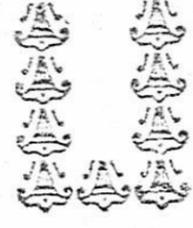
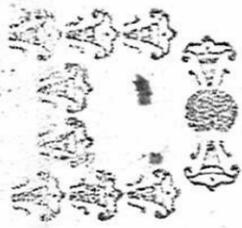
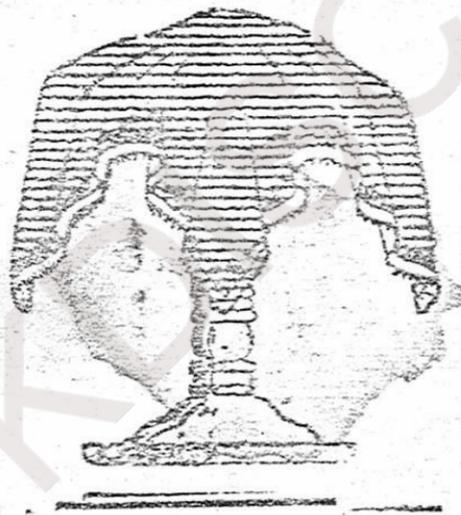


# ডৈমু



মলবাৰী জিলা বৰ' ফৰাইছা আফাৰ্শনি  
 !! নিষ্খুম বিলাই !!



● বাছাৰ গাটনৈ : ●

: দিহুন গাটনৈ ●

১৯৭৩ মাইথায়

ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী দান

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সুজুগিৰি :—

মুখী আৰুৰাম বড়ো

লোগা সুজুগিৰি :—

মুখী বমাকান্ত বধুমতাৰী

# 'AASU' VERSUS 'ABSU'.



Sri Ramdas Basumatary,

B. A. (Hons) B. T.

Mushalpur.

This article is a sketchy delineation of rifts suffered by the 'AASU' and the 'ABSU' during the last language tangle of Assam which was beaten by turbulent waves of turmoils from October 5, 1972 till November 11, 1972. 'AASU' stands for "All Assam Students Union" and 'ABSU' stands for "All Bodo Students' Union."

The recent language tangle beginning to form whirls of controversies some time back in the month of September and taking its violent turn on the death of Muzammil Haque in Kharupetia riots on October 5, 1972 and subsiding after the Chief Minister's press-note released on November 11, 1972 assumed quite distinct characteristics from those that occurred in the past. The language turmoil of last 1960 had centred on the question of official language of the state, but this time it revolved round the issue of medium of instruction of

Universities in Assam. It was a triangular fight involving three different language groups,—viz. the Assamese, the Bengalis and the Bodos. The Assamese stood for Assamese as sole medium of instruction, the Bengalis for 'Bengali' as medium of instruction along with 'Assamese' and the Bodos for continuation of 'English' as medium of instruction in the Universities of Assam for all time to come. Thus with three antagonistic objects in view undesirable disturbances took roots at various places and then gradually spread all over Assam to garb a grim attire actions of, loot arson and murder. The continued heat of engendering untoward bloody excitement letting way to profane affairs and insecurity law and order situation of the state, hit the victims for more than a month, i. e. from October 5, 1972 to November 11, 1972. An act of drawing a vivid picture of those wild disturbances, in fact, demands a series of long analytical outlines with all their backgrounds. But our purpose is here not to brood over the detailed history of the movement while on the contrary it is only to unveil a number of facts about the rifts that ensued between the 'AASU' and the 'ABSU' and to assert the stand of the latter.

### **ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE OF DIVERGENCE :—**

Up to October 10, 1972 the conflicts on the issue

were confined only to the Assamese and the Bengali language groups. But certain vested political interests and narrow chauvinistic feelings exposed by the agitators of the 'AASU' did all their best to estrange the 'ABSU'. The text of divergence may be put as stated below.

The reiterations of demand of the AASU for 'Assamese' as the sole medium expressly meant not only the exclusion of Bengali medium but also the replacement of English medium from the Universities of Assam. Such motive of the AASU even going against the temporary retention of English medium as per 12th June decision, 1972, of the Gauhati University Academic Council became an unfortunate victim to angry observations of the ABSU. The ABSU which works in harmony with the ABSS (All Bodo Sahitya Sabha.) in the cause of representing the views of Bodo people on linguistic and literary affairs was already aware of long-cherished aspirations of the latter towards retention of English not only as media of instruction of the Universities but also as an associate official language of Union and the states until Hindi would become competent, to replace English. In this circumstances the repeated cries of slogans echoing 'Assamese the sole medium' and the same being again flared up through exciting news published by the Assam news papers wrought only the good

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of rousing the violent fury of the ABSS. Besides this other undemocratic slogans (used by the AASU) like 'Sinha Sarker—Murdabad' 'Ana Assomia Bhasha—Chua Bhasha' (i.e. "languages other than Assamese are untouchables" which was particularly used in Bodo concentrated areas) along with acts of burning effigies of the Chief Minister here and there, hiding festoons, and tearing off printed leaflets and appeals hung by Bodo Students on bamboo-bars, trees and street-posts served to add fuel to the blazing fire of the anger of ABSU. These counter-blasts indulged in by Assamese students finally led the ABSU to confirm itself of the fact that the agitation sponsored by the AASU was one that had been totally biased with disruptionist ideals and vile linguistic chauvinism. The ABSU therefore, found no reason to lose time any more and decided, though at the latest, to launch a counter agitation on the demand for retention of English as media of instruction in the Universities of Assam for all time to come. It (the ABSU) woke up in conscious vigilance and served a clarion call upon all its District Units to mobilise all Bodo students to non-co-operate in the picketings scheduled by the AASU on October 11 & 12, 1972. The ABSU clung to its stand for English medium under a parallel movement counter to the agitation spear-headed by the AASU. This counter movement of the ABSU continued till

Nov. 12, 1972 when the AASU called off its agitation in response to the press-note issued by the Chief Minister of Assam on November 11, 1972.

After calling of the agitation the General Secretary of the AASU in his statement issued in the Assam Tribune of November 14, 1972 gave out a boasting announcement over a self aggrandised victory of it in a few high sounding words which read thus;—“This movement will be inscribed in history for the unparalleled way of discipline and order, restraint and sensibility demonstrated by the students, youth and public from all walks. The historic struggle for the rightful place of Assamese and the role played by the student community bear no parallel.” But in so far as the reality of achievements is concerned such a hollow boasting of the Secretary, AASU also perhaps bears no parallel of deserving abuses from different quarters for the narrow chauvinism the AASU had displayed in course of movement. It is sad enough to note that the AASU could not foresee the aspirations of the Bodo people while it was conducting the rash agitation in order to foil the demand for Bengali medium in the Universities of Assam. It is very much this lack of introspection in the leadership of the AASU which did more than enough to alienate the Bodos, the real sons of the soil of Assam;

and it is for this basic reason that the recently over language tangle spearheaded by the AASU shall be recorded for ever in the history of Bodo language not as one glorious but as one most unwelcome sad event of chauvinism widening the gap of disintegration among the people of Assam.

### **JUSTIFICATION OF STAND FOR ENGLISH MEDIUM.**

None is opposed to retaining English as a subject of study at all stages of education. But the opposition is related to its continuation as medium of instruction only. Various arguments have already cropped up in regard to banishment of English media from the Universities of India. The education policy of the nation is also so designed as to replace English media by regional languages of the states. But it is to be remembered that as soon as the policy was announced earlier on July 19, 1967 a volume of divergent opinions was heard against the implementation of it (the policy) as a result of which the then Union Education Minister Dr. Triguna Sen had to write to the Authorities of the states on October 16, 1967 with an advice to 'make haste slowly'

in switching over to the media of regional languages. This fact apparently indicates nothing but a warning against the hasty action on the switch-over campaign without considering the environments in which the Universities have to perform their academic functions. Of all arguements (including those of educational commissioners) that appear to be the basis of the National Education policy of India, it is perhaps enough to make mention of the one most forceful of all references made by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation who once said,— “The foreign medium has caused brain-fog, but an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and immitators, unfitted them for original work and thought and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land.” Before making any remarks on the observations involved in this saying it may be urged to all first to bear in mind that the father of the nation after attainment of country's independence felt the need of nationalising the spirit of the Indian intelligentsia then very much attached to English way of life resulting out of long drawn bondage of two hundred years' British regime. Laying emphasis on such ideals against English medium of instruction may be considered to have been

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a need of the time in order to inculcate a deep sense of native spirit in the masses of India as a whole. Another important cause for laying emphasis on such observations also appears to be that the international affairs of the country could not gain ground in those days as much as they are doing now. So all the subsequent countrywide views parallel to those of the great father of nation may be well valued with deep veneration from national points of view, but not definitely from the point of view of international one. It is true that a University basically works in the national environment of its own. India has its own cultural values and these have to be reared at any cost. But this does not mean that being narrowly national and parochial in its outlook the Indian Universities should totally lose their international perspectives. The face of the world is now fast changing. The emergence of the UNO with its few international departments like the WHO, UNESCO, etc. are but reflections of an ever-growing and evolving pattern of international culture. Perhaps every right thinking man now does not feel hard to believe that the formation of a world Govt. is a sure possibility of the future however remote it might be. A time has to come when under the canopy of the world Govt. the peoples of the globe will be pressed to choose English as the language of world-administration

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since it is the language spoken and used by the largest majority of the world. In the context of such probability of the future there is every logical ground to advocate retention of a status, by every nation of the world for wider cultivation of English; and the scope for wider cultivation of English may be given to the learning youth at the higher education stage not through the provision of it as a subject of study but as medium of instruction only.

A University is the noblest seat of learning. It should be both national and international in its perspectives. Banishment of English medium from the Universities of India without careful considerations would definitely involve a series of difficulties being detrimental to:—

1) the efficiency of education standards diminishing the scope for acquiring extensive knowledge on various branches of learning for non availability of good and suitable (translated) text books;

2) the movement of students and teachers from one region to the other and carrying intellectual discourse and intercourse;

3) the carrying on of mutual research works,— especially in co-ordination with the Universities of other countries as and when needs arise ;

4) the cultural, political and intellectual integrity of the country in lack of a Universally acceptable link language;

5) the rooting out of virus of regionalism and subnationalism;

6) the growth of international talents etc.

In the light of the above considerations this can be very genuisely concluded that the ABSU'S demand for retention of English media in the Universities of Assam, may of whole of India and that too 'for all time to come.' calls for logical deliberations of the learned leaders of the nation. English media of instruction should be retained in the Universities of India even at the cost of modification of the accepted education policy of the nation. Any policy of education of any nation framed up without relevance to the international background of the day cannot be guaranteed to escape tumbling down in the long run. The present is the age of a compromise between nationalism and growing internatioalism and to maintain this order of co-ordination between the two, the hither-to operated national education policy of India appears to face a dire need of modification. "If there is anythiug final, it is that nothing is final. This is very much true in the case of human knowledge."

