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### **Fratricidal Clashes in Bodoland Demand**

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#### **Abstract**

*The Bodoland demand movement in Assam was first started democratically and soon culminated into an extremist movement and two groups viz., National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and Boro Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) played an instrumental role in the process. Both the NDFB and BLTF demand Bodoland, but BLTF demanded a separate state within India; on the other hand, the NDFB has been demanding a sovereign Bodoland outside the Indian union or secession from Indian Union. This ideological difference cause strong loggerheads between the two groups. This caused many fratricidal killings. The demand of BLTF has been partially fulfilled by the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), ignoring the demand of NDFB. But, soon after the BTC formation each group became thirsty each others' blood. So far, the Government authorities have not formulated or adopted any long-term strategy for a permanent solution to Bodo Terrorism; rather, they stratified the Bodo leadership and co-opted the middle class by negotiating with their demands. Meanwhile, some more militants have declined to lay down their arms.*

*In view of these developments, this paper examined the factors responsible for the fratricidal killings, the major incidents of fratricidal killings and the strategies that have been exercising by Bodo organisations in dealing with the same.*

**Key Words: Loggerheads, Fratricide, Fratricidal Clashes, Fratricidal Killings, Bodoland.**

**Introduction:** The Bodos have been demanding Bodoland comprising whole North- bank of Brahmaputra River since 1987. Though, this demand was not new but previously "Udayachal" was demanded by Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). The plans and policies of other Bodo organizations had changed recurrently, after achieving the political power many Bodo leaders changed their attitude towards the Boro society. After independence in every Assembly/Parliamentary elections Boro's have been able to get political representation. In spite of that Boro leaders failed to promote the issues like, economic underdevelopment, unemployment, illiteracy etc. Bodo leader's self-centered, political hobnobbing, unstable political principles cause the growth of dissatisfaction among the educated Bodo youth. Bodos were expecting more from their political leaders who were supposed to represent the interest of the community. But, the ratio between expected and achieving have had huge gap, for this reason the feel of deprivation growth in the mind of youth. Hence some youth try to rectify the incorrect policy that other Boro organization preceding leaders had adopted.

The history of the intra-group clashes among the Bodos starts after the withdrawal of 'Udayachal' which was demanded by the PTCA since 1967. The ABSU leaders withdraw support from PTCA movement and intended to lead the Bodoland demand with their new charismatic leader Upendra Nath Brahma. Many PTCA leaders were assaulted in the hands of ABSU supporters for their betrayal towards the Bodo as well as whole tribal. Though there were loggerheads but, there was no fratricidal killing was recorded at that period. In this context it is important to know the term fratricide. The term 'fratricide' derived from the Latin words *frater* "brother" and *cida* "killer," or *cidum* "a killing," both from *caedere* "to kill, to cut down") is the act of a person killing his or her brother.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To study the factors responsible for fratricidal killings among the Bodo rebels.

2. To study some major incidents of fratricidal killings.
3. To study the role of Bodo organisations to stop fratricidal killings.

**Methodology:** The paper is prepared collecting information from secondary sources. Various books, journals, news papers, research papers both from published and non-published sources of government and non government organisations have been consulted.

**All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU):** The ABSU and Bodo Peoples Action Committee were the signatories of BAC Accord signed on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1993. The BdSF, (On 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1994, the BdSF rechristened as the National Democratic Front of Bodoland or NDFB) was opposed the accord and committed to an armed struggle for the creation sovereign Bodoland. Meanwhile, rift between the Bodo elite classes started. On the contrary severe infighting within the leaders of the Bodos and due to lack definite territorial boundary BAC became a failed. At the same time the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) had consolidated the support base within the community. Due to failed accord the NDFB indirectly blamed the ABSU and their allied groups. Due these moral and ideological differences the ABSU leaders became soft target of the NDFB. There were numerous incidents where the NDFB targeted ABSU leaders and killed them i.e. On 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1998, the NDFB terrorists kill two ABSU leaders in Darrang district. April 18, 2002, Suspected NDFB terrorists kill the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) 'Education Secretary' Khwrwkhang Boro at Lantibari under Patacharkuchi police station limits in Barpeta. On May 3, 2002, suspected NDFB terrorists killed Laharam Mushahary, former president, Dhubri district unit, All Bodo Students' Union's (ABSU's). These incidents showed that NDFB had been targeted to ABSU for fratricidal killings.

**Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF):** Ideological difference between the NDFB and the BLTF and also their rivalry resulted in the fratricidal killings. It is worth mentioning that the NDFB aims to Sovereign Bodoland. In 1996, two rival groups, viz. NDFB and BLTF decided to annihilate each other. Each of the militant organisations tried to dominate the Bodo political parties. In their rivalry they killed, kidnapped the supporters of each other. The NDFB (new name of the BdSF, adapted on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1994) alleged that the BLT killed Gauri Basumatary at Gendabeel on October 11, 1996 and attacked NDFB cadres from Kokrajhar town on October 20, 1996. The BLT also kidnapped Anup Doulagap, the BAC Secretary, and the son of the Chief of BAC. With this end in view, the NDFB launched operation *Doar* against their rival group, BLTF. On the other hand, the BLTF launched operation *Srangsrang* against the NDFB. On 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2000, 11 BLTF terrorists killed in an internecine clash with the NDFB terrorists in Barpeta district.

As the result of a decision taken on 10 January 2001 in Bhutan, the NDFB decided to target members of the BLTF, BSS, ABSU, Bodo People Action Committee (BPAC), and the All Bodo Women's Welfare Federation (ABWWF), for selective killing. On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2001, three BLTF cadres were killed by the NDFB terrorists at Bijni. In the same year on September 16, NDFB terrorists kill a Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) cadre and injured another in an internecine clash at Dopdopi, Rangapara police station limits, Sonitpur district, Assam. On 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2002, the NDFB's 'chief' D R Nabla, in a statement in the online edition of its mouthpiece *Gwdan Mahari* (New nation), terms the creation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) a non-pragmatic move. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2003, the NDFB killed BLTF cadre at Ladangguri under Sarbhog police station limits in Barpeta district. On 21 March, 2003, an NDFB press release refutes allegations that it was planning to target top All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and BLTF leaders. June 11, 2003, Media reports indicate that the NDFB has issued threats to the Bodo leaders and also to the leaders of the rival BLTF.

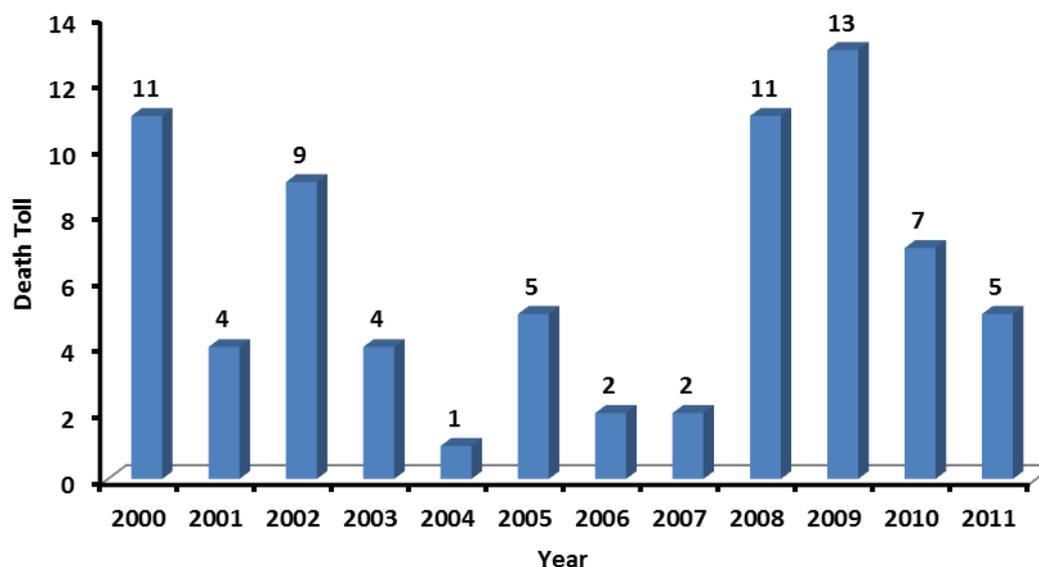
**Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS):** The NDFB has been demanding Roman script since their formation. But, Bodo Sahitya Sabha withdraws the demand in the Simbargaon, Sabha conference in February, 2000. Meanwhile, on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2000, the President of Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Bineswar Brahma, was shot dead by suspected National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) militants at his Bhetapara residence in the city around 8.30 this evening. The slain Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) president, who was also Joint Manager, Movement and Commercial of Food Corporation of India (FCI), had played a major role in the peace initiative involving the BLTF and the Government of India. It may be mentioned that the NDFB was strongly opposed to Brahma's idea of adopting Devanagiri script for Bodo language which was later endorsed by Bodo Sahitya Sabha also. The NDFB was pressuring the Sahitya Sabha to adopt Roman script for Bodo language. Sources here informed that the dastardly

killing of Brahma, who was instrumental in keeping the BSS flag flying against all odds, was a reflection of the deep sense of frustration of NDFB was suffering from after it had been sidelined in the Bodo peace process. He played a major role to bring an end to the fratricidal killings among different Bodo groups.<sup>i</sup>

**Split in NDFB and Fratricidal killings:** On 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, the NDFB held its General Assembly meeting at Serfanguri designated camp in Kokrajhar District and elected B. Sungthagra alias Dhiren Boro as the new 'President' of the outfit. B. Sungthagra was previously the 'Vice-President' of the outfit. On 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2009, NDFB expelled its founder president, Ranjan Daimary alias D.R. Nabla, after replacing him with B. Sungthagra alias Dhiren Boro as its new chief. The new NDFB president, Sungthagra, criticising the alleged involvement of Daimary in the October 30 serial bomb blasts in Assam, said on January 1 that the NDFB would have no truck with the former chief and his accomplices.<sup>ii</sup> On 18<sup>th</sup> November, the Ranjan Daimary faction of the banned NDFB constituted its new 'Executive Committee' with Ranjan Daimary as the 'President', Dintih Gwra Narzary as 'General Secretary', 'Captain' Sangbijit as 'Commander-of-Staff' and Barbai Basumatary as 'Assistant Publicity Secretary'. The NDFB-RD also appears to be heading for a split. The group led by the 'chief' of Bodoland Army (the armed wing of the faction), 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".<sup>iii</sup> These splits worsen the situation and increased the numbers of fratricidal clashes.

On 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2003, Suspected NDFB terrorists kill four members of the family of a former colleague, including two children, at Taijouguri village, Kokrajhar district. On 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2007, the chairman of the ex-BLTF Welfare Society, Jonomohan Mushahary, warned the NDFB to stop fratricidal killings by targeting innocent Bodo youths and ex-BLTF cadres and viewed it as beyond their tolerance. He also accused the NDFB of having no respect for cease-fire ground rules and doubted whether their command over the outfit is intact. He urged the joint monitoring group to look after NDFB's activities following cease-fire to clarify whether the outfit is in favour of restoring peace in the area and maintaining ground rules for peaceful negotiations. On 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2008, NDFB warned former members of the BLT, who formed the Bodoland Territorial Council, that "provocation" would invite strong retaliation from them. The outfit's information and publicity secretary, S. Sanjarang, claimed that some "ex-BLTF members" were trying to "provoke" his group into frittering away the gains from the peace process.<sup>iv</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, Assam Government directed the police on to shift all NDFB members to three designated camps. According to the officials, the proximity of the NDFB cadres to members of the disbanded BLTF was causing law and order problems and the rival groups needed to be distanced.<sup>v</sup>

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2010, a relative, of a pro-talks 'commander' of the NDFB is shot dead by unidentified militants of Ranjan Daimary faction of the NDFB at Silapur village in the Balijuri area under Sootea Police Station in Sonitpur District along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. Sources said deceased person Udai Mushahari was on the hit list of the Daimary faction as he was suspected to be a Police informer.<sup>vi</sup> On 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, a 52-year-old schoolteacher, Lilabati Basumatary, is shot dead by suspected cadres belonging to pro-talks faction of the NDFB at Harisingha Deolguri in the Udalguri District. Lilabati is the elder sister of Ranjan Daimary, who is leading the anti-talk faction of the NDFB.<sup>vii</sup> On 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2010, a surrendered NDFB militant, Thirangtha Basumatary (25), was shot dead by the anti-talks faction of the outfit at Pahijuri under Rangapara Police Station in Sonitpur District.

**Fig.1. Number of Persons killed in Fratricidal Clashes**

Source: Retrieved from [http://www.satp.org/satporgtop/countries/india/states/assam/terrorist\\_outfit/ndfb..](http://www.satp.org/satporgtop/countries/india/states/assam/terrorist_outfit/ndfb..) on 20/01/2012 at 09:12AM.

**Figure 1.** Shows that Bodo groups are continuously engaged in fratricidal clashes which resulted lost of many lives. In the year 2009 maximum 13 number of persons were killed and in 2004 minimum one person lost live. For unknown reasons in recently in 2012, 2013 and 2014 there is no fratricidal killings.

On 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2011, a militant, identified as B Thukang (28), belonging to NDFB-Progressive was killed by unknown miscreants in Bagmara village, under Dotma in Kokrajhar District. On 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2011, one person, identified as Ranendra Borgoyary (35) of Laukriguri, was killed in Ballamjhora in Kokrajhar District. Police said Borgoyary, a surrendered NDFB cadre, was the vice-president of Gossaigaon District committee of the UDPF but had joined BPF before the Assembly election.

**Role of the other organizations to stop Fratricidal Killings:** Bodo National Council (BNC) an umbrella organization consisting 23 Bodo organizations was formed on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2010, with the objective of providing a common platform for all Bodo organizations –civil, political and non-political organizations-to fight for their common causes, including the demand for a separate state of Bodoland.<sup>viii</sup> The major members of BNC at formation day included – Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF), All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF), BWJF, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Dularai Bodo Harimu Afad etc. The primary objective of the BNC is to work for greater unity and reconciliation among the civil society, Bodo leaders and organizations which have been involving in fratricidal killings. The peace efforts of the BNC have showed the seeds of unity among the warring Bodo groups.

Bodo Sahitya Sabha also organized a series of awareness programme to develop the “Peace, Unity and harmony” among the Bodos. They organized these programme at Kajalgaon in Chirang district on 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2014, at Mushalpur, in Baksa district on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2014, on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 at Udalguri and at Rangapara in Sonitpur on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2014. There are many organizations which have been indulging in the peace- making process or to stop the fratricidal killing among the Bodo rebels.

**Major Findings:** Following are the some major findings from the above discussions:

1. The loggerheads are due to hobnobbing politics of Bodo leaders.
2. The NDFB had the rivalry with the ABSU due to BAC Accord.

3. The NDFB had the distrust on Bodo Sahitya Sabha because there agreement with the Central Government due to Roman Script issue.
4. The NDFB and BLTF had rivalry due to ideological differences of their objective.
5. There are continuous intra-group clashes among the Bodo rebel groups.
6. There are not only fratricidal killings with the NDFB and BLTF, but after the split in the NDFB in three factions there are also fratricidal killings amongst the NDFB factions.
7. The NDFB and the BLTF not only annihilate each other but also targeted the siblings of the rival groups.
8. The rivalry amongst the NDFB and BLTF increased after the BTC formation.
9. There are elite competitions among the Bodo leaders.
10. In the year 2009 maximum 13 persons lost lives in the fratricidal killings.
11. More or less all Bodo organizations are working for more maintain peace and harmony within the Bodo community.

### Remedies:

1. Only mutual trust could stop the fratricidal killings among the Bodo rebel groups.
2. Non-political organization need to play an important role to bring the trust within the community.
3. By stopping of too much politicization of the any issues.
4. By stopping the elite competitions among the Bodo leaders.
5. Illegal arms should collect and hand over to authority.
6. By spreading the moral values like non-violence.

**Conclusion:** Fratricidal killings cause many lost of life within the Bodo community. Since the beginning of Bodoland movement there are so many infighting, disagreement and dissatisfaction towards the leadership. Such dissident group tried to annihilate each other as a result fratricidal clashes starts. With the help of some voluntary organization Bodos are now at present able somehow reduced such clashes and in the process of unification. Probably for self realization or for the threatening they have been facing from the intruder finally realized that unity is the best alternative way to revive their age old heritage.

### Endnotes:

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- <sup>i</sup> The Assam Tribune, “*Bodo Sahitya Sabha president shot dead*”, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2000.
  - <sup>ii</sup> The Assam Tribune, “*Rift in NDFB widens, Daimary expelled*”, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2009.
  - <sup>iii</sup> The Telegraph, “*NDFB-R stares at split*” 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2012.
  - <sup>iv</sup> The Telegraph, “*NDFB in warning to rivals*”, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2008.
  - <sup>v</sup> The Telegraph, “*Separation pill for Bodo rivals - Dispur sends NDFB cadres to camps*”, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.
  - <sup>vi</sup> The Telegraph, “*Pro-talks Bodo leader’s kin killed*”, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2010.
  - <sup>vii</sup> The Telegraph, “*Bodo spearhead’s sister shot*”, 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.
  - <sup>viii</sup> Sushanta Talukdar, “*New Body of Bodos to work for Statehood*, The Hindu, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2012.

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