

Bodoland Happiness Mission

Annual Report
2025

“Another world is possible: a world full of love, care and honour... but for that we must read the book of humanity, which is not available in the market, it is to be found only in our hearts.”

Pramod Boro

Chief Executive Member, BTR.





BODOLAND

HAPPINESS MISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-025

Creating spaces for
meaningful dialogue
on **peace, healing,
and reconciliation**
that span across
communities, genders,
and generations.

With Heartfelt Gratitude

As we present the Annual Report for the year 2024 - 2025, we pause to extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have walked this journey with us.

Our sincere thanks to the Hon'ble Chief Executive Member of the Bodoland Territorial Region, Shri Pramod Boro, whose unwavering support and visionary leadership continue to inspire and guide the Bodoland Happiness Mission.

We are equally grateful to the Governing body of the Mission, our dedicated team, and the many participants who have engaged with us across communities, disciplines, and regions. Your trust, courage, and willingness to participate, from educators, ex-militants, and youth leaders to cultural workers, administrators, and grassroots voices have infused every initiative with meaning and momentum.

To every organisation, ally, and well-wisher who has stood beside us in the spirit of healing, dialogue, and collective well-being, **thank you**. Your support has been the quiet force behind every step of transformation, and we carry that forward with humility and renewed purpose.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the editorial Team, **Mainao Basumatray & Lina Rabha** Programme Associate, **Juli Brahma, Debajit Adhikari, & Abu Tahir Sheikh**, Team Bodoland Happiness Mission, and **Nabin Pokhrel**, IofC Nepal for their contributions in editing, design, and thoughtful presentation.

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FOREWORD

It gives me great joy to witness the continued progress of the Bodoland Happiness Mission in its journey of healing, hope, and holistic development. As we reflect on the year 2024–25, it is truly heartening to see how the Mission has grown into a people-centric platform that promotes emotional well-being, social harmony, and the dignity of every individual.

Bodoland has faced many challenges in its past, with conflicts that left deep scars. Through the Bodoland Happiness Mission, we are committed to healing those scars by nurturing understanding, unity, and hope among all communities, paving the way for a peaceful and inclusive future.

This report is more than a record of programmes and achievements; it is a testament to the quiet, steady work of healing and rebuilding—of choosing peace over conflict, hope over despair, and compassion over indifference.

The Bodoland Happiness Mission was born out of the deep understanding that true development is not measured solely by infrastructure or economic growth, but by the inner well-being of people and communities. Over the past year, the Mission has touched thousands across the Bodoland Territorial Region through dialogue, care, and the simple yet powerful act of listening.

This report captures that spirit. It tells the story of what is possible when governance listens with its heart and when communities are empowered to lead their own change.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the team behind the Mission and to every citizen who has participated with sincerity and courage. Let us continue to walk together—across differences and the wounds of the past—towards a future where happiness is not merely an ideal, but a lived reality for every person in Bodoland.

May this report inspire us all to keep walking the path of peace and progress, together.

With conviction and hope.

(Pramod Boro)

Message from Shri Kati Ram Boro

It fills me with deep pride to witness the remarkable transformation Bodoland has undergone over the past year. For decades, Kokrajhar and the wider Bodoland Territorial Region were known for conflict and unrest a place many feared and misunderstood. But today, Kokrajhar is proudly recognized far and wide as a City of Peace.



This change is not just in words but in reality. When the Durand Cup was hosted here and, on live national television, the anchor greeted the world with “Welcome to the City of Peace, Kokrajhar,” it was a powerful moment, a moment that showed how far we have come.

Under the visionary leadership of Hon’ble Chief Executive Member Shri Pramod Boro, Bodoland is transforming from the epicentre of conflict into a model of peace and hope. This transition is reflected in the growing trust among communities, the spirit of cooperation, and the sincere efforts of the Bodoland Happiness Mission.

The Mission is rooted in a belief that true development begins with the healing of emotional wounds, of fractured relationships, and of divided communities. It is through listening, dialogue, and collective care that we are rebuilding the social fabric of our land.

This transformation is not just a change of image but a lived experience felt by people in every village and town. The Bodoland Happiness Mission’s focus on emotional well-being and peace-building is gradually knitting our communities together with threads of empathy and mutual respect.

As the Advisor of the Bodoland Happiness Mission, I proudly present the Annual Report of the Bodoland Happiness Mission 2024-25 and congratulate the entire team, whose dedication and hard work have made this journey possible.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all who have worked tirelessly, officials, volunteers, community leaders, and citizens, for walking this path of healing and peace.

Let us continue this journey with courage and humility, so that Bodoland’s story may inspire others, not only as a place that overcame conflict but as a shining example of peace, unity, and hope.



(Kati Ram Boro)

Hon’ble Speaker, BTCLA,
Chairperson Community Vision Document
cum, Advisor, Bodoland Happiness Mission

4th

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Message

It is a privilege to convey warm greetings and share reflections on the progress of the Bodoland Happiness Mission through this Annual Report 2024–25.

This year has been remarkable in advancing the Mission's vision of fostering peace, harmony, and holistic well-being across the Bodoland Territorial Region. The collaborative spirit among government bodies, community leaders, youth, and civil society organisations has been truly inspiring. Together, we have worked to nurture an environment where healing and reconciliation are not only ideals but lived realities.


A notable achievement has been the implementation of peace and reconciliation initiatives that have fostered dialogue, strengthened social cohesion, and supported the reintegration of diverse groups affected by past conflicts. These efforts are critical to building lasting trust and a culture of nonviolence in our communities.

Equally important has been the development and adoption of the Community Vision Document—a participatory process that has empowered citizens to voice their aspirations and guide the future development of Bodoland. This inclusive approach ensures that governance is responsive, transparent, and anchored in the people's will.

The Government of the Bodoland Territorial Region is steadily advancing on the path to set a **model of governance and a model of peace**, demonstrating how inclusive leadership, community engagement, and a commitment to justice can transform conflict-affected regions into thriving, harmonious societies.

As we reflect on the achievements and lessons of the past year, let us renew our commitment to building a Bodoland where every individual enjoys peace, dignity, and opportunity.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all stakeholders for their dedication and partnership in this noble mission.


(Akash Deep IAS)
Principal Secretary
Bodoland Territorial Council
Kokrajhar



Message from Shri Mantu Boro

It is with a deep sense of responsibility and hope that I share a few words about the journey of the Bodoland Happiness Mission. Over the past year, I have witnessed the Mission touching lives in profound ways bringing healing, peace, and a renewed sense of community to many corners of Bodoland.



Our region has endured challenges that have left scars on both individuals and communities. Yet, through the Mission's tireless efforts, we are beginning to see those scars transform into stories of resilience and hope. The Mission's emphasis on emotional well-being and inclusive participation has created spaces where people feel safe to express themselves, to listen, and to rebuild trust.

As a member working closely with communities, I have seen firsthand how these initiatives inspire people to look beyond past divisions and work together toward a shared future. It is this collective spirit that will carry Bodoland forward, transforming it into a region defined not by conflict, but by harmony and progress.

I am grateful to all the dedicated team members, volunteers, community leaders, and citizens who have contributed their energy and faith to this cause. Let us continue to nurture this spirit of cooperation and healing, so that every individual in Bodoland may experience true happiness and peace.

Together, we are building more than just programs we are building a future grounded in understanding, compassion, and hope.

(Mantu Boro)

MCLA cum Member Coordinator, Bodoland Happiness Mission

Message from Shri Rintu Ch. Boro

It is with deep satisfaction that I present the Annual Report 2024–25 of the Bodoland Happiness Mission a collective journey of healing, hope, and transformation in the Bodoland Territorial Region.

This year, the Mission made significant strides in strengthening community well-being through deeper collaboration, emotional literacy, and inclusive development. A cornerstone of our efforts has been the peace and reconciliation initiatives that have brought together youth, elders, and diverse communities in dialogue and healing. These spaces have helped rebuild trust, mend fractured relationships, and lay the groundwork for a shared, peaceful future.

Equally significant has been the launch of the Community Vision Document process, through which communities across BTR articulated their aspirations, challenges, and dreams. This participatory initiative is a bold step toward inclusive governance and people-led development, ensuring that every voice finds its place in the shaping of Bodoland's future.

Under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Executive Member of BTC, Shri Pramod Boro, the Mission has evolved into a platform for both inner and societal transformation, bridging divides, revitalising culture, and enabling each individual and community to flourish.

This report captures the milestones and momentum of that journey. I extend my sincere gratitude to all community leaders, departments, youth, and partners who have walked this path with us.

May we continue to listen, heal, and build a Bodoland rooted in peace, dignity, and collective joy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

(Rintu Ch. Boro, ACS)
Chairperson, Implementation Team
Bodoland Happiness Mission

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The Soul of the Mission: Stories of Endurance, Unity, and Gratitude

Introduction:

Peace Begins Where the Silence Ends

In places marked by conflict, the deepest wounds are often unspoken. The silence that follows violence is heavy, not just in public memory but in the private corners of families, communities, and institutions. The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), long shaped by ethnic strife and insurgency, has entered a new chapter. But what does it mean to rebuild, not just roads and schools, but trust, dignity, and hope?

The Bodoland Happiness Mission (BHM), initiated under the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Executive Member Shri Pramod Boro, dares to ask and live into that question. It recognises that healing is not a technical process but it is human. It cannot be imposed; it must be invited, lived, shared.

This Annual Report does not offer a list of deliverables. It is a reflection of how **people once divided by blood, ideology, and fear now sit in circles of dialogue**, asking difficult questions, offering personal stories, choosing forgiveness. It documents how **administrative staff rediscovered purpose**, how **young aspirants challenged inherited limitations**, and how **women stepped forward not as victims, but as architects of peace**.



In these pages, you will not find big promises. You will find something rarer than truth-telling: stories of those who admitted guilt, of those who had never forgiven themselves, of those who, for the first time, spoke their father's name aloud, cried, or laughed without shame.

BHM is built on a belief that **peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of trust**. That governance must not only build infrastructure, but inner strength. That policy, to be meaningful, must begin with people's inner lives - with what they carry, fear, remember, and hope.

The Mission draws its strength not from hierarchy but from **shared humanity**. From administrators who listen. From mothers who lead. From ex-combatants who plant trees. From journalists who write not to expose, but to heal.

This report is not a conclusion. It is an invitation. An invitation to continue the difficult, beautiful work of peace, **not just in laws and plans, but in language, in silence, in the choices we make each day**.

Let it remind us that in Bodoland, a new story is being written. Not by one person. But by many. In many voices. In many hearts.

Engagement Footprint: Programme Overview and Participation Data

The Bodoland Happiness Mission has been steadily deepening its engagement with diverse sections of society across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). Through thoughtfully designed programs, it has reached individuals and communities once separated by conflict, bureaucracy, and social divisions, offering safe spaces for healing, reflection, and capacity-building. The emphasis on dialogue, inner governance, peacebuilding, and purpose-driven service has touched a wide spectrum of participants.

Programme	Venue	Duration	No. of Participants	Key Stakeholders
TOT: Advancing Peace-Immersive Training for Leaders			14	Happiness Champion and core team
International Day of Peace	Bodofa Cultural Complex	1	1400	Students' union, Community Organizations, Ex-Militant Groups, and Students
Inter-convergence Programme	Multiple locations	1	255	Grade III employees of BTC, BTR Fellows, Super 50, UPSC, APSC, and Medical
Youth Connect: Initiating Peace, Forgiveness, and Dialogue	The ANT Campus, Chirang	4	46	Students Union, Sports person, and university students
Women in Peace Building	Siloam, learning centre, Meghalaya	5	26	Women leaders from Grass roots, ASHA, Anganwadi, Students, CLF and politicians
Cultivating Harmony: Ex Militant Groups	Siloam, learning centre, Meghalaya	5	31	12 Ex-Militant group from BTR
Women Leadership Summit	Siloam, learning centre, Meghalaya	5	42	Women leaders from Grass roots, ASHA, Anganwadi, CLF, SHG, VO, teachers and politicians

Programme	Venue	Duration	No. of Participants	Key Stakeholders
Community empowerment programme	Multiple locations	1	723	Community organization, CLF, Anganwadi and VO
Emergence CCBTRO: Shaping the New Leadership in Bodoland	The ANT Campus, Chirang	5	47	Coordination Committee of the BTR Organizations
Dialogue with Ex-Militant	Kuchgaon IB Bungalow	3	47	8 Ex-Militant groups from Adivasi
Follow-up with Ex-militant Groups	The ANT Campus, Chirang	3	28	Follow-up with 12 Ex-Militant group from BTR
Media & Arts for peace and Happiness	The ANT Campus, Chirang	3	21	Journalist and reporters from Print, Satellite and Portal
Focus Group Discussion & KII for Vision Document	Multiple locations	3 months	1204	Community Organizations, Teachers, farmers, Students union, women groups and others
Community Consultancy for Vision Document	Multiple locations	3 months	1500	Community Organizations, Teachers, farmers, Students union, women groups and others
Total Reach out			5384	



ENGAGED OVER
5384
INDIVIDUALS

Together for Peace - International Day of Peace 2024

Celebration of the International Day of Peace - *21st September 2024*

The **BTR Government** celebrated the **International Day of Peace** for the second consecutive year in **Kokrajhar**, the heart of Bodoland, with a vibrant display of unity, healing, and renewed purpose. Over **1,400 community members** from across the region took part in the celebration, including **student leaders, community elders, cultural groups, civil society members, and ex-militant representatives**, all coming together to celebrate peace and leave behind the painful legacy of conflict.

The day began with a **Walk for Peace**, symbolically led by 560 participants representing the diversity and aspirations of Bodoland's people. This was followed by a formal program graced by **His Excellency, the Governor of Assam**, and key dignitaries, including **Hon'ble Chief Executive Member Shri Pramod Boro**, whose address highlighted the importance of dialogue, dignity, and co-existence.

Floral tributes were offered at the statue of **Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma**, honouring his vision of peaceful coexistence and leadership. The event featured deeply moving and insightful speeches from eminent guests such as **Neerja Chowdhury, Wasbir Hussain, and Prasanta Jyoti Baruah**, who reflected on the critical role of peacebuilding, media, and inclusive governance in post-conflict societies.



A dynamic **interactive session**, chaired by **Pratibha Brahma**, created a platform for young students, community voices, and intellectuals to share their hopes, ideas, and reflections on sustaining peace in the region.

The celebration stood as a powerful testament to a **new chapter in Bodoland's journey**, one where communities that were once divided by violence now walk together in solidarity, fostering a **culture of peace, trust, and collective resilience**.



One BTR, Many Voices: A Vision for Peace, Participation, and Prosperity

The Community Vision Document for 26 Communities of BTR: A Roadmap for Transformation

The *Community Vision Document for 26 Communities of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)* is a transformative initiative launched under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Executive Member (CEM) of BTR, Shri Pramod Boro. This initiative forms a core part of the **Bodoland Happiness Mission**, the Council Government's flagship programme to promote healing, harmony, and inclusive development across the region.

For over four decades, BTR was marred by cycles of violence and conflict, leading to widespread loss of life, displacement, and the breakdown of inter-community trust. The signing of the historic **Bodoland Peace Accord on January 27, 2020**, opened a new chapter of peace and reconciliation. In this context, the Community Vision Document emerges as a sincere and strategic effort to capture and respond to the diverse aspirations, grievances, and priorities of the people of BTR.

Purpose and Vision:

The Vision Document is not just a policy paper; it is a **collective expression of hope**. It reflects the Council Government's commitment to fostering a **safe, smart, and green Bodoland** - a region where governance is informed by the voices of the people, and every community plays an equal role in shaping its future. The initiative seeks to deepen participatory governance, ensure equitable development, and heal the historical wounds that continue to shape the region's social fabric.



Participatory Process and Methodology:

The preparation of the Vision Document was carried out over a period of **three months**, through a rigorous and participatory process. It was led by **BTR Development Fellows** and **Happiness Champions**, who were first sensitised on how to hold inclusive and empathetic community spaces.

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were conducted across the region, engaging over **2,500 individuals** from different walks of life. These discussions involved members of over **seventy community organisations**, representing **twenty-six distinct communities**.
- The participants included a diverse cross-section of society - **teachers, youth leaders, women leaders, farmers, retired service personnel, and community elders**, among others.
- In parallel, **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were conducted to gather deeper insights into community-specific challenges and opportunities.

This process ensured that the **historically unheard and marginalised voices**, especially those of women, youth, and minorities, were brought to the forefront. The resulting data was systematically analysed to identify cross-cutting themes and community-specific priorities ranging from **education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and governance reform** to **cultural preservation and environmental sustainability**.



Key Features of the Document:

- **Community-driven Approach:** The Vision Document emphasises **equal ownership** among all stakeholders. By actively involving grassroots leaders and civil society organisations, it strengthens local trust in governance mechanisms.
- **Evidence-based Insights:** The recommendations are grounded in extensive field engagement and data analysis, ensuring that they are realistic, actionable, and aligned with community needs.
- **Strategic Framework:** The Document serves as a roadmap for the Council Government to **prioritise development initiatives** and allocate resources effectively, in alignment with community aspirations.

Unveiling Ceremony

The Community Vision Document for 26 Communities of BTR was officially unveiled on 30th December 2024 at ITA Machkhowa, Guwahati, in a historic and emotionally significant ceremony.

The event was graced by the Hon'ble Governor of Assam, Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya, who formally unveiled the Vision Document. The ceremony witnessed the presence of several distinguished dignitaries, senior officials of the BTR Government, and key representatives from the civil society and academic community.

All 26 community organisations from across BTR participated in full strength. In a powerful gesture of inclusion, each community was formally handed its own Vision Document by capturing their unique aspirations, challenges, and priorities. It marked the first time such community-specific visions were officially recognised through a participatory process.

The event was more than ceremonial - it was transformative, signaling a new chapter in Bodoland's journey toward peace, dignity, and inclusive development.

The launch reaffirmed the Council Government's commitment to building an inclusive, just, and equitable future - a future where the hopes of every community are not only heard, but actively shape the roadmap of governance and progress in the region.

Post-Vision Document Initiatives

Following the launch of the Vision Document, the BTR Government has taken several concrete steps to implement the recommendations and continue the journey of inclusive development and cultural revival:

1) Government Vision Document for the BTR

Following the release of the Community Vision Document, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Government has undertaken a detailed review of its findings. The Council has carefully studied the Strategic Thematic Areas highlighted in the document, guided by the principles of “*Sangharsh to Nirman*”, from struggle to reconstruction.

To ensure effective implementation, a strategy has been developed that includes clear vision goals, annual and long-term milestones (5-year and 10-year), phase-wise resource mobilisation plans, and mechanisms for institutional adaptation.

The aspirations and issues raised by the 26 communities of BTR have been categorised into three actionable segments:

- Those that the BTR Government can address directly,
- Those requiring intervention from the State Government, and
- Those needing support from the Central Government, where the Council will act as a strong advocate.

All government departments have been directed to formulate policies aligned with the community aspirations outlined in the Vision Document. In parallel, the BTR Government has initiated consultations with development partners to explore how their expertise and resources can contribute to this collective journey.

The Vision Document is not just a roadmap, it is a *policy charter* for the holistic development of all 26 communities of BTR. It envisions a future grounded in dignity, inclusion, and shared progress, and will serve as the foundation for building a just, peaceful, and prosperous Bodoland.

2) National Workshop in New Delhi for 26 communities

A collaborative national workshop was held in New Delhi, jointly organised by the Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha and the Bodo Study Centre, focusing on the linguistic and cultural concerns of the 26 indigenous communities of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

The workshop featured in-depth discussions on the preservation and promotion of local languages, literature, and cultural heritage. Special emphasis was placed on protecting and revitalising oral folk traditions and indigenous literary forms that are at risk of fading away.

Following the workshop, the teams from Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha and the Bodoland Happiness Mission have initiated a series of consultative meetings across BTR. These community-level dialogues aim to co-create practical policy frameworks to address the urgent linguistic and cultural needs identified during the Delhi workshop.

This initiative marks a significant step in shaping inclusive cultural policies and ensuring that the voices, identities, and heritage of all 26 communities are preserved and celebrated.

3) Establishment of Community Museum

The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse regions in India. During the Vision Document process, one of the most strongly voiced aspirations across all 26 communities was the *preservation, promotion, and protection of their cultural heritage and historical artefacts*.

Responding to this collective need, the Hon'ble Chief Executive Member of BTR, Shri Pramod Boro, after closely studying the Vision Document and engaging with community representatives, announced a landmark initiative: the establishment of a Community Museum dedicated to all 26 indigenous communities of BTR.

This first-of-its-kind museum will serve as a living repository of cultural artefacts, oral histories, traditional knowledge systems, and indigenous art forms. It aims to celebrate the identity of each community while promoting inter-community harmony and the cultural integrity of the region.

The museum is envisioned not just as a space for preservation, but as a centre of pride, learning, and unity, reflecting BTR's commitment to cultural justice and inclusive development.

4) Publication of BTR Communication Bridge (A Practical Resource of 1001 words and 1001 sentences in 18 Languages of the Region)

To enhance inter-community communication and cultural literacy, the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) Government is publishing a practical multilingual handbook titled "BTR Communication Bridge."

This one-of-a-kind resource will feature 1001 commonly used words and 1001 practical sentences in 18 languages spoken across BTR. It documents the linguistic diversity of the region and offers an accessible tool for residents to understand and engage with one another in daily life.

The Communication Bridge is designed not only to support everyday conversations but also to foster cultural understanding and encourage a shared sense of belonging among BTR's diverse communities. It reflects the government's commitment to preserving linguistic heritage while building stronger social bonds.

5) Recognition of Community Festivals and Observances

One of the most frequently expressed aspirations during the Vision Document consultations was the recognition and respectful observance of each community's distinct cultural practices, rituals, and commemorative days. Communities across the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) voiced a strong desire for their cultural identity to be acknowledged within the official framework of governance.

In response, the BTR Government has introduced a Restricted Holiday Calendar that formally recognises and honours the significant festivals and observances of all 26 communities. This initiative is not merely symbolic; it affirms the equal dignity of every community and reinforces the principle that cultural identity is integral to inclusive development.

By institutionalising the recognition of community-specific days, the BTR Government is working to build a shared civic space where diversity is respected, and every community feels seen, valued, and represented. This step aligns with the broader vision of cultural justice and unity in diversity, central to the Bodoland Happiness Mission and the future of BTR.

6) Bodoland Lifetime Achievers Award - Folk Culture 2025: Celebrating Heritage and Reconciliation

The Bodoland Lifetime Achievers Award – Folk Culture recognizes such cultural custodians who sustain the region’s folk heritage across generations.

In the spirit of the Vision Documents’ emphasis on cultural inclusion, the **Bodoland Lifetime Achievers Award – Folk Culture 2025** was conceived as a tangible symbol of Bodoland’s renewal. This award is a visionary initiative of the BTR Government to **honour a veteran folk artist** who has devoted their life to preserving, promoting, and protecting the rich cultural heritage of the region. It is not merely a reward for individual excellence; it stands as a *“tribute to the collective spirit of the communities of BTR and their enduring contributions to the folk traditions that form the soul of this land”*. In essence, the award emerged directly from the community visioning process – *“one of the tangible outcomes of this initiative”* – reinforcing the government’s commitment to **cultural justice and holistic well-being** as envisioned in the people’s document. Rooted in the larger framework of cultural revival and inclusive development, the award exemplifies how Bodoland is turning its grassroots aspirations into concrete action.

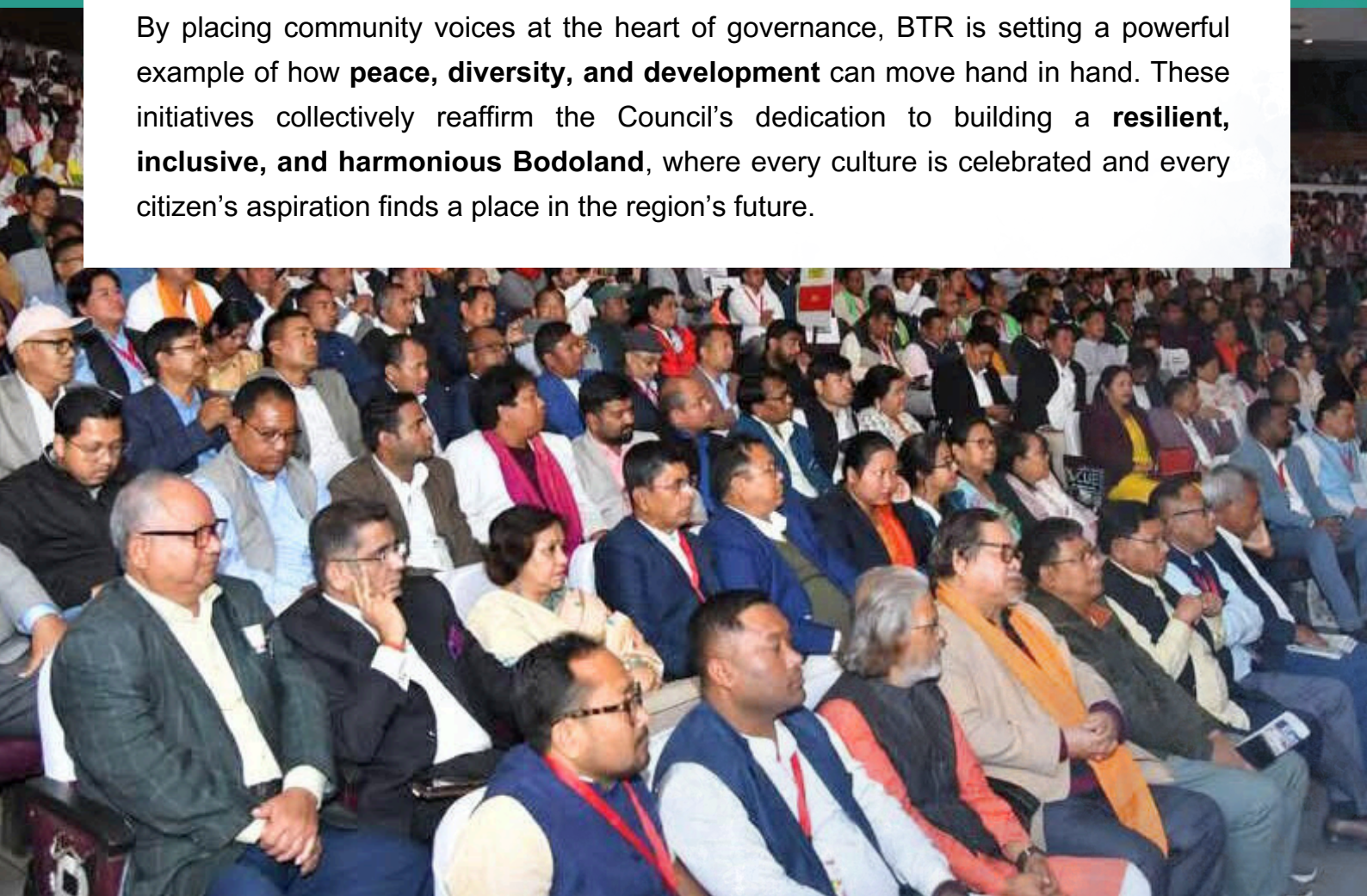
The award aligns with BTR’s broader agenda of **reconciliation and cultural justice** after decades of strife. It is instituted under the dynamic leadership of Hon’ble Chief Executive Member Shri Pramod Boro as an expression of the government’s inclusive cultural policy.

By honoring an exemplary folk artist, the BTR leadership aims to “re-establish trust among communities, rekindle a sense of shared belonging, and reaffirm the region’s commitment to cultural justice and inter-community respect”. In a region where communities once felt excluded and alienated, this gesture rebuilds trust by showing that every culture, whether majority or minority, is treasured in the new Bodoland. The award uplifts not just an individual but the collective pride of the community they represent, sending a reassurance that their language, dance, music, and wisdom are integral to Bodoland’s identity. This is culturally restorative justice – acknowledging historical contributors and ensuring representation in the narrative of progress.

From vision to celebration, Bodoland’s journey is a testament to healing unity and the power of cultural renaissance.

The *Community Vision Document* and its follow-up initiatives represent a paradigm shift in how development is envisioned and implemented in the Bodoland Territorial Region. These efforts highlight the Council Government’s **inclusive, people-first approach**, grounded in deep listening, participatory planning, and cultural respect.

By placing community voices at the heart of governance, BTR is setting a powerful example of how **peace, diversity, and development** can move hand in hand. These initiatives collectively reaffirm the Council’s dedication to building a **resilient, inclusive, and harmonious Bodoland**, where every culture is celebrated and every citizen’s aspiration finds a place in the region’s future.



Chronicler: Programme Highlights

The Training of Trainers (ToT) for Bodoland Happiness Mission team

The Training of Trainers (ToT) for the Bodoland Happiness Mission was a five-day intensive journey held at Kerunyu Ki, Zunheboto, Nagaland, with 13 participants and led by facilitators Ms. Penuo Heikha and Mr. Himanshu Swarnkar. The training aimed to build the inner readiness and facilitation skills of Happiness Champions and Core Team members who lead the mission across districts. With participants from diverse backgrounds, some with no prior facilitation experience. The focus was not just on techniques but on nurturing self-awareness, empathy, and emotional resilience. Sessions combined practical tools like the ***Freedom Glass, Forgiveness Letter, and Life Balance Sheet*** with group exercises, role plays, and peer-led facilitation. Personal story-sharing circles created powerful moments of healing and trust, reminding everyone of the importance of holding space without judgement. Co-facilitation was emphasised throughout, with trainers modelling mutual respect and coordination. Participants learned to manage energy, time, and presence in a training space, while recognising that facilitation is a shared journey, not a solo act.

The ToT planted seeds of confidence, emotional intelligence, and purpose. It reinforced that transformation begins within, and that community engagement is most effective when rooted in compassion, courage, and connection.



Inter Convergence

Inter-Convergence Programme for Grade III Employees - BTC Secretariat

📍 **Venue:** BTCLA Conference Hall, Kokrajhar

🕒 **Duration:** 1 Day

👥 **Participants:** 80 Grade III Employees

Facilitator: Mr. Kiran Gandhi, Initiatives of Change (IofC) India

This one-day programme brought together 80 Grade III employees of the BTC Secretariat to pause, reflect, and reconnect with the deeper meaning behind their daily work. Rather than a typical training, it became a space for honest conversations and heartfelt sharing.

The session began with two questions: “What do you like most about your job?” and “What feels demotivating?” Participants shared openly. One said, “We meet many people every day, and helping them gives us joy.” Another added, “It gives us a sense of dignity when we know people depend on our work.” Yet others spoke of their challenges: “We work hard, but if files get stuck higher up, we feel disheartened,” and “Sometimes, our efforts go unnoticed and it makes us feel invisible.”

Mr. Gandhi responded with a story about three stonecutters—one who saw his job as a burden, another as a way to earn, and the third who proudly said he was helping build a hospital. This story struck a deep chord. Many participants went quiet, some with tears in their eyes. When asked, “Which stonecutter are you today?” the room reflected silently. It helped them see how even routine work can have a bigger purpose.





In another moving moment, participants were asked: “Who has helped you selflessly?” Stories flowed - of parents who sacrificed for their education, seniors who guided them, and colleagues who stood by them during tough times. Then came the second question: “Who have you helped selflessly?” One woman shared, tearfully, how she had supported a poor student’s education, and how proud she felt now that he was working and getting married. Others shared moments of kindness and support among colleagues.

The day ended with a simple yet powerful message: ***“Every file is someone’s life. Treat it with care. You are not just staff - you are part of building people’s futures.”***

Many participants said this was the first time they had been asked to speak from the heart and that they would welcome more such sessions to reflect, reconnect, and find meaning in their everyday roles.

Inter-Convergence Program with Super 50 APSC Batch

📍 **Venue:** SPM IAS Academy, Guwahati

Organized by: Bodoland Happiness Mission

Supported by: Department of Education, BTR Government

The Bodoland Happiness Mission, in collaboration with the Department of Education, BTR Government, successfully organised a two-day Inter-Convergence Program for the Super 50 APSC Batch at SPM IAS Academy, Guwahati. The program was thoughtfully designed to complement academic preparation with ***emotional well-being, self-leadership, and a deeper reflection*** on the aspirants' personal purpose as future civil servants.

Throughout the two days, participants were invited into a space that encouraged introspection, connection, and visioning. One of the core themes was the idea of **giving oneself a second chance, an opportunity** to step back, reflect, and embrace self-compassion. The facilitators emphasised that setbacks, self-doubt, or past struggles should not define anyone's path. Instead, what matters is how we choose to renew and move forward with purpose.

A powerful session titled ***"Freedom Glass"*** explored how individuals can transition from being victims of their circumstances or relationships to becoming creators of meaningful, empowered connections. This shift in perspective encouraged students to take ownership of their emotional narratives and interpersonal dynamics.

Another key discussion revolved around the ***"Circle of Concern"*** and the ***"Circle of Influence."*** Participants were asked to list three personal concerns, and then consider what aspects of those concerns were within their power to influence. This exercise helped them move from anxiety-based thinking to a solution-oriented mindset, which is especially crucial for those preparing to take on leadership roles in public service.



The theme of **“Problem vs. Solution”** mindset prompted participants to ask themselves a fundamental question: Do I want to be part of the problem or part of the solution? This moment of reflection served as a grounding force, highlighting the importance of accountability, integrity, and proactive action and qualities that define impactful ACS officers.

A particularly inspiring segment encouraged students to visualise **the kind of ACS officer they aspire to become**. This went beyond titles or roles and delved into the values they wish to uphold, the leadership qualities they aim to embody, and the social change they hope to lead. It was a moment where personal dreams aligned with public responsibility.

To close the program, students participated in a creative exercise called **“Drawing the Self,”** where they expressed their inner identities, aspirations, and emotions through simple visual representations. This non-verbal process provided a unique and powerful way for students to connect with themselves and with one another on a deeper level.

The two-day convergence program proved to be a transformative experience for the young APSC aspirants. It offered a safe and meaningful environment for emotional exploration, helped build clarity of purpose, and inspired many to commit not just to passing an exam, but to becoming grounded, compassionate, and responsible public servants for the future.



Inter-Convergence Program with Super 50 UPSC Batch

📍 **Venue:** Vajirao & Reddy Institute IAS Coaching Institute, Delhi

Organized by: Department of Education, BTR Government

Over two days, the Super 50 APSC aspirants shared openly from the heart. One student said, “I’ve always been afraid of failure, but this space helped me see that it’s okay to begin again.” Another reflected, “I realised I’ve been focusing so much on clearing the exam that I forgot why I started to serve people.” During the Freedom Glass session, several participants admitted how past experiences and self-doubt had held them back. One remarked, “For the first time, I feel I’m not alone in this journey.” In the Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence activity, students expressed how writing down their fears and identifying what they could control helped them feel calmer and more focused. One participant shared, “I now see that some things are out of my hands, but I can choose how I respond.” The final session, Drawing the Self, brought quiet moments of expression. Many used colours and symbols to show their hopes and struggles. One participant said, ***“This drawing helped me speak what I couldn’t say in words.”***

The Inter-Convergence Programme, organised by the Bodoland Happiness Mission and supported by the Department of Education, BTR Government, was held at SPM IAS Academy in Guwahati for the Super 50 APSC Batch. It was designed to complement academic learning with emotional resilience, clarity of purpose, and leadership values. Rather than lectures, the programme created a safe space for reflection and connection where future civil servants could think deeply about who they are, what they stand for, and how they want to lead. The focus was not just on clearing an exam, but on becoming grounded, responsible, and compassionate officers.



One-Day Engagement Program with Super 50 Medical Batch

📍 **Venue:** Allen Coaching Institute, Guwahati

Organised by: Bodoland Happiness Mission

Supported by: Department of Education, BTR Government

The Bodoland Happiness Mission, under the initiative of the Department of Education, BTR Government, organised a one-day interactive program with the Super 50 Medical Batch at Allen Coaching Institute, Guwahati. Recognising that the participants had just completed their Class 12 and were at the beginning of a challenging academic journey, the session was designed to be light-hearted yet deeply reflective, mixing fun with foundational life values.

The core focus of the day was on values, not just the values taught during childhood, but how those values are lived and practised today. Through engaging dialogue, the participants explored questions like: Are we truly living the values we were taught, or are we merely believing in them without practising them? Values such as honesty, love, respect, humility, and responsibility surfaced during the discussion. The session helped students reconnect with these principles in a way that felt personal and relevant.

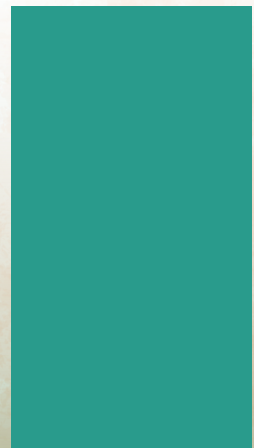
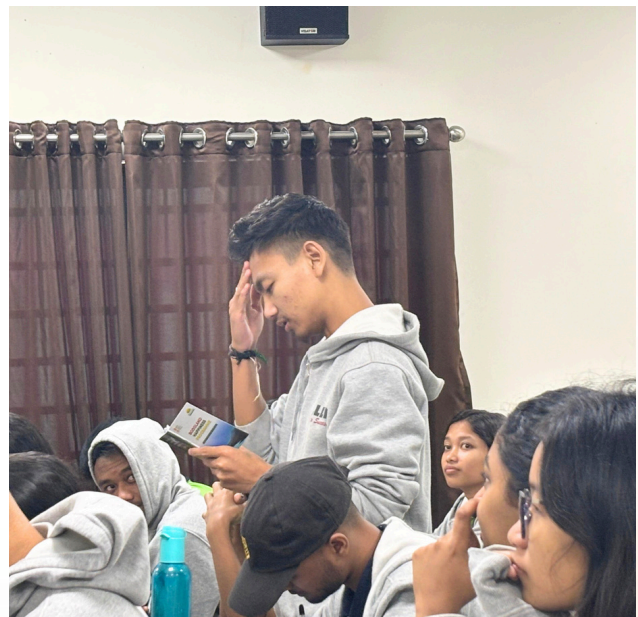
To bring energy and teamwork into the space, an interactive activity called the Human Knot was played, encouraging collaboration, laughter, and bonding among the students. Another powerful segment was the “Life Balance Sheet”, where each participant reflected on two heartfelt questions: Who has helped me unconditionally? And whom have I helped unconditionally? This sparked quiet contemplation and emotional honesty.

The students also participated in a simple but touching writing exercise, composing notes or letters to someone they would like to thank, and someone they felt the need to forgive or say sorry to. This process created space for emotional release, healing, and gratitude.



A particularly important discussion centred around the question: ***Are you pursuing medicine out of your own desire, or are you here because of your parents' wishes?*** The responses revealed a mixed picture: around 30% of the students admitted they were primarily there due to parental pressure, while the rest felt a genuine personal calling. This segment opened up an important space for self-awareness, honesty, and acceptance.

Toward the end, participants were asked to express one thing they admire most about the medical profession, not in words, but through drawings. The pictorial representations brought out themes of service, compassion, healing, and respect for life, providing a creative glimpse into their aspirations. Despite their young age, the participants engaged with sincerity, openness, and curiosity. The program successfully created ***a safe, enjoyable, and meaningful environment*** that helped them reflect on who they are, why they are on this path, and how they want to grow not just as future doctors, but as grounded, value-driven human beings.



Interactive Session with Mr. Kiran Gandhi

📍 **Venue:** BTC Assembly Conference Hall

👥 **Participants:** BTR Development Specialists & Fellows

Organised by: Bodoland Happiness Mission in support of the BTR Govt.

The **Bodoland Happiness Mission is in support of the Council government.** Curated a thoughtfully designed interactive session with **Mr. Kiran Gandhi**, Senior-level Course director and facilitator at Asia Plateau, the education and training centre of Initiatives of Change (IofC), aimed at restoring energy, purpose, and collective spirit within the cohort. The session brought together the Fellows and Specialists for a candid and rejuvenating dialogue centred on personal leadership, emotional resilience, and collaborative functioning.

Mr. Gandhi opened the session with a powerful sharing of his own professional journey marked not only by success but by struggle, uncertainty, and self-discovery. He recounted moments of both failure and triumph, underscoring that a fulfilling career is not a linear path but a deeply human one. His central message, that **"life becomes lighter and more meaningful when anchored in purpose"**, struck a strong chord with the participants, many of whom had recently been questioning their own role and direction in the face of field-level challenges.

Following this, **Ms. Penuo Heikha** (*A facilitator on ethical governance and personality development and a former Trustee of Initiative of Change, Asia Plateau*) steered the conversation into a reflective space using the framework of the **Circle of Concern and Circle of Influence**, enabling participants to identify what truly lies within their control amidst the broader systemic realities. This segment gave voice to the underlying dissatisfaction felt by many, but crucially, it also helped shift the narrative toward ownership, agency, and constructive action.



A particularly engaging and energising segment came as Mr. Gandhi introduced the concept of **Social Styles**, where participants discovered whether they were Analytical, Amiable, Expressive, or Drivers. This light-hearted yet insightful exploration brought laughter and moments of teasing as Fellows playfully identified each other's styles. More importantly, it opened up a deeper understanding of interpersonal dynamics, with a key takeaway being: *"People are not difficult; people are different."* The conversation highlighted the importance of adaptability, empathy, and emotional intelligence in team settings, crucial for the collaborative development work the Fellows are entrusted with.

The session left participants visibly more connected, self-aware, and grounded. It rekindled not only a sense of individual purpose but also a shared commitment to the larger goals of the BTR mission. Through stories, frameworks, and moments of humour, the Fellows were reminded that while the journey is demanding, they are not alone and that with clarity of purpose and mutual understanding, even the hardest days can become meaningful.



Youth Connect Program: A Deep Dive into Inner Peace

📍 **Venue:** The Ant, Chirang

📅 **Duration:** 5 Days

👥 **Participants:** 46

The **Youth Connect Program** was a transformative five-day journey organised under the Bodoland Happiness Mission, bringing together young people from all districts of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The programme created a safe and reflective space for youth to explore their identities, examine personal and social values, and understand their role in building peace. Through activities such as journaling, dialogue circles, cultural exchange, and value-based discussions, participants engaged in deep self-reflection and emerged with a renewed sense of purpose, healing, and responsibility.



Quote 1 - On Inter-community Harmony:



*My parents come from different communities, and growing up in BTR, I've seen firsthand how real the conflict between communities can be. So much blood has been shed. **If only the Bodoland Happiness Mission had started earlier—maybe those wounds could've been prevented.** But now that it's here, I carry its message of love, peace, and happiness with me, wherever I go. It's never too late to choose harmony.*

Quote 2 - On Personal Transformation:



I was addicted to cigarettes. But through this program, I've seen what it means to truly value life, mine and others'. I promise myself, and those I love, that I will never touch it again. This is my first step toward a healthier, happier me.

Quote 3 - On Emotional Awakening as a Man:



As a man, society taught me to hide my emotions. But this program awakened the soft, nurturing side of me—the side that listens, that feels, that cares deeply. For the first time, I don't see this as a weakness. I see it as strength.

Quote 4



*In my Nepali community, the caste system is deeply rooted—and it disturbs me every single day. It hurts to see people divided by something so inhumane. Through this program, I've found the strength to challenge it. **I will make an effort to eliminate this darker side of our society** and build a future where everyone is treated with dignity, not hierarchy.*

From Conflict to Conversation

Program with Ex-Militant Groups at Siloam Resource Learning Centre, Meghalaya

📍 **Venue:** Siloam Learning Centre, Meghalaya

📅 **Duration:** 5 Days

👥 **Participants:** 50 Ex-Militants from 12 groups

Held at the Siloam Resource Learning Centre, Meghalaya, From Conflict to Conversation was a five-day residential programme that brought together 50 former militants from 12 groups—many of whom were once in violent conflict with each other. Organised under the Bodoland Happiness Mission, this gathering was a courageous and unprecedented step towards healing and reconciliation. Through guided reflection, emotional storytelling, forgiveness exercises, and non-judgemental listening circles, participants faced painful memories, acknowledged harm done, and began to imagine a new role for themselves—as peacebuilders in a changed Bodoland. What made this space powerful was that it was not imposed from outside—it came from a shared desire to move forward with truth, dignity, and responsibility.

“

My late Father always use to reach out to me that his health is deteriorating and he wants to meet me before he leaves this earth. As I was in Hideout and couldn't come to meet him. I also felt it must be a trap, so I stopped responding, and after few days I got the new my father passed away. *I was so heartbroken and full of guilt, and I even couldn't attend my father's Funeral.* This guilt of not meeting my father have always haunted me till now. Upon reflecting and sharing this story I felt very light and liberated.





One of the Participants from NDFB has sought forgiveness from the other ex-militant participants for the *wrong and harm his people have done.*



I have never imagined that someone would listen to our stories, find meaning in what we did and all the wrongs we did to harm others, I feel disturbed when I recall the past and I become aggressive, but this *Happiness mission Programme is helping me*, especially the morning reflection time where we are given questions, I Can say I'm happy now and I will try my best to accept the past and make peace.



It has been many years since I last prayed with my family. The first thing I will do after returning home is *apologise to my wife and make sure to find time to pray with my family.*

Community Empowerment Programme with Adivasi EX-Militant Groups

📍 **Venue:** Forest IB Bungalow, Kuchugaon, Kokrajhar

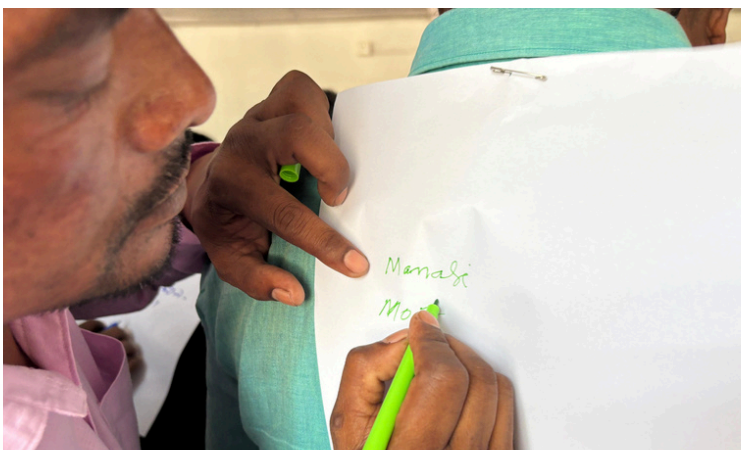
📅 **Duration:** 3 Days

👥 **Participants:** 50 Ex-Militants from 8 factions

This three-day residential programme was curated by Ms. Penuo Heikha and Mr. Himanshu Bharat of Initiatives of Change, India, at the request of Amit Hembrom, Chairman of the Ex-Adivasi Militant Group. Deeply moved by his experience at the earlier Siloam reconciliation program, he wanted his comrades to experience the same journey of forgiveness, healing, and transformation through the Bodoland Happiness Mission. Held at the historically significant Forest IB Bungalow in Kuchugaon - once a site of fear and torture - the programme marked a powerful reclaiming of space and spirit. Participants reflected on their personal journeys, faced emotional wounds, and began to see themselves not as remnants of conflict, but as active custodians of peace in Bodoland.



Knowing Each Other Through Stories of Joy and Pain



— “ —

When I passed my Matric Exam on my third attempt, I was very happy. My saddest memory is of *being beaten by my alcoholic parents*, forcing me to hide in the jungle to survive.

— ” —

The happiest moment of my life was the birth of my baby girl. But I still remember the *pain of seeing 10 dead bodies* from my village when I was just 10 years old.

— ” —

— “ —

I topped my class in the 10th exam, but soon after my 12th exam, my mother passed away minutes after speaking to me. *It is a pain I still carry.*

— ” —

These personal stories opened a space of empathy and honesty. Many shared parts of their lives they had never voiced before, creating a powerful sense of shared humanity.

Reflections on Peace and Responsibility

*“When we came yesterday, many of us were still speaking about past conflicts. But today, I ask myself, what was my role in making it worse? **Bodoland is peaceful now, and it’s our responsibility to sustain it.** In the end, we all carry the same heart.”*

Through silence, reflection, and exercises like the Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Influence, participants began to take ownership of their past and responsibility for Bodoland’s future. The discussions on leadership and followership helped shift mindsets from passive memory to active purpose.

Healing Through Forgiveness and Renewal



I had no idea about this before. Now I realise how peaceful it is to forgive someone.



We have never experienced such sheer joy in just 3 days. I feel like I’ve known the trainers forever. We have become so connected.

Sustaining peace in BTR is a shared responsibility. The government alone cannot do it. We all have a part to play.



The programme did not just close with learning but it ended with a heartfelt commitment to carry the message of peace into families, villages, and future generations.



“The place where we are now, speaking about peace, was once filled with pain and fear. Many of our friends were brought here for torture. It is so meaningful that we now stand here, together, talking about healing and peace. This is a true transformation.”

”

Women Peace Circles

📍 **Venue:** Siloam Resource Learning Centre, Meghalaya

📅 **Duration:** 3 Days each

👥 **Participants:** 13 Participants in each batch

The Women Peace Circle programs were an intimate and intensive initiative aimed at mobilising women leaders from each district of BTR. These women were carefully selected based on their influence and potential to impact their communities. The program centred on empowering women as peacebuilders and nurturers of social harmony, highlighting the crucial role they play in sustaining peace within families and communities.

Women, being the primary caregivers and nurturers, were seen as the natural pillars for instilling peace at the grassroots level. The discussions focused on their potential to influence both personal and collective well-being, thus playing an instrumental role in transforming conflict into cooperation. By recognising and fostering these leadership qualities, the program helped elevate women's contributions toward building a peaceful BTR.



A particularly memorable moment from the program came during a discussion on forgiveness. One participant shared that ***‘forgiveness could be postponed until the 31st of December’***, a sentiment that caught the attention of everyone present. The facilitator responded firmly, stating that forgiveness cannot be postponed and must be practised in the present, as it is essential to healing and moving forward. This exchange became one of the key highlights of the program, reinforcing the urgency and importance of forgiveness in the peacebuilding process.

Quote 1 - On Forgiveness and Responsibility in Communication:



This peace circle has taught me the power of forgiveness both to give it and to ask for it. As a woman, I've also learned how important it is to be mindful of the words I use. Our words can either heal or hurt, and I now choose them with care." - Ms. Anjali Boro (Jeevika Sakhi, ASRLM Chirang)

Quote 2 - On Passing Peace to the Next Generation:

The lessons I've received here about peace and happiness are priceless. As an Anganwadi worker, I will pass this knowledge to the children in my center. If we sow the seeds of peace early, there will be no room for violence in our homes, in our communities, or in the world." - Ranjita Daimary (Anganwadi Worker, Borobazar Block, Chirang)



Quote 3 - On Empathy and Mindful Speech:



This peace circle has made me realize that everyone's life is different and difficult in their own way. It has taught me to pause, reflect, and speak with kindness because we never truly know what someone else is going through." - Binita Barman (President, Barman Mandai Women's Wing)

The energy, commitment, and willingness of the participants to lead by example made the program a resounding success, and their newfound strength as peacebuilders will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on their communities.

Women Leadership Summit: Celebrating Women Change makers

📍 **Venue:** Siloam Resource Learning Centre, Meghalaya

📅 **Date:** 7th – 10th March

👥 **Participants:** 42

The Women's Leadership Program held from 7th to 10th March was not just a training it was a **celebration of spirit, courage, and transformation**. Over four vibrant days, the campus came alive with energy, emotion, and laughter, as dynamic women from various backgrounds gathered to explore leadership, identity, and healing.

From the moment the participants arrived, there was a sense that something special was about to unfold. The program, a carefully curated blend of reflection, learning, and joy, created a space where women could truly be themselves. It was a space where women spoke, women cried, and women laughed their hearts out.



This is the first time I am writing a letter to myself,” one woman shared through tears. “I am feeling liberated.

Nobody praises me,” *another wrote*, “so I have praised myself in this letter.



One letter carried a grief that held the entire room still.



I apologized to myself,” *a mother wrote*, “and to my late son. I couldn’t save him. He ended his life because of a love that society didn’t accept. He was my only child. **This letter is my way of saying sorry.** That pain lives in me every day.

One participant beamed as she said:

“I was so excited to come to this program that I bought jeans for the first time. I wasn’t even sure I’d wear them—that’s why I didn’t even pay the shopkeeper. But I did! I wore them and went to every corner of the campus clicking pictures. I felt free.”

Another woman, in her 50s, wore a salwar suit for the very first time in her life. Her smile lit up the room. ***It wasn’t just a new outfit it was a symbol of a new beginning, a small but mighty act of liberation.***

One participant noted:



We talk about how men hold power, but we must also look at how we use ours.

A powerful metaphor from the session came when someone shared:



Men are the sculptors of our society, but women act as the clay. Yet, even clay can decide its shape. We carry life, we carry culture, we carry stories. And with that comes the power to reshape everything—gently, but decisively.

Many participants came carrying heavy stories of loss, of struggle, of silence. And yet, they left with lighter hearts, brighter smiles, and stronger bonds. For the organising team, too, it was a profound experience.



This program was not just for them. It was for us too. We saw transformation happening in real time. The laughter, the tears, the courage changed us as much as it changed them.”

- Ms. Lina Rabha (Program Associate cum Trainer)

This program was more than a leadership workshop; it was a space for healing, a space of belonging and sisterhood, and a platform for finding joy amidst pain. It reminded everyone that leadership doesn't always mean standing in front — sometimes, it means standing together



Community Empowerment Programme - Women Leadership Workshop

In collaboration with All Assam Gorkha Sanmilan

 **Venue:** Udalguri Gorkha Bhaban

 **Participants:** 36 Female, 5 Male

A transformative three-day workshop was conducted with a focus on Women's Leadership and Community Empowerment under the larger umbrella of the Bodoland Happiness Mission. The session commenced with a brief introduction to the Mission and its purpose, followed by an energizer and participant introductions to build trust and openness in the space.

The first reflective session, titled "Who Am I?", invited participants to explore their identities beyond societal and familial roles. It was observed that most women had never paused to reflect on themselves as individuals. Many shared that this was the first time they had been asked about their own dreams, feelings, and sense of self. This led to a powerful moment of silence and collective realization that their identities had long been overshadowed by obligations and expectations.

In the Types of Leadership session, participants engaged in critical conversations around gender and leadership. They were asked to list five qualities they believed women inherently possess and would want to share with others. Common responses included resilience, compassion, patience, responsibility, and adaptability. These qualities were then mapped to leadership models, helping participants recognize their potential as community leaders.

The Life Balance Sheet activity encouraged women to assess their emotional, social, and personal "assets" and "liabilities". This introspection brought forward the invisible labour they contribute, the emotional burdens they carry, and their immense inner strength.

A fun yet meaningful leadership game involving blindfolds helped highlight trust-building, communication, and the importance of supporting each other as women leaders.

In the closing session, each participant was invited to write and share their vision for Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) in the next 5 years. Common dreams included:

- A peaceful, united community beyond ethnic and gender divides
- Greater participation of women in local governance
- Education and financial independence for all girls
- A society where women's voices are valued in decision-making

Personal Reflections from Participants:

“For the first time, I felt I was being heard – not as someone’s wife or daughter, but just as me.”

“I realized I never allowed myself to dream. Today, I feel like I can.”

“We women can lead, we just need to believe in ourselves and in each other.”



Community Empowerment Programs on Peace and Happiness Building

Objective: Equip communities with tools for emotional well-being, peacebuilding, and collective harmony through dialogue, self-reflection, and community-led action.

SERIES PART I

Locations & Participation:

- Shikari Bangla (Udalguri): 43 participants
- Borobazar ICDS Office (Chirang): 80 participants
- Sidli ICDS Office (Chirang): 87 participants
- Forest IB Bungalow (Kochugaon): 85 participants

Key Activities:

- Clap challenge (potential and self-belief)
- “What makes you happy/sad?” dialogue
- Group drawings of peace
- Story-based learning on conflict escalation
- Drawing exchange activity on respecting others’ creations



Sharings:



“Giving to others gives a deep sense of joy.”

My greatest happiness comes from being in my village after being away.



The poor condition of my village saddens me.

I feel unheard by my children.



We didn't destroy the drawing because it felt wrong—someone else had put effort into it.



We didn't destroy the drawing because it felt wrong—someone else had put effort into it.

SERIES PART II

Locations & Participation:

- **Mazbat: 60 participants**

- **Kochugaon: 150 participants**

Organisers: Ms. Prativa Das (Mazbat) & Ms. Jagita Basumatary (Kochugaon)

Origin: Women Leadership Program, Siloam, Meghalaya

Focus:

- Self-led empowerment initiatives
- Dialogue between diverse community groups
- Community-design collaborative projects

Sharings:



What we learned at Siloam lit a fire in us. We knew we had to bring this back home—to give our own communities the chance to heal and grow like we did.” – *Ms. Prativa Das, A Women Leader and Program Organizer, Mazbat*

“I saw flaws in me. I feel a responsibility to be an example in my village. Change starts with self-correction.”

— a VO member, Mazbat

“Earlier, we thought peace was only the absence of fighting. Now we understand it's about how we treat each other every day—with kindness and respect.”

— Women's Group Member, Kochugaon



SERIES PART III

Locations & Participation:

- Doomni, Baksa (22 May 2025): 120 participants
- Tamulpur (23 May 2025): 58 participants
- Kajiamati, Udalguri (24 May 2025): 62 participants

Key Activities:

- Life Balance Sheet
- Emotional healing reflections
- Drawings on meaning of peace
- “Do No Harm” dialogue
- Forgiveness and gender equity discussions



Sharings:

“Who has caused me pain? Whom have I caused pain?” (Shared during reflection in Doomni)

“My village,” “my child” (shared answers when asked what peace means)

“I will now learn to forgive.” (Kajiamati participant after deep reflection)

“Peace also means addressing gender inequality—how can there be peace when women are left out?”

Conclusion

Across BTR, these programs created inclusive, reflective spaces where people from all walks of life could listen, share, and grow. Whether in a crowded ICDS office or a remote bungalow once associated with violence, participants found room to explore peace as something deeply personal and profoundly communal. Through stories, drawings, dialogue, and the courage to reflect, these sessions proved that even one small conversation can plant the seeds of healing and change.

Program with the CCBTRO

📍 **Venue:** Ant Campus, Chirang

👥 **Participants:** 47

It was a significant initiative organised by the Bodoland Happiness Mission, aimed at empowering youth leaders and central-level participants from various student organisations. The core focus of the program was to inspire and mobilise these participants to take the teachings of peace, healing, and happiness beyond theoretical discussions and into tangible actions that could benefit their communities, especially at the Anchalik and unit levels.

This program brought together an impressive mix of participants, ranging in age from as young as 16 years to the more seasoned individuals, with many participants aged 65 and above. The diversity in age and experience created a dynamic environment where both young minds and experienced voices could come together, share insights, and learn from each other. The intergenerational exchange was an essential part of the program, creating a strong sense of unity and shared purpose among participants of all ages. The discussions during the program were centred around the themes of peace, healing, and happiness, values that are critical in fostering harmony within communities. These topics were not only discussed but also explored in-depth, with participants actively reflecting on how these values could be implemented in their everyday lives and within their local communities. One of the highlights of the program was its focus on action-oriented outcomes. Rather than leaving the event as just another theoretical training, participants were encouraged to come up with practical and realistic action plans to spread the messages of peace and healing throughout their communities. The plans developed were diverse and inclusive, ranging from role plays to visual posters, one-on-one awareness programs, and large-scale community awareness initiatives. These action plans demonstrated the participants' deep commitment to making a meaningful difference at the local level.



The program also introduced an innovative concept that set it apart from conventional programs: a two-hour silence period. During this time, participants were encouraged to disconnect from external noise and engage in self-reflection. This silent time was deeply valued by the participants, allowing them to connect with themselves and the teachings on a more personal level. Many remarked that it gave them the space to process the discussions and internalise the messages of peace and healing.

One of the participants quoted:



"The world would be a better place to live if there were no languages, only gentle physical touch – for it is in the softness of a touch that we truly understand one another."

A particularly heart-warming aspect of the program was the overwhelming generosity and selflessness shown by some of the participants. **One individual, who found the program incredibly beneficial, chose not to accept his travel allowance and instead requested that the funds be used for a more meaningful purpose, highlighting his commitment to the mission and the cause.** This act of kindness was a poignant reminder of the values the Bodoland Happiness Mission stands for and created a lasting impression on everyone involved.

This program not only achieved its objectives but also set a new standard for how such initiatives can be impactful. The program stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, the value of intergenerational exchange, and the importance of translating learning into real-world action.



Follow-Up Program for Ex-Militant Group

📍 **Location:** The Ant Campus, Rowmari, Chirang

📅 **Date:** 28th February – 2nd March 2025

👥 **Participants:** 28

Purpose:

A three-day follow-up program designed for ex-militant group members to reflect on their peacebuilding journey, deepen personal transformation, and plan for future community-based leadership and social initiatives. The program built on the foundational work initiated at the Siloam Retreat, Meghalaya.

2) Participant Experience Sharing

Mr. Amit Hembrom, Ex-Militant Commander, now President of AVSAR: Spoke about the profound influence of social work in BTR, highlighting sustainable income generation through bee-keeping and women's participation. Shared about planting over 400 trees and initiating another impactful program with ex-militants in Kochugaon.

Mr. Vishal Tamang, Ex S-UGPO member: *"I was inspired by the Siloam experience and organised football coaching for 40 village youths. Initially, the community resisted and criticised me, but over time, I earned their trust and built a thriving youth initiative."*

Mr. Suresh Ghimmire, Surrendered UGPO President: *Stressed the urgent need for second-line leadership, especially among youth and women. Women's empowerment is now a cornerstone of his work.*





“Once, I held weapons in my hands—now, I choose the pen. Where there was anger, I now write with purpose. My path is no longer one of fear, but of healing. I walk forward with a heart committed to peace—peace within me, and peace around me. My only mission now is the welfare of my people, and the language I speak is one of hope.” - Mr. Baburam Murmu, Ex-BCF(BT) Chairman:

If we walk together, it will be good, and we need to take this program to our village. We need a strategy. *We have come holding weapons, but we must leave all that behind and take the right path.* We need to think about how to reach people and how to bring happiness. We must live together with all communities, and it is important to sit together and talk with everyone. - Mr. Sunil Baskey, Ex-STF President





We were demanding for our constitutional rights, which is why we took up arms. When the government asked us to surrender our weapons, we discussed it. After surrendering, we did not see any progress. Then I thought, do we have to take up arms again? But *when I attended the Bodoland Happiness Mission Program, I understood that this is the wrong path, and we cannot take up arms again.* - Mr. Sambhu Hasda, Ex-GS AYSAR General



The long-standing pain in my heart was something I couldn't share with anyone. *Through the BHM program, I was able to share my sorrows, and my heart felt lighter.* Now, I am very happy. Thanks to this family-like support. I'm trying my best to unite our family with the BHM family. I'm making efforts to unite every caste and community. We need to create leaders. - Mr. Kermu Kormokar, Ex-ACMA Chairman



Media and Arts for Peace and Happiness

📍 **Location:** The Ant Campus, Rowmari

👥 **Participants:** 22

🕒 **Duration:** 2.5-day workshop

🤝 **Supported by:** District Information and Public Relations Office (DIPRO), BTR

Overview:

This focused workshop brought together journalists and media professionals from all five districts of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) to explore the role of media in promoting peace, emotional well-being, and ethical storytelling. Organised by the Bodoland Happiness Mission in collaboration with DIPRO, the programme aimed to strengthen responsible journalism, encourage sensitivity in reporting, and open constructive dialogue between media and the government.



Key Themes and Insights:

- Responsible journalism must balance truth with empathy
- Social media amplifies conflict - media literacy and sensitivity are essential
- Consent, tone, and context matter deeply in reporting traumatic stories
- Journalists often face burnout and desensitisation from covering violent incidents



Participant Sharings:



If you want to make everyone happy, you cannot be a journalist/ Reporter.

I am leaving with a renewed sense of confidence and a deeper understanding of my responsibility. – *Fwrdan*



- **Journalists expressed that this was a much-needed initiative** and appreciated the focus on emotional and ethical aspects of their profession.
- There was a collective realisation that such workshops must be held district-wise to include local news portal members and grassroots media workers.
- Participants left with a renewed sense of responsibility and a vision of contributing to peace and happiness in the region through thoughtful reporting.



- Media professionals informed that they often find themselves reporting on distressing events like rape, murder, accidents day after day, which gradually desensitized them and make them feel emotionally detached. However, this programme has served as a powerful reminder for them of the importance of empathy in their work. They felt Initiatives like this help them reconnect with the human side of the stories they tell, encouraging them to feel for others and approach their responsibilities with greater compassion and sensitivity.
- After the programme, participants expressed that meaningful change must begin with themselves, and they felt motivated to reflect on their own actions and attitudes.
- Many shared their intention to discuss and share what they had learned with their family members, fostering awareness and dialogue at the household level.
- Several participants suggested organising similar programmes specifically for youth affected by drug abuse, recognising the urgent need for targeted intervention.
- It was also recommended that Programmes like this should be conducted VDC-wise to ensure deeper outreach and impact at the grassroots level.
- Lastly, participants proposed, including DIPRO (District Information & Public Relations Office) staff in future programmes to strengthen media-government collaboration and extend the message more effectively across communities.

Conclusion:

The Media and Arts for Peace and Happiness programme proved to be a reflective, relevant, and emotionally resonant space for journalists. It not only re-centred the ethical and human purpose of media work but also set the groundwork for stronger collaboration between the press and public institutions in building a peaceful, empathetic, and well-informed Bodoland.

Focused Stories of Change



:Weaving a New Story for Bodoland

This chapter shares stories from people whose lives have been positively impacted by the Bodoland Happiness Mission. These stories show how small shifts on the inside, whether in mindset, emotions, or understanding can lead to meaningful change on the outside. Together, they reflect a new and hopeful journey for Bodoland, built on trust, healing, and happiness

► Suresh Ghemeray | Chairperson, Surrendered United Gorkha People's Organisation

"My name is Suresh Ghemeray, and I come from Sashipur in Tamulpur. I represent the Gorkha community as an ethnic leader and serve as the Chairperson of the Surrendered United Gorkha People's Organisation."

When Suresh first attended the Bodoland Happiness Mission programme, he didn't expect it to leave such a lasting impression on him. ***"The sessions were very motivating,"*** he recalls. ***"The concept of unity in diversity wasn't just talked about - it was felt. It added so much to my understanding of leadership and living together."***



What touched him the most was a simple but profound lesson from a session he calls xx, yy, zz theory. (Originally, The Prisoners' Dilemma) Uncle Gandhi's (Trainer full name Mr. Kiran Gandhi) theory, that a good leader should move **slow and steady**, with patience and purpose. ***"It struck me deeply. We often rush, react, and burn out. But leadership needs grounding."***

The programme didn't just impact his thinking, it also changed his daily life. ***"I've started giving time to my loved ones now, something I used to overlook in the rush of social and organizational duties. That balance is something this programme gave me."***

Suresh speaks about peace and forgiveness with a quiet strength: “Living with others by forgiving their past actions brings us inner peace. When we are peaceful, we’re happy. And when we’re happy, so are our families and communities.”

One of the most powerful moments for him was the chance to reflect on his own strengths and flaws. ***“I started giving time to myself, looking within. That was new.”***

He believes this mission is exactly what the region needs. ***“It inspires and equips people from different communities to build peace, dialogue, and happiness. It’s about participation, not just preaching. That’s what makes it last.”***

Looking ahead, Suresh hopes for a life of simplicity and purpose. ***“I want to live peacefully. I want my community to grow, get equal opportunities, and live in harmony with others. That’s how we build a peaceful and prosperous Bodoland.”***

His message is simple but powerful:



“First of all, love yourself. Start treating others who are different from us as normal, not difficult. Try to build trust with concrete thinking”

► Bishal Tamang | Member, Surrendered United Gorkha People’s Organization



“My name is Bishal Tamang. I live in the village of Darrangamela, Sashipur, District Tamulpur, and I am a member of the Surrendered United Gorkha People’s Organisation.”

Reflecting on the sessions I attended, I feel a quiet sense of happiness. It was a good experience to be surrounded by fellow leaders and former armed cadres.

What I noticed most was this: deep down, every single one of us was looking for the same thing: *peace, a happy lifestyle, and support to walk in the right direction.*

The programme gave me powerful perspectives. I learned about the significance of peace, forgiveness, living together, and how crucial understanding and communication are to building strong relationships.

There was one moment that stayed with me. Listening to people share their personal stories, their struggles, sacrifices, and the way they protected their lives and families was deeply emotional for me. It made me reflect on how much pain we've all lived through, and how much strength it takes to carry on.

This experience changed something in me. I now feel more love and respect for others. There is a kind of positive energy in the way we listen to one another, care for one another. That shift, even if slight, has had a real impact on my emotions and actions.

Through this journey, *I've come to understand that peace, forgiveness, and living together are not separate ideas; they are connected. Together, they form the foundation for resilient communities.* I learned the value of:

- Empathy and understanding, to help us see each other with kind eyes.
- Effective communication, to strengthen the relationships we depend on.
- Letting go, to heal and move forward.
- Celebrating diversity, to build inclusive communities that honor every voice.

I have become more empathetic. I understand now that everyone carries unseen burdens. And with that awareness, I've been able to connect more deeply and meaningfully with people around me.

If I hadn't joined this programme, I would have missed so much:

- A deeper understanding of myself.
- New friendships rooted in shared values.
- Fresh perspectives on what truly brings happiness.

- Practical tools to grow emotionally and spiritually.
- And the chance to be part of something that gives back to the community.

Yes, I believe this mission can have a long-term positive impact in Bodoland. By nurturing empathy, promoting healing, and creating spaces for reflection it helps bring communities closer together. It strengthens individuals while also supporting sustainable, inclusive development.

As for the future, I want to keep learning, growing, and making a positive contribution. For my community, I hope for unity, understanding, and a shared commitment to progress. And for Bodoland, I dream of a future marked by social justice, sustainability, and equal opportunity, a future where every young person can thrive.

If I could share one message, it would be this:



Choose kindness, practice forgiveness, and cultivate compassion. These simple yet profound actions can bring peace, healing, and happiness to yourself and those.

► Tamanna Sarma | An Ethnic Leader of Gorkha Community

The Freedom Within: A Journey to Peace and Purpose

In the quiet village of Suklai in Udalguri, lives Tamanna Sarma, a proud ethnic leader of the Gorkha community. Known for her dedication to the welfare of her people, Tamanna always carried the weight of leadership with dignity. But deep within, she longed for something more clarity, connection, and a renewed sense of purpose.



That moment came when she attended the Women Leadership Summit held at Siloam, Meghalaya, under the broader vision of the Bodoland Happiness Mission. “The sessions were deeply motivating,” she recalls, her voice filled with sincerity. “Unity in diversity wasn’t just spoken about, it was lived. We were women from different ethnicities, yet we shared the same dreams, the same struggles, and the same desire to lead with compassion.” But it was one session in particular that left an imprint on her heart- the “Freedom Glass” activity led by Ms. Zooni Dash. “It wasn’t just a glass,” Tamanna shares, her eyes misting over with emotion. “It was a mirror to my inner self. *I saw my flaws, really saw them, not with shame, but with the courage to change. That moment changed me.*”

She says after the summit, something shifted inside her. Where her days were once consumed entirely by community responsibilities, she began to carve out time for her loved ones and for herself. “I realized that I had been giving so much to others, I forgot to nurture my own soul. Now, I reflect more. I acknowledge both my strengths and imperfections.” She also found a new definition of peace not as a distant ideal, but a choice made every day. *“Peace starts with forgiveness. When we forgive, we find peace. And when we are at peace, our families and communities feel that warmth. It becomes a ripple of happiness”* – Ms. Tamanna says.

Looking back, Tamanna feels deeply grateful. “If I hadn’t attended the summit, I would’ve missed the incredible motivators who spoke with such passion. I would’ve missed the opportunity to meet fellow women leaders and to feel that spark of transformation within myself.” And she believes this mission is more than just a program, it’s a movement. *“Its vision to inspire, empower, and create dialogue among BTR’s diverse communities is exactly what our region needs. It plants the seeds for a more inclusive, peaceful Bodoland.”* Her hopes for the future are both simple and profound: “I want a peaceful life. I want my community to thrive, to have equal opportunities, and to live with others in harmony. Only then can we build a truly prosperous Bodoland.”

She has a message to the world:



Love yourself first. Treat others, no matter how different, as human. **Build trust and Be kind.** That’s how healing begins.

► Kobita Basumatary | President, UPPL Women Cell, Bijni (Chirang District)

From Pain to Peace: My Journey Through the Women Peace Circle



I am Kobita Basumatary, from Panbari Bathopara village. I work as the President of the UPPL Women Cell in Bijni (Chirang District). I stand on a foundation that has been built on resilience, empathy, and community. But this strength I now carry was not always been with me. It is a strength I discovered, piece by piece, through the Women Peace Circle program. In our society, women grow up learning how to serve, to endure, and to sacrifice.

We are taught to be silent in the face of injustice, to bow our heads, and to carry the weight of family and society on our shoulders. For a long time, I believed that this was what it meant to be a "good woman."

But inside, I had questions. I was in pain. I carried memories I never spoke of, one of them being my own abduction, a chapter of trauma and silence that changed my life. ***Forgiveness seemed like a distant dream. I wore a smile, but inside I was fighting battles that no one saw.***

Then came the Women's Peace Circle

I joined with hesitation. But from the first session, I knew this was unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was not just training; I felt it was a sacred space for me. A space where women sat in a circle, not divided by age, background, or status, but connected by their pain, their hopes, and their stories. The storytelling sessions changed my life. Each woman opened her heart to stories of abandonment, violence, struggle, and survival. I realized that every one of us carried pain so deep, yet we had learned to live with it in silence. For the first time, I felt safe to share my own story not as a victim, but as a survivor. That moment of sharing and being heard was my liberation.

One of the biggest lessons I took away from the Peace Circle was the power of empathy. I learned that we are all human, and humans make mistakes. But

**True strength lies not in punishing, but in forgiving.
Forgiveness is not weakness; it is the highest form of courage.**

I also realised how much harm is done in our communities when women pull each other down. Too often, when one woman rises, others try to silence her. I experienced this personally. But the Peace Circle helped me rise above that. It taught me to be a sister to every woman, to see her not as competition, but as a fellow traveller on the path to peace. I found the courage to forgive myself for the times I couldn't help others, for the times I stayed silent.

From “I” to “We” - Rebuilding Family and Community

I live in a joint family- nine members under one roof. Family can be a source of love, but also of conflict. After the Peace Circle, I began to see family differently. I stopped seeing others as outsiders. And also presenting myself as an outsider. I started viewing my family as a single boat we are all sailing in. And in that boat, there is no “I” and “you.” There is only “we.” I started listening more. And slowly, the atmosphere changed not just for me, but for everyone around me.

A Call to Give Back

For years, my role as a social worker mostly in political ground kept me busy, often away from my village. But after going through this journey of Women Peace Circle, I knew I had to return. I knew I had a responsibility to give back to the community that accommodated me as a daughter-in-law. During our last Bwisagu festival, I stood before my people not just as a leader, but as a messenger of peace. I spoke about love, about unity, and about forgiveness. I urged the community to lift up its women, not pull them down. Because I have seen what happens when women are empowered- **they heal themselves, and then they heal their communities.** Our young girls are watching us. And they are growing up in a world where addiction, child marriage, and gender-based violence are still stealing their futures. But I have hope. I believe that if every village had a Peace Circle, we would raise a generation of women who are strong, kind, and unbreakable. This program has the power to melt even the hardest hearts, to make even the most rigid minds rethink their beliefs.



My Message to every woman reading this, hear me: ‘Your pain is real. Your story matters. But you are not alone. We are stronger together.’

► Jagita Basumatary | Jeevika Sakhi, ASRLM Kokrajhar District

A Journey of Reflection, Healing, and Hope

I am Jagita Basumatary, a Jeevika Sakhi under ASRLM from Dwikhorguri village in Kachugaon Block, Kokrajhar District. Participating in the Women Leadership Summit marked the beginning of a powerful journey, one that not only transformed me from within but also empowered me to inspire change in my community.



When I attended the Summit, I did not know it would touch my life so deeply. This was more than a training, it was a mirror. For the first time, I had a space to reflect, correct, and change aspects of my life, my family, and even the social norms I had grown up accepting. The journey took me back to my roots- my childhood, my joys, my sorrows, and all the moments in between. I cried. I smiled. I forgave others. I forgave myself. I recognized that just as some people had hurt me, I too had, knowingly or unknowingly, hurt others. That realization was the first step in my healing.

One moment in the program stands out above all. We were asked to imagine and plan for a *Happy Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)*. I felt empowered as if I were both a policymaker and an architect of peace. It stirred something within me. For the first time, I was not just thinking about change, I was creating it.

Gathering Courage in a Conflict-Touched Land

Our region has known **violence, ethnic tension, and conflict**. I have seen it. I have felt it. The fear. The mistrust. The silent separation that still exists in the hearts of many people. But through this program, I have realized something important: **'Real peace begins inside'**. If people do not feel peace in their own hearts, no external solution can bring lasting harmony. We must change how we see ourselves and each other. This is definitely not easy, but it is possible. Now, I am not afraid to speak up for unity. I am not afraid to support someone from a different background. My heart has opened up in ways I never imagined.

That sense of purpose led me to organize a community empowerment program at Bajrabil VCDC, where around 150 people gathered. It was the first event in our village that focused not on politics or SHG savings, but on peace, happiness, and human connection. Discussions revolved around ***non-discrimination, equal resource sharing, and the critical role women play in building a harmonious society***. The response was overwhelming. Villagers, VCDC members, and even the chairman expressed how much they valued the dialogue.

I have a very simple message to society:

'Let us set aside our differences, because even a single difference can ripple out into countless harms. And before pointing fingers at others, take a deep look inside yourself. That's where change truly begins. I did it—and I am still doing it, every day. After that deep look within what I found was not only pain but also potential. Not just sorrow but also strength. **I now walk with hope, not just for myself, but for every woman, every child, every soul in our villages.** Let this journey continue. Let the Bodoland Happiness Mission reach the most remote villages. Let it bring hearts together. If we walk this path of reflection, acceptance, and peace, a happy, ***united BTR is not just a dream, it is our future.***



From Anger to Peace: My Journey with the Happiness Mission

► Billion Hembram | NGO worker, Krishnapur Village, Chirang

My name is Billion Hembram, and I live in Krishnapur village, District Chirang. I work with an NGO, trying in my own way to support my community. But before joining this program, I was also struggling within myself. I used to be very impulsive, quick to react, and quick to get angry. It affected my relationships, and sometimes, even my peace of mind.



Everything started to change when I became a participant in this beautiful programme, the Happiness Mission. One session that truly touched me was the River of Life. It gave me the space to reflect deeply on my past, my present, and the direction of my future. I remembered my difficult days, the pain I carried, the decisions I made, both good and bad. For the first time, I sat with those memories not to blame myself, but to understand and heal.

This reflection opened a door inside me. I realised I had built walls around myself, especially when it came to trusting people or forgiving those who had hurt me. But during the program, I met others, shared openly, and made friends who listened without judgment. Slowly, I began to see that some of the thoughts I had held for so long were not true. I had misunderstood people, and I had allowed pain to guide my actions. Through this journey, I learned to forgive - not just others, but also myself. Today, I feel like a changed person. I still have emotions, but I am no longer ruled by them. I respond with more calmness and care. If I had not joined this program, I would have missed this opportunity to grow, to understand myself better, and to experience what it truly means to live in peace with others. I believe the Happiness Mission is not just a program, it is a seed that will grow into lasting peace and joy in our communities. It is teaching us to live together with love and understanding, and that is what a developed BTR needs most. *My message to everyone is this:*



If we learn to coexist in peace, we will create a stronger, happier, and truly developed Bodoland. The path to development is not in anger or division - it lies in **understanding, in trust, and in living together with harmony**. Let us walk this path together with open hearts and peaceful minds.

A Journey of Change and Hope: My Story

► Agape Murmu | Haraputa



My name is Agape Murmu, and I come from the village of Haraputa. I work as an LIC agent and also engage with people through social media. Life had been moving forward as usual, but something shifted when I stepped out of my home to attend a program I knew little about. I did not know what to expect, but what I found there changed me deeply. When I joined the program, I was not sure what I would learn. But very soon, I was introduced to something beautiful: discipline, respect, and love for community life. I learned how to speak with

kindness, how to live together with others in harmony, and how to see people not just with my eyes, but with my heart.

One moment that touched me deeply was during a group discussion. I met new friends,, each carrying their own life stories. Some shared that they had lost their parents. As I listened, I felt their pain. I could see the depth of their emotions, and it helped me realise how hard life can be for many. That moment taught me empathy, the kind that stays with you and changes how you see the world. Before attending the program, I was not very confident. I used to hesitate to speak in front of people. But the environment in the program gave me the courage to find my voice. I practiced speaking, I listened to others, and gradually, I found confidence growing within me. When I returned home and shared my learnings, my church recognised this change. They gave me a role I never thought I would get: the role of Youth Secretary. It felt like a new beginning; one filled with responsibility and trust.

What amazed me most was how people from different communities lived together during the program. I had once thought it was not possible, but for those few days, we stayed like brothers and sisters. We talked, laughed, shared stories, and even exchanged phone numbers. We are still in touch. That experience taught me that unity is not just a dream; it can be our reality. Before, I overthought everything. My mind was always restless. But now, I feel peace within. I have learned to forgive. I have learned to let go. I have learned how to deal with life's challenges calmly. I am not the same person I was - I am stronger, more peaceful, and more hopeful.

If I had not attended this program, I would have missed all these beautiful lessons. Today, I imagine a BTR that is peaceful and educated, where all communities live with respect and unity.

My message is this: *“There is no benefit in violence. It is not necessary to solve any issue. Peace is the only path that builds, that heals, and that brings us together. Let us walk that path together.”*

A New Me: Finding Peace Through the Bodoland Happiness Mission

► Samujjal Rabha | Udalguri District

My name is Samujjal Rabha, and I live in Udalguri district. I currently work with a Suzuki dealership. Before attending the Bodoland Happiness Mission workshop, I struggled with confidence, especially when dealing with people at work. But today, I stand changed, stronger, calmer, and more hopeful.

When I first joined the program, I was not sure what to expect. But what touched me most was the spirit of unity. People from all religions and communities sat together, learned together, and respected each other. There was no discrimination, only understanding. That taught me something powerful: we are all born as human beings, and we must live with humanity, without hatred or division.

Before the program, things at home were not easy. We were facing tensions, and I often found myself overwhelmed and quick to anger. But something changed in me after the workshop. I learned to control my temper and my impatience, and to look at life with a more peaceful heart. The environment at home has improved. I now bring calmness instead of conflict.



This workshop did not just give me tools; it gave me peace. And not just inner peace. I can feel that peace is slowly growing around us, within the community. It is like something heavy has started lifting, and people are beginning to breathe freely, together.

The most meaningful change I see in myself is that I am no longer ruled by anger. I have become more thoughtful, more patient, and more understanding, whether at home, at work, or with people from different backgrounds. I now feel confident in facing challenges, especially in my job at the dealership. If I had not attended this program, I would have missed the biggest opportunity of my life. I would not have met people from different communities or learned the things I now carry in my heart. It opened my eyes and helped me grow not just as a professional, but as a human being.

I truly believe that if the Bodoland Happiness Mission continues, it will create a long-lasting impact across the BTR. It is already sowing seeds of peace, self-awareness, and unity, and those seeds will grow into something beautiful.

One message I would like to give is: *Let us all come together beyond our differences to build a future where we live with respect, compassion, and harmony. Because when we change ourselves, we change the world around us.*

Be the Change: A Journalist's Journey Through the Bodoland Happiness Mission

► Shri Prafulla Kumar Boro | Journalist, Udalguri District



I am Shri Prafulla Kumar Boro, a journalist from Udalguri district and founder of the Bodo media portals NBNN and Rajiw Bodoland. For years, I have reported on the struggles and stories of our people. But attending the Bodoland Happiness Mission workshop gave me something rare, not just knowledge, but a profound inner transformation. Through this experience, I discovered that journalism is more than reporting facts.

It is about nurturing peace, building harmony, and becoming a voice for healing in society. One powerful realisation stayed with me: before I try to change the world, I must begin by changing myself.

The workshop offered not just lessons, but reflection. During the quiet moments, I looked inward and asked difficult questions to myself: Am I doing enough? Am I doing it right? For the first time, I found clarity. I understood that true responsibility begins with self-awareness, and that is where real impact starts. The space itself played a vital role. It allowed us to disconnect from noise and connect with purpose. The guidance of Kiran Sir, and heartfelt conversations with fellow journalists reminded me that I am not alone. We are part of a larger community of storytellers working for change.

A moment that truly moved me was visiting Udangsri Dera (the ant, Chirang), where women are weaving not just cloth, but dignity and independence into their lives. As someone who often reports on such efforts, this time I felt it very deeply. I saw how empowered women empower society, and how stories must not just inform, but also inspire and uplift. This workshop gave me something I didn't know I needed: affirmation. It helped me recognize that the work I have been doing has value. It gave me the strength to keep going with clarity, courage, and compassion.

If the Bodoland Happiness Mission continues, I believe it will transform lives slowly but surely. It should grow beyond boundaries and reach every corner of the Bodoland Territorial Region, uniting communities in shared hope and purpose.

My message is simple but very important: ***Let us end hatred. Let us reject discrimination. Let us live with love, respect, and unity. I urge every community and every individual to take part in this mission. Because when we help one another, we rise together.***

A Journey Toward Inner Peace and Community Harmony

► Priyoma Boro | Teacher, Bansbari, Baksa District

Participating in this program has been a life-changing experience for me. Each session was not only informative but deeply emotional and transformative. Through various activities, I began to understand the root causes of conflict, how peace slips away from our lives, how relationships and unity break down, and, more importantly, how we can restore them.



Every session resonated with my real-life experiences. We laughed, cried, and shared

openly with one another. The session that impacted me the most was the Life Balance Sheet. It made me reflect deeply on my past on the people I had hurt, knowingly or unknowingly. That moment of reflection was powerful and healing.

After attending these sessions, I feel a significant change within myself. I now recognise my strengths and weaknesses. I have learned to appreciate who I am, to understand others, and to value relationships. I have begun to feel a sense of oneness with myself, with others, and with my community. One of the most important lessons I learned is the power of forgiveness. To build a peaceful community, we must let go of violence, differences, and bitterness. Forgiveness - both asking and offering is the key to a peaceful community. True peace begins when we forgive ourselves. Only then can we extend peace to others.

This program gave me the space and courage to correct my mistakes and grow as a person. Earlier, I would make decisions only from my own point of view. Now, I consider others' perspectives as well. That shift has brought balance and empathy into my life. I truly believe this program can play a vital role in building a peaceful Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). If more people experience what I did, we can overcome the pain of the past, heal our relationships, and unite across communities.

I appeal to everyone - let us forgive, let us heal, and let us walk together. Because peace begins within. This workshop was not just an opportunity, it was a turning point in my life. It changed how I see my work, my responsibility, and my role in building a better future. And that is the beginning of real, lasting change.

Lighting the Path of Harmony: A Journey of Courage and Change

► **Namita Muchahary, Jeevika Sakhi, ASRLM, Kokrajhar District**



My name is Namita Muchaharay, and I am from Kokrajhar district. I work as a Gender Resource person under the Dotoma Block and also as a Jeevika Sakhi with ASRLM. But more than my work, I see myself as someone who wants to bring people together and build a society where everyone, no matter what their background is, can live in peace, love, and respect.

Since I was a young girl, I have always felt a strong calling to help others. I remember getting small responsibilities when I was in school as part of the All Bodo Student Union (ABSU). That's where my journey began. But life has not been easy. Before marriage, I went through many challenges at home. Even now, I carry struggles inside me. There were times I felt like giving up, but something inside me kept me going with the hope that one day, things would get better.

Attending the Bodoland Happiness Mission program at Siloam was a turning point in my life. For the first time, I was able to speak from my heart. I shared things I had never told anyone before. The pain I had carried for years found a place to breathe. I cried. I felt heard. And most of all, I felt peace. That space gave me the strength to forgive, to let go, and to start healing.

I realised something very important there - that to bring change outside, we must begin within ourselves. I saw how my anger, my ego, slowly started melting. I felt lighter. I felt calm again. Since I returned, I've been trying to spread what I learned. I talk to the women in my village, I listen to their stories, and I share mine. I can see small changes. People are starting to understand each other better. That gives me hope.

What I loved most about the program was the quiet time. In silence, I could hear my truth, my pain, my dreams. We all need moments like that, where we can just be with ourselves.

I believe deeply that if we want to build a good and peaceful society, we must walk together. One person cannot do it alone. We have to listen to each other, accept our differences, and still stand united. We must learn to forgive, to love, and to support each other. I feel proud that I am part of something bigger than myself. I feel proud that I can now say, I am not just surviving, I am growing, I am healing, and I am helping others do the same.

My message to everyone in Bodoland is this:



*Let's come together as one family. Let's remove hatred, ego, and discrimination. Let's build a society where no one is left behind and where every person feels they belong. **We have the power to bring change when we work together, listen deeply, and act with love.***

Choosing Peace: A Journey of Forgiveness, Reflection, and Hope

► Mithinga Basumatary | Teacher, Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar District

My name is Mithinga Basumatary, and I am a subject teacher in English at Dotma Higher Secondary, Kokrajhar. When I joined the Women Peace Circle Program of Bodoland Happiness Mission, I never imagined how deeply it would touch my heart, change my mindset, and connect me with people and stories that I will carry with me for a lifetime. Each session was crafted with care, but two



moments stood out for me. The 7 AM morning session offered a mirror into our own selves, gently helping us confront our fears and insecurities, and guiding us towards inner peace. The night story-sharing circle was a raw and powerful space where strangers became companions, and judgment gave way to empathy. We listened, we encouraged, and we healed together.

The most transformative experience for me was the letter-writing activity. Writing a letter to forgive someone who once hurt me was not easy. I had carried that pain for years. But through that simple act, I felt something release within me. I was finally free. When Sister Penuo Heikha (Facilitator) passed the ball of string with a symbol of hope through our hands, it felt like we were all connected through our stories, our strength, and our shared resolve to choose peace.

One major shift I feel within is that I now pause and think before I speak or act. I have learned to accept people as they are and to look inward instead of placing blame. Forgiveness is not a weakness, it is a virtue, a practice, a path to peace. I have also returned to my diary, pouring out thoughts that can not be spoken aloud.

In a world glued to screens and scrolling, this return to writing has brought me clarity. I am inspired by people like Irene Laure, who showed how one person's courage and commitment can spark peace across nations. I believe the same for our communities.

This program also reminded me of my privilege. Hearing the stories of others, their pain, and their courage helped me realise how different each life is. And yet, we all want the same things: love, respect, dignity, and peace. From the stunning surroundings to the warm meals and the bravery of those who spoke before the camera, everything felt like a gift. I firmly believe this mission must continue. Our youth are drifting, many lost in substances, directionless. This program offers a path back to purpose. Women, too, are rising, claiming space in politics and society with strength and compassion. Their voices in peacebuilding are not just essential, they are enduring.

I dream of a Bodoland where all communities live in harmony, where women and men walk side by side, and where governance is transparent and just. A land where every person is seen, heard, and given the chance to shine.

If I have one message, it is this:



*Always be true to yourself. **Peace begins from within.** Spread love and kindness, the world needs it now more than ever.*

“I chose to rise”

► Anima Kisku | Anganwadi Worker, Rabonghat, Gurubhasha



My name is Anima Kisku. I live in Rabonghat village in Gurubhasha, Chirang, Assam. My journey, like many women, has been one of pain, change, and strength. Today, I can say with pride that I am no longer the same person I once was. I am stronger, more confident, and I no longer depend on anyone to move forward in life.

When I joined the Women Peace Circle Program under the Bodoland Happiness Mission, I did not expect that it would touch my soul so deeply. The session that changed me the most was the *quiet time*. In that silence, I sat under the sky, looked at the trees, and thought about how they change with the seasons. I felt a deep connection. Just like trees lose their leaves, stand bare, and bloom again, so do we, as human beings. We go through changes, some beautiful, some painful. But we keep growing. That quiet moment helped me reflect on one of the most painful events in my life. It was a time when I felt completely broken and shattered in every way. I had lost my strength. But slowly, I found a way to stand again. That experience changed me forever. It made me the woman I am today. Stronger. Wiser. More compassionate.

One of the hardest lessons I learned was how to forgive someone who had deeply hurt me. Forgiving them didn't mean forgetting. It meant choosing peace over pain. It meant setting myself free from the past. I let go, and I moved on. That was the moment I truly became a leader, not just in society, but in my own life. Through the sessions, I gained confidence. I started understanding my emotions better. Now, when I make decisions, I do it with full awareness, not fear. I no longer doubt myself. I believe in my strength.

I have one dream for Bodoland:

That every woman, no matter where she comes from, can walk freely with her head held high. A Bodoland where there is no discrimination, where all communities live together in love, harmony, and peace. That is the future I believe in, and I will work for it.

To everyone who reads my story, my message is simple but powerful:



*Choose peace. Choose forgiveness. Choose to rise. **Let's always contribute to building peace in our society.** Because to me, more than any identity, my religion is humanity.*

Walking the Path of Peace

► Amit Hembrom | Former Militant Comander, Now President of AVSAR

My name is Shri Amit Hembram. I live in Latamali, in Kokrajhar district. I am a farmer, but over time, life has given me new roles - the president of Awakened Vision for Sustainable Adivasi Resurgence (AVSAR). Yet, all these titles are not just achievements, they are milestones on a journey that began with a deep desire for change, both within myself and in the world around me.



When I participated in the Bodoland Happiness Mission Programme, there was a session called the River of Life. I found something very powerful. I found a new way to understand my own story. It showed me that change is possible, even when the road is difficult. It helped me reflect on my past, reconnect with my roots, and reimagine a future filled with peace and purpose. Through my participation in the Bodoland Happiness Mission programs, a transformation began. I learned not just how to lead, but how to lead with empathy and understanding. My perspective changed. I began to treat people differently, kinder, more respectfully. In return, I started seeing changes in my surroundings. My community began to respond with the same respect and trust. I became not just a farmer, but a bridge between people, between conflict and peace, between despair and hope.

If I had not taken part in these programs, I know I would have lost many. I would have missed the chance to meet new people, to learn from their stories, and to grow from their wisdom. These experiences helped me believe in collective strength, like how walking together in unity can take us further than walking alone.

My message to all is:



In the path of truth, there is peace and development. We cannot build a better society by force or division. Peace is the foundation of true progress. If we want to see a developed society, we must first become peaceful individuals. And for that, **we must walk together, with open hearts and a shared vision.** Let us build that path - step by step.

“If I Change, Everything Can Change”

► **Bandana Das | Kanaklata CLF Secretary, Baksa District**



My name is Bandana, and I live in Baksa district. I work at the Kanaklata Cluster Level Federation CLF as the secretary.

I recently had the chance to participate in the Women's Leadership Summit under the Bodoland Happiness Mission, and it became

one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. Before this program, I did not know so much about the issues that women face every day. Through the summit, I became more aware of gender inequality, of the different kinds of violence women go through, and more importantly, of the strength we have when we stand together.

One of the biggest lessons I learned is that silence will not solve our problems. We women need to speak up, and when we do with courage and non-violence and change will come. I also learned about the importance of self-defence, not just to protect ourselves physically, but also emotionally and mentally. I met women who have gone through deep pain and suffering. Listening to their stories gave me strength. I understood that if we truly search for peace, we will find it. The space where the summit was held was itself so peaceful and it touched something deep in my heart.

I felt many changes in myself during and after the program. I even wrote a letter during one of the activities, which is something I had never done before. It helped me reflect on who I am and where I want to go. I feel like a part of me has started to heal. I truly believe that if I had not attended the program, I would have missed something very important in my life. Another beautiful thing that happened was the bonding in my team. Among the CLF members, we now feel more connected and more understanding of each other. That is a big step forward.

I believe change does not happen in one day. But if one woman changes, and then two, then three, then slowly, change will spread. I have hope. I believe that one day, we will see a peaceful and united Bodoland. And this program is planting those seeds of peace. For me, the biggest lesson is: If I become a better person, everything around me can become better too.

To everyone in our community, especially women, I want to say: ***Believe in yourself. Speak up. Support each other. And never lose hope. Together, we can build a peaceful future.***

My Journey of Peace and Transformation Through the Bodoland Happiness Mission

► Ghanapriya Basumatary | Barbari Village, Baksa District

I am Ghanapriya Basumatary, a teacher by profession, living in Barbari village in Baksa District. Participating in the sessions of the Bodoland Happiness Mission (BHM) has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life. Each session offered deep insights that touched my heart and changed the way I think, feel, and act, not only as an individual but also as a person in my community.

Before joining the programme, I had never realised the depth of peace that can come from understanding, love, and coexistence. Through the stories and discussions facilitated during the sessions, I learned the true meaning of harmony. I understood how we, as human beings from different communities, can live together peacefully if we embrace empathy, respect, and love. I also learned how crucial it is to cultivate peace within our families.



By loving and respecting one another at home, we create a ripple effect that brings peace to the wider society. The sessions helped me understand the hidden power of women, that we can be strong leaders, compassionate peacemakers, and the foundation of a peaceful society. The facilitators' stories made me reflect deeply on how to let go of fear, anger, and ego. I now know the importance of listening to others, understanding their problems, and not judging anyone too quickly.

The Bodoland Happiness Mission helped me look within. I was able to evaluate myself, discover my inner strengths, and recognise the qualities I need to develop to be a good leader in my community. This programme planted seeds of positive thoughts in my heart and mind. It helped me believe in peace, in compassion, and in the collective power of kindness.

I truly believe that the Bodoland Happiness Mission has the potential to create a long-term positive impact in the Bodoland Territorial Region. It is not just a project, but it is a movement toward peace, healing, and happiness. If I had not participated in this programme, I would have missed one of the greatest opportunities of my life. I now believe, with all my heart, that only love and mutual support can bring lasting peace in our society. ***Let us walk this path together with understanding, with hope, and with happiness.***

Way Forward:-

A Future Rooted in Peace, Dignity, and Belonging

As the Bodoland Happiness Mission prepares to enter its third year, we stand at a powerful threshold - one marked not just by milestones achieved, but by the growing belief that lasting peace is possible when people are given space to speak, to feel, and to lead. From the quiet resilience of rural women to the bold creativity of our youth, from the stories of reconciliation shared by ex-combatants to the renewed sense of purpose among civil servants, the heart of Bodoland is slowly but surely turning towards healing.

The past two years have shown us what is possible when we choose empathy over alienation, participation over passivity, and dignity over division. And so, the journey ahead must build on this momentum, not just by scaling up, but by deepening the roots of what has begun to grow.

From Dialogue to Transformation

The dialogues held in village courtyards and youth centres are more than conversations; they are seeds of a new social contract. In the coming year, we will deepen this practice through structured cycles of intergenerational dialogues, training more facilitators who can carry the torch of understanding into even the most remote hamlets. These local processes will not only heal wounds but also shape plans for development, governance, and future-making.

Let the people of Bodoland not just participate in governance, but reimagine it.

Leadership from the Margins

Women and youth, who are often spoken for rather than listened to, are now emerging as co-creators of peace. Through fellowships, storytelling, and mentorship, we will create pathways for women to take up public leadership rooted in care and courage. Youth will be given the tools to dream boldly and lead creatively through theatre, media, and dialogue. In doing so, Bodoland will tap into its greatest resource: the imagination and resilience of its people.

We envision a time when every girl in Bodoland can grow up knowing that leadership is not distant, but hers to claim.

Healing the Past, Reclaiming the Future

The inclusion of former militants in peacebuilding signals a profound shift - from exclusion to restoration. These young men and women, often lost between history and stigma, are reclaiming their role as agents of peace and mentors of the next generation. The Mission will walk alongside them, offering support, platforms for dialogue, and meaningful roles in shaping village life. In doing so, we move from symbolic reconciliation to lived reintegration.

Let no one be defined only by their past. Let every person be met with the hope of who they can still become.

Governance with a Human Face

True transformation is incomplete without the state itself reflecting the values of peace and inner clarity. The Inner Governance and Administrative Convergence programme offers a pioneering model, where public officials are not just trained to be more efficient, but invited to rediscover purpose, empathy, and shared service. Let governance in Bodoland become a force not just of administration, but of aspiration.

Culture as a Compass

As we honour our folk artists and guardians of tradition through the Bodoland Lifetime Achievement Awards in Folk Culture, we affirm that culture is not peripheral to development - it is central. It carries memory, identity, and meaning. In a region marked by conflict, cultural justice is not symbolic - it is essential. The songs, dances, crafts, and stories of our ancestors must guide our steps into the future.

Let every child in Bodoland grow up rooted in the wisdom of their land and proud of their people's legacy.

A Movement, Not a Programme

The Bodoland Happiness Mission is no longer just a programme. It is a movement of hearts and minds. A new civic imagination is emerging - one in which happiness is understood not as fleeting emotion, but as community wellbeing, emotional literacy, justice, and participation. Every engagement is a chance to restore trust, renew dignity, and reweave the fabric of belonging.

In Closing

The horizon that lies ahead is bright - not because the challenges have disappeared, but because Bodoland is rising to meet them with hope, heart, and humility.

The Bodoland Happiness Mission is a living testament to what becomes possible when we centre people, honour their stories, and build from the ground up.



Endnote:

Continuing the Journey

From Wounds to Wisdom: The Journey of the Bodoland Happiness Mission


The Bodoland Happiness Mission was born from the recognition that **peace cannot be legislated; it must be lived, felt, and nurtured from within**. In a region where decades of conflict have left behind not only physical scars but deep emotional and social ruptures, the Mission has emerged as a **collective act of healing**, bold, inclusive, and deeply human.

Over the past year, thousands of lives across the Bodoland Territorial Region have been touched. From former militants reconciling with their pasts to students learning the art of inner governance, from women's groups rediscovering agency to communities daring to trust again, **the Mission has become a quiet revolution transforming pain into purpose and isolation into solidarity**.

More than a programme, it is a process a growing movement of people choosing empathy over enmity, and dialogue over silence. The most powerful transformations often occurred in the most unexpected places, **in forest rest houses that were once sites of fear, now echoing with laughter and stories of renewal; in villages where mistrust was the norm, now becoming spaces of shared festivals and community circles**.

In one of the most powerful reflections during a session with former Adivasi militants, participants shared:

"This place where we are now, once used as a torture camp, where many of our friends were brought for interrogation—today we are here talking about peace. This is transformation."



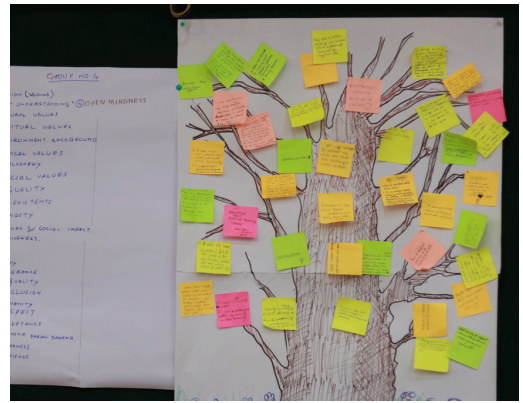
This Mission has shown that **true happiness is not merely the absence of suffering, but the presence of connection, dignity, and belonging.** It has also reminded us that **peace is not the responsibility of a few but the shared duty of all** citizens, communities, and governments working together with courage and compassion.

As the world searches for ways to respond to protracted conflicts and fractured societies, **Bodoland offers a living example a people-led journey toward healing and hope. It is now becoming known as the “Bodoland Model of Peace and Happiness”** a model rooted in forgiveness, inner transformation, trust-building, and the collective will to move forward without forgetting.

As we look ahead, the Bodoland Happiness Mission stands not as a paused project, but as an ever-unfolding commitment. The road is long, and the work of healing is not linear. But if the past year has taught us anything, it is this: **transformation is possible when people are heard, when their wounds are acknowledged, and when spaces are created for hope to take root.**

Let this be not the end of a mission, but the beginning of a culture a **Culture of Peace**, deeply rooted in the soul of Bodoland, with lessons for the world.


Thank You!



Bodoland Happiness Mission



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