



## Role of Bodoland Peoples' Front in Bodoland Territorial Council (Btc) & Assam

Dr. Subhash Talukdar\*

*Subject Teacher in Political Science, Barpeta, Assam, PIN-781377*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr. Subhash Talukdar, Subject Teacher in Political Science, Barpeta, Assam, PIN-781377

**Abstract:** *Bodos are one of the oldest Tribes of Assam. According to the historians, the Bodos are a race of the Mongoloid group of people who are described to be the inhabitants of a north of the Himalayas and west of China. With the passage of time, they migrated to the Bullungbuthur valley (Brahmaputra valley) and lived there till the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. The Bodos had only a few leaders and guided among them. One of them was Kalicharan Brahma. He was known as Gurudev.*

*The Bodos could realize this sheer neglect of the community by the higher castes and political authorities of the time. Accumulation of anger and dissatisfaction compelled them to launch several movements for the preservation of their ethnic identity. Main aims and objectives of Bodoland Movement was to create an Autonomous Self Governing body known as BTC, to provide constitutional protection under sixth schedule to the autonomous body, to fulfill economic, educational, social, political and linguistic aspirations, preservation of socio-cultural, land-rights and ethnic identity of the Bodos and infrastructure development in BTC area. Under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma launch a social movement. After the formation of BTC in 2005, BPF a regional political party emerged in BTC for hope and aspiration of Bodo people.*

*This paper based on the role of BPF in Bodoland Territorial Council and Assam.*

**Keywords:** *Bodo, ABSU, BPF, Movement, State, Bodoland.*

### 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The Bodo Movement for a separate homeland started during the colonial period. The Kochari Yubak committee submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission, depending for the protection and preservation of their distinct identity and culture.

During the post independence period the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) was formed in 1952 with a view to protect the Bodo language and literature.

In 1968 All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) was formed. ABSU also spearheaded the demand for a separate state for the Bodos to protect the language, cultural, social, economic and political identity of the Bodos. Upendra Nath Brahma was elected as the President of the ABSU in 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1986 in the Darrang Conference of the ABSU. Upendra Nath Brahma, popularly known as the "Bodofa" took the issue of a separate state of the Bodos for the protection and preservation of their language, culture, socio-economic and political identity with a view to fulfill their demand for a separate Bodoland movement was started.

The Bodo Accord was signed on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1993 at Kokrajhar. But the BAC Accord of 1993 failed to satisfy the Bodo leaders. A mass movement organized under the leadership of the ABSU and the BPAC which turn in to a violent one. After six years of such violent movement of the ABSU and BPAC, Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) an insurgent group was formed by a section of Bodo youths to launch the movement more in a vigorous way to fulfill the demand for a separate Bodoland.

The BLT under the leadership of Hagrama Basumatary surrendered arms along with 2, 641 BLT cadres at a public ceremony organized on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2003 at Kokrajhar Districts Sports Association field with a view to join in the main stream politics of the region. As per the MOS, the BTC would try to fulfill the socio-economic, political, cultural, educational, language and ethnic

identity of the Bodos with the infrastructural development of the BTC for early implementation of the developmental aspects under the BTC area

The Bodoland Peoples' Progressive Front (BPPF) is one of the regional political parties in Assam. The party was formed on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 with Shri Rabiram Narzary as its President and Shri Hemendra Nath Brahma as its General Secretary. The surrendered leaders of the BLT, together with the leaders of the All Bodo Students' Union, formed a political party called Bodo Peoples' Progressive Front (BPPF). In 2005 the performance of BPPF was very good because at that time BPPF contested all 40 seats of the BTAD and won 22 seats with 55% of votes.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

The Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF) is a regional political party in Assam. The BPF party under Hagrama Mohilary has been playing very effective role in the BTC. The aims and objectives of the BPF are: to work for the sovereignty and integrity of the country based on the democracy and secularism; to work for the political rights, economic development and social justice; to make the BTAD a model and self sufficient region by influencing the State Government of Assam and the government of India. The BPPF party suffered a vertical spilt into BPPF(R) with Rabiram Narzary and BPPF (H) with Hagrama Mohilary later on renamed as the BPF. The Bodoland Peoples' Front plays a very effective role in the politics of Assam and it has almost able to protect the interest of the Bodos

Another remarkable achievement of the BPF was that it enabled to bring consciousness among the Bodo people in the BTAD. It was because of the effort of the BPF that ruling party had to show its concern over the problems of Bodo people. The BPF was also able to represent the social, economic and political problems of the people of the rural areas of the BTC. The BPF has been playing a significant role in social- political, economic and cultural development of all sections of people in the society and try to promote the social justice, secularism and democracy. The BPF has also been trying to solve the problems like unemployment, illiteracy and flood. After the signing of the MOS, an Autonomous area was created named the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) within the State of Assam which included four districts – Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources of data have been collected from the field study, Constitution and programme of the BPPF & BPF, elections manifestos of the BPF & BPPF, office documents of the Government of Assam and the BTC. Besides, Secondary sources of data have been collected from published books, journals, articles, magazines, newspapers etc. The descriptive and analytical methods have been used for in analyzing and interpretation of data.

The performance of BPF in BTC election 2005, mentioned bellow -

**Table1:** Performance of BPPF in 2005.

SL NO.	POLITICAL PARTY	SEATS WON
1	BPPF	22
2	AGP	01
3	IND	17
4	INC	00
5	BJP	00

**Source:** Assam State Elections Commission, Dispur.

From the above table : 1, it is clear that BPPF secured 22 seats, IND candidates won 17 seats and AGP won only 01 seats. INC and BJP could not secure a single seat. The result shows that BPPF formed the BTC government for the first time.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2005, all the 40 elected members of the Bodoland Territorial Council were administered oath by the Lower Assam Commissioner, C.K. Sarma. Hagrama Mohilary was sworn as the Chief of the BTC. Chandan Brahma as the Deputy Chief. The other 11 Executive Council Members were administered the oath of office by the State Chief Secretary, S.Kabilan at the Government Higher Secondary Schools' field in the presence of the Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi, the Health Minister,

Bhumidhar Barman, and the Planning and Development Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Members of the Lok Sabha from Kokrajhar, S.K. Bwismuthiary, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha President, Brojendra Kumar Brahma and host of other dignitaries on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2005.

### **3.1. Performance of the BPF in the BTC Elections, 2010**

The Election Commission declared the BTC elections for second term to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2010. BPF contested for 40 seats. The BPF won 31 seats, while Congress (I) secured 3 seats and Independent Candidates secured 6 seats.

In the second BTC elections 2010, Hagrama Mohilary was the Chief of the BTC. He kept the portfolios with him like PWD, P&RD, PHE, WPT & BC (Non-Plan), any other departments not allotted to other EM. The Kampa Borgoyary was the Deputy Chief of the BTC. He was entrusted to the portfolios like Small Industries, Cottage Industries, Rural Industries, Forest and Tourism. There were 12 Executive Members in the BTC elections in 2010. Out of 12 Executive Members only Santiuse Khujur was elected from Indian National Congress. Other 11 Executive Members were elected from the BPF. They were- Derhasat Basumatary, Mitharam Basumatary, Sobha Ram Basumatary, Buddhi Narzary, Lwmswrao Daimary, James Basumatary, Deben Boro, Gonesh Kachary, Bonomali Boro, Reo Reo Narzihary, Mono Kr Brahma. The Governor of Assam nominated 6 members to the BTC to represent the different communities.

### **3.2. BTC Elections 2015**

BTAD, which came into being in 2003, witnessed its third elections on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. Seven political parties contested the elections; additionally a large number of Independent Candidates contested the elections. In the BTC elections 2015 the main contest was likely to be between the ruling BPF led by Hagrama Mohilary and the Peoples' Coordination For Democratic Rights (PCDR) which contested for the first time in the BTC elections 2015. Total number of voters were 20, 64,099 while 10, 58,889 were male and 10, 05,210 were female voters.

After the BTAD elections 2010, the Bodoland Peoples' Front (BPF) has once again formed the Council. Out of 40 Constituencies BPF got elected from 20 Constituencies. The BPF secured 47% of the total votes polled while Independent candidates secured 28.5% of votes. The other political parties like AIUDF secured 4%, BJP secured 13%, Indian National Congress (I) secured 6% and AGP secured 0.50% of voters polled during this elections. So the BPF continued to dominate the BTC by an absolute majority in the BTC since its inception.

An attempt has been made here to study the performance of BPF in the BTC elections 2010 & 2015.

**Table2:** Performance of BPF in 2010 & 2015(BTC elections)

Sl.No	Political parties	Seats won in 2010	Seats won in 2015	Gain/loss since 2010
1	BPF	31	20	-11
2	INC	03	0	-3
3	AIUDF	--	04	+4
4	BJP	--	1	+1
5	IND	06	15	+9
6	CPI(M)	0	0	NIL
7	AGP	0	0	NIL

**Source:** Assam State Elections Commission, Dispur.

The BPF secured 31 seats in 2010 elections and 20 seats in 2015. The Indian National Congress (I) secured 3 seats in 2010 and no seats could be secured in 2015. The AIUDF secured 4 seats while it could not win a single seat in 2010. The BJP secured one seat in 2015 for the first time. The CPI(M) could not secure a single seat in 2010 and 2015 elections. The Independent Candidates got elected 6 and 15 seats in 2010 and 2015 elections. The result shows that the Independent Candidates were going day by day because those Independent candidates also belonged to some political parties while the BPF was losing its mass base support gradually.

### **3.3. Performance of the BPF in Assam Assembly Elections 2011**

The first phase of elections was held in 62 Assembly Constituencies as on 4/4/2011 and the second phase election was held 64 Assembly Constituencies on 11/4/ 2011.

**Table3.**

Party	No. of contesting candidate	No of candidates elected	No of valid votes polled	Percentage
INC	126	78	54,43,781	39.39
AGP	104	10	22,51,935	16.29
BJP	120	5	15,84,895	11.47
CPI	17	-	72,023	0.52
CPM	17	-	1,56,654	1.13
NCP	35	-	59,827	0.43
AIUDF	78	18	17,37,415	12.57
AIFB	4	-	3,588	0.03
JMM	9	-	14,440	0.10
AITC	103	-	2,81,747	1.98
Shiv Se.	5	-	5,237	0.05
SP	13	-	13,241	0.10
AIMF	6	-	3,870	0.03
ASDC	1	-	10,361	.07
<b>BPF</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8,47,520</b>	<b>6.13</b>
JD(U)	2	-	3030	0.02
CPI(ML)	8	-	24,813	2.24
RCPI.RB	2	-	1398	0.01
RSP	1	-	505	0.00
J&K N.P	2	-	2353	0.02
LKS	4	-	2,154	0.02
LKB	2	-	5123	0.04
SAP	5	-	3028	0.02
SUCI	25	-	20,487	0.15
IND	263	2	12,69,861	9.19
Total	981	126	13820576	100.00

**Source:** Statistical Report on General elections, 2011 to the 13<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Assam, Government of Assam, State Election Office, Dispur, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2011.

Table (3) shows that during the Assam Legislative Assembly Elections, 2011 a total of 24 Political Parties including the national, regional and other small ethnic based political parties took part in the elections. In this elections Congress (I) again won the elections with coalition partner, the BPF. On the other hand, the AGP and the BJP fought against the Indian National Congress (I) and its alliance. The AIUDF fought alone against all other political parties. The Indian National Congress (I) has contested all the 126 Constituencies and won 78 seats out of 126 seats. The Indian National Congress (I) got absolute majority in this elections. The total votes were polled 54, 43,781(39.39%). The performance of the AGP was very poor. The BPF contested 29 seats out of 126 seats of Assam Assembly elections and while it has won 12 seats and allied with the Congress Government. The total votes were polled **8, 47,520** and percentage was **6.13%**. Therefore the performance of the BPF was very effective.

### 3.4. Performance of the BPF in Assam Assembly Election 2016

The poll date was declared in two different phases as the 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 (Monday) for 65 LACs in the first phase of elections. The 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 (Monday) for 61LACs in the second phase of elections.

The counting of votes and result was declared on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The election changes the power of Congress, which had formed the Government under Tarun Gogoi since 2001. The overall voter turnout was 84.72%. It was a new record. The turnout was an increase from 2011, Assembly election. It was figure of 75%.

**Table4:** Performance of the BPF in Assam Assembly Elections, 2016

Party	No. of contesting candidates	No. of candidate elected	Total no. of valid voters polled	Percentage of valid votes polled
INC	122	26	5,23,8665	31.00
AGP	30	14	1,37,7482	8.01
BJP	89	60	4,99.2185	29.05

CPI	15	-	37,243,	0.02
	19	-	93,508	0.06
CPIM				
NCP	11	-	44,848	0.03
AIUDF	74	13	22,07,945	13.00
AITC	19	-	27,739	0,02
BPF	13	12	6,66,057	3.90
	11	-	33,220	0.02
B.Gap				
UPP	4	-	2,91,198	1.72
NOTA	-	-	1,89,080	1.01
Others	702	1	18,67,532	11.00
Total		126	1,70,66,699	100

**Source:** *Statistical Report on General election, 2016 to the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Assam, Government of Assam.*

Table (4.) highlights that the performances of the BPF in the Assembly election 2016. In this election, the BPF formed the pre-alliance with the BJP and the AGP. The Indian National Congress (I) has contested 122 Constituencies out of 126 and it has won only 26 seats. It was the very poor performance of the Congress. The total votes polled in favour of the Congress were 52, 38,665 (31.00%). The performance of the AGP was comparatively better. The AGP has contested 30 seats out of 126 seats and it has won 14 seats. The BPF has contested 13 seats out of 126 seats of Assam Assembly elections and it has won 12 seats as an ally of the BJP. The total votes polled was **6, 66,057 (3.90%)**. The BJP has contested 89 seats out of 126 seats and it has won 60 seats and formed the Government first time in Assam with their allied partner the BPF and the AGP. The total votes polled in favour the BJP were 4, 99, 2185(29.50%). The performance of BPF was very attractive.

From the study it is revealed that the continued its BPF dominant role in the BTC since its inception. BPF contested all the 40 seats in the BTC elections but in 2005 it won 22 seats, in 2010 it won 32 seats, and in 2015 it won 21 seats. Winning 22 seats in the first General elections, the BPF became the largest party in the BTC and became the ruling party and Hagrama Mohilary formed the first BTC government. The second BTC election was held in 2010 and in these elections, the BPF succeeded in maintaining the earlier victory. In the third general elections to the BTC, the BPF became the majority party and formed the Government with Hagrama Mohilary as its Chief for the third consecutive terms. Thus, the elections result shows the better performance of the BPF as a movement organization and its leads performing better developmental activities and programmes for the BTC. The pro-people policies and programmes of the BPF enabled to influence and motivate the people under the BTC, particularly the Bodos of Bodoland area overwhelmingly voted to the BPF and its leaders to power for the three consecutive terms of the BTC and the Assembly and Parliamentary seats also.

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