

CHAPTER-VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Today conflict caused by ethnic hostility is gradually rising day by day across the whole world. The questions related to the ethnicity has come forefront everywhere. Ethnic assertion all over the globe has been in the rise. People now want freedom to speak their language, and celebrate their ethnic, religious, traditional heritage without fear of ridicule. It has been suspected that dominant ethnic groups would surely engulf all smaller ethnic existence and their identity. This suspicion and fear has consequently given rise to many of the ethnic movements today. This suspicion and fear and the trend of ethnic assertion is bound to be there in North-East India and it is likely to proliferate. Further, different tribal communities of North-East India have started movements and have mobilized their people to achieve greater socio-political and territorial autonomy. In Assam, this phenomenon has become significantly visible in the 60's onward and it has been seen that number of groups mobilising since then has been increasing.

In Assam, it has been seen that even after the continuous process of Assamese society formation the existence of the ethnic groups are also same apparent at all. Whatever it may be, in the first half of the twentieth Century, raising some fundamental questions to the Assamese formation, the tribal groups of Assam came forward to protect their own identity. However, although these groups came forward to protect their identity, they did not demand separation from Assamese. Mentionable that the memorandum that Bodo leader Kalicharan Brahma placed before the Simon

Commission on 4th January in 1929 was the first memorandum of its kind placed by the tribal groups of Assam. This memorandum says clearly that the Bodo does not intend to introduce itself as a separate entity from the Assamese. Though they did not demand a separate identity than Assamese, still it is mentionable here that, they made the demand of separate electorate for them. Hence, it is seen until this period that although the tribal people or being conscious to their identity all right, they did not want to give up their belongingness to Assamese. The tribal leaders who had trust and perpetuated dual identity, believed the possibility of being Assamese even after being tribal. But the caste Hindu Assamese middle class could not reflect this attitude or they could not assimilate the tribal elements in the process of Assamese formation. As a consequence when the Assamese middle class nullified the concept of dual identity and stressed on single identity, the tribal leadership also tended to cling on separate identity. However unlike Bodos which demanded the sole Bodo identity being separated from the Assamese, The Misings founded its own Mising existence even after being the Assamese itself by the process of dual identity.

The growth of a raising middle-class among the tribal groups made their people conscious as to their ethnic identity. In the very beginning of this move, only as a partaker of the greater Assamese society, they came forward to protect their own identity and cultural heritage. Mentionable here that, instead of raising their political demands they in this period did lay stress on protection and development of the socio-cultural elements and picked up some economic issues. It implies that they endeavored to organize and start a movement of socio-economic development, cultural and

educational progress of the society. In respect of the revivalism started among the tribal people in socio-cultural line, serious conflict between the middle class of the tribal and its counterpart of the Assamese did not take place in the beginning. But gradually the Assamese middle class started playing a conscious role and such types of conflict began to happen. In spite of this bitter development the tribal people came forward to protect their self identity and prepared for a political movement along with its cultural revival.

The emergence of a newly educated middle class among the tribals gave an organized form to protect their interest. In this case, class interest of this newly emerging middle class was another driving force behind this raise. One main objective of this raise was to protect its class interest by maintaining a different stand from the Assamese middle class. Though it was a driving force behind this move, however conflict between tribal middle class and Assamese middle class has not been so distinct in the very first instance and therefore personalities from the Assamese middle class were invited to various conferences of important bodies of these tribal groups.

It was the Bodos who initiated an organized movement for protection of its political right, preservation and development of cultural identity amidst this long process. Thus, in the line of the Bodos, the Misings also started an organized movement for protection of socio-cultural, political and economic rights and cultural heritage as well. However, it is already discussed in third chapter of this work that unlike the straggle to establish a separate Bodo – identity from Assamese with the demand of autonomy at the initial stage, later demand of separate state and cultural

totality, the Misings preferred to solve the core economic and political issues by the means of political autonomy and protection and development of its own cultural heritage and wanted to form a greater Assamese society with the equal partaking of all tribes and ethnic groups of Assam.

However, the base of this self assertion movement of the Bodos and the Misings started organized way in the post independent period has its legacy in the colonial period, was designed by the rules and regulations of the British Colonial government towards the tribals. Thus, the state re-organizing process and the policies adopted by the centre and the state governments towards the tribals from time to time also played significant roles to gear up and design the movement of self assertion of the Bodos and the Misings. It seems that many a states of the world stressed on the process of cultural homogenization in state building process. In respect of India also, the same phenomenon is noteworthy and it has much impact on the dimension of the Bodo and the Mishing movement.

In addition to all these factors, threats to their traditional agro-economy caused by different policies imposed during the colonial and Post colonial period, contraction of cultivable and habitable land due to both internal and external migration and apathetic attitude of the caste Hindu Assamese middle class government and occasional aggressive policies as well also fuelled up their grievances only to fortify them to the path of movement. This matter is discussed in details in the second chapter of this work.

The present work titled **Understanding Cultural Dimension of the Autonomy Movements of Assam: A Study on the Bodo and Mising Movements** is an attempt to approach towards the questions such as the main factors behind the movement for protection of socio-economic, political and cultural rights of the Bodos and the Misings, reasons behind their cultural revivalism and the nature of its move, intensity in the sense of mobilizing and organizing the people for this movement, managing diversity and the changing dynamics of these movements basically in the post accord period etc . It has been discussed the above said matters in the following six chapters and endeavored to find out the answers.

In the first chapter **The Bodos and the Misings of Assam and their Culture: A Historical approach**, it has been discussed about the ethnic identity and culture of the Bodo and the Misings. The Bodo is one of the autochthonous tribal groups living in the northern bank of the Brahmaputra in particular. The Bodo has the highest number of population amongst the tribal groups living in the plain area; the number is 1361735 according to the census of 2011 which is 5.01% of the total population of Assam. This tribal groups belonging to the Indo Mongoloid came to this region thousands of years ago. The Bodo Kacharis moved periodically over a considerable amount of time from south China via Tibet and Bhutan in ancient times and settled in the Himalayan plain blow the foot hills of Bhutan and present Arunachal Pradesh, areas located at the northern bank of river Brahmaputra. Gradually, they moved further inland and settled in different parts of the region in and around the area adjoining

Nepal, North Bengal, Garo hills, North Cachar hills and Cachar plains in the southern part of Assam, Tripura and some adjacent areas of Bangladesh.

Language of the Bodos belongs to the Bodo group of Sino-Tibetan family of languages. The written form of this language which is enriched with folk-literature was introduced by the Christian Missionary and it got its concrete form in the second decade of the twentieth century by the way of publication of '*Bibar*' the first Bodo magazine. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha which was established in 1952 carried on this literary expedition to a significant stage. As a result of the continuous Endeavour of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and the All Bodo Students Unions, the Bodo language was adopted as the medium of instruction in the Bodo dominated areas in 1963. Curriculum for learning of Bodo language was introduced in Guwahati University in the year 1996 followed by Dibrugarh University. The Bodo Language was recognized by the Government of India as one of the Scheduled Languages under the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 2003.

The traditional religious faith of the Bodo is *Bathou* religion. Worshiping of *Bathoubrai* is the main base of their traditional religious faith. In case of the Bodos no any particular place for public worshipping is seen. Usually, a *Siju* plant (euphorbia splendens) is found in every Bodo family which is used as *Bathou* alter and they perform their religious rituals there only. Deity worshipping is not practiced by the Bodos. Rice is the chief food item of the Bodos, being they dependent on agriculture. They take different types of paddy, vegetables, fish and meat as their meal. Like all the other tribes of Assam, Bodos have their traditional beverage, rice beer called *Jau* or

Jumai. In respect of garments and jewelry, they use generally colourful ones. The traditional dress worn by the Bodo women is called *Dokhona*. They celebrate a good number of festivals and as these are as agribased as their economy. *Boisagu, Domasi, Katigasu, Kherai Puja, Garja Puja* is some noteworthy festivals of the Bodos.

In respect of their social life, it has not been seen any evidence of other traditional institutions apart from *Khels* and *Mels*. The *Gaonburha, Ozah* and the *Deori* play the main roles in management of the villages.

The Mishing is one another Indo-Mogoloid tribe that lives in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. Originally they were hill dwellers and inhabited the hills lying north of the upper Brahmaputra valley in Siang and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. For a long period of time since 16th century approximately and up to the first decade of twentieth century they were coming to the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. Presently they have settled down in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat, Sonitpur and Tinsukia district and a small number of the Mishings dwell at Pasighat in the East Sinag district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Mishing language belongs to Tibeto- Burma group of languages. The Mising language has some variants based on regional variations and social stratifications. Before independence, neither any written form nor its own script of the Mising language was found. It was the Christian Missionary that introduced the written form of the language as they did in case of the Bodo language and they adopted the Roman script for the language. The expedition was carried on later by the Mising Agom Kebang which was formed in 1972 to protect, preserve and

development of Language, literature and culture. Animism, Animatism and super naturalism came to be basic ingredients of Mising religion. The religion of the Mising is named *donyi Polo* as the traditional religious faith is based on the worshipping of *Donyi Polo*.

On being their economy agro-based, their chief food is rice supplemented by different types of vegetables, fish, meat etc. Rice beer popularly called *Apong* is one of indispensable item of Mising used in their usual daily life. *Apong* and *Para Apong* are two kinds of Rice beer used by the Misings. As an agro based tribe, the festivals of the Mising are also based on agriculture. *Ali Aye Ligang* and *Porag* are two main festivals observed by them.

Regarding to their socio-political history, no any king or such type of dignitary among the Misings is not seen. The society was embedded with a sense of democracy. *Gaonburha* was the chief to manage the affairs of a village or society. There some traditional community organization like *Kebang*, *Murung* and *Mimbir Yamme* play special roles in management of the village affairs and to intake social morality. Traditionally, the Mishing use colourful dress which are usually product of domestic handicraft.

In the second chapter **Background of the Bodo Movement and the Mising Movement**, it has been discussed the background and causes behind the Bodo and the Mising movement which got its momentum during the post Independence period, as a whole. The background of these tribal movements can be attributed to the traditional tribal society and life and cultural base of the people and the various rules regulations

enacted by the colonial government basically in the first half of the twentieth century. Mentionable that, report of the Simon Commission, formation of the tribal league, Government of India Act-1935 etc had immense influence on the basic structure on the future of the tribal people in Assam. Thus, the nature of the Assamese society formation and the attitude of the cast Hindu Assamese middle class in this process also were other significant factors behind these movements.

To analyze the causes of the Bodo and the Mising movement, it is considered the gradual enhancement of land alienation to be the first. The Bodos and the the Misings are the two main tribes that live in the rural Assam and having agriculture as their main base of economy. At the arrival of the British and due to their policies of exploitation their traditional basis of agro-economy was severely kicked down. Agricultural land of the tribal people, forest land and hills which were once community resource were acquiesced with the intention of more profit and it pushed the tribal people towards the state of land alienation. Exploitation through the *Zamindari* system, with the inception of colonialism the idea of private property strike blow the backbone of traditional agro-economy made the future of the tribal people gloomy. To generate more revenue, the British imported Lakhs of Muslims from the East Bengal and got them settle down in the Brahmaputra valley and the policy of making more revenue by settling these people made the periphery of the occupation of the tribal people just narrow only. Thus, the policy of ‘Grow more food campaign’ was another addition to the agony of the indigenous saga.

During the Post Independence period also, there some land laws and regulations aggravated the problem more. Although some tribal belts and blocks were reserved for the people, those were not properly protected. It resulted to a continuous process of land alienation among the tribal and it relegated the tribal people, who afraid the modern life-style, to remote places. The agro economy of this tribal people was totally collapsed due to the land alienation process and many of them became total land less.

In the first half of the twentieth century, a middle-section people although it was not a complete middle-class arose among them and it tried to unite the suffered people to solve their common problems. This section was much instrumental to form various organizations, to revive the cultural elements, to organize the people and to lead the people to movement for protection of their heritage. And now, the conflict taking place between this section and the Assamese middle class, on being their line of expectations same became another impetus of the movement of the later time. In the post independence period, some government policies in particular reorganization of state in 1960s, creation of Tribal state in 1970 in Assam just stirred the people. Again, some socio-political happenings of Assam such as Language Act of 1960, Medium of Instruction of 1970 and Assam movement intensified the turmoil and accordingly they also made the idea of cultural revival relevant once more. The majoritarian approach of Assamese Middle class pushed back them to socio culturally marginalized position and it compelled them to seek new avenues. The problem of unemployment which was

yielded from new economic policies and various land policies implemented time to time was also another major cause of their frustration.

In case of the Misings, the main cause of their disgust is rooted to the process of losing their agricultural and habitation land due to different policies adopted during the Colonial and Post-colonial period. Natural disaster is also another prominent factor of losing their land. Every year this tribal group which is basically riverine is losing thousand acres of land due to erosion and another thousand acres became desert like as covered by flood carried sand. There, a distinct difference is noticed in case of land alienation between the Bodos and the Mishings. In case of the Mishings, the cause of land alienation is basically due to natural disaster. And, at the same time, being child nature, as they are disgusted with modern life style and socio-economic atmosphere, they retreat themselves to the interior areas only to give up their land to be occupation by either by the non tribals or by the government for some developmental project. Effect of external migration in case of the Bodo is especially noteworthy. During the colonial period, with the aim to make more profit, Muslims from East Bengal were hired and they were settled at the non cultivated land, forest land under Bodo dominated area. This migration affair which continued during the Post independence period also became a major factor behind land alienation. Besides acquisition of the land owned by the Bodos by various government policies during both colonial and post-colonial period was also another noteworthy cause of the process of land alienation among Bodos.

Unemployment was one of the major problems caused by land alienation. Like so, socio-cultural exclusion was also another main factor. The prolong Socio-cultural alienation which was to be faced by the Misings during Post Sankardev Brahminical social set up made them frustrated. Besides, the rules and regulations adopted during the colonial and Post-colonial period worsened their conditions. The affairs during 60's and 70's decade of Assam diminished their socio-cultural and material access to a large extent.

With the expansion of education, educated section of the tribal people devoted itself to organize the people to solve their problems. The section endeavored to solve their socio-cultural problems by unifying their people through some socio-cultural organizations. Expansion of education made the people politically conscious also. And, obviously there conflict took place between the middle class of this tribal people and its counterpart of the Assamese, as both of them nourished the same expectations. This conflict of class interest was one of the main causes of the tribal self Assertion movement. Because of all these reasons mentioned above the rising newly educated middle class came forward and started movement in an organized shape.

In the third and fourth chapter of this work, the revival process of the cultural elements and the process how people were culturally mobilized for a movement with economic-political aim have been discussed. To do this, in the third chapter, entitled **Defining and Redefining Culture in the Bodo and the Mising movement: Culture as a force of mobilization-Language and Literature**, the revival of the Bodo and the Mising languages, development of language and literature and the manner, that the

people were mobilized by an organized form in the line of language and literature, has been thoroughly discussed. This socio-cultural revival which was devoid of any political agenda in the initial stage became the key factor of a political movement in the later period. Language can be the base of a nation building process. In case of the Bengali, basically in nineteenth century, it is seen that they gave their identity by the way of their language only. Likewise, in respect growth of Assamese nationalism, the role of Assamese language was much pivotal.

In case of the movement of the Bodo self assertion also, the role of the language was foremost. With the rising of an educated middle class, they focused on the development of language and literature and the trend, being boosted up by Bodo Sahitya Sabha which was formed in 1952, got a distinct momentum. Formation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha and its different kind of activities not only gave a new dimension to the development of the Bodo language but it also became successful to unite the Bodo people on the basis of language and literature. Different movements for the development of the Bodo language, Bodo script movement were the prominent happenings during the period. It is mentionable that, obviously the enterprise of revival of its language and literature faced antagonistic reaction from the caste Hindu Assamese middle class. Though the movement, at first, was a move for preservation and development of mother tongue only, the opposed reaction from the Assamese middle class towards this movement converted it to a movement for asserting a separate identity than Assamese. Interestingly, the process of cultural revivalism which had no political objective at the beginning, became the most instrumental power

of the Bodo self asserting movement gradually. It was a grand breakthrough of the Bodo people that they could lead an organized political movement after getting their people united on the basis of language particularly. Role of the Bodo language, literature, particularly impact of Bodo poetry, short stories, novel, and lyrics was immense in upsealing of the sense of self assertion among the Bodos.

In case of the Misings also it is seen that they became aware to protect their own language and culture basically in the second part of the 20th century. In this process, Mising Agom Kebang played a pivotal role to create a standard Mising language by assembling different variety remained dispersed places. The Mising language got an own form and dynamicity mainly as the effort of the Mising Agom Kebang and the TMPK. In the movement for protection of their economic and political rights which became another major movement in Assam, the language based mobilization of the Mising people stood as a major force. However, although the Mising people were technically successful in the political struggle in getting its autonomous council, they cannot be considered grand successful to give a powerful organized form to the Mising people on the basis of language, literature and culture.

The fact can be attributed to the matter that a section of Mising people has already detached from their own language and has accepted completely the Assamese language through a prolonging graduality of assimilation. Thus, the intermixture between the Misings and the non Misings is too deep. It is seen that the Misings live in a scattered way in different places instead of their habitation in an isolated or unitary

system. This is also another factor for which it is not quite successful making their people organized on the basis of the Mising language and culture.

The fourth chapter of this work entitled **Defining and Redefining Culture in the Bodo and the Mising Movement: Culture as a force of mobilization-Religion, Social Customs, Dress code and others**, the revival process of the traditional religious beliefs, traditional dress code, traditional food items and other cultural heritage are discussed thoroughly. The chapter has also discussion on how religion has been being used as a force of mobilization or to unification of the people for an organized movement with political and economic end. It also discusses the retrieval process of the traditional food habits and traditional dress code of both the tribes and its use with political-economic aim.

Regarding the retrieval of cultural elements, the Bodos had to first experience a religious reformation by the way of *Brahma* movement and later by revivalism of traditional religious beliefs of *Bathouism* under the leadership of Nikhil Bathou Mahasabha. Simultaneously, there has been an increasing emphasis from both the ethnic groups on restoring traditional social customs, food habits, traditional attires etc. In the process of revival of traditional religious beliefs the *Donyi Polo* movement among the Misings has to be worth mentioned. But the movement till date is not a grand success one unlike the Bodos as it is not capable of entering the all Mising mind and uniting the people on its basis. It is mentionable that the Misings constitute less than 50 percent in all the districts where they are mostly found. In Dhemaji and Lakhimpur where Misings are most dominant there also their physical distributions are

interspersed with the Assamese settlement. This intermixing of the Mising people with Assamese settlement and the long historical assimilation they faced becomes a major reason of slow progress of their revival process as a whole.

While discussing the politicization of cultural elements the chapter also deals with how songs with nationalist zeal were popularized among common people to organize them for a political movement. These songs have an appeal to organize and join hands to save the future of their people, to protect and preserve their rich cultural heritage and a call for reformation in every aspect of life for having a dignified life. Thus, gradually songs resonating ethnic sentiment were popularized among masses to mobilize them towards an organized movement.

The fifth chapter entitled **Managing Diversity: Changing Dynamics in the Bodo and the Mising movement** has discussions on how state tries to manage diversity by the way of creating Autonomous Councils on the one hand and how the political leadership of both these ethnic groups trying to manage diversity within the council areas in the post accord period on the other hand. The chapter also tries to find out what are the changing trends in the Bodo and Mising movement in the post accord period. It is seen that once the accords were signed, the leaders more than concentrating on the standing demands of separate state by the Bodos and six schedule demand by the Misings, leaned towards electoral politics of these autonomous councils and there has been seen a rise of gradual disagreement among the political leadership and the civil society of these ethnic groups.

Major findings:

1. In the beginning of the twentieth century, a small newly emerging middle class rising out of the tribal people of Assam made an effort to upkeep their own identity and they raised some fundamental questions to the greater Assamese nation building process. In this process, big brother attitude of the caste-Hindu Assamese middle class, gradual increase of dominating attitude etc. made the tribal people skeptic and worry as to their future. One of the main causes of their worriedness was gradual land alienation for both internal and external causes. Shrinking of cultivable land in consequence of internal and external aggression due to policies adopted during colonial and post colonial period collapsed their agro-economy. This gloomy misfortune kindled the middle class tribal people to organize the common people under one umbrella. The question of the interest of middle class is also intricate with this development. Different rules and regulations toward the tribal adopted and imposed during the colonial period also intensified their Zeal for self assertion in post independent period.
2. With the rise of an educated middle-class, the Bodos and the Mising as well, who liked to introduce themselves to be Assamese once, came forward to protect their own culture and heritage and self identity. At first, it was not a demand for separate identity than Assamese. But, the contentious attitude of the caste Hindu Assamese middle class provoked them to cling to their self identity separate from Assamese. However unlike the Bodos which demanded the sole Bodo identity

being separated from the Assamese, The Misings founded its own Mising existence even after being the Assamese itself by the process of dual identity.

3. The movement to preserve the cultural heritage of the Bodo and the Mising was devoid of any political agenda in the very beginning. But in respect of the political happenings in Assam during the Post Independence period and the conflict taking place between the newly emerging tribal middle class and the Assamese middle class, contentious attitude of the caste Hindu Assamese middle class towards the cultural revivalism taking place among the tribal groups gradually made it a political movement as well. Because of these reasons, it is seen that the cultural revivalism became the instrumental tool of the movement for protection of economic and political right. As already discussed in second chapter, the language act of 1960 created a kind of majoritarian dominance in all aspects including the socio-culture and economy of Assam and it encouraged the politicization of ethno cultural identity of the Bodos and the Misings.
4. The process of cultural revivalism which was quite apolitical turned up itself into the basic line of the movement for protection of economic and political rights. The process of enrichment of own identity by the way of restoration, revival and preservice of cultural ingredients was converted gradually into politicization of ethno-cultural elements. The political struggle continued on its course by unification of people through revival of ethno cultural symbols. The Bodos are much successful in making their people united and fulfillment of its political aspirations by the way of revivalism of its cultural elements. But unlike the Bodos,

the Misings are yet to achieve its success to unite the people by the way of cultural revivalism.

5. It is considered a normal process of the smaller ethnic groups of the whole world to discard some part of their cultural heritage and became partners of a mixed cultural environment through a long and complex process of assimilation. This historical process of assimilation is influenced by social, economic and political factors. The Bodos and the Misings of Assam too have lost a few of their cultural elements during the historical process of assimilation to the Assamese formation. But an emerging middle class of both these communities started to revive these elements. The task was not very easy. To make the task possible they founded many organizations and associations, such as Bodo Sahitya Sabha, All Bodo Students Union, Nikhil Bathow Sangathan, Mising Bane Kebang, Mising Agom Kebang, Mising Dirbi Kebang, Takam Mising Porin Kebang etc. All these organizations have been working tirelessly to revive and preserve their own cultural heritage. While making revivalism of cultural elements, they firstly, gave importance on preservice, development and transmission of their languages. Simultaneously they put increasing emphasis on restoring traditional religious beliefs, food habits and traditional attire and so on. While reviving cultural heritage, the Bodos were to first to experience a religious awareness as they were broadly divided on religious basis. Later, to carry forward the movement to ensure political and economic rights it was felt to mobilize people on the basis of culture. Thus, gradually songs

resonating ethnic sentiment were popularized among masses to mobilize them towards an organized movement.

6. The Assamese society is a consequence of prolonging and historical assimilation. While because of the diversity the Indian nation building process has to face tensions at the same time from the outset of the twentieth century the process of the Assamese society formation too facing some fundamental questions which are still felt relevant. In this regard, managing diversity becomes a necessity and accordingly the state tries to manage diversity by the way creating administrative divisions to which the central government has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature, creating of the Development Councils by the govt. of Assam and signing of accords etc. Signing of accords and formation of autonomous bodies have given a turn to the major apprehensions and the leaders at this period, more than concentrating on the standing demands of separate state by the Bodos and six schedule demand by the Misings, gradually started concentrating on electoral politics of these autonomous bodies. When it comes to electoral politics of the autonomous councils, the inevitability of managing diversity within the council areas come to forefront. Another changing dynamics of this period is the rising difference and conflict among the political leadership and civil society of these ethnic groups. The apprehension towards the Assamese middle class has been gradually getting down and a difference among the political leadership and the civil society of these ethnic groups arises.

Conclusion

The North Eastern region of India is the homeland of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. The political, economic and social aspect of the region is influenced by this diversity the most. Cultural diversity plays a crucial role in determining the socio economic as well as political backdrops of Assam too. The fact is clearly evident in the political background of Assam in the post-independent period. The cause of diversity is the main catalyst of the formation of new states out of Assam in 60s and 70s.

All the tribal groups of Assam underwent a long and complex process of social assimilation and were finally identified themselves as 'Assamese' freely at one point of time. But from the beginning of the 20th century the same ethnic groups refused to call themselves as 'Assamese' and started a socio-political detachment. It posed a challenged to the fundamental structure of the entire Assamese formation. The main reasons of it were relative deprivation felt by the tribal people in the majoritarian Assamese socio-political formation, the Assamese caste Hindu middle class domination and big brother attitude, socio cultural as well as political alienation, gradual land alienation and apathetic role of the successive Assam governments towards tribal issues etc. Among the causes of self assertion the class expectation of the growing small middle class among the tribals has importance. When a handful of people from these tribal groups received education overcoming numerous hurdles, they started to tender middle class hopes and aspirations. All the above mentioned reasons fuelled the sense of self assertion among the Bodos and the Misings.

Man's desire to know about the past is spontaneous and natural. At the same time, if some extinct or about to extinct element from the past becomes reason of political progress of a particular ethnic group then retrieving those elements become very essential. It is seen that the emerging smaller middle class among the Bodos and the Misings started initiatives to revive and preserve the cultural elements out of their genuine necessities. To carry out this task they founded many organizations and associations and the organizations started working tirelessly to succeed its aim. Though the revivalism of cultural symbols among the Bodos and the Misings emerged out of their genuine necessities, with time, it became the driving force behind the political movement. It is seen that mobilization and unifying people through the politicization of cultural elements became main force in later period and continued.

From the point of retrieving cultural elements and mobilizing people in cultural line for political cause the Bodos are comparatively more successful than the Misings. The Bodo language and literature received national recognition as it was included in eight schedules of Indian Constitution and Sahitya Academy; the highest literary forum of India, recognized the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and Bodo literature. Ones religiously divided Bodos have started to show interest towards *Bathow* culture gradually. The Misings have a long way to go regarding the revival and transmission of its language, literature or restoring traditional religious beliefs among the masses. It is worth mentioned that most of the Mising villages are intermixed with the mainstream Assamese villages and it becomes a major reason of slow progress of their revival process. However, the Bodos were successful to form BTAD and the Misings

formed an autonomous council as a political solution to their long standing issues after conducting age long movements.

Formation of BTAD and Mising Autonomous Council is no doubt a positive development. Here, it is the necessity for the progress of both the tribes to let these autonomous units work in a free environment without any pressure and undue intervention by the state government. However, the environment of understanding from both the sides would surely resolve some complex issues like boundary demarcation and others, as boundary demarcation of Mising Autonomous Council have been creating problems. Governments too have to avoid majoritarian approaches while making policies. In conclusion, we may say that by discarding all majoritarian approaches and adopting multicultural approach, in a liberal democratic environment, the Bodos, the Misings and all other ethnic groups will get proper attention to develop them in every aspect. Such approaches will help to establish unity and maintain colourful diversity of Assam. Once it is realized, it will further help to strengthen Indian unity and harmony too.