

# **Ethnic Insurgency Movement of Assam Among the Different Insurgent Groups**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Northeast India which lies in the easternmost part of India is the most insurgency affected region in the entire country after Kashmir. There is thriving militancy in most of the north eastern states. Different militants groups demand for autonomy to outright secession. These insurgency movements started with India's independence in 1947. In the past the insurgents groups got support from the mass people as they raised their voices for the genuine grievances of the people. But in the latter periods they lost their support from the people. Many insurgent groups like UNLFW, NDEB, NSCN, ULFA, NLFT, ATTF etc. are found in north east India. The present paper is an attempt to study about the history as well as causes of insurgency movement among the tribes of North east India. There are various causes of insurgency movement among the tribes of North East India.

**Keyword:** Northeast, insurgency, movement, groups. Autonomy, region, militancy, independence etc.

## **1. INTRODUCTION :**

The ethnic identity movement has become major attention area in the contemporary World. The problem ethnic identity movement is appeared every corner of the World. Now a days the ethnic identity movement has become most important problem in the nation like India. The diversified language, culture, community, region, creed, tradition etc are major reason behind ethnic identity movement in India. Generally, the ethnic identity movement means a movement of various ethnic groups for preserve and protect their traditional custom, language, culture, history etc. Simply, we can say that it a protect movement of various minority groups from the exploitation and domination of majority in the society.

North East India is a region of unity among diversity which consists of eight states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura and Sikkim along

with different ethnic communities, caste, classes, race, language, region etc. There are four foreign countries surrounding the region, namely China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan. The region has connected by small corridor to the main land of nation which is popularly known chicken neck corridor. Wherever, ethnical, linguistic, cultural, traditional, geographical, social etc. various different has here in the region from the mainland of the nation. Therefore, the various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups are demanding for their separate identity and they are started identity movements, autonomy

movement, secessionist movements etc. for acquired their goal. Especially, in the state of Assam is major victim of that kind of movements. Such as the Assamese agitation against the foreigners, Bodos movement for separate Bodoland, Karbi Anglong and North Cachar autonomous movement, Bengali language movement in Barak Valley,

Mising, Rabha, Tiwa movement for Autonomous status and Tai Ahom, Moran, Mottok, Konch-Rajbangshi, Chutia etc. Schedule tribe demands movement are mostly significant at present. Many times the identity movement overcome the peaceful means and takes violence means of agitation. Such as the Insurgency movement overcome of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Democratic front of Bodoland (NDFB), Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF) etc. are most important.

Therefore, various ethnic groups of North East India are also demanding their autonomous states by using both violence and peaceful means. In Nagaland since 1993 ethnic clashes has been occurring continuously between Naga and Kuki, whereas the Naga ethnic community are considered as majority. Initially it started between the Thankul and Kukis in the Chandel district areas. In 1980s Tripura has witnessed of serious ethnic conflict between tribal and non-tribal Bengalis, who are primarily immigrants from earlier East Pakistan now Bangladesh who came to Tripura after 1949. Though, the state of Arunachal Pradesh is also victim of the same. Whereas, many tribal ethnic communities are crying for preservation and safeguard of their socio-cultural heritage from the dominate majority community.

## **2. OBJECTIVES :**

This paper is prepared with certain objective to understand about the Ethnic identity Movements and Ethnic groups in North East Region of India. Those are follows —

1. To understand the identity movement of the various ethnic groups in Assam.
2. To analyse the various causes of creation of Identity Movement.
3. To examine effect of identity movement in national unity of India.

## **3. METHODOLOGY :**

The study is conducted on descriptive and analytical method by using secondary data collection method. The required information are collected from secondary source likes published books, journals, newspapers, internet, media etc.

## **4. ASSAMESE IDENTITY MOVEMENT :**

An important ethnic identity movement in Assam is the Assam Movement or the Anti-Foreigner movement. Which is considered as umbrella movement for the preservation and protect of indigenous rights and identity of Assam. It is basically agitation against the illegal foreign nationals' immigration into Assam. During India and Pakistan separation in 1947 large numbers of foreigners were entry into north east region from neighbour countries like East-Paklistan and Nepal. As a result population of Assam increased up to nearly 35 percent decade of 1954-1961. After that, during the India-Pakistan war 1965 and 1971 the Bangladesh independence war had also brought large quantity of foreign immigration entered into state until 1979. Then peoples become patience less and under the leadership of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) launched a massive movement to turn out the foreigners. Where found that there were more than 45,000 names of foreigners in a list of

nearly voters of the Monglodoi Lok Sabha by-election on September 1979. So, the students and the people of Assam started massive movement against the illegal immigrants in the state. The main objectives of Anti-Foreigners Movement were to stop the illegal immigration of foreign nationals to Assam from the neighbouring countries, the foreigners must be pullout from the participation in the electoral process in Assam as well as India, deportation of all the foreigners living illegally in Assam. Enable the peoples of Assam to protect their distinct identity and traditional homeland from the threat of foreign nationals. The movement was continuing around six years long from 1979-1985 and finally the movement was ended after coming to the memorandum of understanding between government of India under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and agitate groups in 1985. Which is popularly known as historical Assam Accord 1985. However, the illegal foreigner immigrants' problems are not solved in Assam yet. The unchecked boundary between India and Bangladesh is still appearing in border. As result the insurgency group of Assam ULFA as well as students unions, various samities or civil societies are still demanding clean and pure demographic figure of state by the National Registration of Citizens (NRC).

### **BODOS ETHNIC IDENTITY MOVEMENT :**

Bodos are the largest tribal community of the north east and they are demanding separate state of Bodoland carved out from Assam. The major grievances of demand separate Bodoland are mostly lack of development, danger to language and culture, alienation of land, inadequate representation in government services and feeling of non-participation on their activities of welfare. The Bodo agitation is led by All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) and Bodo People Action Committee

(BPAC). The agitation became violent in 1987 because of formation of the Bodo Security Force later known as National Democratic Front of Bodoland in 1986 and they demanded an independence country of Bodoland. After that the state government appointed an Expert Committee in 1991 for study the problem in details and recommendation to solve the situation. After that Memorandum of Settlement was signed on February 20, 1993 between the government of Assam and representative of demand group and the Bodoland Autonomous Council was granted to Bodos under the framework of Indian Constitution. The Assam Government formally handed over charge of 38 departments to newly constituted Bodoland Autonomous Council on 9 June, 1993. But, ABSU, BPAC and people of Bodos are not satisfied with autonomous council and finally, on 10 of February 2003 the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was established with 46 executives members.

### **5. KARBI AND DIMASSA MOVEMENT:**

After independence of India the hills peoples of Assam have strongly feel for regional autonomy and better status within the framework of the Indian Constitution. There are many different socio-cultural identity, living style, language etc. between hills and the plains population of Assam. The differentiation between hills and plains of erstwhile Assam was the major reason behind carved out as separate states from mainland. For example, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh etc. are most important. The Karbis and Dimasas are major hills tribal ethnic communities within

Assam and they are dwelling in hills part of state. They are living respectively Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills District. They were started Autonomy and separate identity movement according to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee's recommendation on the incorporate in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution with maximum autonomy for safeguard their customs and tradition and other tribal affairs. The Karbi Anglong District formally known as Mikir Hills and the North Cachar Hills was combined into same district and it was known as the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District. The district was divided into two Sub-divisions as namely North-Chchar Hills and Mikir Hills. Both the sub-divisions were turned into two separate full-fledged district in 1970 and 1976 respectively. Since under the provision of Article 244-A of the constitution. The Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills Autonomous State Demand Committee (KANCHASDCOM) and the Autonomous Demand Committee (ASDC) along with Karbi Students' Association (KSA) and North Cachar Hills Students' Federation (NCHSF) led the demand of separate statehood. The movement had been continuing for a long period and aftermath changed occurred in movement and tripartite Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1996 among the Central Government, State Government and Movement groups. In this understanding both the districts has renamed as Autonomous Council with transferred 30 additional departments by the Parliament Constitution amendment Act incorporate with the Six Schedule of the constitution.

#### **SIXTH SCHEDULE DEMAND GROUPS' IDENTITY MOVEMENT :**

The Sixth Schedule or autonomous council demand movements are significant ethnic identity movement in Assam since independence. In 1967 the Udayachal Demand movement launched by Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) whereas many tribal groups were organized for demand of separate plain tribal land or state in name of udayachal. But, this movement was unable to reached goal, because the various groups had started separate movement for their own separate identity. For example the Bodos script Identity movement, which is considered as major reason of failure the Udayachal demand. After that such groups has continued their movement with separate ways to reach same goal and some groups are reached to goal of Sixth Schedule or Autonomous Status. But unfortunately many tribal groups like Mising, Rabha, Tiwa, Kachari etc. are left out from the Constitutional status of Sixth Schedule and still they are crying for the status of Sixth Schedule under the Constitution. They are raising their voice for the preservation and protection of tribal custom and tradition form the threat of non-tribal domination and exploitation and grant them the constitutional safeguarded or status. They are continuing their movement since formation of Plain Tribal Council of Assam in 1967. As a result the State Government of Assam has provided Autonomous Council without territorial boundary to those agitational groups under the State Government Act 1995. But, they are not satisfied with the non-Sixth Scheduled Autonomous Council and still demanding for the constitutional status and take various means of agitation like rally, strike, bandh call, submit memorandum etc.

#### **SCHEDULE TRIBE (ST) DEMAND GROUPS' IDENTITY MOVEMENT :**

The Schedule Tribe demand issue is very significant for the ethnic identity question in Assam now a day. There are six ethnic groups namely Tai Ahom, Moran, Muttok, Adivasi and Konch Rajbonshi are demanding ST status from the other backward caste (OBC). They are considered themselves as very backward community and they should have provided ST status constitutionally. They are raising question on their danger situation of old language and culture which are on the way of extinct. For the preservation and protection of their tradition and identity those groups are seriously taking agitation for constitutional

are gradually opposing this demand. Because, they are feared of lost their identity if developed communities will included in the same status. Apart from that both sides are agitating for self preservation and which is become very critical situation to solve the problem for the government authority.

### **CAUSE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY MOVEMENT :**

Ethnic identity movement is spread as mushroom day by day in the contemporary democratic society. It is not only in India or Assam otherwise entire world face with same. There are various causes are responsible for that, especially in Assam some significant causes are like ethnic diversity, unequal development regional and geographical division, religious and linguistic diversity etc. Some important causes are diverse ethnic communities, unequal economic development, different between Plains and Hills peoples, Assamese language imposes to nonAssamese speaking peoples, unchecked illegal immigrants, spread of education formation of ethnic or communal party displacement of people etc.

### **IT'S IMPACT ON PEACE AND HARMONY OF ASSAM :**

The largest democratic nation of India is a land of unity among diversity. Which is homeland of different castes, communities, races, religion, languages etc. The state of Assam has also same situation with the nation. Therefore, large numbers of differentiation have been appearing since the historical period in the state. The diversified creed, race, language, culture, region, community, caste etc are living together in the state. So, the various movement and issues mention earlier has happened since the British colonial period. The state faced various challenging situation on maintain the peace and harmony in state. The identity movement is a major challenge behind national peace and harmony. The various different groups of the ethnic community created separate identity issue among each other groups of society and they always preference only about progress or welfare of own community. Therefore, they give less interest on equal development of the all communities as well as all the state. Those kind of communal or ethnic identity attitudes have been becoming major challenge toward peace and harmony among the diverse groups of population in the state of Assam.

The Official Language Bill opposition movement in 1960s was the foremost among identity agitation in Assam. Apart from this the hills area of Assam or nonAssamese speaking population started demand of self identity or autonomy status and the central government passed the North East Re-organization Act and the areas of region gradually carved out from mainland of Assam. Besides, still many part of Assam are demanding separation from mainland in name of separate and self identity of ethnic community. For example, Bodos demanding separate Bodoland, Konch Rajbanshi demand separate Kamatapur state etc. are most significant which has broken down the unity and harmony of the state.

The question of peace and security is most significant in North east and in Assam since the Official Language agitation. During this movement many people lost their life and many violent incidents were occurred entire Assam between Assamese and non Assamese peoples. For example, in Kamrup district 15 persons were killed and more than 130 people injured and large numbers of house, shops, markets, office were burnt. Some way in the Assam Movement or Anti-foreigner agitation (1979-1985) leaded by AASU also various violent activities were happened. In this movement suspected more than 2191 peoples were death and thousand of peoples treated brutally with weapons like knives, daggers etc. This movement is the origin of creation the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) insurgency groups in state, which is become main challenge to peace keeping in state. As like the various insurgency groups are created in



Assam is name of ethnic identity movement which are connected with ULFA. Such as National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Dima Haklam Daogah (DHD), Karbi Longri North Chachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF), Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam (MULFA) etc. are most significant insurgency groups. Those insurgency activities are violent peace and security and human rights by using arms and animation over common peoples. For example, on 15 August, 2004 on the event of Independence Day celebration at Dhemaji bombed by ULFA and killed 18 innocent children's and injured many, on 30 October, 2008 serial bomb blasts in Guwahati and causing 81 deaths and 470 injured and also many major and minor incidents has been occurring in state day to day.

## **6. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION:**

In the process of nation building, especially in Third World countries has several challenges may be faced, of which the most complex and critical is the question of identity. Diversities nation of Indian including state of Assam is victim of the same. Thus, the multi dimensional democratic society of Assam should have to be adopts essential step for achieve peace and harmony. There will be no peace and harmony in the state or region, if unable to solve the problem of identity movement. There are essential suggestions for solution of ethnic identity movements given below.

- a. The foremost finding suggestion for the study is the permanent solution of the burning issue of illegal immigrants problem of the state.
- b. Another important suggestion is the government should formulate the neutral high level expert committee for study the matters of various demand groups.
- c. The State Re-organization Act should be amended. The provision of language base state formation has mostly effect into the identity movement of various ethnic groups.
- d. Provide practical education to the students on national unity and communal harmony in educational institution is also important for reduce the movement.
- e. There should have strict rules and regulations to the political system and party politics.
- f. The civil societies of the nation as well as state should take essential initiative on ground of unity and harmony among the various rivalry groups of society.
- g. The government should avoid discrimination policy of all round development of society.

The identity movement in Assam has been one of the serious issues since independence which has become major threat towards the peace and harmony of North East India especially in Assam. There were lots of problems and disturbed at beginning of newly independence state of Assam. Whereas, the government unable to found out proper ways of solution. The government had taken many initiatives to solve the problems. Some of those were move towards opposite direction and brought the separation movement among the various ethnic groups which has beeh still Continuing in the state. Besides, many new issues are growing up gradually day by day in Assam. For that the government should have to take essential action for solve the problem of ethnic identity movement. Therefore, the state's progressive is possible through the cooperation, harmony and peaceful activities of peoples. In the conclusion, it can say that separation gives only a little satisfactions and development but unity among diversity provides common satisfaction and all round development to the peoples. So, Pandit Nehru says "If nation dies who lives, If nation lives who dies." Therefore, everyone should follow the philosophy of Nehru and pick up the stick of national integration, peace and harmony of all community instead of separate identity movement.

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