

Government of India's Peace Negotiation with Bodo Rebels: A Review on the NDFB's Journey from Terrorism to mainstream politics

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Abstract:

The Bodoland Territorial Region Accord 2020 (BTR Accord) is signed on 27th January, 2020 to solve the Bodo's demand for political autonomy. The Bodo an ethnic group widely spread in the Assam province of India. The political negotiation was long awaited. The educated middle class among Bodos once felt the need for an organisation for the assertion of Bodo identity which, in course of time, culminated in the formation of different organisation. The major signatories of the BTR Accord are four factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) along with the All-Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and the United Bodo People's Organisation (UBPO) a civil society. In view of above this work intent to study some research questions – (i) Whether BTR agreement is a permanent solution for the Bodo terrorism? (ii) Whether BTR agreement can put impact on Bodo electoral politics? (iii) Whether BTR agreement will fulfil the aspirations of Bodo leaders or Bodo people?

Keywords: Bodo insurgency in Assam, India: terrorism challenges, peace accords, and counter-terrorism strategies.

1. Introduction

The Bodoland Territorial Region Accord 2020 (BTR Accord) is a political solution for the Bodos signed on 27th January 2020. The Bodo is an ethnic group widely spread in the north-eastern region of India. This political issue was long awaited. The educated middle class among Bodos once felt the need for an organisation for the assertion of Bodo autonomy which, in course of time, culminated in the formation of different organisation, viz., Haoraghat Bodo Sanmilan, Bodo Kachari Jubok Sanmilan, Bodo Jubak Chatra Sanmilan, Assam Tribes and Races Federations, Assam Bodo Chatra Sanmilan (1918), All Assam Plains Tribal League (1932), Bodo Sahitya Sabha (1952), All Bodo Students' Union (1967), Plains Tribal Council of Assam (1967), Bodo Security Force (1986)¹, Bodo Peoples' Action Committee (1988), Bodo Peoples' Party (1993), Bodo Liberation Tiger Force (1996), Peoples' Democratic Front (1996), Bodoland Statehood Movement Council

(1996), Bodoland Demand Legislative Party (2001) and so on (Sharma, 2000, pp.128-42). However, almost all those organisations lost support base due to propagation and practice of 'ism' such as "groupism", "nepotism", and "sectarianism".

The major signatory of the BTR Accord is National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) which was formed on 3rd October 1986. The outfit was ignored for subsequent Bodo Accords. The 1st Bodo Accord was signed by All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) in 1993 and outlined the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). The 2nd Bodo Accord was signed in 2003 by Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) a relatively fresher outfit than the NDFB became fateful to form Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). Thus, finally the 3rd and final Bodo accord signed by the four factions (Gobinda Basumatary, Ranjan Daimari, Dhiren Boro and Saoraigwra) of NDFB, ABSU and the United Bodo People's Organisation (UBPO) a civil society. After this agreement the BTAD rechristened to BTR with additional political and economic bonanza. This ends NDFB's 33 years armed struggle along with a commitment not to revitalize Bodoland movement for the creation of Separate Bodoland state. This agreement also ensured that Assam will be not suffered further division of its land. Though, only time will tell whether for forever or for time being. However, BTR agreement raised some questions came into mind. Whether BTR is an agreement that signed to fulfil the aspirations of Bodo leaders or Bodo people? Whether BTR agreement can be treated as an election manifesto of UPPL? Whether BTR agreement is a permanent solution for Bodoland issue? In view of above present work is undertaken to analyse the NDFB's struggle for Bodo autonomy; and to study the impact of BTR Accord on Bodo electoral politics.

2. Objectives

- To analyse the NDFB's struggle for Bodo autonomy; and
- To study the impact of BTR Accord on Bodo electoral politics.

3. Methodology

The study is descriptive and analytical one, based on secondary data sources. The Secondary data were comprised of both published and unpublished documents, various books, articles, seminar papers, journals, memorandums, newspapers and Internet sources. The qualitative methods were used for analysis of data.

4. Result and Discussion

The NDFB Chief Ranjan Daimary granted interim bail by Guwahati High Court to pave his way to join the peace talks in New Delhi (The Telegraph, 2020, January 24). Hence, Government prepared to discuss demands like political rights of the Bodo people, safeguard of their language and culture and related matters. As mentioned earlier after the BTR Accord, NDFB all set to be joined in mainstream politics. However, NDFB's

transition from terrorism to mainstream politics was never been easy. Throughout the progression it faced many perpetual hurdles. The following are the challenges that faced by NDFB – First, as an underground outfit it was usual to face counter-terrorism operation from the established authority. Second, fractionalization within the outfit was another obstacle that faced during the movement. Third, inter and intra group clashes were also hindrance of the NDFB's struggle for Bodo autonomy. Though, ABSU also the signatories of BTR agreement, the settlement with NDFB preferred most.

5. Counter-terrorism operation

In response to the violent activities of the NDFB, on November 23, 1992, the Union Home Ministry imposed ban on the NDFB under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (George, 1994, p. 89). The NDFB still figures in the list of the banned organisations. Interpol also issued notices on Daimary twice in 1997 and in 2010. The Government of India declared intense operation against the NDFB for many times. One such major operation was launched on the soil of Bhutan in 2003 named as Operation All Clear (OAC). In that operation 12 camps of the NDFB which was scattered across the dense jungles of southern Bhutan, adjacent to Assam and West Bengal was destroyed. During operation 40 NDFB militants were killed and many other top leaders were arrested (The Tribune, 2003, December 16). After the OAC many NDFB militants were compelled to surrender. Even the Ceasefire agreement between NDFB and Government of India signed in 2005 was the consequence of the OAC. However, neither NDFB nor the Government of India followed ground rules of ceasefire agreement. In early days of Ceasefire agreement both Security Force and NDFB had abstained from attacking each other. One hand with every passing day's number of arrested and encountered NDFB militant had increased and the other hand the outfit also engaged in every unlawful activity.

After dislodged from the soil of the Bhutan, the NDFB set its many bases in the hill's areas of Bangladesh. However, depending on the attitude of the ruling party of Bangladesh towards India, usually Bangladeshi government declined to cooperate in India's counter terrorism operations on the militant like NDFB. However, through the arrests of Anup Chetia, Aurobindo Rajkhuwa militant of United Liberation Front of Assam and Ranjan Daimary the Chief of NDFB in Bangladesh shown some courtesy towards India's request. Another major operation against NDFB-S a faction of the NDFB intensified after the outfit had killed 81 civilians on 23 and 24 December 2014 (Dholabhai, 2014). Hence, after that violence Government showed 'zero tolerance' on NDFB militant.

6. Split in the NDFB

So, rips among the leaders of NDFB had started from 2002 onwards. The arrest of its ' General Secretary' Gobinda Basumatary on the December 5, 2002, and Dhiren Boro, Vice-President on January 1, 2003, was a major setback as well as the beginning of the rift within the outfit. The arrest or surrender of top-ranking

leaders gradually led to a change the strategies of NDFB which resulted the signing of ceasefire agreement with the Union government. Even those arrests gradually isolated few leaders from core organisational functionaries. This rift had created two factions one who regained faith in negotiations with the Indian Government and have agreed to abstain from any violent activities another who tried to derail the peace process. The loggerheads among the leaders led to split into two factions' viz., the Anti-Talk faction led by Ranjan Daimary and the Pro-Talk faction led by Dhiren Boro. Thereafter, the outfits fight to claim its originality. The faction who engaged in negotiations with the Union government teamed up and expelled Ranjan Daimary from the outfit. The pro-talk faction perceived October 30, 2008, Assam serial bomb blasts as propaganda to derail the peace process. There were reports that the October 30 serial bomb blasts were triggered by the NDFB cadres at the behest of Ranjan Daimary by keeping the local leadership out of the loop. Meanwhile, the NDFB held its General Assembly meeting at Serfanguri designated camp in Kokrajhar District and elected Dhiren Boro as the new 'President' of the outfit (The Telegraph, 2008, December 16).

However, in an e-mail to the media Daimary asserted as the chairman of the NDFB, and to be continued his efforts for the self-determination of the Bodos (The Telegraph, 2008, December 28). By reacting the Daimary's statement S. Sanjarang, 'Publicity and Information Secretary' of NDFB stated through a press release that B. Sungthagra alias Dhiren Boro was its 'President', and confirmed the rift within the outfit (The Telegraph, 2008, December 29). Finally, NDFB expelled its founder President, Ranjan Daimary, after replacing him with B. Dhiren Boro as its new chief. The expulsion came a day after the cease-fire between the NDFB and the Centre expired. This shows that the Pro-talk faction of the NDFB had taken such harsh decision on the apprehension that if it maintains any relationship with the Anti-talk faction, the Ceasefire agreement might be withdrawn (The Telegraph, 2009, January 2).

As reported by Centre for Development and Peace Studies (2010, January) the Anti-Talk faction of the NDFB was also confirmed the split and later constituted its new 'Executive Committee' on November 18, 2009, with Ranjan Daimary as the 'President', Dinthi Gwra Narzary as 'General Secretary', 'Captain' Sangbijit as 'Commander-of-Staff' and Barbai Basumatary as 'Assistant Publicity Secretary'. This new Executive finalised the nomenclature of the Anti-talk faction as the NDFB-R (CDPS, 2009). The NDFB-R suffered a setback when the outfit's Chief Ranjan Daimary was arrested on April 17, 2010, in Jinaighati town in Sherpur district of Bangladesh and was handed over to the Border Security (BSF) at a border post in Dawki in Meghalaya (The Assam Tribune, 2010, May 1). He is named as the prime accused by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the serial blasts of October 30, 2008. A special court on January 30, 2019, sentenced Daimary and nine others to life imprisonment for their role in the blast. The decision of the court brings another twist on the ongoing peace process between the outfit and the Government of India. Many leaders of the NDFB-R stated that Daimary cannot hold talk with handcuff (The Assam Tribune, 2019, January 31).

7. Split in the NDFB-R and formation of NDFB-S

Due to the arrest of Daimary and declaration of unilateral indefinite ceasefire call on July 26, 2011, and occurred another split in the NDFB-R. The ceasefire agreement came into effect from August 1, 2011, to find a durable and sustainable political solution through political dialogue and discussion. After at this development, a group led by the 'Chief' of Bodoland Army (the armed wing of the NDFB-R), I.K. Songbijit, on November 20, 2012, announced the formation of a nine-member "Interim National Council", with Songbijit as its self-proclaimed "Interim President". Other members of the "Interim Council" included 'Interim Vice-President' B. Naison; 'Interim General Secretary' B. Saoraigwra; 'Deputy Military Secretary' B. Jwngshar; 'Assistant Finance Secretary' B. Sansula; 'Assistant Forest Secretary' B. Sibigiri; 'Assistant Organising Secretary' H. Leba; 'Assistant Publicity Secretary' C. Rwikha; 'Member' B. Dwmwilu; and 'Captain' G. Bidai as the 'Deputy Chief of Bodoland Army'. This decision was taken at the general meeting of the NDFB held on November 13 and 14 at an undisclosed location (The Telegraph, 2012, November 21). Later, the NDFB-S also removed its 'President' Songbijit Ingti Kathar and elevated it's 'Interim General Secretary' B Saoraigwra to the top post. A Karbi by ethnicity, Songbijit is reportedly holed up in Myanmar. He was sidelined when the outfit took the decision to massacre the Adivasis. The heinous crime was executed under the direction of G Bidai, 'Deputy Chief' of the outfit's 'Armed Wing'. A group led by former 'General Secretary' B Saoraigra of NDFB-S has dissolved the NDFB's 'Interim Council' formed in 2012, forming a new 'General Council' ousting IK Songbijit. In an e-mailed statement to the media, B Saoraigra, the new 'President' of the 'General Council' said that General Assembly of the NDFB-S held on April 14 and 15, 2015 had vowed to revamp its national struggle and dissolved the former interim national council of NDFB (The Sentinel, 2015, June 27).

8. The rift in the NDFB-P

After a gap of six years from July 19, 2013, the General Assembly of the NDFB-P was held on June 5 and 6 over a two-day program in Sapkhaity, Udalguri. Since then, only on June 6, 2019, formed its new central committee of the NDFB's National Council. Gobinda Basumatary, the founder general secretary of the NDFB was elected as the rebel outfit's new chairman, whereas S Sanjarang was elected as the new general secretary in its General Assembly. Chairman Dhiren Boro was elected as Adviser to the group (Deka, 2019). Due to reshuffle of leadership, few dejected top leaders of the NDFB tried to become close with ruling party leaders of the Bodoland Territorial Council. The BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary ready to take initiative peace process between the NDFB-P and Government of India. But some top leaders refused to participate in the peace process undertaken by the Government of India under the initiative of Mohilary. Those leaders of the NDFB-P who agreed to participate in the peace process under the initiative of Mahilary were served explanation by the organisation. Thus, finally NDFB-P boycotted its Advisor and former President B.Sunghagra alias Dhiren Boro and former Mandal Commandant B Phailaw (Pratidin Time, 2019).

After the rip between Dhiren Boro and Gobinda Basumatary of the NDFB-P, the split of its one of the wings People Joint Action Committee for Bodoland Movement (PJACBM) had become imminent as some of the leaders of the joint action committee who had been given show cause notice that set a 24-hour deadline on September 20, 2019, for clarification from Rakesh Bodo, the Chief Convenor of the PJACBM.² The PJACBM help out in expediting peace dialogue between the NDFB-P and the Government of India for a permanent solution and have been working for a meaningful dialogue. The split of top leaders of the NDFB-P and expulsion of its president Dhiren Bodo to bring Gobinda Basumatary in the Presidentship did not remain within the outfit but its impact has virtually been seen among the leaderships of PJACBM. The founder President Jebra Ram Mushahary was expelled because he tried to invite NDFB-R supremo Ranjan Daimary and BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary as guests in a foundation day observation of PJACBM. Hence, the PJACBM also followed the tradition of expelling and split tradition in Bodo politics (The Sentinel, 2019, September 21).

The leadership of NDFB has been frequently changing due to arrests, encounters, surrenders and splits in the outfit. Many of the founder leaders were arrested and found missing after Operation All Clear in Bhutan. Due to the lack of safe hideouts, many front-ranking leaders also surrendered. Some leaders were even dissatisfied with the progress of the prolonged peace talks and criticised the lavish lifestyle of the topmost leaders. This led to political differences among the leaders and eventually resulted in splits and change of leadership. Hence, till the signing of BTR Accord there were four factions in NDFB, viz. NDFB- Progressive (NDFB-P), also known as Pro-Talk Faction led by Dhiren Boro, NDFB-R led by Ranjan Daimary, NDFB-S led by B. Saoraigra and NDFB-P (Gobinda Basumatary).

9. Consequences of Split among the NDFB

The consequence of a split in the NDFB always goes wrong. In each split, the NDFB became more intent to show its strength. Though the outfit signed a Ceasefire agreement on May 25, 2005, the Chairman of NDFB, Ranjan Daimary's statement on October 3, 2008, assumes significance and disappointment over the achievement of peace talks. He stated, "India does not want to talk and resolve the Indo-Bodo problem peacefully and democratically. India just wants to prolong the ceasefire and wants NDFB to die a natural death (The Telegraph, 2008, October 4)." This statement was a hint for the discontent and possible threat for a dreaded act. Besides on October 30, 2008, the outfit executes its blueprint and showcases its strength in form of Serial blast. As mention earlier Daimary execute this act without informing outfit's local leaders. Meanwhile, on December 22, 2014, the NDFB-S had warned security forces to stop attacks on its cadres. The outfit accomplished warning that was virtually ignored by the state authorities. Thus, on 23 December, militants belonging to NDFB-S killed 71 Adivasis at five different places in Chirang, Kokrajhar and Sonitpur districts. Though, during the early days of Ceasefire agreement, NDFB was involved very calculative violent

activities. However, all of a sudden in 2008 NDFB killed 86 civilians; and in 2014 NDFB-S killed 101 civilians. In both the occasions NDFB suffered a setback in the form of split. It seems that splits occurred much before and violence was only an external execution of dissidence.

It is pertinent to mention that although Ranjan Daimary, Gobinda Basumatary and Dhiren Boro are the founders of the NDFB and spearheaded the organisation for more than thirty years from 1986 to 2019, their supremacy within the organisation was challenged due to political differences with a section of the leadership. However, in spite of the setback faced by Ranjan Daimary and his faction of the NDFB for three splits, he continues to be an important force to reckon with. As stated by the senior Union Home Ministry official and interlocutor P.C. Halder, “the Centre felt that a final settlement could be worked out when the Ranjan Daimary faction of the NDFB is also on board.” Hence, the rift in leadership and formation of new faction looks like only fates of the NDFB’s struggle for Bodo’s self-determination which is continuously under negotiation; from Sovereignty to Statehood and Statehood to Union Territory so and so forth. However, NDFB virtually disbanded on March 9, 2020. The self-disbandment came after the signing of Memorandum of Settlement on January 27, 2020 which had paved the way to create another political arrangement under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution of India, namely Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) by replacing Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD).

However, it is a matter of uncertainty that BTR Accord would be fulfilled the aspirations of Bodos which is political autonomy than why Bodo leaders need to demand other schemes. If Government provide autonomy to Bodos than everything will be decided by Bodo leadership. In this point of view BTR Accord is look alike another Memorandum that Bodo leaders urge Government to fulfill in near future. Though, the BTR Accord supposed to bring peace in the area, but for how long? Within a short interval the demand for Bodoland movement may be revitalized, when thousands of other cadres or grass root leaders will be deprived in power share. Even now NDFB militants hurriedly joint in different political parties to get maximum political benefit.

10. Counter mobilization against BTR Accord

Some of clause that included in Accord is deplorable for some ethnic group and gave instant reaction on it. Meanwhile the Central Committee of the Karbi Students Association (KSA) had opposed Government of India’s (GoI) decision to expedite the process of granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) Hills status to Bodos living in Karbi Anglong and other hill areas of Assam. The KSA President Samson Teron stated that while the association hoped the third Bodo peace accord would address the grievance of Bodos, it would oppose the contentious issue under Clause 8 of the accord inked with Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT) in 2003. The clause 8 of 2003 accord had granted ST status to Bodos living in Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao Districts. Further, Dimasa Students’ Union (DSU) have also decided to oppose the move of the government as the decision will

‘infringe upon the rights’ enjoyed by the Karbis and Dimasas of the two hills districts. DSU general secretary Pramith Sengyung said the organization will continue to oppose the decision to grant ST Hills status to the Bodos living in the hills (Salam, 2020).

Hiteswar Barman, advisor to the All Koch-Rajbongshi Students’ Union (AKRSU) stated by reacting the BTR Accord, “In pleasing 27% of people, the Centre ignored the political, social and economic rights of the non-Bodos in BTAD”. The President of the All-Bodoland Minority Students’ Union (ABMSU), also dissatisfied with Government’s move and said, “It is unfortunate that the non-tribal stakeholders were kept in the dark about this accord. We are not optimistic as the 2003 accord did not prevent injustice to the non-tribal people” (The Hindu, 2020, January 29). Hence, BTR Accord is opposed by the different ethnic group who reside in BTAD.

11. Influence of the BTR Accord on BTAD Elections 2020

The BTR Accord helped the UPPL to gain political foundation in BTAD. The ABSU President, Pramode Boro who led to sign the BTR Accord along with top brass NDFB-P leaders later joined in the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) which is only Bodo opposition political party of ruling Bodo Peoples’ Front (BPF) within BTAD. The NDFB-P led by General Secretary, Gobinda Basumatary has been under the negotiation process since his arrest in 2003. He attended several rounds of tripartite talks with the Government of India and state Government of Assam. The Ranjan Daimary faction of NDFB signed ceasefire agreement with effect from August 1, 2011 to find a durable and sustainable political solution through political dialogue and discussion (The Telegraph, 2013, November 30). However, NDFB-R started formal talks from June, 2013. The NDFB-S had begun formal talks after signed an agreement with the Centre and State governments for the cessation of operations (The Hindu, 2020, January 23). Hence, NDFB-P had taken stronghold in the peace process. It seems that after signing the Accord NDFB-P received more acknowledge then the other factions of NDFB. The NDFB-P led by Gobinda Basumatary joined in the United People’s Party Liberal (UPPL)³; hence UPPL automatically became the Bodo warriors’ political party. When BTC elections declared by Assam State Election Commission, the BTR Accord is truly turn out to be an election manifesto of UPPL.

In Indian politics every new regional political party followed the footsteps of most successful political party namely Indian National Congress. Even after 63 years of India’s independence and living in a different era, after so many factions and several split in that freedom fighter’s party, yet leaders of Congress do not forget to claim that they are the fighters whose martyrdom gave India independence. Following that path many leaders who fight for self-determination were became self-proclaimed elite leaders of their respective ethnicity. They extract maximum political benefit from their leadership. The Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) Accord is a failed accord due to lack of Constitutional safeguard. However, the leaders who signed the Accord

have been entertaining immense power till today in Bodo politics. Similarly, under the leadership of Hagrama Mahilary the Bodos received another Accord, known as Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) and we witnessed fifteen years rule of BPF in BTAD. Each leader who was signatories of BTC Accord became unassailable leaders of Bodo politics. So, after BTR agreement, UPPL step in to claim that space where BPF were the frontrunner only few days back. The political participation is a feature of democracy, so UPPL is going to exercise it, we cannot deny the fact. The NDFB leave terrorism and joined in mainstream politics is a welcome sign for the Bodos as well as for the Assam. However, questions arise on the intent of Bodo leaders, whether they had consensus to sign the Accord or other factor compelled to do such? Whatever the intention was it does not matter because they disbanded itself and signed in the agreement. In the process they starved for political power and put some challenge to ruling BPF.

The BPF leaders also attended the final talk and signed as witnessed for the BTR Accord. However, soon after came back to Kokrajhar, leaders of BPF start criticizing the BTR Agreement as a Xerox copy of BTC agreement and it is only a propaganda of NDFB to gain political space in Bodo politics. It seems that Mahilary knows everything what was going inside the peace process and what is BTR agreement; stay away from disclosed anything before agreement had signed. Even few days before BTR agreement was signed, Hagrama Mohilary, Chief of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) stated that a peace accord containing all factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the Centre would be inked in near future (Narzary, 2020, January 12). A person who knows all development of BTR Accord later criticized the agreement likely to please the non-Bodo voters who always searches reasons to decry all subsequent Bodo Accords.

To join in mainstream politics the NDFB militants of four factions surrendered in Guwahati in Kamrup Metropolitan District of Assam. The surrendered militants include including 836 cadres from factions of NDFP (Progressive), 579 cadres of NDFB-Ranjan Daimary faction (NDFB-RD) and 200 members NDFB-S. A total of 178 arms, 4,803 live ammunition, 14 grenades and one 2-inch mortal were surrendered by the NDFB rebel groups (The Assam Tribune, 2020, January 31). All the four factions of NDFB, decided to unify as one platform during a special session of the outfit at Bijni in Chirang District of Assam. Pro-Talks Faction of NDFB (NDFB-PTF) 'president' Gobinda Basumatary stated as, "We have decided to unify keeping the greater interest of the organisation as well the Bodo people in mind. We want proper implementation of the Bodo accord in the coming days. We shall go with unity and tranquility to meet proper implementation of every clause of the Bodo accord" (The Assam Tribune, 2020, February 12).

Later three factions of the NDFB factions were disbanded. NDFB-Progressive (NDFB-P) led by Govinda Basumatary, was disbanded at Khumguri Western Zone designated camp near Serfanguri in Kokrajhar District of Assam. The faction members disclosed that the group will float a non-profit NGO to be named as Dwimu Foundation to work for the cause of the welfare and rehabilitation of all its members. The three other factions

of the outfit, led by Ranjan Daimari NDFB-Ranjan Daimary (NDFB-RD), B. Saoraigwra NDFB-Saoraigwra (NDFB-S) and Dhiren Boro (NDFB-Dhiren Boro (NDFB-D), were formally disbanded on March 9 at Sonaigaon designated camp in Udalguri District of Assam. By keeping tradition of split and factions of the NDFB, it was unified only to sign the BTR Accord, after the occasion is over all leaders and members decided to choose their own political destiny. The Govinda Basumtary led NDFB-P joined in UPPL, literally he is not joined he retained with UPPL, and majority of members from other three factions joined in BPF. Thus, BTR Accord became political issue for every political party within BTR.

Primarily NDFB-P tried hard to unify all its top brass leaders of four factions in a single political party. Yet, NDFB-S General Secretary BR Ferrenga joined United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and Chief the outfit, B Saoraigwra joined Hagrama Mohillary led Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and claimed that 99.99 per cent of the members of his faction are with him. The defection, wave of anti-institutions, allegation and counter allegation of unfair means etc. increase the hit the election atmosphere in BTR (Insidene 2020). Hence, the eternal goal government to settle peace the area through BTR Accord is obscure as all the factions had tried to capture power. One hand UPPL had tried to convince the core Bodo nationalist that BTR is the only solution for Bodo issue and will fulfill all aspirations of Bodos by implementing whole clauses of the Accord. They even succeed partially, formed BTR Government and ruled a term. On the other hand, BPF decried BTR Accord is nothing but a carbon copy of the BTC Accord.⁴ Hagrama Mahilary dethroned from BTC Assembly and Governor's rule was imposed in BTAD. This political development generates opportunity for UPPL to expose the irregularities of the ruling party in various departments.

12. Conclusion

We cannot be too judgmental on BTR Accord because it ends a violent era and peace settlement will be lot more dependent on the implementation of the accord. Though the clauses in the agreement are based on to be not to be arrangement, yet with proper handle of its clauses will deliver a permanent settlement for peace in the region. The clause for granting the Scheduled Tribes (Hills) status to the Bodos living in two hills district is being opposed by the Karbi and Dimasa's. Similarly, the clause mention about the inclusion of new areas within BTR jurisdiction is vigorously opposed by the AKRSU, ABMSU, Gana Suraksha Party (GSP). The implement of the Accord will be largely based on the result of the BTR election 2020. Because, UPPL is vocal on it and BPF is decrying on it. Hence, UPPL is trying to convince Bodo voters and BPF is eyeing on non-Bodo voters. So for this political cold war the Bodo society divided into fraction and finally fratricidal killings may occur in the area. Till now organised crime was occurred in the form of terrorism; if rehabilitation of the disbanded militants would not be done properly soon unorganized crime will be increased which would be a matter of concern worry to settle the permanent peace. After prolonged peace negotiation NDFB had reached

in an agreement which is surely be a matter of joy both for them as well as civilians and will have to wait for successful implementation of the BTR Accord, which will be granted peace in the region.

End Notes

1. The Border Security Force (BSF), the Standing Council of the Bodo Security Force held a meeting on April 18, 1993, and took a resolution to change the nomenclature of the organisation as the National Democratic Front of Bodoland. The same resolution was approved to be enforced with immediate effect in the NDFB National Council's meeting from November 22 to 25, 1994. Hence, the NDFB an armed revolutionary organization had rechristened forthwith as having the same principles and views of the Bodo Security Force. See Dhiren Boro, *The Lockup is My Home*, (Trans.) Rahul Dev Brahma, Kokrajhar: Words & Words, 2015, pp. 23-32.
2. The PJACBM formally came into being on March 31, 2012, at the initiative of Jebra Ram Mushahary as the founder President.
3. United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) was formed on 5 August 2015 at Dotma, in Kokrajhar district with a view to bringing about revolutionary change for sustainable development and lasting peace in the India's Assam province particularly in BTR (formerly known as BTAD).
4. Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Memorandum of Settlement.

3. Alteration of Area of BTAD

3.1 A Commission will be appointed under Paragraph 14 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution soon after signing of the MoS to examine and recommend on the following: -

- i. Inclusion of villages contiguous to BTAD and having majority tribal population, as demanded by Bodo organizations.
- ii. Exclusion of villages currently under BTAD which are contiguous to non-Sixth Schedule areas and have majority non tribal population.
- iii. Increase in constituencies of BTC up to the maximum of 60 seats after alteration in the area, without adversely affecting the existing percentage of reservation for tribals. Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Memorandum of Settlement.

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