

Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma, the Great visionary leader of Bodos!



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Monjib Mochahari 11 October 2008 34592 views

Upend Nath Brahma, lovingly known as 'Bodofa' (the Father of Bodos), was born on March 31, 1957 in a poor family in Bogari villave of Kokrajhar district of Assam. He studied at Kokrajhar College and later he completed Post Graduate studies from Gauhati University.

Even from his early childhood, Upend Nath Brahma showed his intelligence and demonstrated great his leadership quality. He knew the history of Assam extremely well.

Though Bodofa Upend Nath Brahma lived only for 33 years but he will ever be remembered for his visionary leadership and the sacrifice he made for the cause of his people. Today, his name is a source of determination and sacrifice for the Bodo people. He is an 'icon' of leadership, sacrifice and unity.

His Political activism:

His active political involvement in student politics began way back in 1978-79 when he as elected as the President of the Goalpara District Bodo Students Union.

In 1983-84, he chaired the seat of vice-president of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU). He shouldered the responsibility as president of ABSU in 1988 at 20th annual conference of ABSU held at Bashbari.

He lectured in many parts of Assam, reinforcing the theme that Bodos were treated as second class citizens even in their own motherland, Assam. He observed that the Bodo people had little or no influence in Assam politics. He observed no job opportunities for Bodo students, once they completed their studies.

Upend Nath Brahma with his followers, having realized the need for a mass movement, gradually mobilized Bodo students at the grass-root level. In 1987, as the AASU movement was losing momentum, he with his trusted colleagues spearheaded the 'non-violent Bodoland Movement' to carve out a separate state 'Bodoland' in the North Bank of Brahmaputra in Assam.

As the president of ABSU, he left no stone unturned to fulfill the historical demands of Bodos. The agitation was at the peak during 1988-99.

In 1989, the then Congress Government led by late Rajiv Gandhi formally invited the ABSU president for a tripartite talk between the Central government, the Assam government and the ABSU.

On August 28, he led a 50-member Bodo team in the first round of tripartite talks held in New Delhi. He showed his shrewdness, intelligence and promptness in the talks.

In the mean time, he was suffering from cancer and was admitted in CMC Hospital, Vellore, from where he attended the second and third rounds of talks.

He also attended the fifth round of tripartite talks. Though the Government of Assam proposed to offer all medical treatment abroad, he refused to accept the offer and rely on contributions from the well wishers.

He guided and conducted the cause of the Bodo Movement from his hospital bed. Tragically, the great leader died even before he could see the fruits of his leadership on May 1, 1990. Although Upendranath Brahma was a Hindu, he wanted himself to be buried. His tombstone can be seen in the Upendranath Park in Dotoma.

In eternal memory for his sacrifice to the suffering humanity, the Upenda Nath Brahm Trust has been constituted to confer award annually on persons of repute in selfless services for the uplifting of the downtrodden people and for making significant contributions in the field of literature, art and culture, politics, economics and social under the nomenclature of 'UN Brahma Soldier of Humanity Award". The award carries a sum of Rs. 25,000 and a citation.

Today, Upendranath Brahma's life is celebrated each year on the anniversary of his death as 'Bodofa Day', all over Assam.

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BY MONJIB MOCHAHARI

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