

Preface

The Bodos are of mongoloid race of Tibeto-Burman stock now inhabiting an extensive area in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam with their main concentration in the northern bank of the Brahmaputra right up to the foot hills along the northern boundary of Assam adjoining Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh .They are now recognized as Plains scheduled Tribe in Assam .Once this great race inhabitant the entire north eastern plains of of India extending from southeast Nepal through north Bengal and Assam-Meghalaya right up to Tripura as well as the adjoining foothill regions of Bangladesh, where their descendants are still living under various tribal and linguistic identities.

In earlier literature Bodos had been referred as the 'Kacharis'. It was B.H. Hodgson who used the word Bodo for the first time to refer to a linguistic group under Tibeto-Burman linguistic family and all the communities mentioned bellow were incorporated into that family .These are –Boro Kachari, Sonowal Kachari, Tiwa, Rabha and Dimasa.

This work has explored many critical and micro level aspects of the socio-economic and ethnic transition of the Bodos of Duars region, particularly the land related issues since the coming of the Colonial rule.

Though the assertion of the Bodos is a recent development, their existence as a distinct ethnic group has a history of more than two thousand years. It is almost impossible to trace and reconstruct the history of a people who do not have written record and whose participation in the mainstream history is only marginal. In this study, the present researcher has shown only those aspect of the Bodo history which can be based on the basis of evidences, direct or indirect and at the same time which is capable of throwing some light on the complex process of formation of the nationality .

The period from 1866 to 1993 is a formative epoch in the history of Assam in general and to the Bodos in particular. It marked not only the beginning of British rule having radical changes, but it also added in a new element in the area - the social tension, ultimately leading to political consciousness among the people of the area. The object of this work is to provide

in the light of available original sources - Assamese, English, Bodo and Zongkha, a narrative not merely of the successive stages in the establishment of British Supremacy in the Duars, but also the period of subsequent reactions in its true perspective leading to the early phase of the Freedom Movement in the Duars area.

My endeavour to study the gradual transition of the Bodos of Eastern Duars during the period under review had to reckon with many limitations. In spite of the difficulties of processing the source materials on the Duars region, an all-out effort was made to secure all relevant information through interviews of some senior personalities in Assam. All sources of information and interviews are enlisted in the bibliography and reference to them is cited in my thesis. I do not claim this work to be the final one, but firmly believe that this work is a pioneering and lay basis for further investigation in the never ending field of academic research.

The study reveals that the entire development process the socio - religious movement, upward social mobility, ethnic crisis, Bodoland movement etc. are inter related to each other and their roots were laid in the Brahma dharma movement or the spread of Christianity in the early part of twentieth century.

I have tried to present the facts and chronology as authentic as possible and analyzed them critically and objectively. Many of the facts are established facts, which I have just reproduced and interpreted them from various angles.

In accommodating facts I had always been careful and tried to present them in brief but comprehensible manner avoiding unnecessary prolongation. Great care has also been taken not to distort the fact in this thesis.

Standard references have been used in preparing the thesis in order to substantiate the various points discussed. The bibliography shows the extent of the study to prepare this thesis.