain tribal representatives wrote a statement to the Simon Commission in 1929 requesting protections for their cultural and ethnic identity. These included demanding a separate electorate.[73] The All Assam Plain Tribal League was founded in 1933. This party sought to successfully represent plain tribes' political interests in the wider political scene. The Government of India Act 1935 allocated five Provincial Assembly seats to handle simple tribal problems. All Assam Plains Tribal League (AAPTL) was a vocal political group before independence. However, it lost its significance as a consequence of the plain tribe leaders' integration into the Congress party. The entity underwent a transformation

---

[72] Mahanta, Nani Gopal (2013): "*Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland*", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XLVIII No 23
[73] Col, Ved Prakash "E*ncyclopedia of North East I*ndia."p.687.

only into a socio-economic organization in 1956.  The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam emerged in 1967 as major tribal organizations in Assam. Thus, plain tribal interests and goals reemerged. This case called for more autonomy. The PTCA wanted to create Udayanchal as a Union Territory for Indian plain tribes.

From 1974 to 1975, the Bodo tribe in Assam initiated a movement for the adoption of  Roman script as their language's writing system. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha, established in 1952, led the campaign. However, the government ignored their concerns and implemented coercive measures. Around 18 Bodo individuals sacrificed their lives for the Roman script adoption.[74] The central government mandated the use of Devanagari Script, raising awareness among plain tribes about their distinct identity. The demand for Udayanchal was not granted, attributed to political developments within the state and a lack of a unified plan among plain tribal leaders.

Since 1987, there has been an increasing prominence in the desire for separate statehood among the plain tribes, particularly the Bodo people. The campaign for establishment of a distinct political entity has been spearheaded by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), and continues to be actively pursued. During the period ranging from 1987 onwards, numerous changes had transpired that have shaped the current framework of statehood movement.

The All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) began the quest for autonomy fight in 1987. Upendra Nath Brahma, the former president of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), believes that political pressures were inextricably linked to the struggles faced by Assamese plain tribes. According to him, political forces may cause Assam tribes' injustice, exploitation, discrimination, and underdevelopment.[75] The ABSU maintained that a separate state was necessary to accomplish equality and justice. A state inside the Indian Union is the only way to fulfill their demands and

---

[74] Mwshahary Subungcha (2016): "*Bodoland Movement : A Study in Ethnicity and Political Development among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 TO 1993*", Guwahati, p.70.
[75] All Bodo Students Union (2017): "*History in Glimpse: All Bodo Students Union (1967-2017); A Journey of Struggle*", p.9

preserve their culture, heritage, language, and identity. The ABSU started the initiative in 1987 to create a breakaway state, namely Bodoland.[76] The ABSU's actions shaped Assam's social and political scene. A surge in protests, hunger strikes, and bandhs (general strikes) was caused by the growing strength of the movement for the creation of a distinct state. The All Bodo Students' Union organized these activities. The circumstances affected locals' life. Violence during Bandhs claimed several lives. The state used strict steps to preserve regional order. The conflict between law enforcement and bandh supporters made peace in the area harder. The economy and development in Bodo-dominated areas suffered significantly during the stated time span. A slow economy had contributed to the occurrence. Another view was that such actions hampered growth in these places.

The commencement of violent phase of the movement occurred when armed organisations such as the Bodo Security Force[77] (1986) and Bodo Volunteer Force emerged. The two Bodo communities held divergent perspectives with regard to the establishment of a separate nation. One group advocated for the attainment of sovereign status for their homeland, while another other advocated for the establishment of a distinct homeland inside the borders of India. Religion was also a subject of concern. The Bodo Security Force (BSF) exhibited a predominantly Christian demographic, whereas the Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF) was characterized by a Hindu predominance.[78] The majority of individuals belonging to the Bodo community adhere to the Hindu faith, however a significant portion of the population identifies as Christian. A novel competition has commenced between the aforementioned factions in order to establish their respective parties as the authentic representatives of the Bodo community. These organisations collaborated with other insurgency groups in the North Eastern region, hence exacerbating the complexity of the situation. The animosity between two factions of armed Bodos resulted in

---

[76] All Bodo Students Union (2017), op.cit p.9
[77] Bodo Security Force was renamed as National Democrtic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) in 1994. Presently NDFB has three factions. NDFB (progressive), NDFB (Ranjan Daimary faction) and NDFB (Songbijit faction), the former two is now in ceasefire, but NDFB (Songbijit) faction is still engaged in armed activities for sovereign Bodoland.
[78] Mahanta, Nani Gopal (2013): "Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol XLVIII No 23. p.51.

significant human casualties and inflicted severe damage upon the local economy and stability within the region.

Despite the existence of divergent perspectives on the nature of Bodoland within various armed factions, their involvement in the movement has diminished its democratic and peaceful character. The initial period spanning from February to August 1989 marked the onset of a violent phase in the Bodo agitation, characterised by a series of assassinations, kidnappings, and bomb assaults perpetrated by Bodo activists. This wave of violence resulted in the unfortunate loss of 350 lives.[79] The declining role of ABSU in the movement can be attributed to the diminishing prevalence of violent tendencies within the movement. Conversely, the movement exhibited a tendency towards adopting armed strategies in order to assert its authority. Recognising the intricate nature of the matter, the Union government has put out a proposition to engage in dialogue with nonviolent organisations associated with the movement, with the aim of resolving the situation and fostering tranquilly and concord in the region. In 1991, the Union government established a committee, chaired by Dr. Bhupinder Singh, to undertake a comprehensive study on the matters concerning the plain tribes of Assam as part of ongoing discussions.[80] The recommendation put out by the Committee was not accepted by the ABSU and the BPAC.

Subsequently, in the year 1993, negotiations culminated in the establishment of a mutually agreed-upon position, leading to the signing of Memorandum on Settlement on Bodo Autonomous Council. This significant agreement involved the participation of Union government, the Assam State administration, and representatives from ABSU-BPAC. The Memorandum included a provision for the establishment of Bodo Autonomous Council, with the authority to determine the limits of said council delegated to the state administration. The demarcation of boundaries for the BAC was not successfully carried out by the state government due to the opposition shown by ABSU against the notification issued by the Assam government on the BAC boundary. Furthermore, the increasing

---

[79] Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (Sage, 2005).p.264.
[80] Col, Ved Prakash "*Encyclopedia of North East India.*"p.697.

prevalence of armed factions and their actions within the context of the Bodoland movement has posed challenges in effectively implementing the provisions outlined in the Accord. In the end, it was determined that the Accord was unsuccessful.

Following the year 1993, the BAC region experienced a significant increase in incidents of violence. The prevailing state of law and order was severely disrupted. The Accord was unsuccessful in its efforts to establish and maintain peace and harmony within the region. Finally, the agreement was terminated. The non-Bodo members of the Bodoland Accord Committee (BAC) voiced criticism on the provision of Accord, citing its failure to adequately account for the demographic composition of the territory. The signatories of Accord expressed dissatisfaction with the actions taken by the state administration in relation to the Accord.[81] The BAC scenario was characterised by a prevalence of violent acts. The lack of effective policy measures to address the Bodoland concerns has resulted in more detriment to the region.

Conflict between Bodo and non-Bodo groups has complicated matters. October 1993 saw the Bodo-Muslim clash. The displacement affected 3,568 dwellings and 18,000 people.[82] The tragedy killed 19 people, mostly Muslims.[83] In July 1994, a tragedy in northern Barpeta claimed numerous lives. This event targeted Muslim Bengalis. Hundreds died in this atrocity.[84] Bodo-Santhal fighting occurred in Kokrajhar in 1996.[85] The conflict between the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) exacerbated the situation throughout this time. To create peace and resolve the Bodoland problem, the Union Government, state government, and BLT signed the 2003 agreement. However,

---

[81] The ABSU(2017),op.cit , p.12.
[82] Mahanta, "*Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland.*", p.52
[83] Ved Prakash, *Op.ci*t,p.701
[84] The incident was occurred in the relef camp Bashbari in the Barpeta district on 24th July, 1994 in which more than 100 immigrant Muslims were killed, hundreds of houses were torched and 70000were rendered homeless. (Barooah, R.N.: "The Ethnic Violence in Barpeta", the Sentinel, Saturday, 4th September, 1994.)
[85] In 1996, Bodo-Santhal clash was occurred in kokrajhar district. It was spread over 2,500 sq km, devasted 75 villages in both sides, rendered 200000 people homeless and left 100 dead. (Prakash, ved (2007),op.cit, p.705-706)

insufficient institutional management caused major bloodshed in the BTC area during ethnic disputes between 2008 and 2012.

*Impact on other Autonomy Movements led by other Tribes*

The Bodo movement made the other plains communities aware of their individuality and identity. The issue of Assamese Chauvinism was addressed by other Assam tribes. The Bodoland Movement also gave the momentum to other tribes of Assam to call for autonomy.

Under the auspices of Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC)[86], a movement was launched against state government and Assamese nationalism. The ASDC demanded the incorporation of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar, two autonomous hill districts of Assam, into an autonomous state within Assam. Although both hill districts were included in the sixth schedule of the constitution, they believed that the autonomy provided by the sixth schedule was insufficient. As a result, Centre consented to accommodate a portion of ASDC's Sixth Schedule request. On 1 April 1995, in the presence of Union Home Minister, the ASDC leader of the NC Hills and Karbi Anglong and the assam Chief minister signed a memorandum of understanding in Delhi.[87]

A Memorandum of Settlement was signed on March 10, 1995, establishing the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council to meet the demands of Rabha tribe of Assam.[88] It was followed by the formation of Tiwa and Mising Autonomous Councils on April 13 and June 14, 1995, respectively. Thengal cachari Autonomous Council, Deuri Autonomous Council, and Sonowal Autonomous Council were established in 2005 to accommodate the demands of other plain tribes of Assam,

---

[86] Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), originally Peoples Democratic Front, was set up as a mass organization of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation with the aim of statehood for the Karbi Anglong region in the India state of Assam.

[87] The Assam Tribune, dated April 2, 1995.

[88] "Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council - Wikipedia," accessed November 24, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabha_Hasong_Autonomous_Council.

such as the Deuri and Sonowal.[89] These six Autonomous Councils are not covered by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. So, they have less influence. Now, these councils are requesting sixth schedule status in order to gain greater autonomy.

*Issues of Non-Bodos*

Only 32% of BTAD's population is Bodo. Other BTAD groups include Bengali-speaking Muslims, adivasis (santhals), and Koch rajbonghi. Bengali hindus, nepalis, caste assamese, sarania kachari, and rabhas also make up BTAD populations.

Table 3: Ethnic composition of BTAD areas.[90]

| Ethnic groups | Percentage to total population |
|---|---|
| Bodo | 32 |
| Bengali Speaking Muslims | 19 |
| Adivasi communities including Santhals | 17 |
| Koch- Rajbngshi | 16 |
| Other communities including Bengali Hindus, Nepalies, Caste Assamese, Sarania Kachari, and Rabhas | 16 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: Kalita, Uttam (2016).

---

[89] "Autonomous Administrative Divisions of India," in Wikipedia, October 5, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Autonomous_administrative_divisions_of_India&oldid=1178695391.

[90] Uttam Kalita, "Viability of Bodo Movement for a separate State in Assam: A politico- Geographical Analysis." International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 6(9), September, 2016. p. 825-826.

In the meantime, the ABSU's demand to divide Assam in half to create a new state of Bodoland is supported by a negligible portion of the Bodo population. They believe that the proposed state was not just for Bodo-speakers, but for all plain communities of the region that once shared the same ancestry. However, the distinctions between plain tribe groups rendered this proposed land extremely unrealistic. Each group attempted to distinguish themselves through the lens of their own community. The levels of cultural development and the process of assimilation with Assamese culture also vary. Every plain tribe group has its own demand for autonomy, so a vision of Bodoland based on the principle of dividing Assam in half is unacceptable.

Even when the PTCA leaders withdrew their demand for Udayanchal, they maintained that the demand for a separate homeland on the premise of "Divide Assam 50-50" was impractical.[91] Because numerous tribal communities spread throughout Assam and each tribal community is distinct and possesses its own distinctive characteristics. They have their own preferences, so no one can impose the will of one community on another. Therefore, the plain tribal people's demand for a separate homeland was not considered a realistic demand. When the ABSU and Bodo leaders dominated the scenario of movement for a separate homeland, non-Bodos felt that Bodos' dominance would prevail over their wills and that they would be required to act in accordance with Bodo leaders.

In terms of population, Bodos are the largest community in the BTAD areas. However, the combined population of all non-Bodo groups, including Bengali-speaking Muslims, Koch Rajbangshi, Bengali Hindus, Nepalis, caste Assamese, Sarania Kachari, and Rabhas would be significantly higher than that of Bodos. Regarding the failure of the Accord (1993), the then Chief Minister of Assam, Hiteswar Saikia, criticised the union government for rushing to sign the Accord. He advised that the problem would be raised if they include non Bodos areas under

---

[91] Parag kr. Das , 'Prantik', 2nd year. 16-31 July, p. 24-25.

purview of BAC without seeking consent from non Bodos, as Bodo dominated areas in Lower Assam were not contiguous.[92]

Non-Bodos make up approximately 2/3 of the total population in BTAD areas. When there were discussions of the formation of BTC. The non- Bodo population, Sanmilito Janagostiyo Sangram Samiti (SJSS), opposed the proposal on the basis of the demographic reality of the proposed area.[93]

The 2003 Accord on BTC was also criticised by non-Bodos BTAD factions. Non-Bodo organisations opposed the establishment of BTC, because they believed that such an administrative structure legally acknowledged the Bodo hegemony. Conflicts between ethnic groups in 1993, 1994, and 1996 caused non-Bodos residing in the BTAD region to doubt their safety. In addition, they criticised the unequal treatment and excessive emphasis on Bodos in the BTC's power-sharing structure. Koch rajbongshi and Adivasi, the two most significant constituents of BTAD, have demanded inclusion in the ST category. However, the Bodos did not agree with these demands, because it would reduce their political space.[94] Non-Bodos criticised the current structure of BTC, specifically the composition of BTC council. They believe that the proportion of political representation does not correspond logically with the Bodo's actual demographic dominance. 30 seats are designated for STs on the BTC's council of 46. Five would be open to the general public, five would be reserved for non-tribal candidates, and six would be nominated by the governor from underrepresented communities.[95] The non-Bodos, particularly non-tribal factions of BTAD, argue that reserving 30 seats in the council for ST is unjust. Non-Bodos asserted that the selection of reserved seats advanced the Bodos' interests. The reserved constituencies to BTC are designed in such a manner where Bodos have minimum presence. Therefore, the provision of allocated seats enables Bodos to participate in the political landscape of these regions without opposition

---

[92] Kalyan Chaudhury, "The North-East Area of Darkness: Accord Unclear of Territories," Frontline 26 (1994): 30–31.pp 30-31.
[93] Banajit Hussain, "The Bodoland Violence and the Politics of Explanation." (2014)
[94] Mahanta, "Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland."
[95] "Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)," accessed November 24, 2023.

from non-tribal groups. The remaining open seats are in areas dominated by Bodos, so non-Bodos have a remote possibility of being elected.

The Koch rajbonghi community, which is one of the largest groups in BTAD and in the proposed statehood area of Bodoland, also poses a significant obstacle to the Bodos' demand for statehood. In the BTAD, Koch rajbonghi comprised approximately 16% of the population. In Assam, the Koch Rajbongshi community, sponsored by the All Koch Rajbongshi Students' Union (AKRSU), has also demanded the creation of a 'Kamatapur' state. Their demand for a separate Kamatapur state contains some proposed Bodoland territory. AKRSU demands that the proposed Kamatapur include 11 districts from Assam, including Lakhimpur, Sonitpurr, Darrang, Morigaon, Kamrup, Nalbari, Barpeta, Goalpara, Dhuburi, Bongaingaon, and Kokrajhar, as well as five districts from West Bengal.[96] Therefore, it is challenging to satisfy either of these two groups, which could result in community conflict in the region. When the Bodo Autonomous Council Bill was introduced in 1993, Koch Rajbanshi opposed the Bodo Accord. Their immediate demand was Scheduled Tribe status in order to obtain an equal share in the BAC's political sphere. Even after the provision of 30 reserved seats for ST was declared in the 2003 BTC Accord, the Koch Rajbanshi continued to demand ST status to assure equal representation in BTC. The Koch rajbongsi organization's agenda still includes the demand for ST for Koch Rajbanshi. Prior to the 2014 general election, the BJP pledged to include Koch Rajbanshi and six other Assam communities on the ST list. Currently, Koch Rajbonsi obtains the status of other backward class only in Assam, and the government has not yet fulfilled its pre-election promise.

The Adivashis, a prominent demographic within the BTAD region, is currently advocating for the acquisition of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. The Adivashis, namely the Munda, Oron, Santhal, and other tribal communities originating from Jharkhand, were sent to Assam as plantation labourers subsequent to the significant expansion of tea business in 1880. The Bodo-based organisations, like

---

[96] Uttam Kalita, "Viability of Bodo Movement for a separate State in Assam: A politico- Geographical Analysis." *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6(9), September, 2016. p. 825-826.

as the BPPF, have refuted the assertions made by the Adivasi, arguing that they did not qualify as the indigenous population of Assam. According to Nani Gopal Mahanta, the primary factor for the opposition to granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) designation to the adivasis is their population size. Approximately three million tea garden or ex-tea garden labourers would constitute around 50% of the total Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in the state, thus establishing themselves as the most influential ST community, surpassing the Bodos.

Illegal migration is another important issue in BTAD zones. Tribal and other Assamese peoples blamed them for population shift. Encroachment of tribal belts and blocks continues to cause unrest in Bodoland. One section claims Assam is flooded with Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants, while another denies it, but Muslim peasants with Bengali ancestry have been a problem in Bodo-dominated areas since pre-independence. Plain tribes opposed colonialism and the Sadullah Ministry's pro-immigration stance before independence.[97] Later, population increase across Assam supported the Bangladeshi immigrant surge. Bodos feared Muslim peasants or labourers with Bengali acsent would threaten their land and socio-political structure in Bodo-dominated areas.

The rise of non-bodo BTAD groups like All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) and Ona Bodo Surakha Samiti may indicate dissatisfaction of the socio-political order. It has increased Bodo-Non Bodo divide. The OBSS claims support from 27 organisations in Lower Assam, including the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU), the All Koch Rajbanshi Students' Union, and the All Assam Tea Tribe Students' Association

---

[97] The Committee for Protection of Land Rights of Indigenous People of Assam, led by former Chief Election Commissioner Hari Sankar Brahma, has claimed that ubated influx of illegal Bangladeshi tiols into Assam is not a new phenomenon but going on since the pre-independence era. According to the Committee, Sir Sayed Mohd Sadullah of the Muslim League who had formed five governments in between 1937 and 1946, launched a scheme designed as 'Grow More Food' campaign. On the pretext of this scheme, Sadullah brought in lakhs of Bengali Muslim peasants from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and settled them in Assam by giving liberal grants of land in forest reserves, VGRs and PGRs etc. Besides settling the Muslim peasants by the Sadullah government, vast stretches of char lands and government waste/khas land in lower Assam districts and tribal areas came under encroachment of Muslim peasants "B'deshis Have Swarmed into Assam like 'ants' - Sentinelassam," accessed November 24, 2023, https://www.sentinelassam.com/top-headlines/bdeshis-have-swarmed-into-assam-like-ants/.

(AATTSA), which have strong control over their communities' common peoples.[98] The increased influence of non-Bodos factions in BTAD elections and Assembly elections has led to new political occurrences. Non-Bodos concerns dominate Assam's sociopolitical scene.

BTAD's non-Bodos have different goals and objectives, which is a matter of concern. Although they used to fight injustice, the shared goal is gone. Political and social events quickly affected non-Bodo alliances. Alliance stability is uncertain. Bengali-speaking Muslims are the second-highest group in BTAD districts, but other groups don't want to allign with them because they were seen as immigrant Bangladeshis who changed the demography of Assam. The All Koch Rajbanshi Students' Union-led Kamatapur demand conflicts with other non-Bodo BTAD factions.

*Recent Political Development*

The Bodo People's Progressive Front (BPPF) party, under the leadership of Hungrama Mahilary, assumed control of the interim government after the Accord. The BPPF party experienced a split as a result of divergent perspectives on the future of Bodoland among its leaders. Subsequently, Hungrama assumed leadership of one particular division inside the BPPF and rebranded it as the Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF). The other portion retained the name of BPPF and carries on with their tasks. The BPF was in control of BTC from its establishment till 2020. The BPF administration faced several claims of encouraging nepotism and corruption in the BTC. However, the most severe criticism was directed at its inability to maintain peace and order in the BTAD districts. The occurrence of riots in 2007, once again in 2012, and again in 2014 raised doubts about the BTAD administration's capacity to administer the region. The opponent of BPF said that the presence of illegal weapons in BTAD regions was a pressing concern in BTAD, posing a significant risk to human security and regional peace. In addition, the BTAD administration under BPF faced significant allegations of corruption and nepotism.

---

[98] Seven sisters post, guwahati,,28 may 2012

The ABSU accused BPF leaders and members of disregarding the genuine problems of the Bodo people in order to advance their own political goals. The demand for a separate Bodoland was fueled by the establishment of the new state of Telangana. The ABSU once again brought attention to the government's disregard for the concerns and challenges faced by the Bodo people. ABSU condemned the political development in BTAD, as BPF partnered with BJP in the 2016 Assamese parliamentary election, claiming that this did not adequately reflect the concerns of the Bodo people. According to ABSU, the BPF's action would make it difficult to uphold the demands and concerns of the Bodo people's distinctiveness and secularity.

The ABSU reignited the statehood campaign in 2012 and has sustained it to the present day. The ABSU asserts that the preservation of the Bodos people's identity can only be guaranteed by the establishment of a separate state. They contended that the governing body of BTAD territories was incapable of ensuring peace and promoting the development of the region. In 2016, the ABSU publicly endorsed the United Peoples' Party Liberal (UPPL) in the assembly elections. The UPPL formed an alliance with the congress party in order to oppose the BJP-BPF partnership. Despite indirectly supporting the BJP in the 2014 general election, the ABSU said that once in power, the BJP disregarded the concerns of the Bodo people and Bodoland. In addition, the ABSU expressed disapproval of the BJP's choice to contest the 2016 Assembly election with the BPF. The ABSU consistently opposed the BPF in the political arena and criticized their failure to establish peace and promote development. The ABSU support was clearly aligned with the United Peoples' Party Liberal, which formed an alliance with the congress in 2016 Assembly elections.

The non-Bodo individuals have a significant influence in the political landscape of the BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Area Districts) regions. In the early stages of the post-accord period (2003), the Bodo Peoples' Front, under the leadership of Hagrama Mohilary, had significant influence over the political landscape of the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). Following ethnic

conflicts in 2008 and 2012, the concerns over non-Bodos gained prominence. The divergences among various Bodo communities have also contributed to the emergence of a new political phenomena in the BTAD. In the first and subsequent elections of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) had a significant influence across the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD). BPF formed an alliance with the Congress party in the aforementioned elections. The BPF endorsed the Congress party in the State Assembly elections in 2007 and 2011, as well as the national election in 2014. However, due to the rise of non-Bodos groups and the Bharatiya Janata Party's triumph in the 2014 general election, the BPF shifted their allegiance to the BJP. Naba Kumar Sarania, an independent candidate from the non-Bodo group, was elected as the Member of Parliament from the Kokrajhar seat in both 2014 and 2019. The candidate received unanimous support from Sanmilita Janagostiya Aikkyamancha (SJA), a collective alliance representing 20 non-Bodo ethnic and linguistic groupings.

In opposition to the BPF, the Peoples Coordination for Democratic Rights (PCDR), a new political party, originated from the Bodo people during the 2015 BTAD election. The PCDR has obtained endorsement from the ABSU, BPPF, and the pro-talk NDFB (Ranjan Daimary) faction. The PCDR secured nine seats at the election. In the 2015 BTAD election, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) competed for eight seats and successfully secured four seats in areas with a significant Muslim presence, among the non-Bodo groupings.[99] The united coalition of non-Bodo individuals under the SJA was only able to get four seats, as a result of the emergence of a new non-Bodo group called Obodo Suraksha Samiti (OSS) on the political landscape. The existence of two non-Bodo groups resulted in the fragmentation of non-Bodo votes during the 2015 BTAD election. The OSS was separated from SJA and secured 2 seats in the BTAD election, 2015.[100]

---

[99] Nazimuddin Siddique, "Bodoland Territorial Area District Elections 2015," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2015.
[100] Ibid

The BPF, which received just 20 seats in the BTAD election 2015 but survived with a slim majority, switched allegiances after seeing these results. The BPF allied with the BJP in the 2016 election for the state legislature. On the other side, the ABSU backed the United Peoples Party Liberal (UPPL) which was in partnership with Congress to oppose the BJP-BPF combination. The region's non-Bodo population was unable to reach a unified conclusion. Therefore, they all threw their weight behind competing political factions. There was no evidence of non-Bodos continuing their anti-BPF stance in the 2016 State Assembly elections. Because the Congress-UPPL coalition, which was formed in response to the BJP-BPF, had the backing from ABSU, and the ABSU's desire for a separate Bodoland is unpopular among non-Bodos. Thus, factors such as religion and ethnicity found a way to polarize and separate those who are not Bodos. In the 2016 elections for the state legislature, the BJP-BPF combination came out on top. The BPF was once again able to establish its dominance in the BTAD political scene. The BPF was able to gain all the 12 assembly seats of BTAD.

A trilateral political dialogue took place on April 25, 2017 in New Delhi, including the Government of India, the Government of Assam, and representatives from the Bodo community, including leaders from ABSU, NDFB (Progressive), and People's Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM), to discuss the Bodoland problem.[101]   Bodo delegates presented a memorandum to the union Home minister, urging for a prompt resolution to the longstanding demand for Bodoland statehood. The purpose of this demand was to improve governance in the area. The delegates were also calling for a democratic solution to the Bodoland problem, and they emphasized the need for it to be addressed immediately. Following that, a subsequent memorandum of settlement was signed called the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Accord, also known as the Bodo Peace Agreement. This agreement was signed on 27 January 2020 by the Government of India, Government of Assam, All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), various factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and the United Bodo People's Organization (UBPO). The main

---

[101] The talk was observed by Rajnath Singh, present Union Home Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal, present Chief Minister of Assam, Satyendra Garg, Joint Secretary for Home in North East

goals of the MoS are to expand the jurisdiction and authority of the Bodoland Territorial Council, resolve concerns regarding Bodos living outside the BTAD, safeguard and promote their social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities, establish legal protections for tribal land ownership, expedite the development of tribal communities, and facilitate the reintegration of NDFB factions. Furthermore, the current Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) would be redesignated as the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), including the same region as BTAD.[102]

In 2020 BTC election, a new political development was observed in the region. Out of 40 seat, 17 seats were secured by BPF, 12 by the UPPL and the remaining 9 seats were captured by BJP.[103] The BJP made alliance with the UPPL to govern the BTC. The earlier dominance of AIUDF and independent candidates in 2016 had diminished in the 2020 BTC election. Although the BPF is still a partner of National Democratic Alliance led by BJP party at the centre but the shifting of BJP to UPPL in post BTC election led to a significant change in political landscape of the region. The assembly election of 2021 further witnessed the alliance of UPPL with BJP. This compelled BPF to join hands with its former alliance partner Indian National Congress. The election mandate was in favor of BJP and UPPL alliance. The BJP formed the state government for the consecutive time. The UPPL (7) and BJP (2) bagged 9 out of 12 assembly seats of region.[104] The BPF was able to manage only three seats in the 2021 assembly elections of Assam.

*Views of Political Parties*: The political landscape of Assam was largely influenced by the Indian National Congress and Asom Gana Parishad. In the Assembly Election of 2016, the Bharatiya Janata Party took control of the state government. Different parties have a particular viewpoint about the matters concerning the Bodos and Bodoland.

---

[102] "The Third Bodo Accord: A New Deal," Frontline, February 20, 2020,

[103] "Assam BTC Election Result: BPF Wins 17 Seats, UPPL Bags 12, BJP Gets 9; CM Announces New Chief," India Today. accessed on 3.01.2021

[104] "Assam Election Results 2021 Highlights: BJP-Led NDA Inches Closer to Victory; State Cong Chief Resigns | Elections News - The Indian Express," accessed November 24, 2023, https://indianexpress.com/elections/assam-assembly-election-results-2021-live-updates-bjp-congress /.

During the resurgence of Bodoland movement after the Bodo Peace Accord in 2003, the Congress party held power in both the state and union government. The decision by the Union government to establish the state of Telangana has had some implications for the trajectory of Bodoland statehood movement. Tarun Gogoi, the former Chief Minister of Assam, expressed his stance against the partitioning of Assam in response to the growing call for the establishment of a separate Bodoland region. He proposed the idea of unifying all the groups in Assam into a single entity known as "Assamese."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) achieved electoral success in the Assam Legislative Assembly elections held in both 2016 and 2021. The current administration at the central level is the NDA government, which is headed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The platform of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the 2009 General Elections expressed support for movements advocating further autonomy or statehood. In its platform, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pledged to establish smaller states, while emphasizing their dedication to effective government and comprehensive progress.[105] Following the announcement of the formation of Telangana, there has been a renewed call for the establishment of Bodoland as a distinct state. However, Sarbananda Sonowal, in his capacity as a top political leader, has expressed opposition to this demand, emphasizing that his party did not support any further fragmentation of the state. Instead, he has pledged to focus on efforts to enhance the stature of Assam as a whole.[106] During the 2014 General Elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) included in its supplementary manifesto for the parliamentary elections a commitment to address the longstanding concerns of the Bodo community, as well as other tribal tribes, by implementing lasting solutions.[107] The National Democratic Alliance became victorious in the general election of 2014, but, the Union administration did not undertake any measures pertaining to the establishment of a separate Bodoland. The factions advocating for the establishment of Bodoland as a separate state have once again

[105] "BJP's New Proclivity for smaller States formulation", The Hindu, dated April 20, 2009.
[106] "Four statehood demands lead to large-scale violence in Assam", The Times of India, dated Aug 2,2013.
[107] www.bjp.org>press-releases/addendum-election-menifesto-2014.in

reinvigorated their efforts in opposition to the Union Government. In the Assam legislative Assembly Election of 2016, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed a coalition with the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and successfully obtained a majority in the Assam Assembly. A conference was conducted in New Delhi on April 25th, 2017, focusing on the concerns pertaining to the Bodo community.[108]

The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) said that the partitioning of Assam, in response to the Bodoland Movement and the subsequent establishment of Telangana, would not contribute to the economic advancement of the state and its populace.

The Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF) and United Peoples Party Liberal (UPPL) have a significant presence in regions mostly inhabited by the Bodo people. The BPF expressed its support for the establishment of a distinct Bodoland region and expressed the sentiment among the Bodo community of feeling deceived after the declaration of Telangana. Hence, the BPF initiated a demand for independent statehood, asserting that the resolution of the issues pertaining to the backwardness and development of the Bodo community could only be ensured by the establishment of a distinct state. The ABSU asserts that the governing authority in BTR had failed to prioritize the demand for a separate statehood, instead using the Bodoland demands for their own political advantage.

The chapter reveals the impact of Bodoland statehood movement in the socio-political foundation of Assam. The respondents were asked to submit their opinion on the impact of movement on the social profile of the region. The majority respondents (72%) stated that impact of the movement of the social profile of the region was realized in the full sense. The other 26 % respondents viewed the extent of movement's impact as partial. The desire for autonomy in Assam has been heightened by the escalating Separate Bodoland movement. The rise of non-Bodos movement in BTR is a direct result of the government's inability to effectively address the underlying structural problems in the region. The increasing prominence

---

[108] Triplite talk was held among Union government, State government and representatives of Bodos on 25th April, 2017. ("Tripartite talk held on Bodoland issue", The Assam Tribune, dated April 26, 2017.)

of non-Bodo concerns in the political landscape of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) has escalated tensions between the Bodo and non-Bodo communities. Despite the opposition of prominent regional organizations and parties, both political and non-political, to the idea of further dividing Assam, the Bodo-based political parties persist in seeking and advocating for the creation of a separate Bodoland. The future trajectory of the independent Bodoland movement is unpredictable. It could be seen that addressing the structural concerns of the Bodo community pertaining to identity, language, culture, and tradition in an appropriate manner would lead to peace and development in the area, therefore bringing the situation under control.

In summary, it is evident that both the Gorkhaland movement and the Bodoland movement had exerted a substantial influence on the societal dynamics within their respective geographical areas. According to the findings of the study, a significant proportion of participants hold the view that the effects of these movements on the social fabric of the respective regions had been comprehensively acknowledged. Nevertheless, a minority of individuals maintain the view that the influence was negligible or selective. The future trajectory of the both movements remains uncertain. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of addressing the underlying structural challenges faced by the Gorkha and Bodo community. By prioritizing the efforts towards fostering peace and promoting comprehensive development in the region, it is possible that the situation could be handled efficiently.

# CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter incorporates the summary of the study. Major findings of the study are also incorporated, besides a few concluding remarks in this chapter.

The study entitled ' Statehood Movements in India: A Comparative Study of Gorkhaland and Bodoland ' is aimed at finding the factors responsible for the demand for separate statehood in India. The study has analyzed the nature of statehood movements in India. The research work emphasizes two prominent statehood movements, namely Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The work covers the evolution and growth of both movements in their respective region and also tries to identify the issues behind the quest for such demand. The study analyses the response of state authorities, union, and state governments in dealing with the demand and its implication on the trajectory of both movements. A comparative analysis of both movements has been done regarding evolution, the reason for such demands, present status, major support base, nature, and present status. The study also makes an effort to explain both movements and their impact on the socio-political dimension of the region.

The study highlights that the adoption of the federal nature of Indian government reflected the importance of regional autonomy in the Indian context. The statehood movement has its base on the idea of regional autonomy so that the local issues could be dealt with effectively and efficiently. The greater participation of people in the democratic framework is also ensured through regional autonomy as it imbibes the concept of decentralization. However, it would be erroneous to just analyze the restructuring of statehood or the aspirations for statehood from the standpoint of autonomy or power sharing between the state and central authority. The process of redrawing states and explaining the claims for statehood in India has been significantly influenced by socio-cultural variety and several factors, including language, ethnicity, identity and underdevelopment.

The study also explains the nature of statehood movement in India. Since India's independence, the country has faced demands for separate states based on language, ethnicity, culture, and religion. These demands have evolved to focus on better governance and greater participation. The creation of new states is seen as a means to preserve and protect the unique identity based on these factors. The process of reorganizing states is not viewed as unconstitutional or anti-national, as the Constitution of India provides a well-established provision for it.

Statehood movements in India have been driven by the increasing interlink between institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics, as well as between social movements, electoral politics, and the state. The success of these movements is indicative of the growing interconnectedness between social movements, political parties, and the state. The correlation between the emergence of new political parties, the Congress Party's decline from the dominant party, and the progression of social movement activity in India since the 1970s appears to be mutually reinforcing. A lot of non-party movements have tended to tilt toward the electoral politics spectrum, which reflects the many ways that oppressed populations have mobilized.

The involvement of party politics and state in determining the course of statehood movements in India is evident, with the formation of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) and Bodoland Territorial council exemplifying this shift. Political parties and social movements coexist, with political parties aiming to gain government control through public office and social movements focusing on protest through street politics. Parties are seen as "Social Movement Organisations" in literature on social movements, providing the necessary resources for long-term success. Political parties can help social movement organizations by increasing their ideological credibility among the masses. However, non-party political groups may block party politicians from using public areas for political purposes. The identities of movement and the political groups supporting may diverge, as seen in the case of Assam movement. Overall, political parties and social movements coexist in various contexts. The nature of statehood movements in India is influenced by the interplay

between party politics and state, highlighting the importance of regional autonomy and the need for a more inclusive political system.

In multi-cultural countries like India, nationalism is conceived differently at the macro-level, as an anti-colonial political consciousness striving to liberate the country from foreign rule and establish a sovereign state, and at the regional level, as a form of cultural consciousness seeking to protect distinct cultural communities in their traditional homelands. Post-independence India has made various arrangements to reorganize states on linguistic lines, redrawing state boundaries based on ethnicity, and creating new states like Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Telangana on the basis of underdevelopment. However, the increasing demand for statehood in modern India is not only limited to cultural or symbolic dimension, in addition to this the material aspect like lack of proper administration, good governance, economic and infrastructure growth has contributed in moulding the demand of separate statehood.

Factors contributing to the demand for statehood in India include the colonial period's focus on administrative and business convenience, the post-colonial period's efforts to create provinces or states in an Indian way, and the ongoing struggle for cultural nationalism. Those who view statehood as an option to ensure and protect their cultural nationalist identity continue their demands for statehood. The demand for statehood in India has been driven by a lack of democratic and decentralized governance, the concentration of authority and resources at both central and state levels, and the linguistic minority's fear of losing their identity due to the creation of a new state. The government's attitude towards regional development and its failure to promote balanced growth has also contributed to the movement.

The traditional view of the centre about creating new states is that it would lead to parochial and anti-national tendencies, weaken the central government's position, and threaten political nationalism. However, supporters argue that reorganizing states on cultural, ethnic, and language grounds would promote democracy, ensure greater participation of marginalized sections of the population, and ensure better governance. Several prominent statehood movements in India have

not yet found their desired destiny, such as Harit Pradesh, Purvanchal, Bundelkhand, Vindhya Pradesh, Bodoland, Saurashtra, Gorkhaland, Kongu Nadu, Vidarbha, and Konkan.

Further the study has focused on the two important statehood movements, namely Gorkhaland and Bodoland. It highlights the historical background of both movements. The reason for both the movements has analysed to identify their quest for such demands.

For instance, the Gorkhas' claim to Gorkhaland, a separate state, has been influenced by historical and linguistic issues, including identity crises, economic deprivation, unjust treatment, and state responses. The movement was initially opposed to the colonial administration's linking of the territory with Bengal, which was later argued to be coincidental due to British rule. The Nepali language, which originated in Darjeeling during the colonial period, has significantly impacted the Gorkhas' identity development. The Lepcha and Bhutia communities, traditionally considered indigenous, have embraced the Nepali language, providing them with a unique linguistic identity and create a identity division between hill people and plain people.. However, the post-independence linguistic restructuring of states and the assimilation of Darjeeling into West Bengal have raised concerns about linguistic identity insecurity. Advocates argue that the preservation of their linguistic identity could only be effectively ensured through Gorkhaland's formation.

The Gorkhas' identity dilemma is a significant factor in the motivations for the autonomy movement. The hill population of the proposed land asserts a distinct identity based on the Nepalese language and culture. Post-independence India, national leader statements and objections to the Nepali language's inclusion in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution have caused psychological setbacks for the region's inhabitants. The Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty made no explicit distinction between citizens of Nepal and India of Nepali descent, leading to an error among the Indian populace regarding the citizenship of Indian Nepalis in Nepal. This misunderstanding has resulted in the conception of a "Double Homeland," causing an identity crisis.

The educated elite and middle class from the Gorkha community play a pivotal role in the identity assertion and demand for separate statehood. The retired Nepali army and police officers, supported by the Nepali landed aristocrats and rich traders, have articulated the ethnic exclusiveness of Gorkhas and demand for autonomy. The Gorkhas have a negative view of the Bengal Government, believing it undervalues their ethnic and regional cause and ignores the progress made in the region.

In context of Bodoland, the Bodos, the indigenous inhabitants of Assam, were among the first groups to settle in the Brahmaputra Valley. Over time, they became a marginalized minority in the region, feeling abandoned by the colonial government. Bodos are considered as Scheduled Tribes (plains) in post-independence. Despite India's independence, the plain tribes continued to be treated with disregard, and the desire for ethnic assertion among them led to the creation of a new force of plain tribes in opposition to their continued deprivation. Separate statehood is now a central demand of the movement, solidifying the group's identity and goals.

The Bordoloi Committee, established to address Assam's tribal peoples, failed to address the concerns of the plain tribes of Assam. The committee considered the plain tribes a minority and excluded them from administrative mechanisms. The Bodos believed that assimilation with non-tribal groups would eradicate their distinctiveness and culture, leading to the Bodos asserting their distinct identity.

The Bodos became more organized in opposition to the imposition of Assamese hegemony. The government's insufficient policy to address tribal issues led to the Bodos arose against the government's failure to adopt adequate measures to protect and promote their distinctive culture. The rise of the Bodo middle class has played a significant role in the quest for a separate homeland. Bodo middle class has been instrumental in expressing the aspirations of Bodos in various time periods, influencing the development of the Bodo people's unique ethno-linguistic identity. They have advocated for territorial autonomy and a unique national identity, focusing on the desire for a separate Bodoland.

Meanwhile, it is observed that the response of Union and State governments and their role in addressing the demands of Gorkhaland and Bodoland have profoundly influenced the course of both movements. The Darjeeling region boasts a historically significant background characterized by a prolonged period of colonial rule, during which it experienced a diverse range of governmental administrative systems. Having adjusted to these various forms of governance, the Gorkhas in the region maintain a tangled relationship with the Indian state. Following postcolonial India's acceptance of the linguistic concept for state reorganization, the Gorkhaland movement, which sought to establish a distinct administrative structure for the region, gained momentum. Despite its establishment in 1976, the Darjeeling Hill Development Council failed to live up to the aspirations of people because of an imbalance in democratic representation.

The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) emerged as a prominent force in instigating the Gorkhaland movement in 1986, which subsequently resulted in a series of intense and tumultuous demonstrations. Both the state and the federal administrations have been accused of having political agendas, leading to different approaches in their handling of the Gorkha movement. In 1988, the government established the Darjeeling Hill Development Council as its response. Until 2008, Subhash Ghising presided over the council and was accused of corruption and suppressing critics. In the year 2007, the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, assumed control of the Gorkhaland movement. Subsequently, they entered into an agreement known as the GTA Accord with the central and state governments. This accord delineated the specific goals and responsibilities of the administrative framework currently in place within the Darjeeling hills region.

The lasting influence of the strategies employed by the colonial administration in Assam to govern indigenous communities is evident in the region, persisting beyond the attainment of independence. The policies of colonial administration were designed to address the needs and concerns of various tribal communities residing in the region. Notably, these policies exhibited a focus on

safeguarding and promoting the welfare of hill tribes, while comparatively overlooking the interests and well-being of plain tribes. With implementation of these policies engendered a profound sense of cultural and ethnic identity within the plain tribes, thereby catalyzing a heightened level of consciousness and subsequent advocacy for adequate representation. The Bordoloi Subcommittee, in its comprehensive analysis, put forth a recommendation advocating for the classification of the plain tribes of Assam as a minority group in post-colonial period.

The post-colonial era in India witnessed the emergence of a distinct movement known as Bodoland, initiated by the Bodo community, which is recognized as the largest plain tribe in the country. This movement was born out of a sense of dissatisfaction with the government's efforts in addressing the concerns of plain tribals in general and Bodos in particular. The Bodo people sought to establish a separate statehood for themselves, aiming to address their unique socio-political and cultural aspirations. In the light of challenges posed by Bodoland movement, various governmental entities, both at the state and Union levels, have implemented diverse measures in order to address these issues. While the current level of movement may be considered low, it is noteworthy that the demand for statehood persisted within the region.

The government's efforts to address the issues of inequity in the Bodoland and Gorkhaland movements have been ineffective. The existing policies have failed to protect the linguistic, cultural, and identity attributes of these communities. The government's lack of a well-defined strategic approach has hindered progress in addressing the structural issues associated with these movements. This is evident through the shortcomings of various agreements and the persistent presence of the movements despite peace accords.

Further, the study explores the comparison between Gorkhaland and Bodoland from different perspective. The evolution, reason of continuity of movements, the present status, nature and the present establishment has been analysed to find out the similarities and the dissimilarities of both movements. The

study has shown there were similarities in many areas but the impact of variables is different each movement.

And the study also underlines the socio-political implications of both movements in their respective region. The study divides the movements into different phases to analyse their implications on social and political dimension of the region. The study also analysis the present political developments in both regions as well as the different views of political parties and the minorites (Non-Gorkha/ Non-Bodo) of respective region.

The Gorkhaland movement is categorised into four stages- colonial period, 1947-1986 as second stage, 1986-1007 as third stage and 2007 onwards as fourth stage. The formation of the All India Gorkha League in 1944 had a significant impact on the struggle for the rights of the hill people in Darjeeling. It led to the fragmentation of the united fight as the AIGL excluded the Lepcha and Bhutia communities. The language movement, the competitive party system in the region, with dominance from the AIGL but presence of communist and Congress parties, was also notable. The emergence of GNLF and the revival of demand for a separate homeland were major political events during subsequent period. However, there remained uncertainty about the political destiny of Gorkhas and a desire for regional autonomy. The subsequent phases of movement, led by the GNLF and GJM, brought further changes and turbulence to the region's social and political landscape. The formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and the signing of the GTA Accord were significant developments. The revival of Gorkhaland movement in 2017 further shifted the distribution of power within the region's political landscape.

The Bodoland movement has been subjected to analysis across various phases. The present analysis aims to critically examine the historical periods of the colonial era, the initial phase of independence, the period from 1987 to the BAC (1993) Accord, the subsequent period from the BAC Accord to the BTC Accord (2003), and the post-BTC Accord era. The primary objective of this evaluation is to explore the social and political implications of Bodoland movement. Beginning with colonial practices that instilled in plain tribe members a sense of consciousness and

understanding of their ethnic identity, the movement was put forward by the Bordoloi committee's proposal. The language movement advocating for the use of the Roman script, coupled with the perceived lack of attention from both the state and union government in addressing the concerns of the Bodo community, contributed to the underlying context surrounding the demand for statehood. Since the year 1987, emergence of the ABSU (All Bodo Students' Union) led by Upendra Nath Brahma has been instrumental in orchestrating widespread mobilization efforts in support of the Bodoland movement, ultimately resulting in a surge of momentum towards the establishment of a separate statehood. The various activities undertaken in support of the movement resulted in a disruption of the regular daily routines.

The subsequent signing of the BAC accord in 1993 and its subsequent failure to adequately address the issue pertaining to the Bodos ultimately resulted in its breakdown. The phenomenon of armed organizations that emerged during the 1990s underwent a notable shift towards a more violent trajectory. The signing of BTC accord in 2003 proved instrumental in the restoration of peace within the region. However, persistence of ethnic conflict highlights the need for a more comprehensive analysis of the structural issues prevalent in the area. The signing of the BTR peace accord in 2020 instilled a sense of optimism among the local populace, as it presented an opportunity for their deeply-rooted grievances to be potentially addressed within the framework of the new agreement.

The Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements in India have experienced violent periods. The Gorkhaland movement, led by Subhash Ghising and the GNLF, experienced a critical phase in 1986, marked by protests against the state and union government. The conflict between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Gorkha National Liberation Front led to violence and retaliatory killings. Again in 2007, the wake of Gorkhaland movement under the leadership of GJM had gone through series of Bandha, strike and agitation which disturbed the peace paradigm of the region as well as impact on the development aspect of the area. Revival of the movement in 2017, also marked with widespread arson and vandalism, massive clashes and multiple causalities in the concerned region.

In the same way, the Bodoland movement, led by ABSU gained prominence in 1987, leading to protests, hunger strikes, and Bandhs. The state administration used harsh measures to maintain control over law and order, and confrontations between law enforcement personnel and those supporting the bandh exacerbated the challenges. The most violent phase of movement began when armed organizations like the Bodo Security Force (1986) and Bodo Volunteer Force emerged. The two Bodo communities had divergent views on establishing a distinct homeland, leading to a rivalry between the two factions. This animosity resulted in significant human casualties and severe damage to the local economy and stability. The 2003 agreement aimed to establish peace and resolve the Bodoland problem, but inadequate handling of structural problems led to significant bloodshed in the BTAD region between 2008 and 2012. A new agreement was established in 2020 to promote peace and stability in the region.

The violence during course of both movements impacted on social and economic aspects of the region in negative way. In the context of peace and development, it is imperative for the government to assume a pivotal role in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at safeguarding the rights of all communities within the relevant region. The research findings indicate that the geographical area under investigation exhibited a diverse demographic makeup, characterized by the presence of multiple ethnic groups. The policies can be formulated with a focus on inclusivity, ensuring that all members of the population in the region, regardless of their ethnic background, were adequately represented within the political framework of region. In order to achieve the desired outcome of promoting peace and development, it is imperative for the government to consider implementing measures aimed at addressing the underlying structural challenges faced by the Gorkha and Bodo communities.

Furthermore, it is imperative for state authorities to actively promote the development of democratic institutions within regions that were seeking statehood. This entails placing significant emphasis on the pivotal role of civil societies and fostering effective people-to-people communication. Such measures are crucial in

order to mitigate the risk of further deterioration in law and order within the aforementioned region. The findings of this study indicate a strong correlation between the concepts of democratization and decentralization, and their interconnectedness with peace and development. In order to fortify the democratic culture of the region and ensure its sustained peace and growth, it is imperative for the government machinery and influential entities to implement efficacious measures. In order to make informed decisions regarding the rearranging of region, it is imperative to engage in meaningful consultations with the general population. The implementation of a consultative or decentralized approach holds promise for addressing the underlying structural challenges faced by the affected groups and fostering enduring peace within the region.

**Findings of the Study**

I. A critical analysis of the statehood movement and its increasing alignment with the political party and state signifies a departure from earlier conceptualizations of social movements. Political parties are often seen as helpful to social movement organisations because they provide the movement more organisational power. The propensity of political parties to align themselves with specific movements can be attributed to the perceived enhancement of their ideological legitimacy in the eyes of the general public.

II. The study reflected that the fight for statehood was also seen through the lens of class perspective. The push for autonomy or a separate state was seen as a kind of elite manipulation. This approach was based around an instrumentalist conception of ethnic identity. When examined from this viewpoint, the social movement's class dynamics become clearer. The statehood movements in India and the results of such movements showed that the misery of the ordinary people was not addressed. Despite several government attempts to appease the public's desire for autonomy, the majority's complaints have not changed. In some ways, the elite nature of

statehood movements is reflected in the government's top-down approach to dealing with them.

III. The research suggests that ethnic identity, economic distress, and regional autonomy are the key factors driving both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. However, the degree of influence of these factors varies between the two movements, with regional autonomy being more prominent in the Gorkhaland movement and ethnic identity being more prominent in the Bodoland movement. Overall, a combination of these factors contributes to the expansion and sustainability of both movements.

IV. The research findings suggest that leadership, a sense of alienation, and inadequate policies and programmes are significant factors influencing the trajectory of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements. Leadership was identified as a one of major contributor to the development of both movements, while alienation and insufficient policies and programmes also played a significant role. Additionally, a substantial portion of the population believes that all of these factors were equally accountable for the expansion and persistence of such movements. The Gorkhaland movement has been sustained by leaders who see it as a means to gain political power in the region. The elite class has significantly influenced the movement's trajectory. The Bodoland movement's persistence is attributed to state authorities' failure to implement effective policies.

V. The study indicates that the both movements mostly garnered a backing from political factions, student organizations, and community-based organizations. In the context of Gorkhaland movement, it has been revealed that the prime base of movement is political party. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement has significant backing among student organizations, as shown by participants indicating a favourable inclination towards them. In addition, political parties, civil society, and insurgent groups all played a role in bolstering the support for the Bodoland movement.

VI.    In light of the available evidence, it can be inferred that the Gorkhaland movement exhibited a relatively higher degree of nonviolent tendencies when compared with the Bodoland movement. The prevailing perception among the respondents indicates that the Gorkhaland movement was predominantly characterized by peaceful activities in comparison to the Bodoland movement. However, it is noteworthy that a considerable segment of respondents also acknowledged the presence of both peaceful and violent components within the movement. In contrast, the Bodoland movement is commonly perceived as exhibiting a greater propensity for violence, as indicated by a larger proportion of respondents attributing violent tendencies to it. According to the data collected, it is evident that a relatively low proportion of participants perceived the Bodoland movement to be characterized by peaceful means.

VII.   The Gorkhaland movement has a mixed perception of success, with a significant portion of the population believing that the success rate was average and a minority expressing skepticism. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement was viewed more favorably, with a majority of individuals perceiving it to have an partial level of success and a significant portion believing it to be significantly high.

VIII.  The study revealed that in comparison to the Gorkhaland movement, the Bodoland movement has a positive response from the population to the government's attitudes towards the movement. The critical analysis reveals that the positive response that gathered in connection with the Bodoland movement is highly based on the people's hope about the recently concluded peace accord. The study found that any treaty or accord gives a positive outlook among the population about the government's response regarding the movements.

IX.    The findings of the research indicated that the political parties located in the respective regions of Gorkhaland and Bodoland had contributed positively and supportively to the resolution of the concerns raised by these movements. In the Gorkhaland area, the AIGL, GNLF, GJM, Hamro Party, and Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantarik Morcha were among the groups

who spoke out against the injustices experienced by the Nepali and Gorkha communities. These parties are arranged according to ethnicity, and there was rivalry among them to portray their groups as legitimate spokespersons for Gorkha problems. Within the framework of Bodoland, it was noted that regional political parties, including the BPF and UPPL, were more vocal in their expressions of concern regarding the Bodoland movement's issues, in contrast to the state and national parties of the area.

X.   The Gorkhaland movement and the Bodoland statehood movement have had significant impacts on the social fabric of their respective regions. The majority of respondents in both movements believe that the impact on the social profile of the region has been fully realized.

XI.  The analysis showed that the Statehood Movements had a significant influence on the relevant areas' development paradigms. Regarding how the movements affected the previously described paradigm, there were varying interpretations. Many believed that one of the main reasons for statehood movement was the region's low level and uneven development, as they believed that separate statehood might bring about the necessary development in the area. However, a different perspective held that the movements prevented correct growth process from unfolding. People perceive things differently, yet both movements' majority responses indicated that statehood movements had a large influence on the development of the concerned area.

XII. The current study examined individuals' responses regarding their preferences for consideration in the creation of new states in India. The participants in this study expressed their preference for taking into account administrative and political, social and ethnic, economic and linguistic factors when discussing the formation of new states in India. The variability of aspects is observed to differ across various movements. In the Gorkhaland region, it was observed that a significant proportion of the local population expressed a preference for administrative and political consideration as the foundation for the establishment of new states. The historical context of the movement and the current demand for

224

autonomy are evident in their inclination to prioritize administrative convenience as the primary foundation for the establishment of new states. In the Bodoland area, however, it was believed that social and ethnic consideration was suitable. The preservation and protection of ethnic identity might be achieved through the establishment of a separate statehood. The prevailing injustice surrounding the identity issue had prompted the Bodoland region to respond with a focus on ethnic considerations.

XIII. Furthermore, both movements exhibited a consensus and expressed a prevailing sentiment that granting extended autonomy to the region would facilitate enhanced engagement of the general populace within the democratic structure of the nation. This perspective highlights the belief that granting regional autonomy might encourage the advancement of democratization, decentralization, and the promotion of peace and development in the region.

To sum up, the analysis of statehood movements in India illuminates the complex linkages present in these movements as well as the wide range of variables that fueled the desire for separate statehood. Issues about the erosion of cultural identity, the lack of democratic governance, the concentration of power and wealth, and the government's poor handling of citizen issues have become salient elements in this situation. Aside from this, historical, linguistic, and cultural elements have been the main drivers behind the creation and continuing growth of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. The few violent incidents that have occurred throughout these movements have further shaped their course and the effects they have had on the impacted areas. The government might take the initiative and actively encourage inclusiveness, democratic institutions, and meaningful discussions in order to successfully solve the underlying issues and develop peace in the area.

*QUESTIONNAIRE*

# STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND.

Name-

Gender-

Age-

Occupation-

Contact no-

1. What is the prime reason for the demand of statehood?
   a)     Ethnic identity
   b)     Economic deprivation
   c)     Regional autonomy.
   d)     All of the above.

2. What is the factor responsible for the continuity of movement in the region?
   a) Leadership
   b) Feeling of alienation.
   c) Inadequate policies and programmes.
   d) All of the above.

3. Who is the main support base of the movement?
   a) Students' organization
   b) Political Parties
   c) Civil societies
   d) Others

4. What is the participation level of the people in the movement?

   a) Very high

   b) High

   c) Average

   d) Low

5. To what extent the movement is violent?

   a) Violent

   b) Partially violent

   c) Peaceful

   d) Mix of both

6. What is the present status of the statehood movement in the region?

   a) Active

   b) Partially active

   c) Inactive

   d) Status quo

7. What is the response of union government towards the movement?

   a) Accommodative

   b) Neutral

   c) Indifferent

   d) Repressive

8. What is the response of state government towards the statehood movement?

   a) Accommodative

   b) Neutral

   c) Indifferent

   d) Repressive

9. To what extent people are satisfied with the present administrative set up of the region?

   a) Fully

   b) Partially

   c) Average

   d) Low

10. Which national political party is positive with the demands of Gorkhaland movement?

    a. Indian National Congress

    b. BJP

    c. TMC

    d. CPI (M)

11. Which national political party is negative with the demands of Gorkhaland movement?

    a. Indian National Congress

    b. BJP

    c. TMC

    d. CPI (M)

12. Which political party is positive with the demands of Bodoland movement?

    a. Indian National Congress

    b. BJP

    c. AGP

    d. Others

13. Which political party is negative with the demands of Bodoland movement?

    a. Indian National Congress

    b. BJP

    c. AGP

    d. Others

14. What is the attitude of regional political parties with regard to the movement?

    e) Positive

    f) Supportive

    g) Negative

    h) Indifferent

15. To what extent the movement influences the voting behavior.

a) Fully

b) Partially

c) Neutral

d) Low

16. How does statehood movement impact on the economic development of the region?

a) Fully

b) Partially

c) Neutral

d) Low

17. How does statehood movement impact on the social fabric of the region?

a)      Fully

b)      Partially

c)      Neutral

d)      Low

18. How does the present administrative set up accommodate different communities of the region within the system?

a) Satisfactory

b) Partial satisfactory

c) Neutral

d) Not satisfactory

19. What is the success rate of the movement?

a) Very High

b) High

c) Average

d) Low

20. What is the prospect of the success of the movement in the region?

a)   Very High

b)   High

c)   Average

d)   Low

21. To what extent the small states can be successful to strengthen the democratic culture of the country.

   a) Very high

   b) High

   c) Average

   d) Low

22. What is appropriate consideration for the creation of new states in India at present context?

   a) Administrative and political consideration

   b) Social and ethnic consideration

   c) Economic consideration

   d) Linguistic consideration

23. To what degree the idea of regional autonomy can be supportive to the process of democratization and decentralization.

   a) Very high

   b) High

   c) Average

   d) Low

24. To what extent the notion of regional autonomy is able to ensure peace and development in the region.

   a) Very high

   b) High

   c) Average

   d) Low

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BOOKS & JOURNALS

Anderson, Benedict. "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism." In *The New Social Theory Reader*, 282–88. Routledge, 2020.

Anderson, James Drummond. *A Collection of Kachári Folk-Tales and Rhymes*. Assam secretariat printing Office, 1895.

Bagchi, Romit. *Gorkhaland: Crisis of Statehood*. Sage Publications India, 2012.

Bahadur, Subba Tanka. "Ethnicity, State, and Development: A Case Study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling." New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications in association with Vikas Publications House, 1992.

Banerjee, Basabi Khan, and Georg Stöber. "Gorkhaland Movement in India: A Case of Indigeneity and/or a Struggle over Space?" *1 Geographien*, 2013, 5.

Baruah, Apurba K. "Communities and Democracy: A Northeast Indian Perspective." *North East India Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 13–30.

Baruah, Sanjib. "Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India," 2007.

———. *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

Basu, Amrita. "The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism." *The Success of India's Democracy* 163 (2001): 89.

Basumatary, Nicodim, and Bhagirathi Panda. "Assessing Socio-Economic Development in Bodoland Territorial Area District of Assam in India." *International Journal of Social Economics* 47, no. 12 (2020): 1541–59.

Bebbington, Anthony. "Poverty Reduction and Social Movements: A Framework with Cases." *Background Paper for UNRISD Report on Combating Poverty and Inequality*, 2009.

Besky, Sarah. "The Land in Gorkhaland: On the Edges of Belonging in Darjeeling, India." *Environmental Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2017): 18–39.

Bhagat, Gayatri. "Regionalism in India: A Comparative Study of Gorkhaland and Telengana Movements." PhD Thesis, University of North Bengal, 2015.

Brahma, Kameswar. "A Study of Socio-Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Ceremonies of the Bodos: With Special Reference to the Bodos of Kokrajhar District." *(No Title)*, 1992.

Brass, Paul R. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 1991.

Brown, David. "The State of Ethnicity and the Ethnicity of the State: Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 12, no. 1 (January 1989): 47–62.

Chadha, Vivek. *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis*. Sage, 2005.

Chai, Sun-Ki. "Predicting Ethnic Boundaries." *European Sociological Review* 21, no. 4 (2005): 375–91.

Chakrabarty, Subhas Ranjan. "Silence under Freedom: The Strange Story of Democracy in the Darjeeling Hills." *The Politics of Autonomy. Indian Experiences. New Delhi*, 2005, 173–95.

Chalmers, Rhoderick. "Education, Institutions and Elites Building and Bounding Nepali Public Life in Early Twentieth Century India." *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives*, 2009, 109–47.

Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar. "The Place of Assam in the History and Civilization of India." *Gauhati University*, 1970, 45ff.

Chaudhuri, Sucheta Sen. "The Bodo Movement and Bodo Women—A Case Study of Organizing Women within an Ethnic Movement." *Tribal Studies in North East India*, 2002, 63.

Chaudhury, Kalyan. "The North-East Area of Darkness: Accord Unclear of Territories." *Frontline* 26 (1994): 30–31.

Chettri, Saurav. "Communist Party in Darjeeling and the Gorkhaland Movement (1943-2011)," 2017.

Col, Ved Prakash. "Encyclopedia of North East India." Atlantic Publishers and Distributors New Delhi, India, 2007.

Kaviraj, Sudipta "Crisis of the Nation-State in India", 1994.

Das, Jogendra K. "The Bodoland Movement in Local and National Perspectives." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 4 (1994): 417–26.

Das, Sankar. "Bodoland Statehood Movement: A Study on The Role of All Bodo Students' Union (Absu)," 2017.

Dasgupta, Atis. "Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling." *Social Scientist*, 1999, 47–68.

Datta, Prabhat. "The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (1991): 225–41.

Dutta, Anwesha. "The Politics of Complexity in Bodoland: The Interplay of Contentious Politics, the Production of Collective Identities and Elections in Assam." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 478–93.

Edwards, John. "Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Some Central Concepts." In *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, 5–25. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2012.

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity." *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 845–77.

Gait, Edward. *A History of Assam*. Thacker, Spink & Company, 1906.

Ganguly, Rajat. "Poverty, Malgovernance and Ethnopolitical Mobilization: Gorkha Nationalism and the Gorkhaland Agitation in India." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 11, no. 4 (December 2005): 467–502.

George, Sudhir Jacob. "The Bodo Movement in Assam: Unrest to Accord." *Asian Survey* 34, no. 10 (1994): 878–92.

Ghimirey, Bhupen. "The Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling: Exploring the Quest for a Separate State." *International Journal of New Media Studies: International Peer Reviewed Scholarly Indexed Journal* 6, no. 1 (2019): 5–11.

Ghosh, Anjan. "Gorkhaland Redux." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2009, 10–13.

Gohain, Hiren. "Bodo Agitation and Ideological Blinkers." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1989, 2271–72.

Gupta, Susmita Sen. "Transformation and Consolidation of Bodo Identity: An Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class." *The Standard International Journals*, 2014.

Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Updated Edition with a New Preface*. Univ of California Press, 2000.

Hutchinson, John. "Ethnicity and Modern Nations." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 4 (January 2000): 651–69.

Karlsson, Bengt T., and Tanka Bahadur Subba. *Indigeneity in India*. Routledge, 2013.

Kaviraj, Sudipta "Crisis of the Nation-State in India", 1994

Khawas, Vimal. "The Project of Gorkhaland." *Social Change* 39, no. 3 (September 2009): 435–39.

Kitschelt, Herbert. "Movement Parties." *Handbook of Party Politics* 1 (2006): 278–90.

Kohli, Atul. *The Success of India's Democracy*. Vol. 6. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Kothari, Rajni. *Politics in India*. Orient Blackswan, 1970.

———. *Rethinking Democracy*. Orient Blackswan, 2005.

———. "The Non-Party Political Process." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1984, 216–24.

Kumar, Anup. "The Making of a Small State: Populist Social Mobilisation and the Hindi Press in the Uttarakhand Movement." *(No Title)*, 2011.

Lama, Mahendra P. "Gorkhaland Movement: A Perspective Economic Analysis." *Himalaya Today* 1, no. 1 (1988): 5–9.

Leitner, Helga, Eric Sheppard, and Kristin M. Sziarto. "The Spatialities of Contentious Politics." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33, no. 2 (April 2008): 157–72. .

Leoussi, Athena. *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism*. Routledge, 2018.

Levinson, David, and Melvin Ember. *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 2. Holt New York, 1996.

Mahanta, Nani Gopal. "Politics of Space and Violence in Bodoland." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2013, 49–58.

Mann, Rann Singh. *Culture and Integration of Indian Tribes*. MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1993.

Mawdsley, Emma. "Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 40, no. 3 (November 2002): 34–54.

McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (May 1977): 1212–41.

Misra, Udayon. "Bodoland: The Burden of History." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2012, 36–42.

Nagel, Joane. "Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture." *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (1994): 152–76.

Nanda, Subrat K. "Cultural Nationalism in a Multi-National Context: The Case of India." *Sociological Bulletin* 55, no. 1 (January 2006): 24–44.

Narzary, Mamata. "Role of All Bodo Students' Union and Its Impact on the Politics of Assam (From 1967 to 2016)." PhD Thesis, Bodoland University, Dept. of Political Science, 2019.

Pathak, Suryasikha. "Ethnic Violence in Bodoland." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2012, 19–23.

Paul, Salvin, and Swgwmkhang Brahma. "Role of Social Movements in Conflict Transformation with Special Reference to Bodoland Movement." *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 7, no. 4 (2017): 184–200.

Peoples, James, and Garrick Bailey. *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Cengage Learning, 2014.

Pradhan, Alina. "Politics of Separation: The Case of the Gorkhaland Movement." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 2012, 683–90.

Roy, Barun. *Gorkhas and Gorkhaland*. Barun Roy, 2012.

Rumba, Pratik. "Land Question, Ethnicity and the Gorkhaland Movement: The Political Economy Perspective," 2017.

Sabharwal, Vikas. "Ethnicity, Alienation and Underdevelopment: The Gorkhaland Statehood Demand," November 23, 2023.

Saikia, Pahi. *Ethnic Mobilisation and Violence in Northeast India*. Taylor & Francis, 2020.

Saikia, Smitana. "General Elections 2014: Ethnic Outbidding and Politics of 'Homelands' in Assam's Bodoland." *Contemporary South Asia* 23, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 211–22.

Samaddar, Ranabir. *The Politics of Autonomy: Indian Experiences*. Sage, 2005.

Samanta, Amiya K. *Gorkhaland Movement: A Study in Ethnic Separatism*. APH Publishing, 2000.

Sarkar, Swatahsiddha. "Autonomy, Self-Rule and Community in Darjeeling Hills: A Review of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)." *Available at SSRN 2038225*, 2012.

———. "Gorkhaland and Beyond." *Himal South Asian*, 2014.

———. *Gorkhaland Movement: Ethnic Conflict and State Responce*. Concept, 2013.

———. "Language and Ethnicity in Darjeeling Hills." *Himalayan Studies in India*, 2008, 85–100.

———. "Reflections on Parliamentary Elections and Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling Hills." *Journal of Politics and Governance* 3, no. 2and3 (2014): 21–34.

———. "The Land Question and Ethnicity in the Darjeeling Hills." *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 25, no. 2 (2010): 4.

Schlesinger, Joseph A. "The New American Political Party." *American Political Science Review* 79, no. 4 (1985): 1152–69.

Scott, George M. "A Resynthesis of the Primordial and Circumstantial Approaches to Ethnic Group Solidarity: Towards an Explanatory Model." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 2 (April 1990): 147–71.

Sengupta, Nitish K. "Bengal Divided: The Unmaking of a Nation, 1905-1971." *(No Title)*, 2007.

Shah, Alpa. "Who Cares for a New State?: The Imaginary Institution of Jharkhand 1." In *The Politics of Belonging in India*, 217–30. Routledge, 2011.

Sharma, Chandan Kr. "The Indian State and Ethnic Activism in North East India." *North East India Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 41–46.

Sharma, Chandan Kumar. "Bodo Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class and the State." *Political Dynamics of North East India, New Delhi: South Asia Publishers*, 2000, 128–42.

Siddique, Nazimuddin. "Bodoland Territorial Area District Elections 2015." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2015.

Singh, Nahar, and Kirpal Singh. "History of All India Gurkha League, 1943-1949." *(No Title)*, 1987.

Singh, Oinam Ranjit, and Gautam Mushahary. "Bodoland Movement: A Historical Perspective." *International Journal in Management & Social Science* 3, no. 9 (2015): 78–85.

Subba, Tanka Bahadur. "Agrarian Social Structure and Change in Sikkim," 1989.

———. "Dynamics of a Hill Society: The Nepalis in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas." *(No Title)*, 1989.

———. *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives*. Concept Publishing Company, 2009.

———. *North-East India: Handbook of Anthropology*. Orient Blackswan, 2012.

———. *Politics of Culture: A Study of Three Kirata Communities in the Eastern Himalayas*. Orient Blackswan, 1999.

———. *Religion and Society in the Himalayas:[National Seminar on March 13-15, 1986]*. Gian Publ. Publ., 1992.

Subba, Tanka B. "Race, Identity and Nationality: Relocating Nepali Nationalism in India." *Millennial Asia* 9, no. 1 (April 2018): 6–18.

Subba, Tanka Bahadur, and G. C. Ghosh. *The Anthropology of North-East India*. Orient Blackswan, 2003.

Subba, Tanka Bahadur, Joseph Puthenpurakal, and Shaji Joseph Puykunnel. *Christianity and Change in Northeast India*. Concept Publishing Company, 2009.

Talukdar, Subhash. "Role of Bodoland Peoples' Front in Bodoland Territorial Council (Btc) & Assam." *International Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1–6.

Tillin, Louise. *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins*. Hurst Publishers, 2013.

Vandekerckhove, Nel, and Bert Suykens. "'The Liberation of Bodoland': Tea, Forestry and Tribal Entrapment in Western Assam." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (December 2008): 450–71.

Wenner, Miriam. "Challenging the State by Reproducing Its Principles. The Demand for 'Gorkhaland' between Regional Autonomy and the National Belonging." *Asian Ethnology* 72, no. 2 (2013): 199–220.

———. "Diasporic Imaginations of Darjeeling: Gorkhaland as an Imaginative Geography." *Nepali Diaspora in a Globalised Era*, 2015, 108–30.

———. "Functions of Sovereign Violence: Contesting and Establishing Order in Darjeeling, India." *Political Geography* 77 (2020): 102094.

———. "Legitimization through Patronage? Strategies for Political Control beyond Ethno-Regional Claims in Darjeeling, India." *Geoforum* 66 (2015): 234–43.

———. "Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens"." PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015.

———. "Understanding Gorkhaland." JSTOR, 2015.

Zaidi, A. M., and S. G. Zaidi. "The Encyclopedia of Indian National Congress, Vol. 12, 1936–1946." *New Delhi*, 1981, 162.

## NEWS PAPER & GOVERNMENT SOURCE

"(Info) Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha - बुन्देलखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा (Bundelkhand Congress) | Bundelkhand Research Portal," November 24, 2023.

"2008 Riots: Probe Panel Blames MUSA, Assam Police Intelligence Wing - The Hindu," November 24, 2023.

"Absorbed Areas (Laws) Act, 1954," November 24, 2023.

"Ahead of 2024 Elections, Former U.P. DGP Launches Bundelkhand Loktantrik Party to Advocate for Separate State - Hindustan Times," November 24, 2023.

"Anit Thapa's BGPM Wins GTA Election 2022 - Siliguri Times | Siliguri News Updates," November 24, 2023.

"Assam Election Results 2021 Highlights: BJP-Led NDA Inches Closer to Victory; State Cong Chief Resigns | Elections News - The Indian Express," November 24, 2023.

"Assam Riots Toll Rises to 32; More than 70,000 Flee Homes | India News - Times of India," November 24, 2023.

"Autonomous Administrative Divisions of India." In *Wikipedia*, October 5, 2023.

"B'deshis Have Swarmed into Assam like 'ants' - Sentinelassam," November 24, 2023.

"Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873," November 24, 2023.

"Bodo Peace Accord," November 24, 2023.

"Bodo Stir: Complex Issues, Unattainable Demands on JSTOR," November 24, 2023.

"Bundelkhand - Wikipedia," November 24, 2023.

"Bundelkhand Ekikrit Party (BEP) Protesters Demanding Separate Statehood | Bundelkhand Research Portal," November 24, 2023.

"Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density," November 24, 2023.

Frontline. "The Third Bodo Accord: A New Deal," February 20, 2020

"GJM Members Burn GTA Accord in Hills | India News - The Indian Express," November 24, 2023.

"GJM's Decision to Quit Political Drama, GTA's Tenure Ends in 10 Days: GNLF | India News - The Indian Express," November 24, 2023.

"Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Act, 2011," November 28, 2023.

"Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936. (Hansard, 25 February 1936)," November 24, 2023.

"GTA Election 2022: Bengal Election Commission Announces Gorkhaland Territorial Administration Poll Dates," November 24, 2023.

"GTA Polls Pass off Peacefully, 59% Turnout Recorded | Kolkata News - The Indian Express," November 24, 2023.

"Memorandum of Settlement on Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)," November 24, 2023.

"Nod to Lepcha Board - Govt Passes Resolution Hours after Lepchas Call off Fast - Telegraph India," November 24, 2023.

"Panchayat Polls in Darjeeling after 23 Years, 8 Parties Form Alliance against TMC - India Today," November 24, 2023.

"Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council - Wikipedia," November 24, 2023.

"Tamang Resigns from Post of GTA Chairman," November 24, 2023.

"The Lepcha Development Board – Another Step for Development of the Hills – All India Trinamool Congress," November 24, 2023.

"The North-Eastern Area (Reorganization) Act, 1971 - Lawyers Law," November 24, 2023.

Bing. "Btr Accord Pdf," December 3, 2023.

"BTR Accord MoS (Bodolandjobnews.Com)," November 24, 2023.

Hindustan Times. "Gorkha Janmukti Morcha to Contest GTA Elections," June 30, 2012.

Hindustan Times. "TMC Ally BGPM Sweeps Gram Panchayats in Darjeeling, Kalimpong," July 13, 2023.

India Today. "Assam BTC Election Result: BPF Wins 17 Seats, UPPL Bags 12, BJP Gets 9; CM Announces New Chief," November 24, 2023.

India Today. "GNLF Wages a Determined Movement for a Separate State Called Gorkhaland," November 24, 2023.

Standard, Business. "GJM Leader Binay Tamang Appointed as Chairman of New Board to Run Darjeeling Hills," September 20, 2017.

The Indian Express. "GTA Polls Pass off Peacefully, 59% Turnout Recorded," June 26, 2022.

BRIEF BIO-DATA OF THE CANDIDATE

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | : **SANKAR DAS** |
| **Father's name** | : MAHENDRA DAS |
| **Mother's name** | : JYOTSNA MOYEE SAIKIA DAS |
| **Permanent address** | : Vill. Parbati Nagar, PO. Tezpur, Dist. Sonitpur, Assam.Pin-784001 |
| **Contact No.** | : 8876254238/8731972789 |
| **Email id** | : sankardas749@gmail.com |
| **Date of Birth** | : **15-01-1994** |
| **Religion** | : Hinduism |
| **Nationality** | : Indian |
| **Sex** | : Male |
| **Caste** | : **OBC** |
| **Marital Status** | : Unmarried |

## ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- HSLC : SEBA, 2009, (1st Division,)
- HSSLC : AHSEC,2011, (1st Division)
- B.A. : Political Science (Hons.), Gauhati University, 2014, (1st Class)
- M.A. : Political Science (Hons.), Gauhati University, 2016, (1st Class)
- UGC NET (Political Science), 2016.
- M.Phil : (Political Science), Mizoram University, Aizawl, 2018.
- Pursuing Ph.D (Political Science) Mizoram University, Aizawl, 2020 onwards.

Language Proficiency: English, Assamese, Hindi.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Das, Sankar and K.V Reddy (2023), "Ethnicity and Ethnic Phenomena In North East India", *Journal of People, Politics and Administration*, 1 (1), P. 27-34

Das, Sankar. (2022). "Role of Women in Peace Building Process in Nagaland: With Special Reference to NMA." In *Unmilan: A Manifestation.* IQAC, Jagiroad College. ISBN: 978-81-954809-4-4. P. 145.

Das, Sankar (2022). "An Analysis on the Provisions of NEP 2020 on Adult Education." In *National Education Policy 2020: Issues and Challenges.* LGB Girls' College. ISBN: 978-81-957112-2-2 Pp. 144-150.

Das, Sankar (2020) "COVID-19 and Its Impact on Global Economy with Special Reference to the Economy of India." In *Modernism and Postmodernism: Reflections and Speculations.* ISBN: 978-2-12-345680-3 P. 320.

Das, Sankar. (2020). "Socio-Political Implications of Bodo Movement in Assam." *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation.* IJPR, ISSN 1475-7192.

Das, Sankar (2020). "The Status of Sixth Schedule in North East India: An Analysis from the Colonial Response to the Present Context." *Journal of Critical Reviews.* JCR, ISSN 2394-5125, 3539-3543.

Das, Sankar. (2019). "State Responses to Bodo Movement in Post Independent India." *International Journal of Research and Analytical Review.* IJRAR, E-ISSN 2348-1269.

**SEMINAR/CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTED**

- Paper entitled '*RESPONSE OF BODO WOMEN IN BODOLAND MOVEMENT*' in National seminar on ACHIEVEMENT OF INDIAN WOMEN: WITH REFERENCE TO VILLAGE, YOUTH, ENVIRONMENT, DEFENCE, AND ECONOMY, organized by BRM Government College, Tinsukia, Assam on 7th and 8th November, 2023.

- Paper entitled '*INDIA'S INDC: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES*' in International Seminar on CLIMATE CHANGE AND STRATEGIES FOR RESTORATION organized by Goalpara Law College on 29th -30th April, 2023.

- Paper entitled '*IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTR:AN ANALYSIS FROM NORTH EAST INDIA PERSPECTIVE*' in

North East Green Summit, organized by IIT, Guwahati on 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

- Paper entitled '*ROLE OF BORDER TRADE IN STRENGTHENING POLITITICAL TIES BETWEEN NORTH EAST INDIA AND MYANMAR'* in the National Seminar on BORDER AND CONNECTIVITY: NORTH EAST INDIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA organized by Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.
- PAPER ENTITLED '*COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF ABSU AND MZP IN SOCIAL MOVEMENT'* in National Seminar on MIZORAM AFTER INDEPENDENCE, organized by OKD, GUWAHATI on 18TH JANUARY, 2017.

**Declaration**

I Mr. Sankar Das, hereby declare that the information furnished above is true to best of my knowledge and belief.

Date:

Place: Aizawl, Mizoram                    **SANKAR DAS**

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE


NAME OF CANDIDATE:        SANKAR DAS

DEGREE:        Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT:        Political Science

TITLE OF THE THESIS:        Statehood Movements in India: A Comparative Study of Gorkhaland and Bodoland

DATE OF ADMISSION:        $2^{nd}$ November. 2020

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

        1. DRC:        29.06.2021

        2. BOS:        12.05.2021

        3. School Board: 18.05.2021

MZU REGISTRATION NO.: 1600627

Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO. & DATE: MZU/Ph. D/1487 OF 02.11.2020

EXTENSION (IF ANY): NA


**Prof. AYANGBAM SHYAMKISHOR**

HEAD

Department of Political Science

**ABSTRACT**


**STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND**



**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**



**SANKAR DAS**
**MZU REGISTRATION NO: 1600627**
**Ph.D. REGISTRATION NO: MZU/Ph.D./1487 of 02.11.2020**



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
**DECEMBER, 2023**

**Introduction**

Governments is classified into unitary and federal models based on the type of ties between the national and regional government. The founders of Indian constitution made the decision to create a federal structure based on two primary factors: the large geographical expanse of the nation and its significant socio-cultural heterogeneity. Nevertheless, the word 'federation' is conspicuously absent from the Constitution of India. The establishment of federal structure is driven by the significant concept of reconciling national unity with regional autonomy. The concept of regional autonomy is closely linked to the notion of 'statehood' within the context of federal system in India. The reorganization of states is not considered unlawful or contrary to national interests, since the Indian constitution outlines a well-established method for this via Article 2 and 3. The justification for the rearrangement of states in India is based on legal and constitutional grounds. The concept of autonomy is closely intertwined with the notion of statehood. However, it would be erroneous to just analyze the restructuring of statehood or the aspirations for statehood from the standpoint of autonomy or power sharing between the state and the central authority. The process of redrawing states and explaining the claims for statehood in India has been significantly influenced by socio-cultural variety and several factors, including language, ethnicity, identity, and development.

When India gained independence in 1947, it was comprised of over 500 princely states that were not cohesive. The territorial divisions of India were temporarily categorized into states known as Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D. Shortly after achieving Independence, there was a significant call for the restructuring of states based on linguistic considerations. The demand for the linguistic reorganization of states in India, voiced by the Indian National Congress during the liberation movement, was based on sound grounds and had been promised to the people after independence. In June 1948, the Government of India established the Linguistic Provinces Commission, led by S.K. Dhar, with the purpose of assessing the practicality of restructuring states based on linguistic considerations.

The report was presented by the committee in December 1948, whereby it advocated for the rearrangement of states based on administrative convenience rather than linguistic considerations. There was demonstration and call for the restructuring of states on the basis of linguistic criteria. In response to the widespread public discontent with the Dhar report, the Congress took the initiative to establish a Linguistic Provinces Committee (referred to as the JVP committee) in December 1948. This group was tasked with conducting a thorough examination of the matter. The newly formed JVP committee shown a lack of support for a language foundation in the process of state reorganization. The responses and attitudes shown by prominent officials of the Congress party over the subject had generated significant discontent among the populace in India, particularly in the southern region. The state of unrest and protest were persisted.

Andhra Pradesh was the first linguistic state to be formed when the Telugu-speaking areas were divided from the State of Madras in 1953. Following an extended period of societal turmoil, a series of events unfolded after the demise of Potti Sriamulu, who passed away as a result of a 56-day hunger strike. The creation of Andhra Pradesh brought a fresh perspective to the discussion on reorganization of states according to linguistic factors. In response to the increasing number of requests for linguistic-based states, the Government of India established a committee led by Justice F. Fazl Ali, with H.N. Kunzru and K.M. Panikkar as members. The purpose of this commission was to thoroughly examine these demands. The report was submitted in September of 1955. The recommendations put forward were duly acknowledged with some alterations, leading to the enactment of States Reorganization Act in 1956. Consequently, the previous fourfold distribution of States was substituted with a total of 14 States and six Union Territories by the implementation of the Seventh Constitution Amendment. The agitation and protest persisted after to the implementation of State Reorganization Act, as a means of advocating for the establishment of additional states. The splitting of existing states was a consequence of the desire for the establishment of additional states based on linguistic or cultural homogeneity. The political landscape of India has undergone a

series of ongoing transformations leading to its current state. Currently, the nation of India is comprised of a total of 28 states and 8 Union Territories (UTs). The persistent pursuit of statehood is ongoing in India. The demands for Gorkhaland and Bodoland are examples of how factors such as ethnicity, identity, economic stagnation, and language play significant roles in the articulation of their demands and aspirations for separate statehood.

The primary goal of the Gorkhaland Movement is to establish Gorkhaland, which is now part of West Bengal, as its own separate state within India. People who speak Nepali in the West Bengal hill districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong constitute the bulk of the Gorkhaland population. The people who live in the hill districts of West Bengal, there are linguistically and culturally distinct from the Bengalis who constitute the majority in West Bengal. The colonial government is largely responsible for the current movement for Gorkhaland demand. Darjeeling, an unsettled region, was under Chogyal of Sikkim's control until the 1780s. The Gorkhas attacked and occupied a large portion of Sikkim, including the cities of Darjeeling and Siliguri. For 35 years, they were in charge of it. However, the destiny of the Gorkhas was altered when colonial government was invaded and they became part of the British Empire. The Gorkhas made several attempts to express their desire for autonomy, but their wishes were not granted. Following India's independence, the region fell under the direct control of West Bengal. Gorkhaland movement has persisted in the region ever since, addressing difficult problems including linguistic diversity, economic stagnation, and cultural division. The evolution of movement through its many stages has brought it to its current state. The evolution of movement into its current form can be traced back to a number of factors, including shifts in the political environment in both West Bengal and the centre, the personalities of movement's leaders, government responses to the Gorkhaland issue, the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), violence during the early stages of the movement, civil society's and political parties' roles, and the creation of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). However, the desire for Gorkhaland persists in the area and has far-reaching effects on its sociopolitical framework.

The concept of Bodoland pertains to the aspirations expressed by the Bodo community residing in the state of Assam. Assam is recognized as a region that encompasses a diverse array of ethnic groups, each contributing to the rich cultural variety of the area. The Bodo people represent the largest ethnic group inhabiting the plains of Assam, a state located in northeastern India. The Bodos is believed to have undergone a migratory event during the ancient era, relocating to the geographical region of Assam. The Bodo tribe has been widely acknowledged as one of the earliest indigenous communities to have settled in the region. Over the course of time, the Bodo tribe has experienced a decline in its regional significance. The concerns regarding rights and identity in the region originated from a combination of colonial and post-colonial developments. These include illegal immigration, imposition of chauvinistic cultural norms, and rejection of recognition for ethnic and language differences. The movement, which aimed to safeguard their identity, was initiated in 1929 when the tribal leaders of Assam effectively communicated their demands to the Simon Commission. Since that particular time period, it has been observed that the Bodo community had expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the fulfilment of their demands pertaining to equality, identity, and development.

The plain tribal communities residing in Assam, notably the Bodos, were not afforded any specific protective measures during the period of colonial administration. In the context of post-independent India, the government has adopted various strategies to tackle the challenges faced by the Bodo community. The Bodos, as per demographic analysis, constitute the most populous ethnic group within the region. The Bodo ethnic group encompasses approximately 12% of the overall tribal population of Assam. The movement for separate statehood in 1987 was spearheaded by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). The proposed statehood was given with the term 'Bodoland' by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). The Bodoland movement, initiated by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), has undergone various stages of development. Various measures were implemented by both the central and state governments at different stages of the movement in order to address the concerns pertaining to the Bodo community. The Memorandum of

Agreement on Bodo Autonomous Council (1993), Memorandum of Agreement on Bodoland Territorial Council (2003), and Memorandum of Agreement on Bodoland Territorial Region (2020) represent significant administrative measures implemented by the Government in direct response to the demands and concerns raised by the Bodo community. However, it is worth mentioning that the notion of establishing a separate Bodoland continues to hold relevance within the region.

**Review of Literature**

Monirul Hussain (1993) in his work "The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity" published by Manak Publication in association with Haranand Publiction , New Delhi studied 1979-85 movement that held in Assam from sociological perspective.Hussain's research investigated into the multifaceted dimensions of the movement, exploring its sociological underpinnings and shedding light on the complex relationship between class dynamics, ideological frameworks, and the construction of identity within the context of Assam.

Sudhir Jacob George (1994), in his article 'The Bodo Movement In Assam: Unrest to Accord' Published in Asian Survey, vol.34, No10, Oct, by University Of California Press posits that the region of North East India is primarily characterized by the presence of various ethnic groups. The study is involved in the analysis and management of various stages within the Bodoland movement, as well as the examination of the activities undertaken by different organizations.

Dipankar Gupta (1997), in his article 'Ethnicity and Politics', published in 'Politics in India', edited by Sudipta Kaviraj, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, deals with the issue of ethnicity and its implication on politics. He examines the success of Indian state as nation state, although the doubt prevails at the initial stage of independence. Gupta tries to take account of historical account to conceptualize the idea of unity of India. Gupta analyses India as imagined communities and tries to articulate different demands and movements from perspective of language, natives and regional perspective.

Sanjib Baruah (1997), in his article, ' Politics of Subnationalism : Society versus State in Assam', published in 'State and Politics In India', edited by Partha Chatterjee, Oxford University press, New Delhi, highlights the issue of assam from sub nationalist perspective. The attitude and response of government is analyzed in his work and its impact on society of Assam is critically examined. The issues like underdevelopment, illegal immigration are highlighted to understand the structural issues of Assam.

Myron Weiner (1997), in his article, 'India's Minorities: who are they? What do they want?', published in 'State and Politics In India', edited by Partha Chatterjee, Oxford University press, New Delhi,delves into the complex dynamics surrounding the minority groups within the Indian context. The study explores into the complicated relationships between minority and majority groups in India.

Atul Kohli (1997), in his article, 'Crisis of Governability', published in 'Politics in India', edited by Sudipta Kaviraj, Oxford University Press, New Delhi - deals with change in power structure and its impact on governance. He examines the shifting of power from party base to personal base in Indian political system. He also analyze the issue of shifting legitimacy from earlier political establishment to new emerging political centre, which are viewed as outside of the established political channels. He also analyses the role of civil society, phenomena of increasing political violence, electoral competition, ethnicity, role of leaders to understand the structural issues of governance process in India.

Atis Dasgupta (1999), in his article 'Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling' published in Social Scientist, Vol. 27, No. 11/12, deals with the ethnic paradigm of Gorkhaland and the changing nature of demands of autonomy from time to time and organization to organization. Dasgupta explains the historical roots of Gorkhalnd and its demands for autonomy. The article explains the demographic change of the region by taking account of process of migration from pre colonial era to the present time.

Chandan Kumar Sharma (2002), in his article 'Tribal Land Alienation: Government's Role', published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 52, deals with the issue of the land alienation among the tribal population in Assam and highlights the role of government in the colonial period and post independence in response to the issue. Sharma analyzes the policy of colonial phase and their implication in the life of tribal population of India in general and in Assam in particular.

Sanjib Baruah (2005) in his book 'Durable Disorder, Understanding the Politics of North East India' published by Oxford University Press, New Delhi examines the root reasons and strives to figure out the political relevance of ongoing political violence. Ethnic violence and internal displacement are foregone conclusions, he argues, due to the current political economy of northeast India and its relationship with a sense of ethnic homeland.

Apurba Kumar Baruah (2005) addresses the topic of violent traits that ethnic groups in Assam have acquired to protect their identity in his paper "Communities and Democracy: a Northeast Indian Perspective," which was published in North East India Studies, Vol. 1, June. The researcher also endeavors to assess the dearth of effective governance policies implemented by authorities, which have resulted in significant detriment to both human development and the democratic framework within the region. Baruah's research primarily centers around the complex processes of nation-building and its consequential effects within ethnically diverse regions, such as the state of Assam.

Chandan Kumar Sharma (2005), in his article 'The Indian State and Ethnic Activism in North East India' published in North East India Studies, Vol-1, June explores into the notion of self-rule within the ethnic dimension and its growing prominence in the context of North East India. The researcher also posits that the theory of 'one nation and one state' is not a welcomed phenomenon in regions where ethnic dominance is prevalent.

Samir kr Das (2005) addresses the topic of conflict resolution strategies used by Indian states in the northeast in the wake of globalization in his paper "Globalization, Ethnicity and Conflict Resolution in North East India: Proposals for a Paradigm Shift," which was published in North East India Studies, Vol. 1, June. The author posits that while non-ethnic conflicts do indeed occur in the region, they are often overshadowed by ethnic conflicts, primarily due to the significant influence and prominence of ethnicity in the region.

Subrat K. Nanda(2006), in his article 'Cultural Nationalism in a Multi-National Context: The Case of India' published in Sociological Bulletin ,Vol. 55,No. 1, deals with the concept of cultural nationalism and its impact on the multi-national set up of one country. He tries to conceptualize the idea of nationalism and tries to analyze the implication of it in multi cultural world of the third world.

Nani Gopal Mahanta (2007), in his article 'Ethnicity, State, and Identity: From Confrontation to Co-existence.' Published in Problems of Ethnicity in the North East India, edited by B.B Kumar, Astha Bharati, Delhi, talks about how confrontation could be transformed into co-existence in North East India. This scholarly work examines into the intricate dynamics of the North East India region, specifically focusing on the potential for converting confrontational situations into harmonious co-existence.

Suryashika Pathak (2010) in her article 'Tribal Politics in the Assam: 1933-1947' published in Economic and Political Weekly, vol XLV no 10, deals with the socio-economic and political dimensions of the tribal society in Assam during the phase of 1933 to 1947. Her analysis of the role of colonial administration in addressing the issue of plain tribes in Assam gives a clear-cut picture of the situation of tribals during the colonial era. She examines the politics of Assam before 1933 regarding the tribal population.

Jayanta Krishna Sarmah (2011), in his article 'An Alternative Formulation for Autonomous Councils in Assam' published in Economic and

Political Weekly, Vol. 46, No. 35, analyses the idea of autonomy and reason for the demand of it. He tries to establish principle of minority and indigenous rights and the right to self determination with the concept of autonomy. Moreover, the protective and promoting provisions of culture through autonomy also highlight to understand the reasons for the demand of autonomy.

Louise Tillin (2011), in his article 'Questioning Borders: Social Movements, Political Parties and the Creation of New States in India' published in Pacific Affairs, Vol. 84, No. 1, Experiencing the State : Marginalized People and The Politics of Development in Contemporary, published by Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia, deals with social movement and its changing nature in Indian political system. The article explains the shift of the nature of social movements in present time.

C. Townsend Middleton (2011), in his article 'Across the Interface of State Ethnography: Rethinking Ethnology and its subjects in multicultural India' published in American Ethnologist, Vol. 38, No. 2 deals with the idea of formation of ethnic or tribal identity in India onset of securing their position in the list of scheduled tribe in India. In this article, Middleton tries to explain the ground reality of Darjeeling and the effort of 'Gorkha' community to categories themselves to ensure ST status in India. He elaborates the concept of reservation, government benefit, as well as economic and political wellbeing of the people with the idea of ST status.

Ramesh K. Chauhan (2012), in his article 'Federalism, Governance and Demand for Smaller States In India' published in the Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 73, No. 2, deals with the federal structures and the experience of post independence Indian states and make arguments in favor of smaller states to address issues like administration , democracy, development, governance.

Anuradha Rai (2012), in her article 'State Reorganization in India: Real-Politicking or Electoral Politics, published in The Indian Journal of Political Science

, Vol. 73, No. 4, deals with the demands of state reorganization in India. She analyzes the factors that instigated the demand for state reorganization in India. The author explains different phases to elaborate the process of reorganization of states that took place in India.

Jaikhlong Basumotary (2014), in his article 'Quest for Peace in Assam: A Study of the Bodoland Movement' examines the Bodoland Movement from a number of angles. He began his writing with a little background on Northeast India. He describes the Bodo people in general terms. According to him, all of North East India's mobilization has been centered on themes of ethnicity and identity. He explains that the movement got its start when the Bodo people's hopes and dreams were disregarded. He also sees the movement as the Bodo people's attempt to advance economically, socially, and culturally. He also details the progression of the movement from its inception in 1933 to the present day, with distinct stages occurring between 1967 and 1986, 1987 and 1992, 1993 and 2003, and 2003 and beyond.

Swatahsiddah Sarkar (2014), in his article 'Gorkhaland and beyod analysis', published in Himal Southasian,Colombo, Sri Lanka deals with the issue of state responses in addressing the Gorkhaland demand. He examines the reasons for the quest of self-governance in Darjeeling by stating mainly due to recognition of the collective social and cultural rights of Gorkhas who identifies themselves as different from Bengali and self-governance without hampering the idea of national sovereignty.

Udayan Mishra (2014), in his book "India's North East Identity, Movements, State and Civil society" published by oxford university press, Delhi deals with socio-political scenario of Northeast. By drawing parallels between the identification movement and its historical foundations and its perspective on the Indian federal system, he analyzes the character of the movement.

Miriam Weinner (2015), in her thesis 'Monopolising a statehood movement: Gorkhaland between authoritarian parties and 'aware citizen', University of Zurich, deals with idea of aware citizen as conscious people regarding their dream about Gorkhaland. She extensively writes about the changing of regimes, state as well as local level and their way of dealing with the issue of Gorkhaland.

Bivek Tamang and Sangmu Thendup (2015), in their article 'Demerger' and Statehood: Similarities between Gorkhaland and Telangana' published in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 50, No. 38, deals with the issue of statehood demand in India with focusing on the policy of demerging. In the article, they analyze the historical background of the demand of Gorkhaland. The emphasis has been given from colonial phase and their policies to the present time in dealing with the issue of Gorkhaland.

Subungcha Mwshahary(2016), in his thesis 'Bodoland Movement: A Study in Ethnicity and Political Development among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 TO 1993, talks with numerous aspects that were associated with the movement. His theoretical work is an attempt to define ethnicity and nationalism and a description of Assamese ethnic phenomena. He introduces the Bodo people and discusses the commonalities shared by the various Assamese tribal communities. He analyzes the beginnings, development, and motivations of the movement, as well as its many stages.

Samrat Sinha (2017) in his article ' The Strategic Use of Peace: Non-State Armed Groups and Subnational Peacebuilding Mechanisms in North Eastern India' published in Democracy and Security, Vol 13, No.4 examines a diverse set of subnational peace processes and policy instruments in the context of India. The article emphasizes the insurgency that exists in Northeast India and its impact on other aspects.

Bhupen Sarmah (2017) in his article ' India's Northeast and the Enigma of the Nation-state ' published in Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Vol 42(3)

analyses the confrontation of India's process of nation-building in the northeastern part. The article describes the history of colonial annexation of the northeastern part of India and subsequent policies of colonial administration that created the dichotomy between the hills and valleys population. He explains the post-colonial administrative arrangement in dealing with Northeast India.

Soham Das (2019) in the article 'Ethnic Conflict in the Indian Subcontinent: Assessing the Impact of Multiple Cleavages' published in the Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, Vol 6 No. 3, examines the ethnic conflict in Indian Subcontinent through different aspects of cleavages. The analysis of regional conflicts based on ethnic identity has been stated in the article.

Jairam Ramesh (2019) in his article 'Reorganisation of States and Thereafter' discusses the historical background of the reorganization of states in India and how it has impacted the social and political arenas. The author examines the Congress's stance on the reorganization of states based on linguistic principles during the colonial period. Later, after the withdrawal of commitment, massive protests and public outrage ensued. The author analyzes the recommendations made by the State Reorganization Commission and how it affected India's political climate. The author emphasizes three waves of state reorganization in India and the political implications of each, which helps in understanding the historical perspective of the statehood movement.

The earlier studies on the issue of statehood movements did not cover the present context of the movements. A comparative analysis has not been done properly. Examining the role of civil society, political parties, and movement activists has not been analyzed critically to find out similarities and dissimilarities to understand different statehood movements in India in general, Gorkhaland and Bodoland in particular. State response and socio-political analysis by taking account of both movements provide the idea about the issues like on ethnic, identity and language and its impact on such movements. The study also explains the present

status of the movement and its relevance among the people and in the region so that paradigms like peace, socio- economic development can be examined thoroughly.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study aims to examine the characteristics and dynamics of statehood movements in India. The primary focus of this study is directed towards the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements, specifically. The analysis focuses on examining the evolution and current state of the movements from various perspectives in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their nature. This enables a critical evaluation of the different phases of the movement and their influence on various paradigms such as peace, development, ethnicity, and identity. Both movements have undergone various stages of development and are currently ongoing in the region. Various measures have been implemented by state actors in response to these movements. The aforementioned actions exert a direct influence on the trajectory of the movements. The present study aims to examine the role of government in effectively addressing the complex challenges associated with the statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The present study aims to conduct a comprehensive examination of the demographic context within the concerned region, with a specific focus on the roles played by civil societies, political parties, and movement activists in these respective movements. Furthermore, this research endeavour seeks to undertake a comparative analysis between the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of the intended investigation is to be limited to the geographical region encompassing Assam and West Bengal, with particular attention directed towards the locales where the Gorkhaland and Bodoland concerns hold significant influence. The proposed study uses a comparative approach in order to assess and analyse the patterns and trends of movements. The present study aims to provide a concise overview of the reactions exhibited by both state and central

government entities in response to the various movements that have taken place in the region. Additionally, it seeks to explore the socio-political impacts that have arisen as a result of these movements.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research work holds considerable significance in the context of ongoing statehood movements in India. It sheds light on various dimensions such as ethnicity, identity, language, autonomy, and societal structure, which are closely intertwined with these movements. Given the rich diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups in India, it is crucial to acknowledge that any demand or request made by one particular group can potentially have an impact on other groups within the region. The statehood movements of Gorkhaland and Bodoland have been characterized by a significant degree of violence. The study aims to investigate potential solutions that may be mutually agreed upon in order to foster peace within the region. The present study aims to conduct an analysis on the efficacy of government initiatives in order to comprehensively assess their direct and indirect influence on various societal movements. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge the significant contributions made by political parties, movement activists, and civil society in facilitating and advancing the progress of these movements. Therefore, the present study undertakes a comprehensive comparative analysis to elucidate the characteristics and patterns of these movements.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the nature of statehood movements in India.

2. To analyse the reasons for emergence of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements.

3. To analyse state responses in dealing with these two movements.

4. To make a comparative study on the process of these two movements

5.   To examine on the socio-political implications of these two movements in the region.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study attempts to answer the following research questions-

1.   What is the nature of statehood movements in India?

2.   What are the reasons for the quest of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements?

3.   What are the state responses towards these two movements?

4.   What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements?

5.   What are the socio-political implications of these two movements in the region?

**METHODOLOGY**

The present research work is a comparative study particularly confined to the people in living in hill region of Darjeeling district, West Bengal and Bodoland Territorial Region, Assam. The study has combined both qualitative and quantitative research where primary and secondary sources of data have been used. The primary sources have been collected through field study and observation method. The field study has been based on sampling method of survey research. In the field study, for collecting primary data a detailed questionnaire was prepared and circulated among the respondents. The Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements, although has basic components in its course but in regard to the question on political parties and their influence on the respective areas are varies from each other. That is why some questions are limited to particular region to obtain the opinion regarding political parties and their response towards the movements.

Depending upon the nature of study, the non-probability methods of sampling has been used. The respondents were purposively selected using the criteria of sex, age and occupation. The sample size of the present research is 200. From each movement 100 respondents have selected. So far as age is concerned, it was categorized into youths (15-24) and non-youths. In the question of occupation, the research classified the respondents in to 5 categories of representatives: service holder, members of political parties, member of civil society organization, students and business person. From each category, 20 respondents have selected for each movement.

Secondary data is collected through available literature on the topic, magazines, newspapers, various publications of the central, state and local governments, reports and publications of various associations connected with the theme of the research.

Regarding data analysis, different methods are used in analysis the collected data. The researcher relied upon the use of analytical and descriptive methods in the study. Moreover, the researcher has used tables, charts and graphs to analyse the data statistically.

**CHAPTERIZATION**

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The first chapter covers the introduction of the topic, demographic profile of Darjeeling and Assam, brief overview of GTA and BTR, significance of study, statement of the problem, review of literature, research questions, and methodology.

**CHAPTER II: STATEHOOD MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The second chapter deals with the nature of statehood movement and try to analyze the process of such movements from different perspective. The chapter gives a brief introduction to the statehood movements of India. The nature of such

movements is explained in order to critically evaluate the objectives of the movements.

## CHAPTER III: GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS

The third chapter discusses the nature of Gorkhaland and Bodoland movement. The chapter deals with the reasons for the community's quest for Gorkhaland and Bodoland. In this chapter, focus is given to analyze the different phases of both the movements. The chapter also highlights the status of the movements in the present context.

## CHAPTER IV: STATE RESPONSES: STATE AND UNION GOVERNMENTS

The fourth chapter deals with the state and union governments' responses and attitudes towards the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movement. Different measures and initiative of governments is critically discussed to find out the effectiveness of the same in regard to addressing of the demands of Gorkhaland and Bodoland. The present development of state actions in response to the movements is also discussed in the chapter.

## CHAPTER V: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GORKHALAND AND BODOLAND MOVEMENTS

The fifth chapter makes a comparison of the both movements highlighting evolution of the movements, reason of continuity of movements, nature of movements, and reaction to the different initiatives of the state actors towards the movements. The chapter analyses the different phases of the both movements and try to critically examine present context of the movements.

## CHAPTER VI: SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TWO MOVEMENTS

The sixth section of this study examines the socio-political implications associated with the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements in the region.

The analysis and critical examination of the impact of movements on paradigms such as peace, development, and violence in the region involves a comprehensive exploration of various issues. These issues encompass language, ethnicity, the role of civil society, political participation, political parties, and political development. The interplay between these factors and the aforementioned paradigms is carefully scrutinized, aiming to shed light on the mutually reinforcing effect between the movements and these fundamental aspects of societal dynamics.

## CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

The last chapter summarizes the study. It also includes concluding remarks as part of its findings.

I. A critical analysis of the statehood movement and its increasing alignment with the political party and state signifies a departure from earlier conceptualizations of social movements. Political parties are often seen as helpful to social movement organisations because they provide the movement more organisational power. The propensity of political parties to align themselves with specific movements can be attributed to the perceived enhancement of their ideological legitimacy in the eyes of the general public.

II. The study reflected that the fight for statehood was also seen through the lens of class perspective. The push for autonomy or a separate state was seen as a kind of elite manipulation. This approach was based around an instrumentalist conception of ethnic identity. When examined from this viewpoint, the social movement's class dynamics become clearer. The statehood movements in India and the results of such movements showed that the misery of the ordinary people was not addressed. Despite several government attempts to appease the public's desire for autonomy, the majority's complaints have not changed. In some ways, the elite nature of statehood movements is reflected in the government's top-down approach to dealing with them.

III. The research suggests that ethnic identity, economic distress, and regional autonomy are the key factors driving both the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements. However, the degree of influence of these factors varies between the two movements, with regional autonomy being more prominent in the Gorkhaland movement and ethnic identity being more prominent in the Bodoland movement. Overall, a combination of these factors contributes to the expansion and sustainability of both movements.

IV. The research findings suggest that leadership, a sense of alienation, and inadequate policies and programmes are significant factors influencing the trajectory of the Gorkhaland and Bodoland statehood movements. Leadership was identified as a one of major contributor to the development of both movements, while alienation and insufficient policies and programmes also played a significant role. Additionally, a substantial portion of the population believes that all of these factors were equally accountable for the expansion and persistence of such movements. The Gorkhaland movement has been sustained by leaders who see it as a means to gain political power in the region. The elite class has significantly influenced the movement's trajectory. The Bodoland movement's persistence is attributed to state authorities' failure to implement effective policies.

V. The study indicates that the both movements mostly garnered a backing from political factions, student organizations, and community-based organizations. In the context of Gorkhaland movement, it has been revealed that the prime base of movement is political party. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement has significant backing among student organizations, as shown by participants indicating a favourable inclination towards them. In addition, political parties, civil society, and insurgent groups all played a role in bolstering the support for the Bodoland movement.

VI. In light of the available evidence, it can be inferred that the Gorkhaland movement exhibited a relatively higher degree of nonviolent tendencies

when compared with the Bodoland movement. The prevailing perception among the respondents indicates that the Gorkhaland movement was predominantly characterized by peaceful activities in comparison to the Bodoland movement. However, it is noteworthy that a considerable segment of respondents also acknowledged the presence of both peaceful and violent components within the movement. In contrast, the Bodoland movement is commonly perceived as exhibiting a greater propensity for violence, as indicated by a larger proportion of respondents attributing violent tendencies to it. According to the data collected, it is evident that a relatively low proportion of participants perceived the Bodoland movement to be characterized by peaceful means.

VII. The Gorkhaland movement has a mixed perception of success, with a significant portion of the population believing that the success rate was average and a minority expressing skepticism. On the other hand, the Bodoland movement was viewed more favorably, with a majority of individuals perceiving it to have a partial level of success and a significant portion believing it to be significantly high.

VIII. The study revealed that in comparison to the Gorkhaland movement, the Bodoland movement has a positive response from the population to the government's attitudes towards the movement. The critical analysis reveals that the positive response that gathered in connection with the Bodoland movement is highly based on the people's hope about the recently concluded peace accord. The study found that any treaty or accord gives a positive outlook among the population about the government's response regarding the movements.

IX. The findings of the research indicated that the political parties located in the respective regions of Gorkhaland and Bodoland had contributed positively and supportively to the resolution of the concerns raised by these movements. In the Gorkhaland area, the AIGL, GNLF, GJM, Hamro Party, and Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantarik Morcha were among the groups who spoke out against the injustices experienced by the Nepali or Gorkha

communities. These parties are arranged according to ethnicity, and there was rivalry among them to portray their groups as legitimate spokespersons for Gorkha problems. Within the framework of Bodoland, it was noted that regional political parties, including the BPF and UPPL, were more vocal in their expressions of concern regarding the Bodoland movement's issues, in contrast to the state and national parties of the area.

X. The Gorkhaland movement and the Bodoland statehood movement have had significant impacts on the social fabric of their respective regions. The majority of respondents in both movements believe that the impact on the social profile of the region has been fully realized.

XI. The analysis showed that the Statehood Movements had a significant influence on the relevant areas' development paradigms. Regarding how the movements affected the previously described paradigm, there were varying interpretations. Many believed that one of the main reasons for statehood movement was the region's low level and uneven development, as they believed that separate statehood might bring about the necessary development in the area. However, a different perspective held that the movements prevented correct growth process from unfolding. People perceive things differently, yet both movements' majority responses indicated that statehood movements had a large influence on the development of the concerned area.

XII. The current study examined individuals' responses regarding their preferences for consideration in the creation of new states in India. The participants in this study expressed their preference for taking into account administrative and political, social and ethnic, economic and linguistic factors when discussing the formation of new states in India. The variability of aspects is observed to differ across various movements. In the Gorkhaland region, it was observed that a significant proportion of the local population expressed a preference for administrative and political consideration as the foundation for the establishment of new states. The historical context of the movement and the current demand for

autonomy are evident in their inclination to prioritize administrative convenience as the primary foundation for the establishment of new states. In the Bodoland area, however, it was believed that social and ethnic consideration was suitable. The preservation and protection of ethnic identity might be achieved through the establishment of a separate statehood. The prevailing injustice surrounding the identity issue had prompted the Bodoland region to respond with a focus on ethnic considerations.

XIII. Furthermore, both movements exhibited a consensus and expressed a prevailing sentiment that granting extended autonomy to the region would facilitate enhanced engagement of the general populace within the democratic structure of the nation. This perspective highlights the belief that granting regional autonomy might encourage the advancement of democratization, decentralization, and the promotion of peace and development in the region.

The examination of statehood movements in India sheds light on the complex relationships inherent in such movements and the diverse array of factors that contributed to the impetus for pursuit of separate statehood. The absence of democratic governance, the consolidation of authority and resources, worries regarding cultural identity eroding, and the government's inadequate response to public concerns have emerged as prominent factors in this context. Besides, the Gorkhaland and Bodoland movements have been primarily motivated by historical, linguistic, and cultural factors, which have contributed to their emergence and subsequent development. These movements have also witnessed intermittent episodes of violence, further shaping their trajectory and impact on the affected regions. In order to effectively address the underlying challenges and cultivate a peaceful environment within the region, it is imperative for the government to proactively engage in the promotion of inclusivity, democratic institutions, and meaningful consultations.

**References**


Bagchi, Romit. *Gorkhaland: Crisis of Statehood*. Sage Publications India, 2012.

Bahadur, Subba Tanka. "*Ethnicity, State, and Development: A Case Study of the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling.*" New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications in association with Vikas Publications House, 1992.

Banerjee, Basabi Khan, and Georg Stöber. "*Gorkhaland Movement in India: A Case of Indigeneity and/or a Struggle over Space?*" *1 Geographien*, 2013, 5.

Baruah, Sanjib. *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.

Basu, Amrita. "The Dialectics of Hindu Nationalism." *The Success of India's Democracy* 163 (2001): 89.

Basumatary, Nicodim, and Bhagirathi Panda. "Assessing Socio-Economic Development in Bodoland Territorial Area District of Assam in India." *International Journal of Social Economics* 47, no. 12 (2020): 1541–59.

Bebbington, Anthony. "Poverty Reduction and Social Movements: A Framework with Cases." *Background Paper for UNRISD Report on Combating Poverty and Inequality*, 2009.

Chadha, Vivek. *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis*. Sage, 2005.

Chakrabarty, Subhas Ranjan. "Silence under Freedom: The Strange Story of Democracy in the Darjeeling Hills." *The Politics of Autonomy. Indian Experiences. New Delhi*, 2005, 173–95.

Chauduri, Sucheta Sen. "The Bodo Movement and Bodo Women—A Case Study of Organizing Women within an Ethnic Movement." *Tribal Studies in North East India*, 2002, 63.

Chaudhury, Kalyan. "The North-East Area of Darkness: Accord Unclear of Territories." *Frontline* 26 (1994): 30–31.

"Darjiling (Darjeeling) District Population Census 2011 - 2021 - 2023, West Bengal Literacy Sex Ratio and Density." Accessed November 24, 2023.

Das, Sankar. "Bodoland Statehood Movement: A Study on The Role of All Bodo Students' Union (Absu)," 2017.

Dasgupta, Atis. "Ethnic Problems and Movements for Autonomy in Darjeeling." *Social Scientist*, 1999, 47–68.

Datta, Prabhat. "The Gorkhaland Agitation in West Bengal." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (1991): 225–41.

Dutta, Anwesha. "The Politics of Complexity in Bodoland: The Interplay of Contentious Politics, the Production of Collective Identities and Elections in Assam." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 478–93.

Gait, Edward. *A History of Assam*. Thacker, Spink & Company, 1906.

Ghosh, Anjan. "Gorkhaland Redux." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2009, 10–13.

Gupta, Susmita Sen. "Transformation and Consolidation of Bodo Identity: An Enquiry into the Role of the Middle Class." *The Standard International Journals*, 2014.

Khawas, Vimal. "The Project of Gorkhaland." *Social Change* 39, no. 3 (September 2009): 435–39.

Kitschelt, Herbert. "Movement Parties." *Handbook of Party Politics* 1 (2006): 278–90.

Kohli, Atul. *The Success of India's Democracy*. Vol. 6. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Kothari, Rajni. *Politics in India*. Orient Blackswan, 1970.

———. *Rethinking Democracy*. Orient Blackswan, 2005.

———. "The Non-Party Political Process." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1984, 216–24.

Siddique, Nazimuddin. "Bodoland Territorial Area District Elections 2015." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2015.

Singh, Nahar, and Kirpal Singh. "History of All India Gurkha League, 1943-1949." *(No Title)*, 1987.

Singh, Oinam Ranjit, and Gautam Mushahary. "Bodoland Movement: A Historical Perspective." *International Journal in Management & Social Science* 3, no. 9 (2015): 78–85.

Talukdar, Subhash. "Role of Bodoland Peoples' Front in Bodoland Territorial Council (Btc) & Assam." *International Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1–6.

Tillin, Louise. *Remapping India: New States and Their Political Origins*. Hurst Publishers, 2013.

Wenner, Miriam. "Monopolising a Statehood Movement: Gorkhaland between Authoritarian Parties and" Aware Citizens"." PhD Thesis, University of Zurich, 2015.