

**IS MULTICULTURALISM A HINDRANCE TO
NATIONAL UNITY? EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS
OF MULTI-CULTURALISM IN THE
CONTEXT OF BODOLAND MOVEMENT
IN ASSAM**

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ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism is a fundamental idea that emphasizes the acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural variety in modern communities. It is based on the historical cohabitation of many civilizations. This is especially important when discussing national, ethnic, and religious differences in the context of cultural diversity—a subject that is very important in India. The Dravidian, Naga, and Assamese ethnic movements in India highlight the need to identify and integrate minority communities based on their racial, national, or religious identities. These movements have had a huge impact on Indian politics and cultural expressions, leaving a lasting impression on the country's socio-political landscape. Multiculturalism, which has a long history in India, essentially fosters understanding and tolerance among various communities. India's diverse mosaic of cultures bears witness to its rich and complicated past, as ethnic movements continue

to influence the country's socio-political environment. The Bodoland movement highlights the need for inclusive policies to balance multiple identities and aspirations while maintaining national unity and provides a striking example of the complexities and challenges faced by diversity in the modern world.

Keywords: Bodoland, Cultural Diversity, Cultural Preservation, Ethnic Movements, Inclusive Policies, Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism: Introduction and historical roots

The concept of multiculturalism, both in society and politics, has a long history that spans numerous cultures and eras. Its fundamental idea is that cultural variety within a society should be acknowledged and accepted. The Roman Empire, which included a wide range of cultures and religions and permitted them to coexist under a single governmental body, is one of the earliest examples of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism's historical origins can be traced to the interactions, exchanges, and coexistence of many civilizations throughout human history. This concept has evolved and is an important feature of modern communities, encouraging tolerance and understanding among diverse communities.

The concept of multiculturalism in current political discourse and political philosophy reflects a debate about how to recognize and respond to the issues associated with ethnic, national, and religious distinctions in cultural diversity. The term 'multicultural' is frequently used to characterize the fact of diversity in a society, but the focus of what follows is on multiculturalism as a normative ideal in the context of Western liberal democratic cultures. While the phrase has developed to embrace a wide range of normative claims and aspirations, it is fair to say that proponents of multiculturalism have a common ground in rejecting the ideas of the 'melting pot' in which people of minority groups are supposed to assimilate into the majority culture. Rather, they have separate group identities and customs. In the case of immigrants, proponents underline that multiculturalism is compatible

with, rather than opposing to, the integration of immigrants into society; multiculturalism policies provide immigrants with more equitable terms of integration (Song, 2020).

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Age of Exploration expanded interactions between diverse civilizations and the interchange of ideas, foods, and traditions. In more recent history, the European Enlightenment developed the idea of tolerance and respect for other views and civilizations. Multiculturalism as a modern political policy emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Countries such as Canada and Australia adopted official multiculturalism policies in the 1970s intending to protect and celebrate their various people's cultural identities. Multiculturalism is now a part of a larger political movement to include marginalized groups such as African Americans, women, LGBTQ persons, and people with disabilities (Glazer, 1997). However, the more specific focus of contemporary multiculturalism theories is the recognition and integration of minority groups defined largely by race, nationality, and religion. Immigrants who are ethnic and religious minorities. Minority nations and indigenous peoples are the primary concerns of contemporary multiculturalism (Song, 2020).

Tracing to Indian context, the historical origins of multiculturalism in India may be traced back thousands of years. The coexistence of different religions, languages, and traditions is a feature of India's rich and complex past. Various civilizations, including the Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, and Dravidian, coexisted in ancient India. Tolerance of many faiths and civilizations was shown by the Maurya and Gupta dynasties, as well as the Mughal dynasties. This multicultural history created the groundwork for the secular values contained in the Indian Constitution after independence in 1947, which celebrates and protects religious and cultural diversity. As a South Asian country, India has a rich and diversified socio-cultural shade that has resulted in a multicultural federal structure. This complex culture has formed over the ages as a result of the confluence of diverse cultural elements introduced by conquerors such as Aryans, Sakas, Huns, Pathans, Mughals, and Europeans. This hybrid culture is frequently referred to as 'unity in diversity' or 'vegetables in a salad bowl'. Multiculturalism is profoundly ingrained in Indian

history and civilization, with Jawaharlal Nehru observing that India is a unique melting pot of various races with deep-seated racial memory in his *The Discovery of India* ('Roots of multiculturalism in India').

A historical examination of India's culture and civilization reveals that its roots are extremely diversified, the many linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups have their history and tradition, which is completely embedded in the Indian subcontinent. Indian democracy has demonstrated that multiculturalism as a policy works and has achieved widespread acceptance in India as a principle ('Roots of multiculturalism in India'). It has a linguistic richness with over 1,600 languages spoken and also religious diversity. India's diversified cultural environment demonstrates the coexistence of numerous languages, faiths, traditions, and artistic forms. This diversity has defined India's identity, encouraging tolerance, understanding, and a deep appreciation for the many civilizations that exist inside its borders. Also, the Indian Constitution ensures essential rights and liberties to all citizens, regardless of origin, while also fostering equality and secularism.

Ethnic Movements in India

The term 'ethnicity' does not refer to a uniform phenomenon, it has a continuing ambiguity; what constitutes ethnically determined social behaviour is not specified beforehand, as Max Weber pointed out at the time. The majority of ethnicity researchers agree that the idea refers to group formation, the formation of cultural and social groups, boundaries between 'us' and 'the others', identification, a sense of belonging, symbolic community, and so on. However, there are still disagreements concerning the role. Culture and social structure demonstrate the diversity of interpretation and expression in the field of ethnic phenomena (Ålund, 1999).

In India, ethnic movements are collective acts taken by diverse ethnic and cultural groups to safeguard and promote their distinct identities, rights, and interests. These movements have had a profound impact on the socio-political landscape of India. Several noteworthy ethnic movements have occurred throughout the country's history, each driven by its own set of grievances and goals. India is a

noisy democracy. It has been involved in several political clashes over the years. Conflicts over class, caste, political parties, language, religion, and regions frame India's political landscape. India has seen a number of them, particularly by communities that identify their regional difference based on language or religion. Three of the most important of these movements, namely those led by Tamils, Sikhs, and Muslims from Kashmir (Kohli, 1997). The Kashmir dispute is a worth mentioning big ethnic movement. The conflict over Jammu and Kashmir has raged for decades, with both India and Pakistan asserting their rights. This ethnic movement is profoundly based on religious and cultural divides, with the Kashmir Valley's largely Muslim inhabitants wanting self-determination and autonomy. Again, the Dravidian movement has had an impact in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. This socio-political movement, led by individuals such as Periyar and Annadurai, aims to promote the rights and cultural identity of the Dravidian people, who speak Dravidian languages. This movement had a significant influence on Tamil Nadu's politics and cultural expression. Various Adivasi movements have emerged in the tribal regions of central and eastern India to address issues such as land rights, displacement due to development projects, and cultural preservation. These movements, generally led by organizations such as the Adivasi Adhikar Manch and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, seek to preserve the rights of indigenous peoples.

When it comes to ethnicity and conflicts, Northeast India is a noteworthy region. The Naga insurgency in Northeastern India is one prominent example. The Naga people, who live primarily in Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh, have long sought more autonomy and possibly independence. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) has been a prominent actor in this campaign, negotiating Naga rights with the Indian government. Another notable ethnic movement is the Assam Accord. It arose as a result of conflicts between the Assamese and the inflow of Bengali-speaking immigrants. The Accord, signed in 1985, attempted to resolve the Assamese people's concerns by defining citizenship qualifications and preserving their linguistic and cultural rights.

Finally, ethnic movements in India are numerous and complex, each influenced by unique historical, cultural, and political circumstances. They reflect

the constant attempt to strike a balance between the demands of various ethnic and cultural groups and the greater goals of national unity and social cohesion. These movements influenced Indian politics and continue to alter the country's socio-cultural landscape. Today, ethnicity is a powerful tool not just for mobilization, but also for defending one's political authority, territory, and natural and material resources. India, and especially Northeast India, is a land of many ethnic and tribal groupings. It has been described as a cultural patchwork. Tribal cultures, linguistics, and ethnic identities are all diverse. This extremely sensitive area has been subjected to a great deal of scrutiny. This is due to the ethnicity and fanaticism that are prevalent in this region. Insurgency is intensifying, and the numerous ethnic groups who live here are grappling with identity issues. It is critical to emphasize here that to lessen ethnic conflict, efforts should be taken to bring constructive peace that is long-lasting and beneficial (Saikia, 2018).

Ethnic Diversity in Assam

Assam, India's Northeastern state, is a melting pot of ethnic variety, with a diverse range of groups and languages, cultures, and history. This diversity has sometimes resulted in ethnic movements seeking to address diverse complaints and preserve the rights of various ethnicities. In recent years, several ethnic movements have emerged in Assam. Among these are the movements of the Bodo, Karbi, Tiwa, Mishing, Deori, and Sonowalkacharis. These movement's socio-cultural and political foundations are linked to several common phenomena. Several more ethnic movements in the state are at various stages of growth (Saikia, 2018).

One of the most important ethnic movements in Assam is the Assam Movement (1979-1985), often known as the Assam Agitation. It was predominantly spearheaded by the Assamese-speaking population, who was concerned over large-scale Bengali-speaking immigration, which they saw as a danger to their language and culture. This campaign culminated in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985, which defined citizenship criteria and sought to protect the language and cultural rights of the people of Assam.

Aside from the Assamese, the state is home to a number of indigenous communities, including the Bodo, Karbi, and Mising tribes. These groups have formed their movements, such as the Bodo Movement, which advocates for an autonomous Bodoland territory, and the Karbi Movement, which advocates for more autonomy.

Tea tribes of Assam, a disenfranchised group of labourers, have also fought for their rights. The Tea Tribe Movement tries to address this community's socioeconomic issues.

The Bodoland Movement is undoubtedly another prominent ethnic movement in Assam. The indigenous Bodo people have long desired greater autonomy and recognition of their separate identity inside Assam. The movement, led by the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and the All Bodo Student's Union (ABSU), seeks to create a separate Bodoland territory. The Bodoland Movement exemplifies the larger fight of Assamese indigenous communities to secure their rights and cultural heritage. It highlights the complex and dynamic character of Assam's ethnic variety, as well as the need for discussion and negotiation in resolving past grievances and fostering harmony among the state's diverse population.

Ethnic conflicts are better viewed as power struggles. Ethnic conflicts are thus a subset of the larger collection of political conflicts that dot the political landscape of developing-country democracies and include conflicts along class, caste, or party lines. While it is easy to distinguish ethnic conflicts from other types of political conflicts, what ethnic conflicts have in common with other mobilized groups is that mobilized ethnic groups, like other mobilized groups, seek greater power and control, either as an end in itself or as a means to secure a society's other valued resources (Kohli, 1997).

Bodoland Movement: An Overview

The Bodoland movement is a notable ethnic and political movement in Assam, India. It largely represents the Bodo people, an indigenous ethnic group indigenous to the region. The primary demand of the movement has been the

establishment of a separate territory known as Bodoland, with more political autonomy and recognition of their distinct cultural and linguistic identity. The Bodo movement sprang from historical complaints around land rights, socio-economic inequities, and concerns about the preservation of their language and culture.

The background of Bodo movement was prepared during the colonial period with the systematic immigration that was allowed by the Britishers and which had continued even after independence. In the early part of the 20th century, the Britishers undertook the development and cultivation of wastelands and officially encouraged the immigration of landless peasants from the densely populated bordering districts of Bengal to the sparsely populated districts of the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The colonial administration also imported a large number of working hands to work in the tea plantation, road construction, oil fields and coal mines. This process of the immigration scheme opened a new floodgate for the immigration of landless peasants from East Bengal (Now Bangladesh) to Assam and at least 90% of the immigrants were Muslims. During the period 1911 to 1931, Muslim peasants formed a significant portion of the population in all the Brahmaputra valley districts. In the post-independence period, the flow of a massive number of immigrants assumed a menacing land problem, particularly for the Bodo population (Choudhury, 2015).

As per the census report of 1991, Assam has witnessed the highest growth of voters which is at 13.38% as against the national average of 2.1%. The main reason for the sharp increase in voters is no doubt due to the immigration of Muslim settlers from the neighbouring country Bangladesh. The main point to be noted is that the rate of increase is much more alarming in the Bodo-dominated areas. Thus, the huge influx of migrants had shaken the fabric of the tribal economy, culture and society. The growing migrant population appeared to be a serious threat to their survival and development as a tribal entity (Choudhury, 2015).

The Bodo political movement originated from a need for linguistic rights in Assam, evolving to encompass demands for a distinct script (Nagari script adopted in 1975) and the creation of Bodoland. The push for a separate state was rooted in the desire to safeguard their identity, with leaders arguing for political and

democratic resolution. The proposed state covered a significant part of the Assam valley. In 1967, the Bodo middle class was beginning to voice its desires and the Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) took up the cause of Bodo political autonomy. The request was well received and was in line with the All Bodo Students Union's (ABSU) desire for a distinct Bodo state. However, the PTCA softened its position and lost support from regular Bodos as a result of internal strife and affiliations with the Assam government. There was a rift inside the group after the 1979 leadership transition, which Bodos saw as a betrayal of their real political goals. Founded in 1967, the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) became a unified voice for Bodo demands, calling for the creation of an independent state called Bodoland. When Assamese Chauvinism opposed ABSU's aggressive pursuit of this cause in 1987, Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma led the organization. Together with ABSU, the Bodo People's Action Committee (BPAC) organized a significant demonstration in 1987 under the banner 'Divide Assam Fifty-Fifty'. The Bodo Security Force (BSF) was founded in 1986 to achieve autonomous Bodoland via violent confrontation. But ABSU disassociated itself, advocating for a separate state within India. In 1993, representatives of ABSU and BPAC signed the Bodoland Accord, which created the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) in Assam. Although there was a decrease in hostilities, factional violence continued among Bodo groups, made worse by militant forces desiring complete independence rejecting the pact. Following the establishment of cease-fires with organizations such as the Bodoland Liberation Tiger Force (BLTF), the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was formed in 2003 to oversee a specific region of Assam. ABSU and other groups claim that Bodo's concerns are still neglected despite constitutional revisions, pointing to an ongoing struggle for autonomy and development in Assam.

The signing of the Bodo Accord in January 2020 was an important milestone for the movement. It is an extension of the existing agreement of 2003, an attempt to strengthen the Bodo Territorial Region's legislative, administrative, and financial status. The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), a new administrative subdivision within Assam, was established as a result of this agreement. The BTR was given increased legislative rights and control over specific subjects, allowing the Bodo people to exercise some degree of self-government. The Bodoland movement

exemplifies the complexity of ethnic diversity in Assam and the surrounding region. It shows the significance of addressing historical grievances, acknowledging the indigenous population's rights and aspirations, and creating peaceful cohabitation within the framework of the Indian nation.

Multiculturalism and its Challenges to National Unity in the Context of the Bodoland Movement

Understanding cultural differences is only one aspect of multiculturalism; another is tackling the problems these differences cause in society. A country must use politics and governance to address these issues to prosper; it cannot take an overly liberal or hands-off stance. To foster mutual respect and a feeling of common identity, diverse communities need active state administration. This duty is shared by the majority as well as by immigrant or minority groups. Multiculturalism encompasses the complex concerns of religious and cultural diversity and how we handle these opportunities and challenges. It is a concern for society as a whole. Some of the characteristics and challenges of Multiculturalism are mentioned below:

- **Specificity:** The particular conditions of any nation or area influence multiculturalism. The nature of multiculturalism is influenced by variables like intergroup connections, migration history, and population distribution. Since experiences differ greatly throughout nations, it is imperative to comprehend multiculturalism within the context of the particular society rather than attempting to apply a single model across varied places.
- **Temporal Nature:** Intergroup relations are subject to change over time, as multiculturalism is a continuous process. Coexistence in peace might change for the better or worse. Sri Lanka and the Balkans are two instances of how even peaceful cooperation may be twisted or disturbed. A state's ability to effectively manage its dynamics and foresee future changes is vital.
- **Inherent Tensions:** Diverse modern societies comprise a variety of social diversity, including class and political disparities, in addition to cultural and

religious distinctions. To manage diversity, one must recognize differences while promoting a sense of unity because conflicts might occur, especially in times of crisis or rapid change.

- **Potential Disruptions:** When cultural variety meets with differences in power, wealth, education, and resources, tensions have the potential to turn into conflicts. Societies characterized by such diversity may give rise to cultural disputes, which some see as ‘failures of multiculturalism’. Nevertheless, rather than being a reflection of multiculturalism’s inherent shortcomings, these disruptions should be understood as an inadequacy in managing the multicultural environment.
- **Effective Management:** At every level of society, multiculturalism necessitates cautious management. This entails encouraging community involvement and tolerance as well as integration and the creation of a shared identity despite differences. To combat racism, bigotry, and prejudice, policymaking is essential. Education is also essential for fostering tolerance, understanding, and an interest in variety.

In conclusion, multicultural environments are specific to each location, dynamic, prone to conflict, prone to disturbances, and in need of efficient state governance. Policies, laws, and educational programs are all part of managing diversity to uphold social justice and cohesion and avoid intergroup strife (Nye, 2007). Some scholars also argue that in a country where several cultural groups coexist, multiculturalism recognizes this fact without imposing a single national identity. It celebrates diversity, and multiculturalists stress how crucial it is to uphold the rights and cultural identities of racial and ethnic minorities while advancing equality. A group of people who share a language, culture, ethnicity, or history might be called a nation. On the other hand, national integration entails forging ties between once-isolated countries, accepting diversity, and promoting broad agreement. Similar to multiculturalism, national integration necessitates an equitable and reasonable government that recognizes, respects, and values these distinctions. While national integration governs diversity with equality and justice, multiculturalism promotes cultural diversity (Folarin et al, 2012).

To comprehend the complexities of multiculturalism in a diverse country like India, it's essential to explore the ethnic diversities and conflicts in various regions. Of them, Assam is particularly notable for being a multi-ethnic state, which makes it difficult to assess the rationality of demands made by a single ethnic community. The Bodoland demand in Assam serves as a fitting illustration, highlighting the complexities and challenges posed by such movements in a multi-ethnic state. Considering the opinions of other groups co-existing in the area calls into question the viability of an ethnic group's demand. This is an appropriate example of the challenges thrown by the movement in the characteristic of a multi-ethnic state like Assam or a broader context of national unity.

To understand the ongoing confrontations between Bodos and non-Bodos, one must first understand the historical context. The origins of tribal exclusion zones may be traced back to the colonial administration when the British sought to govern the Assam valley and surrounding hills. To control tribal affairs, the Government of India Act of 1935 enacted rules such as the Excluded Areas Act, Partially Excluded Areas Act, and Inner Line Regulations. Traditional contacts between the Brahmaputra Valley plains and nearby hill tribes were severed as a result of these laws and it continued even in the post-independence era. The Constitution introduced the Sixth Schedule as a constitutional provision, guaranteeing socio-political-cultural protection to Northeastern tribal territories, maintaining much of the 1935 Act. This schedule, however, was not intended for all regional tribes, excluding those already excluded. The status of plains tribes such as the Bodos, Mishings, and Rabhas was disregarded by the Bordoloi subcommittee. Even though the Constituent Assembly has a separate subcommittee addressing minority rights, some argue that Gopinath Bordoloi, chair of the North-East Frontier Tribal Areas Sub-Committee, failed to do justice to plains tribals, assimilating them into Assamese identity and depriving them of special rights (Mahanta, 2013).

The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was established through a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed on February 10, 2003, in New Delhi, by representatives from the union government, the Assam government, and a delegation from the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT). The agreement aimed to establish

an autonomous self-governing body, the Bodoland Territorial Council, within the state of Assam, providing constitutional protection under the constitution. However, the agreement encountered difficulties. Unlike the 1993 Bodo Peace Accord, which was signed by the All Assam Student's Union (AASU), the 2003 accord was signed solely by Hagrama Basumatary, chairperson of the secretive BLT. The BTC Accord fell short in two critical areas: it lacked the values of fairness, justice, and representation, and it failed to address long-standing difficulties like tribal belts, blocks, and the problem of illegal migration. As a result, the gap between Bodos and non-Bodos grew, particularly among Adivasis, Koch-Rajbanshis, Rabhas, and Assamese communities. The BTC region, which included four new contiguous districts, sparked alarm among many ethnic groups, particularly non-Bodos. The BTC's composition, with reserved constituencies favoured by Bodos, sparked claims of institutional discrimination. Non-Bodo organizations, such as the Sanmilita Janagosthiya Sangram Samithi and Ana-Bodo Surakhya Samity, increased their agitational efforts to be classified as a Scheduled Tribe. The conflict in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) mirrors broader identity assertions, which have been amplified by the Sixth Schedule's acknowledgement of the Bodo Homeland (Mahanta, 2013).

The fragile peace between Bodos and non-Bodos in the region is highlighted by the July 2012 hostilities between the Bodos and illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) of Assam, as well as the 2008 violence in the districts of Darrang and Udalguri. Bodos, Koch-Rajbongshis, Rabhas, Adivasis, Tea Tribes, Assamese, Bengali Hindus and Muslims, and Assamese are among the diverse populations that make up the BTAD. The Bodos are said to have threatened non-Bodos to leave Bodo-dominated areas, there are examples of cooperative coexistence that refute ethnic cleansing allegations. Remarkably, the KLO, which has ties to both ULFA and NDFB, is against ULFA's covert backing of SJSS, a non-Bodo group that opposes the construction of Bodoland. A threat to peace is posed by the Koch Rajbongshi leaders, who criticize the Bodo past in Assam and propose combining the demands for Bodoland. Allegations have it that the state administration fomented Bodo-

non-Bodo disputes in the 1990s to keep regions from being ceded to the Bodo Accord (Basumatary, 2014).

The difficulties of creating homogenous territories in varied, multicultural countries like India are highlighted by the complexity seen in areas like Assam, which are ingrained in its multi-ethnic composition. The complex interactions between historical, cultural, and identity processes among the numerous ethnic populations are reflected in the struggle for territorial demarcation. Because Bodos, Koch-Rajbongshis, Adivasis, and other tribes with different histories and goals coexist in Assam, it is difficult to create a single, homogenous territory. Conflicts over territory, resources, and identity emerge to meet the many requirements of these communities, making the possibility of a cohesive and peaceful regional identity more difficult to achieve.

Bodoland's heterogeneous setting presents a complex interplay of opportunities and problems. On the one hand, the region's unique cultural and linguistic mosaic provides opportunities for cross-cultural enrichment and mutual understanding, as well as contributing to the local economy through a wide range of skills, and agricultural methods. This encourages social cohesion and peaceful cooperation among the various communities that make up Bodoland. However, these opportunities are offset by some obstacles. The desire for Bodoland's statehood, which is frequently anchored in ethnic identity, calls into question the larger values of multiculturalism by raising concerns about the preservation of unique identities v/s assimilation into a unified state. To effectively address these difficulties, inclusive policies that recognize the rights and aspirations of diverse people while encouraging social integration and economic success within Bodoland are required. To promote harmony and guarantee the welfare of all inhabitants in the Bodoland regions, efforts must be made to balance the goals of the Bodo community with the interests of non-Bodo people.

Conclusion

The Indian government has made great walks toward resolving the Bodoland conflict while upholding pluralism. The Bodoland Accord established

the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in 2003, giving the Bodo people some autonomy while defending the rights and interests of non-Bodo communities in the area. Including non-Bodo groups in the governance system and allocating seats for them in the Bodoland Territorial Council to guarantee their political representation has been a key component of this strategy. In addition, the administration has initiated development initiatives to enhance the socio-economic circumstances of every Bodoland area inhabitant, irrespective of their cultural or ethnic heritage. Keeping in mind the plurality of the Indian nation, it's difficult to sum up yes or no to the argument of the whole study. However, in conclusion, to answer if multiculturalism poses a hindrance to nationalism is more affirmative than negative. Although multiculturalism is praised for its diversity in India, there are times when it threatens the country's cohesiveness because of the presence of multiple ethnic groups, languages, and customs which can cause cultural conflict and hinder the development of a unified national identity. Social divisions can occasionally be brought about by differences in customs, beliefs, and behaviours, which prevent the smooth integration necessary for strong national unity. To manage this diversity and cultivate the peaceful cohabitation that is necessary for a united country, policies and activities that support inclusivity, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures are necessary. Efforts should be made to balance both the aspects initiated in aiming to accommodate the region's rich cultural and ethnic fabric, promote long-lasting togetherness, and settle historical grievances.

Abbreviations

1. ABSU: All Bodo Student's Union
2. BAC: Bodoland Autonomous Council
3. BLT: Bodo Liberation Tigers
4. BLTF: Bodoland Liberation Tiger Force
5. BPAC: Bodo People's Action Committee
6. BSF: Bodo Security Force
7. BTAD: Bodoland Territorial Area Districts
8. BTC: Bodoland Territorial Council
9. BTR: Bodoland Territorial Region
10. KLO: Kamtapur Liberation Organization
11. LGBTQ: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
12. MoS: Memorandum of Settlement
13. NDFB: National Democratic Front of Bodoland
14. NSCN: National Socialist Council of Nagaland
15. PTCA: Plain Tribal Council of Assam
16. SJSS: SanmilitaJanagosthiya Sangram Samiti
17. ULFA: United Liberation Front of Assam

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