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Bodo Society

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Abstract

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma (Bodofa) was a Socialist leader of India. He saw men and women as equals and complementary to each other. During that time women were deprived in all spheres of their lives, namely, socio-economy, education, politics, literature, etc. They suffered for a long time in the realm of polygamy, forced marriage, superstitious beliefs, etc. Bodofa wanted to reform such aspects. He realized that without the role of women, a society or a nation could not fully develop. A society or a nation should develop equal roles for both males and females. In the history of Bodo, the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), under the leadership of Bodofa, started the Bodo movement in the years of 1980s with a demand for forming a separate statehood for Bodoland within the Indian Union. He thought that the participation of women in the Bodoland movement was necessary. For all the above mentioned reasons under his initiative and of some other ABSU leaders, the All-Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14 July 1986, with a view of equality between men and women while addressing the problems concerning women and empowerment. His inspiration for women was not only to have an active role in participating in the Bodoland movement but also to have, an active role in various spheres such as socio-economic, cultural, and for educational upliftment for women in Bodo Society. The Bodo women did not lag behind but were even ready to sacrifice their lives for their society. They came across various problems while participating in the Bodoland Movement. From then onward through equal participation in the Bodoland movement, today Bodo women are empowered in all spheres of life. In this paper, emphasis is given on Bodofa Upendra Brahma's contributions to women's empowerment in Bodo society and on their mobilizations on the issue of Bodo nationalism and of their participation during the time of the Bodoland Movement.

Keywords: *Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, Bodo Women, AATWWF, Bodoland Movement, empowerment of women.*

1.0 Introduction:

Referred to as *Bodofa* which means “Father of the Bodos”, Upendra Nath Brahma was a visionary leader who moulded the Bodo society into an Autonomous Territorial Region in post-modern India. Born to agriculturists Manglaram Brahma and Lepsri Brahma on 31st March 1956 in Boragari, Dotma, Kokrajhar, BTAD (Assam), he began schooling in 1963 A.D at Mokorapara Lower Primary School, which was located close to his village. He had studied in Assamese Medium at Mokorapara L.P. School as there were no Bodo Medium Schools during that time. He completed his schooling in L.P. with a merit scholarship in 1968. In 1968 he was admitted at Dotma M.E. School and studied up to class VI. He was a brilliant student and had a bright career in his academic life. As his schooling was in Assamese medium, he could deliver speeches fluently in English, Assamese, and Hindi from his school life. He passed the matriculation examination from Sakti Ashram High School securing first division in 1975, and was admitted at Cotton College to pursue his course in science stream. Having cleared the Pre-University examination with letter marks in Physics, he joined Cotton College to pursue B. Sc. Degree with Honours in Physics. B.Sc. He eventually completed the Degree in the year 1981. Thereafter, he enrolled for B.A. at Kokrajhar College followed by M.Sc. at Gauhati University which he completed in 1986. But before taking his masters he did his B.A. from Kokrajhar College. However, his zeal for education was such that he again joined Gauhati University for LLB. However, he could not complete it having faced problems from some zealots who hated him for his community’s background.

He then joined the All-Bodo Students Union (ABSU) to espouse the rights of the Bodos who had been sidelined by majority of the communities in the developmental process. Together with highlighting and raising the voice of the downtrodden Bodo community, he spoke in favour of the Bodo women getting empowered.

Living in the northern banks of the Brahmaputra, the Bodos are considered to be the aboriginal indigenous people of Assam. They are the “Son of the Soil” of Assam. Linguistically they belong to the Tibeto Barman family (ABSU, 1987). The social structure of the Bodo society

is patriarchal. The male is the head of the family. All the family responsibilities are taken by males. In their society, women also have direct and indirect roles in the family and society. In the Bodo society, women also have considerable authority in certain social and domestic affairs. They also play direct and indirect roles in making of some decisions in domestic matters in the family, at the village level. Bodo women play a significant part in the socio-cultural aspects of Bodo society (Basumatary, 2019). However, due to poor financial conditions, most of the Bodo women had to refrain from schooling and are illiterate. For this reason, they were neither able to take opportunities in all spheres of their lives nor make better decisions for their future and they knew nothing about women's rights and law. As such they were deprived. During pre and post periods of Independence of India, women are deprived in all spheres, such as in education, socio-economy and political fields. It can be mentioned that from 1930 to 1986, the educated Bodo, who followed the Brahma Religion, expressed the importance of participating in political activities, so that they could gain political rights. Socio-political organizations like the Tribal League, Tribal Sangha, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, Plain Tribal Council of Assam, and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) were dominated and represented by men. They had no agenda for women's empowerment. Their potential for contribution to the Bodo Movement was not realized by the leaders. It was the turning point for Bodo women, when Bodofa became the 8th President of ABSU in 1986 and realized the empowerment of women in Bodo society. From his school life, he talked about the future of the Bodo and how other tribal communities were exploited, dominated, and assimilated by some advanced sections of the Society in all spheres of their life. He espoused a great Bodo Nationality, one which could create its own identity among the denizens of the world. He knew that women had considerable numbers and were the first teachers to any child who grew to be a man or woman later on. They would be able to do work for the upliftment of their family and society. He understood that without ensuring the betterment of women the reformation of the Society would remain incomplete. For the Bodo to become a great Nationality in the world, and all the sections of the people are to be uplifted. He realized that the deprived section of Bodo women has to be empowered in all spheres, such as education, economics, literature, politics, etc.

The time during which Bodofa lived, the state of Bodo women was pathetic, as they hardly got any chance to have them empowered. Bodofa knew that women being the first teachers of a baby, they ought to be educationally empowered so that the future generation among the Bodos

and the community at large could be empowered. Forced marriages, early marriages, polygamy etc had been a bane in the Bodo society which directly affected womenfolk.

The independence of India from the British colonial regime paved the way for women to shoulder responsibilities at par with men in almost all spheres of life. As far as rights and duties are concerned, the Indian Constitution has clear provisions for the same. Article 15 of the Indian Constitution has mentioned that “The state shall not discriminate against any citizens on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Right to equality), and there should be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters, relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State” (India, 2023)

Bodofa was elected as the 8th President of ABSU in the ABSU annual conference held at Rowta, Darrang District, Assam in 1986. From then as a President of ABSU he got the opportunity to work for the society. In this conference, Bodofa raised the demand for separate State named ‘Bodoland’, a geographical area specially marked for the Bodos, so that they could fulfil their socio-political and economic aspirations. Of course, this geographical territory was to remain within the Indian Union. This was desired for the protection of identity, language, religion, tradition and socio-economic development of Bodos. (Brahma, *et. al.*, 2002). Before starting the movement, he mobilized Bodo to unite all sections of the people in various Bodo inhabited areas. He knew that women were needed in the Bodo movement to make it more meaningful and successful and he encouraged the women to participate in the Bodo movement. He knew that women could do much to transform Bodo Society on all levels and he deeply believed women should take responsibility for the welfare of their Society in all spheres such as socio-economic, educational, and political spheres. He felt deprived of enjoying equal status in socio-economic, political and educational arenas in different development aspects compared to other mainstream communities. Therefore, initially suggested by Bodofa and some ABSU leaders, the All-Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14th July 1986 (Chaudhuri, 2004). Later this organization was renamed in 1993 as an All Bodo Women Welfare Federation (ABWWF). This women’s organization was one of the strong women’s organizations in the Bodo Society. The preamble of the AATWWF was “Whereas, it is considered expedient to form Federation of the women folk belonging to the Bodo community to unite themselves in a common platform through mutual understandings, was being imbibed in a common ideology to fight for ensuring the rights

and justices of the Bodo women in the spheres of socio-economic, political, educational, cultural and for their emancipation from socio-domestic drudgery and thereby enabling themselves in rendering services to the promotion, welfare, and preservation of the Indigenous self identity of all Bodo groups”. Following were the aim and objectives of AATWWF:

- a) To work for the fulfilment of the interests and aspirations of the women.
- b) To build up a bond of unity and also to foster brotherly and sisterly feelings among the Bodo Society.
- c) To fight for equal rights, status, and honour of Bodo women in the socio-political spheres.
- d) Remove the social evil practices and injustice from society that hampered the growth and development of Bodo women toward the path of progress.
- e) To move both State and Central Governments for the security and safety of Bodo women from being victimized by gang rape and abductions in the name of law-and-order problem.
- f) To move for reservation quota in all government jobs, educational institutions, and economic packages for Bodo women in government jobs.
- g) To prevail upon the Government for the provision of free medical care and facilities to the Bodo women belonging to BPL (Below Poverty Level) families.
- h) To raise the voice for Human Rights and civil liberties for all the downtrodden Bodo communities.
- i) To stand for the ethnic identity of the Bodos, the preservation of the rich culture and traditional heritage, and the development of the Bodo language (Constitution AATWWF, n.d).

On the foundation day of AATWWF, Bodofa said to the AATWWF leaders, “No matter how big your problems are, ABSU will always be there to solve them”. From his words, AATWWF members got confidence and more inspiration from him for their activities. After the formation of the women’s organization under the President ship of AATWWF, Mrs. Pramila Rani Brahma and many AATTWF women leaders came forward and mobilized various Bodo inhabited areas

to spread their aims and objectives of the Bodoland Movement (Narzary, 1993). After Women participated in the movement, the movement was stronger than earlier because half of the total population were women. Bodofa said, 'Without the participation of women, the Bodo movement would not be strong'. In this centuries-long bargain with Assam, Bodo women have silently but steadfastly supported the men though their participation was not much visible in the scene. But Bodo women gained new ideas and became more confident during the Bodoland Movement to resurge back and play self-effecting and vital roles to move and heard by both the central and state governments. This created new pages in the history and thus emerged a new Bodo woman ready to take up challenges and prospects of the world. By that time according to Boro womenfolk they were more well-understood and informed about their health, socio-economic, educational, and literary circumstances and made notable contributions to family, society, and community. From then on they are becoming educated, socially, educationally, economically, literally, culturally, and politically and in sports. They were more confident than before. In this paper, emphasis is given on showing Bodofa's contributions to the empowerment of women in Bodo society and in terms of their mobilizations on the issue of Bodo nationalism and participation during the Bodoland Movement.

2.0 Objectives of the Study:

- a) To study the role of Bodo women in the cause of Bodoland under the leadership of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma.
- b) To analyze the contribution of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma's Contributions for the Empowerment of Bodo Women.

3.0 Methodology:

Both Primary and Secondary methods are followed for the study. To collect the primary data, interviews are taken of members of Bodo women's organizations. On the other hand, Secondary data have been collected from published books, magazines, journals, internet etc. The qualitative method is used for this paper.

4.0 Research Questions:

The study has the following research questions:

- a) What is the role played by women during the Bodoland Movement under the leadership of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma?
- b) What are the contributions of Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma towards the empowerment of women in the Bodo Society?

5.0 Discussion and Result:

The following are the contributions of the Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma towards women empowerment in Bodo society:

5.0.1 Bodoland Movement and Bodo Women:

In the years of 1980s, Bodofa UN Brahma under the banner of the All Bodo Students Union raised the demand for a separate state of Bodoland for the Bodo's and other plain tribal of Assam (ABSU, 1987). It was the first time that most of the Bodo women directly and indirectly participated in the movement. It was felt that Bodo women should not be sidelined in the process as they could play an important role in all round development of the Bodo society. Bodofa called every section of Bodo people to join the movement. As per the agenda for the achievement of the movement, under the banner of ABSU, Bodofa formed various organizations during the movement. Among the organizations, the All Assam Tribal Women Welfare Federation (AATWWF) was formed on 14th July 1986, an initiative under the leadership of Bodofa (Chaudhuri, 2004). On his suggestion women too understood that it was the responsibility of women that they should participate in the movement. Before beginning the Bodoland movement ABSU conducted mobilization programmes, meetings, discussions, seminars, and workshops in various Bodo inhabited areas. On his inspiration, Bodo women also jointly worked with the All Bodo Student Union and various programs were conducted for mobilization, meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. The AATWWF members also mobilized movement in various Bodo inhabited areas, such as Meghalaya, West Bengal, and other states. The women's organization spread its activities in all the Bodo-dominated areas within a span of four years (1986-1989) and established district, and village

council level committees in Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Darrang, Barpeta, Nalbari, and Lakhimpur, etc (Chaudhuri, 2004). As suggested by Bodofa for the achievement of the Bodoland Movement, AATWWF formed mobilization groups on different levels such as district, *anchalik*, and village-level committees of AATWWF. During the Bodoland movement not only did they work with ABSU but sometimes they independently mobilized the movement in some Bodo inhabited areas. During the period of the ABSU movement, they carried out numerous activities. Women from diverse sections of the Bodo society participated in village, district, and state levels in the form of processions, dharanas, etc. Various other measures such as protest marches, silent marches; *gherao* of offices of law enforcement agencies, strikes and blockades of highways were held to highlight and resolve the problems of human rights violations, etc during the movement (Dutta, 2016). From the beginning of the movement, Bodo women have given support to ABSU in all agitation programmes.

According to Womenfolk, during the movement time, both AATWWF and BSS jointly resolved the misunderstanding between the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA), and ABSU. As a guardian of the Society AATWWF leaders brought unity not only among women but also brought unity among the Bodo people. According to the women folk during the movement the policemen and the army personnel entered villages in search of the ABSU and BPAC (Bodo People Action Community) activists. They also targeted women. Persons of Police or army operations advised the village women to stay in together. Women were also assigned job of supplying or cooking food for the ABSU, BPAC members and Bodo Volunteer Force (BVF). ABSU members depended a lot on women members for organizing people and keeping communication between common people and the ABSU members. They also collected clothes and distributed them to the riot victims who took shelter in different camps. In case of sudden police, or army raids in any villages, women rushed to protect the innocent villagers and in case of innocent people being arrested, they forced them to release him/her (Dutta, 2016). They are instrumental in minimizing atrocities on women by the armed forces. Common people including innocent farmers working in the fields had to suffer increasingly in terms of police atrocities and torture. Men had to go out in hiding at night fearing police raids. Women and children stayed together always alert to form layers of protection for each other. There was an incident. While Bodo women were coming out to protest against the arrest of an innocent villager from Zumduar by uniformed personals; two brave

women, Gainde Basumatary and Helena Basumatary lost their lives, when police force inhumanly opened fire from a short range at Soraibil on 12 May 1988. Gainde and Helena were declared martyrs by Bodofa. At present 12th May is observed as the day of sacrifice, known as “*Boro Bima San*” (Bodo Mother Day) (Brahma, 2012). On 3rd, February 1988, AATWWF organized a Mass Rally in Kokrajhar district in protest of the incident of Bhumka rape case, and atrocities on the Boro women by the police forces. In this procession, they gave the slogans as, “We want justice”, “We want Human Rights”, *Aijw Afad-Jindabad*”, etc. (Mosahari, 2011). Against this case, AATWWF arranged a press conference at Guwahati, which was also supported by ABSU president Bodofa (Daimary, 2012). This was successful, and the culprits were punished. It can be said that leadership quality was inculcated amongst the Bodo women and the Bumka Rape case of Kokrajhar District by the police force was handled successfully by them and the culprits were punished. During that time young women and Bodo girls were given nursing training; so that the nurses could look after the injured persons and activists of the movement (Brahma, 2012). According to the Women folk, sometimes they were also trained by doctors in different primary health care centres. From 1989 to 1990, most of the girls from each village council received nursing training; such as first aid, pharmaceutical training, handling burn cases, giving on different types of aids for bullet injuries, etc. The training aimed to help the ABSU, BPAC, and Volunteer Force in time of need. According to the women folk, AATWWF members of different villages and district councils carried important messages and letters by cycle from one place to another at the instances of ABSU.

It can be mentioned here that after the participation of women, the Bodoland movement grew stronger than earlier. From then on women became conscious of their rights, society, and empowerment in all spheres of their life. All these happened with the inspiration of Bodofa. Bodo women’s participation in the Bodoland movement was important and remarkable in the history of the Bodo. The Bodo women did not lag behind and were even ready to sacrifice their lives for their society. Bodofa said. “Without the participation of Bodo women, the movement would not succeeded”. Since the time of the Bodoland Movement, many socio-economic changes took place in Bodo society. Under the banner of AATWWF Bodo women were actively involved in the political aspect. They have remarkable contributions towards the achievement of the Bodo Accords, named as Bodoland Autonomous Council in 1993. Many Bodo women were united

and involved in all such activities of the Bodo movement. Bodofa gave opportunity to work to the Bodo women who participated in the Bodoland Movement which encouraged them to learn organizational skills in various fields.

5.0.2 Social Status on Women's Evils:

During that time many social evils cropped in the Bodo society like; trafficking of women, school dropouts, cases of witch-hunting, abuse of girl children, forced marriage, polygamy, domestic violence, etc which are still prevailing in the society. He wanted to eradicate all these evils. Bodofa not only encouraged participation of women in the Bodoland Movement but also, gave women opportunity to work for their development in all spheres. According to womenfolk Bodofa delivered speeches on women's issues, in various programs of the women's organization, namely, the women's body formation, meetings, discussions, seminars, etc. Issues discussed were: Fundamental Rights of women, their law and justice, health and hygiene, the role of the mother in her family, the mother's responsibility to educate her children, women's education, etc. He also talked for eradication of evil social practices, which are prevailing in their society, namely, early marriage, superstitious beliefs, alcoholism, forced marriage, Polygamy, etc. which are hampering the growth and development of the society. He supported the widow's remarriage.

It may be mentioned that initially under his suggestion all AATWWF women members were not only playing active role by participating in the Bodoland movement, but sometimes they organized various programs, such as, meetings, discussions, seminars on the topic of women's issues. According to women when AATWWF leaders invited him as a chief guest, many times Bodofa attended their meetings and suggested some ideas or agendas for their future planning. He strongly supported the role of AATWWF members in removing some social evils, such consumption of alcohol and Polygamy etc (Narzary, 1993). Inspired by Bodofa, AATWWF members made remarkable contributions by organizing the people during the movement. They organized seminars, meetings, discussions etc on issues related to health and hygiene, family planning, the necessity of cleanliness, the role and responsibilities of mothers in the family, witch-hunting, bad effects of polygamy, women's education, polygamy, early marriage, superstitions, alcoholism, drugs, forced marriage, etc (Chaudhuri, 2004). Mrs Kannika Daimari the former General Secretary of AATWWF said, women also jointly worked with ABSU to stop consumption

of alcohol in every Bodo village. In 1989, on 4th April AATWWF took a resolution for 'Anti Alcohol Day'. For many years 4th April was observed as 'Anti Alcohol Day' by AATWWF. In this way, many Bodo women became conscious of their family, and society to build 'A Great Bodo Society'. In contemporary times Bodo women play an instrumental role in decision-making at the family and village level, and the society in general. AATWWF prepared the ground for today's women leaders in the Bodo society.

5.0.3 Educational:

In earlier days, compared to women in advanced communities, most of the Bodo women were illiterate. This was due to unawareness of the parents, lack of higher educational institutions nearby, parents gave less importance to her/his daughters than sons, family poverty, etc. Most of his/her daughters went to earn money outside the state to earn money for alleviation of poverty of their family. Some of them were sacrificed for their life due to suffering from molestation, rape, murder etc. Only a few women had the opportunity for higher education. Most of them did not know their fundamental rights, law, and justice. Mostly they depend on their family.

Bodofa envisioned that education is the backbone for the progress and empowerment of any society. Hence, he stressed the need to educate Bodo youths. He espoused that women being blessed with the same mental capacity as men can equally excel in all spheres of life. Therefore, he voiced for women's education.

During that time most of the non-tribal women were highly educated than Bodo women in various fields. Bodofa knew that education could bring about positive attitudinal change, provide Knowledge, and creative awareness, and develop a capacity to understand and be comprehensive. Bodofa knew that education was also a pathway for economic development. Employment through education paves the way for financial improvement.

Bodofa could envision that educated women can take care of the family in a better way. They can give a better direction to the education of children. Educated women can take care of their household, and finances, and educate their children, thus still sowing the seed for better tomorrow. Bodofa did not confine education only to the basics of formal education but incorporated knowledge and skills to understand various fields related to financial planning savings, basics of

banking, financial earning, etc. which if inculcated by children could lead to the betterment of the family and the society at large.

Bodofa supported women to take up the mantle of writers. Due to his supportive nature a good number of Bodo women came into the literary horizon. Writers and poets came into the scene of this creative field. Bhabani Baglari, a renowned writer and a school teacher, said, 'by the inspiration of Bodofa a few students of Kokrajhar College, published magazines named 'Gwdan Fwngkha' in 1984 and 'Thandwi' in 1985. In this magazine Bodofa contributed his article, and also contributed an amount of Rs 1000/- for publication'. Bodofa not only inspired but also supported them'. It can be mentioned that after the death of Bodofa in 1990, AATWWF published a magazine named 'Songdan' in 1991 which is one of the first magazines of Bodo women. The Kokrajhar district AATWWF started publishing 'Rwikhamuthi' from the same year. Women related issues are the central theme of this annual magazine (Chaudhuri, 2004). Of course, the contributors are not confined to women only but even male writers have published articles in it.

Never were Bodo women more confident than they are today getting exposed to the fruits of education. Before the Bodoland movement, the literary rate of Bodo women was very low, from then till date number of qualified Bodo women were absorbed as teachers in higher learning institutions of different Colleges and Universities. Most of the teachers in schools are women and their presence and service are seen in all government and private departments and offices. Young successful students have spread out all over the country to pursue their studies in different courses like medicine, engineering, agriculture, law, fashion designing, hospitality, management, business management, civil service, science, social science general courses, games, and sports, singer, dancer, and creative fields.

5.0.4 Cultural:

Bodofa was an ardent believer that without one's culture, a community cannot survive and have a unique identity. Following his concept AATWWF also inspired women to wear the traditional dress "Dokhona". Inspired by Bodofa's vision, the Bodos withstood the onslaught of the majority to have the "Sardormekhela" (traditional attire worn by the majority in Assam) imposed on them. When in trouble, they thought of the need to protect and enrich their glorious tradition, language, and culture (Brahma et al 2000). Bodofa inspired AATWWF to adopt the resolution to distribute

“Aronnai” (traditional scarf of the Bodos) to each movement leaders during that time. This decision was taken in the executive meeting of AATWWF held on 20th of July 1989. This decision was inspired by the Bodo tradition of weaving an “Aronai” within a single night, for the men-folk going to war, so that they get protected from evils (Chaudhuri, 2004). According to Boro women folk during that time every family had a loom. Every clothe woven by them, reflected the beauty of nature. The clothes are named by natural titles e.g. Hajw agor, Thaigir bibar, Farrwo magon, daorai mwkhreb etc. Women were expert in weaving cloths. The Boro women weave colourful designs. During earlier times Bodo women wove clothes only for wearing but at present they also weave for business. On October 28, 1987, the ABSU organized a ‘Cultural Demonstration’ as one of the programs of its movement in the Bodo populated areas by dancing and playing their traditional musical instruments. The program was followed by the ‘Cultural Rally’ to get a separate state for them (Mosahari 2011).

5.0.5 Economic Empowerment:

Economic empowerment means women with economic well-being associated with a change of women. Bodofa supported women’s and girls’ economic empowerment. He suggested today’s women should have expert employment opportunities and training in finance. However, for women to be economically empowered, they need both the ability to prosper economically and the power to act on economic discourse. He also suggested in various meetings and conferences of AATWWF members, Bodo women participate in different economic activities such as employment opportunities, markets, business, shops, etc. The 1988-1989 year can be the ‘Economic Revolution’ of Bodo women because during this year most of the women began to earn their livelihood in various sectors. Earlier only a few women came out for business. AATWWF organized awareness-programme seminars, conventions, conferences, and workshops in different corners of Bodo inhabited areas of Assam to discuss issues related to Movement and Socio-Economic problems.

According to the women folk during the movement, in the era of Bodofa, the mobility of women became restricted due to police hostility. Bodo women from depressed families had to look out for alternative livelihoods due to the inability of their men to come out to seek work to

feed their families (Brahma, 2012). In this way, they started markets at every Bodo inhabited area for their livelihood. They didn't sit idle, but learned the business strategies against all adversities. A good number of women were vegetable vendors and were engaged in small-scale businesses. Women -folk of this village participate in many other activities, weaving, fishing, marketing, etc. 70% of Households have their own weaving gears. They weave clothes for themselves for other members of the family and thereby reduce expenditures on these items. Many women are also involved in many other economic activities, e.g. weaving, fishing, marketing, etc. The women are also involved in economic activities, like the rearing of cattle, pigs, fowls, Eri-worm, etc. and some of them run small tea stalls in the weekly markets. It may be mentioned that from 1987 to 1989 there was an economic revolution for women. Today qualified women from good families have set up their business centres like weaving, retailing, designing, handicraft items, food preservation, etc. Hospitality comes naturally to Bodo women as a tradition and this characteristic has helped in booming successful traditional food courts in towns of today's Bodo areas.

5.0.6 Political:

Women's involvement in political activities in the participation of Bodo women in the political field started from the language movement also called the Roman Script movement of 1974-75. At this time most of the women were school and college students so, they did not actively participate in the Movement. However, since 1930, the educated Bodos who follow the Brahma religion have expressed the importance of participating in political activities to fight for their political rights.

Inspired by Bodofa's vision to have the women folk politically empowered, ABSU gave ample opportunities to Bodo women to showcase their leadership skills. Bodofa's philosophy led to women like Mrs. Pramila Rani Brahma, and Miss Kamali Basumatary, starting their political careers as close associates of Bodofa and also members of AATWWF.S.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we can conclude that Bodofa's vision was to empower women educationally, economically and politically. Bodofa did not go against the very foundation of the

Bodo society which since ancient times has given equal status to women. Due to his unwavering support to women's empowerment, one finds women organisations within the Bodo community as AATWWF getting a prominent role and voice in the decision-making process related to the Bodo community. The empowered Bodo women of today's time have much to thank Bodofa for it.

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