

# Tribal Politics in North East India: Issues, Challenges and Emerging Trends



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## **Tribal Politics in North East India: Issues, Challenges and Emerging Trends**

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## Editor's Note

The North Eastern region of India comprising of eight states is characterised by the existence diversified cultures and traditions. This region of the of country has been the hot bed of tribal politics in the post-independence period. The North Eastern region has witnessed several political upheavals ranging from armed struggles to mass democratic movements for autonomy/ separate states. It may be mentioned that the North Eastern part of India houses over 200 of the 635 tribal groups in the country, speaking a variety of Tibeto-Burman languages and dialects. The tribes inhabiting in this region are highly self-respecting people with immense love and attachment to their own distinct language, culture and traditions. The fear of annexation and assimilation by the larger communities gave rise to the question of identity politics among the tribal groups in the region. The identity question and political aspirations of the indigenous groups has resulted in to the reorganisation of the North Eastern region on number of occasions. Even after creations of the new states, the issues and challenges of tribal political aspirations have taken certain new dimensions and have displayed certain emerging trends. The alleged deprivation and violation of certain basic rights of certain communities led to several tribal movements in the area. The emergence of the tribal middle class in the post-colonial period provided a new dimension to the political aspirations of the tribal people in this region. Of late the tribal politics of the region has witnessed several new developments ha displaced certain new trends which deserve serious attention.

Considering these a seminar was organised at Thong Nokbe College on 19th and 20th June 2023. The fund for the seminar was provided by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), Diphu.

The purpose of this seminar is to provide a platform for scholarly discussion on the said topic for understanding and generating awareness about the issues, challenges and trends tribal politics in North East India.

The editors extend their sincere thanks to the authority of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) for sponsoring the seminar. The editors are also thankful to the office bearers of the South East Assam Regional Political Science Association (SEARPSA) for their collaboration in successfully conducting the seminar. Lastly, the editors extend their heartiest gratitude and thanks to all the teaching and non teaching staff of Thong Nokbe College for their sincere help and cooperation. Hope this volume will serve the purpose of the upcoming researchers who are interested in tribal politics in North east India. If by any means this volume helps the upcoming researchers in their research activities, the editors will consider their humble effort a great success.

**Dr. Lutfur Rahman Choudhury**

**Dr. Dhanjoy Narzary**

Editor's

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# **Impact of modernisation on the Socio-Political System in the Northeast: A Study of the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam**

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## **Introduction :**

Northeast is treated as the homeland of the tribes of different groups. All the tribes are having their own traditional socio-economic, cultural and administrative system which they follow in their day to day life. Their ancestral home is in the hilly terrains of the region. Their inhabitants were generally in jungles and hilly areas with their traditional system of social-economic, cultural and administrative system. Usually they use to follow their traditional customary laws in their socio-cultural and political system of their own. They followed shifting cultivation and other traditional customary laws in the economic life too. But with the advent of the British Colonial rulers in the country, all the backward tribal areas including the Northeast India tried to provide them financial assistance as well as establishing educational institutions to impart modern western education and convert them into Christianity. That happened to be the gradual impact and influence of modernisation of the tribals on their traditional customary laws and affected the traditional political institutions of the tribals of the Northeast.

The Colonial rulers established their headquarters in Calcutta (Kolkata) and did not have their intension to annex the Northeast (then Assam) at once because of the extreme backwardness of the region but it was due to the Ahom Princes seeking help for protection of the Ahom kingdom from the Burmese attack again and again. The colonial rulers got the chance for occupying the Northeast by defeating the Burmese with the conclusion of the treaty of Yandaboo in 1926

(Fadia,2009) The Colonial rulers occupied and annexed the whole of Northeast including the hill areas in 1998 whereby they started their occupation in different fields with the help of three major weapons like spread of western modern education with the establishment of modern English Medium schools, financial assistance to the poor tribal people and spread of Christianity by establishment of Churches by the Missionaries (Baptist Churches, Catholic Churches, Presbyterian Church, etc.). At present, there are several states of Northeast India are being dominated by the Christian missionaries like Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and partially Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur and Assam where the different tribal people/ groups have converted to Christianity including the most backward and deprived tea tribes of the region. On the other hand, it is to be mentioned that the remote sensing hilly terrains of the region of the Northeast have become civilized, educated and advanced because of the access of the Missionaries who established schools and the Churches whereby they have provided modern western education and spread religion simultaneously while after 76 years of independence the Civil government of our country could not reach to those remote sensing hilly areas of the region to provide them modern amenities to bring them into the fold of modern civilization. Most of the Tribal groups of the region have accepted Roman scripts for their mother tongue except the Bodos who have accepted Devnagari scripts. The way of modernisation with modern western education and administrative system have been greatly affected to the indigenous traditional system of the tribal people of the region. Traditional customary laws of the different tribal groups are now continuing with changes at par the influence of the modern administrative and political system (Bordoloi,2018). Growth and development of the Middle class emerged among the tribals because of the spread of modern education amongst them (Choudhury,2015).

The present study aims at studying the impact of modernisation and modern politics on the social and political system of the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The present study aims at studying the impact and influence of modern politics

on the traditional socio-political system of the tribals of the Northeast in general and the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam and as to how the traditional socio-political system is existing and continuing among the tribals after the influence of the modernisation and changes.

### **Review of literatures:**

Different writers and researchers have discussed in their writings on the socio-politico-administrative system of the different tribes and the Karbis in particular which have provided lot of information and ideas on the traditional system of the different tribes and the Karbis too. With a view to collect ideas and information on the topic related literatures of different authors, writers and scholars have been discussed below:-

Baruah (1990) in *The Karbis of the Hills* narrated the socio-cultural system of the Karbis and the customary laws that have been practised by them, their nature and habitats, dwelling and life style etc. The author dealt with more information on the Karbis as a tribe with their customs and traditions that they follow in their every life.

Bapuji (1993) in *Tribal Development Administration* dealt with the policy of the government that have been adopted for the development of the tribals in Andhra Pradesh by creating the scheduled areas which were mostly dominated by the tribals known as the Agency Tracts. Further, the author tried to explain about the creation of Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs) and Intensive Tribal Development Projects (ITDB) through Intensive Tribal Development Agency (ITDA). Thus the author narrated the system of development and administration of the tribals through various agencies to make the tribal people economically empowered.

Bey (2005) in *A Glimpse of Socio-Political Evolution of the Karbis of Karbi Anglong of Assam* explained the traditional administrative system prevailed in the Karbi society where three types of socio-administrative segments in the Karbi Kingdom were found like the Ronghang Rongbong, the Chinthong Rongbong and the Amri Rongbong. The author dealt with the role of the eminent Personalities of the Karbis like Semson Sing Ingti, Khorsing Terang and others who fought for

the creation of a separate district of Karbi anglong for the Karbis. The author mentioned about the Separate Statehood Demand Movement for Karbi Anglong also. The book is an informative document on the socio-political development of the Karbis.

Bidyabhusan and Sachdeva (1987) in *An Introduction to Sociology* dealt with the theoretical aspects of the society and social problems, social change which provides information and knowledge about society in a broader perspectives.

Bhattacharjee (ed.) (1989) in *Sequences of Development in N.E.India* compiled several Articles of different eminent writers and scholars who have dealt with the sequences of development of the tribes of different groups in the Northeast. The authors discussed the various devices, methods of development and the drawbacks of backwardness of the tribal people of the region.

Bhattacharjee (1986) in *Sociology of the Karbis* dealt with the socio- cultural life of the Karbis. The author discussed about the customs, traditions, habits and habitates, customary laws, lifestyle of the Karbis in details.

Bhuyan (ed.) (1989) in *Political Development in the North East* explained by distinguished writers and scholars in various Articles on the Traditional socio-political, economic and administrative system prevailed among the different the tribes of Northeast. The book was published in two volumes where the editor compiled almost all the writings of different writers on the tribals on their customary laws, habitats, socio-political, economic and administrative system the Northeast. Different writers categorically discussed on the tribal identity, autonomy movements and disintegration demand for separation in their Articles.

Chattopadhyaya (1988) in *The Jaintias* discussed about the traditional social and politica institutions of the Jaintias prevailed in the Jaintia Kindom of the Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya.

The author explained the different phases of administrative system in Jaintia Hills which were categorised into three phases like before the advent of the colonial rulers, during the colonial rule and after the colonial rule i.e; after independence. The Jaintias rigidly followed the traditional political system in the Jaintia Kingdom with the existence of Doloiship. The administrative

system was followed by hierarchical system like the Dolois at the top and Sardars and Dullias are the sub-ordinates to them. Dolois in Jaintia Hills continued the administrative system as the head in Jaitia Kingdom.

Das (ed.) (2006) in *Tribal Traditions and Development in the Hill Areas, Assam* discussed about the customs, traditions and development system of the tribals living in the hill areas in Assam. The authors revealed the customary laws and traditional system of the tribal people of Assam which are quite different from the plain. Authors of different Articles explained the Tribal identity, Provisions under Sixth Schedule and traditional tribal political institutions in the Hills.

Das (1978) in *The Peoples of the Eastern Himalayas* described about the different groups of the tribes living in the foothills of the Himalayas, their traditional socio-economic and political system. The author categorically mentioned about the Karbis (then Mikirs) and their traditional system.

Dutta (1986) in *Autonomy Movements in Assam* explained about the autonomy movements of the different tribal groups in Assam. The book is a document of the autonomy movements as well as the separate state demand movements led by the Karbis, Dimasas and other tribal group of people, its causes for the out-break of those movements and their consequences too.

Dutta Ray (ed.) (1983) in *Emergence and Role of Middle Class in N.E. India* is a compilation of Articles of eminent scholars and writers on the emergence of middle class among the different tribes of the Northeast and discussed the factors and circumstances for the emergence of class among the tribals. The authors in their Articles focussed about the role played by the middle class tribal people in the political development, socio-economic and administrative changes that took place in the region.

Dutta Ray (1989) in *Tribal Identity and Tension N.E. India* explained the factors for the identity crisis and conflict situation among the tribals in the Northeast. The author revealed the conflict situation in the hills of the region and consequences ultimately led to the formation of autonomy movements or demand for separation from the plains or mainland India. The author minutely observed the conflict situation of the Tribal India of the Northeast.

Phangcho (2001) in *Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills: A Study on Geography and Culture* narrated the geographical conditions of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills (Presently Dima Hasao) and the nature and habitats of the tribal people of the region particularly the Karbis and the Dimasas.

Gohain (1994) in *Continuity and Change in the Hills of Assam (Karbi Anglong District, Assam)* discussed nature and lifestyle of the Tiwas (Lalung tribes) living in Karbi Anglong district who are treated as the Hill Tribes and having similarities of traditional politico-administrative system with the Karbis of Karbi Anglong and the Jaintias of Meghalaya.

Rao (1976) in *A Century of Tribal Politics in N.E.India, 1874-1974* explained the tribal life, politics during colonial period to the formation of separate tribal administrative set up with the incorporation of Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India for the protection of identity, culture at their own. The author discussed the creation of the Autonomous District Councils, Regional Councils, formation, power and functions including the policy formulation at their own for protection and preservation of the customs, traditions, cultures and run the administration for the tribals by their own. The author discussed the annexation process of the plains and hills of then Assam (presently Northeast India) by the colonial rulers and the Constituent assembly debates on the issue of Sixth Schedule and giving more powers to the tribals of the region.

Stack and Lyall (1908) in *The Mikirs* explained the nature and habitats, traditional customary laws of the Karbis, their origin, population, settlement and traditional political institutions.

Singh (1989) in *The Problem of Change: A Study of the N.E.India* discussed the process of change and continuity of tribal people of the region and the problems that had to be faced in this regard in the Northeast.

### **Hypothesis:**

Human society is not static rather it is dynamic. All the social realities are dynamic. Because of its constant changes and movement, social development is happened to be possible for the whole human society. Human civilization happened to be changed with development from primitive stage to medieval

stage to the modern and post modern stage with the faster development of science and technology. It can be assumed that as and when the society will remain static it is sure to be the time for the destruction of the human society and human civilization. So, it may be assumed that change and continuity is an universal process in every human society. In the tribal world of the Northeast India, traditional system on socio-cultural, economic and political that continues in every tribal society of the region with changes and modifications with the influence and impact of modernisation.

### **Methodology:**

The present study has been made based on the secondary sources and personal observation of my own.

### **Modernisation of socio-political system of the Karbis:**

Aristotle has rightly said, “ All human beings are by nature political beings”. Politics has playing a dominant role since the inception of the human society in an organized way for governing them as a civilised nation. As the society has been passed through various changes and developments, the influence of politics on the society in no way be ignored but the whole universe is under the cluster of political domination and political atmosphere. The tribal world of the Northeast is also under the influence of the modern politics.

Since independence, it was the dream of the constitution makers to empower all the backward section of people and the tribes with the devolution of political power up to the grass root level. It was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi that there would be ‘Gram Swaraj’ which has been materialised by the constitution makers with the incorporation of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India and introduction of the Autonomous District Councils, Regional Councils and Village Councils in the tribal world of the Northeast on the recommendations of the Bordoloi Sub-Committee which has been passed in the Constituent Assembly on the stronghold of the Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constitution. Thus the influence of modern politics on the traditional system of any kind of different tribes of the region started with changes and decentralisation of power in the hands of the tribal world to bring them into the

fold of modern civilisation. In spite of introduction of modern political system in the form of devolution and decentralisation of power up to the grass root level the traditional system of socio- political institutions are still continuing among the different tribes following their own customary laws.

The Karbis as an indigenous tribe of the Northeast who are the principal tribe of Karbi Anglong hill district of Assam. Though the Karbis are living in different parts of the Northeast yet the Karbis of Karbi Anglong are strictly following their traditional customary laws in their socio-cultural and political life. In many parts of the region, the Karbis have been assimilated to the other major group of tribes and lost their language, culture and traditions. In Karbi Anglong hill district the existence of Autonomous District Council, Regional Councils for the other small group of tribes and the Village Councils can found but the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council as a part of modern political institution plays a key role in the region for the development of the Karbis. The Autonomous District Council of Karbi Anglong has been upgraded to Territorial Council in the name of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) with more powers for the protection and preservation of rights and liberties of the Karbis, protection of the their land, economy, politics, culture, traditions and customs, customary laws and up gradation education through modern education system, enrich the Karbi language through introduction of Karbi medium in the educational institutions in the district, publication of Karbi literatures etc. with the establishment of Karbi Lamet Amei. The KAAC has been given more powers for the all-round development of the region and the Karbis as a tribe. The Karbis have been fighting for an Autonomous State along with the Dimasas of the Dima Hasao district, the other hill district of Assam for long time and got more powers to the Autonomous Councils in stead of an Autonomous State. They have been given berths to the State government as well as Central government from time to time.

In spite of all the modern political system , the Karbis follow their traditional social systems and practice customary laws in the Karbi society that serves the traditional political institutions of the Karbis. In the Karbi society and village, traditional administrative system are still functioning and the power has been decentralised at the grass root level The socio- political administrative system

has working in three regions or provinces of Karbi Anglong which are known as 'Rongbong' in Karbi. The three regions or Rongbongs are 'Rongkhang' or 'Ronghang Rongbong', 'Chinthong Rongbong' and 'Amri Rongbong'. These Rongbongs found to be exiting and functioning in the western part of Karbi Anglong district presently a separate district in the name of West Karbi Anglong district. Out these three Rongbongs, the Ronghang Rongbong proclaims the highest position and authority. The system of functioning of the three 'Rongbongs' are different from each other though the strata in each of the 'Rongbongs' are same.

Three strata of the institutions are distributed in each of the Rongbongs like Rongbong stands at the top, next to that is the Longri while Rong stands at the bottom which is the lowest unit. The Rongbong is considered to be the Karbi Kingdom while Longri is considered to be the present state or district and Rong is treated as the Village of the present day. The modern administrative system power has been decentralised and devoluted of power from the Centre to the State, Districts, Sub-divisions, Circles and Gaon Panchayats at the bottom. Similarly, the Council found to be in the three strata, Rongbong, Longri and Rong are Pinpo Amei in Rongbong, Habe Amei in Longri and Rong Amei in Rong. The Pinpo Amei is headed by the Lindokpo while the Longri Amei is headed by the Habe and the Rong Amei is headed by the Rong Asarthe or Sarthe. In the Karbi society, Lindokpo of the Pinpo Amei is considered as the Karbi King who controls the Rongbong, the Longri and the Rong. The heads of these three Councils not only administer the three respective regions but also act as the Court of Appeal for the common people (Karbis). The powers and functions of these Councils are as such- the Council of the Lindokpo acts as the Supreme Court of the modern system while the Council of Habe acts as the High Court and the Council of Rong Amei acts as the sessions Court or the Village Court. The Council of Lindokpo is the highest Appellate authority in the Karbi society. If anybody is not satisfied with the Rong Amei, can move to the Council of Habe and/ or to the Council of Lindokpo. The verdict of the Council of Lindokpo is the final verdict. Thus the three organs and heads of the traditional administrative system of the Karbis act as the Executive as well as the Judiciary like the modern administrative system in the district of Karbi Anglong

which they do perform strictly following the Traditional Customary laws of the Karbi Society.

The modern administrative system has different type of administration where the Gaon Panchayats is the grass root administrative unit while in the Karbi society Village Councils or the Rong Amei is treated as the lowest unit of the administrative set up which is known as the 'Ser-Vankep'. Ten persons are appointed in different posts to perform different types of works in the village level in the Ronghang Rongbong. The meaning of Ser is gold and the Vankep is meant for ten persons ; so ten persons appointed to ten posts are to be performed all the functions in the village headed by the village headman known as the 'Sarthe.' Generally the post of the Sarthe is hereditary. The village headman occupies the highest position in the village and the rest assist the village headman to run the administration of the Village Council. The organisation, nature and functions of the Rong Amei or Village Councils of the three Rongbongs are different from each other. On the other hand, the traditional politico-administrative system in the eastern Karbi Anglong and the western Karbi Anglong are different from each other. The eastern Karbi Anglong is known as Nilip and Lumbajong which is being administered by the Hot Asar (Lieutenant Governor) appointed by the Lindokpo at Ronghang Rongbong. There is no system of Council of Habe and Lindokpobut there is Rong Amei headed by the Sarthe. The Sarthe is under the Hot Asar. The functions of the Sarthe and the Rong Amei are the same as the different Habes of Rongkhang, Chinthong and Amri.

In Karbi Anglong district dual system of administrative set up can be witnessed- one is the traditional administrative set up like Pinpo Amei, Habe Amei and Rong Amei and the other is the modern administrative system of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (earlier Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council) which has been upgraded to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council (KAATC) introduced after the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) between the Union Government and the Government of Assam on the one hand and the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) on the other hand on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011. The modern government introduced the system of appointment of the Sarkari Gaonburas in the Village who are to be held responsible to the government for the acts done. The appointment of the

Sarkari Gaonburas in the village level are getting salaries from the government and they act as the agent of the government who have been given authority to maintain law and order, peace and tranquillity in the village as the village headman. The powers and functions of the Sarkarari Gaonburas are recognised by the government as an employee of the government in case of Karbi Anglong it is the KAAC who confers the powers and functions to the Ganburas while the 'Sarthé' is the traditional village headman whose powers are not conferred by the government and they are not getting salaries as that of the Gaonburas appointed by the KAAC or the government. Gradually the importance of the traditional village headmen have been diminished with the introduction of the modern system of politico-administration. The traditional system of Lindokpo, Habe, Councils have got significance on and during the socio-cultural ceremony and rituals but the spread of modern western education developed the aspirations among the young generations and they are more keen and interested in modern political and administrative system rather than the traditional system.

### **Conclusion:**

The traditional administrative system is existing and working in the Karbi society in the form of Pinpo Amei, Habe Amei, Rong Amei but with introduction of the Sixth Schedule and existence of the Autonomous Council with more powers from time to time with the changes, modifications and continuation of its organisation, powers and functions, the traditional system had to face a tough challenge ahead of its existence. The impact of globalisation and liberalisation have made the whole world into a global village and not only the traditional political institutions of the tribals of the Northeast but also there is a challenge for the existence of the modern political institutions of the developing and the underdeveloped countries before the constant challenges thrown by the Multi-national Companies, and Corporations, Corporate Sectors of the developed countries which try to capture, control and regulate the economy, market, politics of the developing and the underdeveloped countries; influence on the culture, society and education. In the era of globalisation, the tribal politics also cannot remain aloof from the influence of modernisation. Thus the study can be summed up with the assumption that the small nationalities and sub-nationalities including the small group of tribal people should develop their

awareness about their traditional socio-cultural and political system. Identity of the tribals cannot be protected without the protection and preservation of their language, culture and tradition. But it is to be mentioned here that Tribal identity is not possible without the identity of the Non-tribals because one is complementary to the others. There is a challenge before all the tribes and the plain people for their existence, protection and preservation of their language, culture, identity and politics from the grip of globalisation. In spite of all these challenges, impact and influence of modernisation on the traditional politics and political institutions, it will continue with changes with the modern politics with new shapes and structures.

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# The Politics of Expediency and Ethnic Upsurge: Karbi Anglong District, Assam

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## 1. Introduction

Assam entered into the colonial phase of history with the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo with the Burmese in 1826. Gradually, the British annexed various parts of North East and adopted various modalities of governance in those places. In colonial period, the province of Assam was sub divided into three divisions for the purpose of census reporting--the Brahmaputra Valley, the Central hill range and the Surma Valley.

‘The Mikir hill tract’, was one of the hill tracts of Assam, inhabited by the tribal and non-tribal population, the most predominant among them were the Karbis. This area was annexed by the British colonizers in 1838(Datta 1990:1080)The ‘Mikir Hill Tract’ was constituted with the administrative boundary of Nowgong district by a notification under the Assam Frontier Regulation Act of 1884. This included the hilly tract wherein the Karbi population was numerous. In 1893, a part of the tract was transferred to the then Sibsagar district. Eventually, adjoining district boundaries were slightly modified and consequent to that, the Mikir hills area in 1913-1914 came within the districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar(Athparia 1996 :209).

As per the Government of India,(Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas), order 1936, the backward tracts of Assam were regrouped as ‘excluded’ and ‘partially Excluded’ Areas. The Garo Hill District, the Mikir Hills in Nowgong and Sibsagar districts and the British portion of Khasi and Jaintia Hills,(other than

Shillong Municipality and Cantonment) were considered as 'partially excluded Territories' wherein the Governor was the sole administrator (Datta 1990:110). In such areas, the provincial legislature had discretion on matters relating to the area only with the prior permission of the Governor. Even the ministers had no constitutional right to advise the Governor on matters relating to the area (Athparia 1996 :210).

It is observed that the political aspirations of the Karbis were largely mooted and developed especially in the 'partially excluded territory' wherein they could assemble freely for political activity and discussion. It is to be noted here that the Karbi leaders in the thirties had emerged from this particular 'partially excluded areas'. Stalwart leaders such as Semsong Singh Engti, Song Bey and Khorsing Terang etc. played a crucial role in the interests of the Karbi tribe (ibid 1996 :210).

In post-independent India, there was a strong feeling for regional autonomy among the tribes. It was strongly felt that such areas needed special consideration and 'certain degree of autonomy' given the chronic under development and long term alienation. Hence, an Advisory Committee was constituted by the Constituent Assembly of India. One of the sub committees of Gopinath Bordoloi was known as North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Area Sub-Committee which is popularly known as the Bordoloi Sub Committee. The recommendation of the Bordoloi sub committee was incorporated in the sixth schedule to the Constitution of India (ibid).

The United Mikir and North Cachar Hill district was set up on 17 November, 1951 covering the areas of Mikir Hill Tract and its contiguous portions from the districts of then Nowgong, Sibsagar, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and North Cachar hills with an area of 15,237 sq.kms. Subsequently, the newly created district was divided into North Cachar Hills and Mikir Hills. By 2 February, 1970 both the sub divisions were turned into two full fledged districts. Since 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1976, the Mikir Hill district was condensed into a single administrative unit called Karbi Anglong. The present district is bounded by Nowgong and Golaghat districts on the north and north east, on the South by Nagaland and North Cachar on the west by the Jaintia hills. The total areas of

the district is 10,332 sq.km. The Karbis constitute the third largest community in Assam, a principal tribal community of the region after the Bodos and the Mishings.

## **2. Political Articulation and the demand for the District Formation**

The 1937 Assembly election is the hallmark of political awakening among the Karbis. Khorsing Terang as the Congress candidate was elected to represent the Mikir Hills Tract who defeated Thengkursing Ingti and Mohonsingh Teron. In 1945, two conventions were held, one at Kathalguri in 1945 and the other was in Hawaipur in 1946 which was attended by 2000 Karbis from the 'Mikir Hills Tract' and adjoining areas. The Karbi-A Darbar, a regional political Forum was constituted with Sarsing Teron as the President and Semson Singh Engti as the Secretary to consolidate the Karbis scattered in different areas and to constitute a district (Athparia 1996 :210). From 1945 onwards there was a massive drive to constitute the All Assam District Committees of Karbi- A Darbar. Barelong Terang as a member took active part in organizing meetings at Golaghat, Bokaghat, Dimapur and Haflong etc. To determine the border of the newly proposed district, the Assam Government constituted the Border Determination Committee with Semsonsingh Engti, Song Bey, Sarsing Teron and Khorsing Teron as members. The first meeting of the committee was held in the office of the Nowgong Local Board (Rongphar 2022 :26).

After assuming office, the members of the Karbi-A Darbar visited Sir Robert Neil Reid, the then Governor at Mohendigu and submitted a memorandum to him praying for special protection and to implement developmental activities at the behest of the Karbi people. Sarsing Teron being a Habe, a representative of the King and Semson Singh Engti were instrumental in taking measures for discarding social evils.

As the Secretary of the Karbi A-Darbar, Semsong Singh Engti moulded public opinion for an independent district for the Karbi people. He accompanied the delegates many a time to Delhi to meet the Governor-General and also visited the members of the Constituent Assembly for safeguarding the backward community such as Karbis and raised the demand to the Governor General (ibid 2022 :83).

On 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1947 Karbi A-Darbar met the Bordoloi Committee and submitted a memorandum placing the demand for a district comprising the areas occupied by the Karbi people. On 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1947 the Assam Governor Sir Andrew Claw visited the tribal inhabited areas with Khorsing Terang who submitted a memorandum to the Governor at Lanka citing various grievances of the Karbi people and demanded safeguards for them [ibid]. Khorsing Terang was closely associated with Karbi A-Darbar since its inception. From 1951 to 1952, he served as the Secretary of the organization and played a pivotal role in the socio-political lives of the Karbi people from prior to the formation of Karbi A-Darbar to the formation of the District Council. "It was because of the organised movement led by the Karbi A-Darbar, the Karbis were given a district of their own in 1951 and a district Council in the following year" (Choudhury 2014 :209).

The Darbar had mass support base which is evident from its electoral participation in the District Council election since 1952. In this election, Mikir hills was allotted two seats and the Congress party fielded Nihang Rongphar from Mikir hills west and Khorsing Terang from Mikir hills east. Both the Congress candidates won with massive number of votes (Rongphar 2022 :150).

The first General election to the council had shown a mass support extended to the candidates as a result of which the Darbar formed the government in the council. The Darbar leadership was confined to few families only (Bhuyan 1992:28). Hence, family centric politics is not new in Karbi Anglong but a tradition since the beginning of political articulation.

Another interesting aspect of the Darbar was alliance with the Congress. Although the Karbi A-Darbar was an ally of the Congress, it never used the Congress election symbol in the council election but its own symbol 'lantern' which was approved only in 1978. However, it used the Congress symbol in the Lok Sabha and the Assam Legislative Assembly election. To challenge the monopoly of old durbar leader Karbi Riso-A Darbar was constituted in 1964. On the eve of the council election, 1971 it demanded nomination of seven of its members. In fact, when one of the leaders of the Darbar was refused nomination he contested as a Riso-A Darbar candidate against a rival Darbar candidate and got elected (ibid).

On October 24, 1960, the Assam official Language Act was passed by the Assam Assembly as per the recommendation of the Pataskar Commission which significantly polarized the political leadership. The MLA from North Cachar Hills, Hamdhan Mohan Haplongbar opposed the very spirit and content of the bill along with MLAs of Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Lushai Hills, Garo Hills and Cachar (Datta:1990 :112:). The then Chief Minister of Assam expected to garner maximum support from the hill people and asked the Tribal Area Development Minister Captain Williamson Sangma to arrange a meeting of the tribal leaders. But the hill leaders except from Mikir Hills and Nagaland immediately met at Tura and took resolution to oppose the language bill. Sangma was then a cabinet minister in the ministry of Bimala Prasad Chaliha who resigned from his post and launched a strong movement for a separate hill state known as the 'North Eastern Frontier State' comprising all the six autonomous districts including Mikir Hills of Assam (Rongphar 2022 :90).

The Mikir Hill district unit of the APHLC was constituted in 1965 with Barelong Terang as the President and Bapuram Singnar as the General Secretary. In addition, a number of Karbi leaders such as Raidang Engti, David Long Ingti, Moniram Langneh, John Ingti Kathat and others joined the APHLC and intensified the movement for the hill state in the then Mikir Hills. The Autonomous State of Meghalaya was created on April 2, 1970. The Mikir and North Cachar Hills Districts were given the option of joining the Autonomous state, if they so desired in the District Councils, by a two-third majority before a prescribed date." But the general body of the district council overwhelmingly supported the positions of status quo. All Members of the Autonomous Council except one i.e., Raidang Engti supported the resolution to remain with Assam in the Council session held on 21<sup>st</sup> February that year (Choudhury 2014 :212). The people of Karbi Anglong wanted to take the decision after the District Council election and a large procession was taken out on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1969 in Diphu. But with the extension of the district council even after expiry of its terms, the time limit given to the hill district to join Meghalaya expired (Rongphar 2022:69). A memorandum was submitted to KVK Sundaram on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1971 which stated that due to the self interest of the political leaders, the hill district of Karbi Anglong was retained in Assam against the wishes of the people (ibid).

The proposal for re-organization of Assam and granting of autonomous statehood to Khasi-Jaintia and Garo hills and the views of four MLAs of NC Hills and Mikir Hills were jointly articulated in a statement named *Reorganisation of Assam –Injustice done to Mikir and North Cachar Hills District* wherein they have brought significant differences between the Khasi and Garo on the one hand and the Karbi and the Dimasas on the other in terms of their religion, culture, pattern of society and system of inheritance. In addition, the Mikirs and the Dimasas are the most backward both economically and educationally and their numerical strength was also less than the Khasi and the Garos. Therefore, for the Mikirs and the Dimasas to join the proposed Autonomous state is 'like the dwarfs making friendship with giants' Hence, the solution of the problem lied in creating a separate state for the Karbis (Datta 1990:113).

In order to keep the Karbis aloof from the Separatist Movement of the hill state in United Khasi and Jaintia hills, Garo Hills and the Mizo hills, the State Government on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1970 through a notification No. TAD/R/153/70 dated, Shillong, the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1970, handed over sixteen development departments to the District Council (Rongphar 2022 :136). From June 1970, the services of all District level officers, subordinate officers and staffs working in the then Mikir hill district were placed under the administrative control of the Mikir Hill District Council. But the assurances provided by the Assam Government and APCC leadership frustrated the leaders of NC Hills and Karbi Anglong since the Assam Government imposed the Assamese language as the sole medium of instruction in the Universities and secondary levels of education. To ventilate their protests, a series of meetings were organised by the leaders and educationists of N.C Hills held on January 16, 1973 and February 4, 1973 at Haflong and of Mikir Hills on February 3, 1973 at Diphu. The concern expressed and decisions taken in these meetings were reviewed in a Joint Conference of the leaders of Mikir and NC Hills districts. Altogether 123 delegates attended the conference including one MLA and fifteen District Council Members (MDC). This conference adopted five resolutions which incorporated demand for creating a separate state and also an Action Committee of the Mikir and NC Hills Leaders' Conference and other related matters. Given that, the Mikir and North Cachar Hill Leaders' Conference submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister conveying how

they were persuaded to remain in Assam and the promises made by the Assam leaders were not fulfilled. The memorandum also highlighted the misuse of the Central grants under Art. 275 and the attempts of 'assamisation' by forcing the Assamese language which they considered a threat to their language and culture and their distinct identity as tribes.

Since the Assamese people did not intend to withdraw, 'there is no meeting point of the two'. In that situation, the only solution for the hill people was the separation from Assam and to have their own state to protect their ethnic and cultural identity (ibid). On 9 June, 1973, a delegation met the PM and submitted a memorandum on the same issue. In response, the Prime Minister told the delegation that to the Government of India, the problem presented by the Action Committee appeared to be economic in nature and not political and as such the Prime minister entrusted the Planning Commission to enhance the allotment of fund for the development of these two hill districts. The PM also advised the delegation to try their level best to adjust and accommodate themselves with the people of the Brahmaputra valley. Even though the delegation were not satisfied with the assurance, they took it as a trial. On November 24, 1980, they submitted another memorandum to the PM urging upon him the immediate need for an autonomous state for them. The memorandum stated, "In spite of more fund made available to us we could not make any further progress in the economic front, not to speak of social and cultural development". It further stated that, "The present agitation in Assam in the name of foreign nationals have threatened the linguistic minority communities including the tribal people of these two hill districts of their very existence as distinct tribes and communities in the state. In fact, the present agitation which is spearheaded by ASSU and AAGSP has made no secret of their intention and determination to destroy the language, culture and tradition of the minorities as well as tribals in Assam. They have declared in their charter of demands and other public Statements that all kinds of reservation and privileges hitherto enjoyed by the tribals and students belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in the state be done away with.... When the present leaders of the student union i.e, present agitators will become leaders of the state in future, what will happen to be linguistic minorities and tribal people can easily be imagined'(ibid).

## **People's mandate and hill Politics: Role of Political parties**

In Mikir Hills and then in Karbi Anglong, a lot many political parties were constituted, but very few subscribe ideology and programmes of action. Some parties have taken up the demand for separate state merely to woo the voters and after the election, they hardly address the issue. Ironically, many of the elected leaders are getting elected with a particular party symbol, ideology and programme of action and by placing these before the electorates, they win the election. Switching over to different parties in order to pursue their self interest entails violation of mandate given by the people, breach of trust, defilement of party ethics and disruption of the democratic process. In addition, some of the parties have played divisive politics too which invariably created a wall of suspicion and mistrust along the civilian population on ethnic lines. The role played by the various political parties and organizations on the issue raised by Article 244 (A) have divided the people. These divisions often manifests in the form of disruption of law and order (Beypi 2007 :609).

The Mikir Hills Minority Party was a party which was constituted in 1968 as a result of the forceful land grabbing drive by some activists of the APLHC in an area predominantly inhabited by some non-tribals. It was a party against possible onslaught on the minorities by the dominant tribes. The party did not oppose hill state movement openly but wanted some kind of constitutional protection in case the same was created. The party became a non-entity when the Mikir hills decided to remain within Assam (Bhuyan 1992 :29). However, the party became active again when some frustrated Congressmen organised a movement for separate state in 1978. A new committee of the party was constituted with a Rengma Naga as the President and a Kuki as the Secretary. The executive committee expressed dissatisfaction at the manner wherein the Assam Government nominated members to the Council after the General election of 1978. The party actively participated in the Assembly and Parliamentary elections of 1983. The Committee submitted memorandum to the Prime Minister for the constitutional protection of the minorities in case a separate state was created (ibid).

In 1971, the Mikir Hills Progressive Party was constituted by those leaders who

belonged to the Mikir Hills unit of the APHLC. This party was constituted merely on the eve of the Council election of 1971. The primary objective of this party was to disrupt the monopoly of the Congress/ Darbar alliance in the Council. The Party also opposed the monopoly of a few families which were in the helm of affairs of the council. Even though it fielded candidates in all the constituencies, only two were elected. It is interesting to note that one of them subsequently joined the Darbar to get the membership of the Executive Committee. Thus it becomes pertinent that the party members were running after the gainful political offices of the council (ibid).

Peoples Democratic Forum (PDF) firmly resolves to strive for equality in opportunity, justice, wealth, cultural and social development irrespective of caste, creed, religion, community and sex. It intended to scientifically channel the wealth of the land for people oriented development in Karbi Anglong for crafting out a united and new democratic India.

The organizers of the party attended the Golaghat Convention (which formed the AGP) and wanted some clarification regarding certain issues concerning Karbi Anglong. The most important of these were (1) implementation of Article 244(A) of the Constitution and (2) Continuation of English as the official language and medium of instruction. The organisers of the Convention did not agree to both the proposals specially the implementation of the Article as that would cause further dismemberment of Assam. Being dissatisfied with their attitude they left the Convention and organised a meeting of all parties and organizations at Diphu which culminated in the formation of the PDF. After its formation, the PDF entered into an electoral understanding with the AGP to fight unitedly against the Congress [I] hegemony. The PDF was invited to join the AGP Ministry with a condition that the party organization of the AGP must also be formed in Karbi Anglong. But the PDF did not agree to the proposal and decided to remain aloof from the AGP. But eventually, the PDF member joined the Ministry on the eve of the council election of 1989. "It is a separatist movement, pure and simple" (Bhuyan 1992 :32-33).

The United Karbi Nationalist organization of 1973 was the first party which demanded complete separation and creation of a full fledged state. But before

the movement was launched in full swing the party ceased to exist. The party did not have any common programme except separation and could not establish itself as a political force due to some important reasons. People lost their faith in the leadership as they frequently changed sides from one political party to another. In addition, the movement for separation launched by the local unit of the APHLC had already been foiled by the Congress-Darbar alliance. Therefore, a fresh move within such a short time was not welcome (ibid).

The All Party Peoples' Conference was a broad-based party constituted in 1978 representing mainly the Congress(I) leaders of both the autonomous districts. The party demanded the creation of a full fledged state comprising the autonomous districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. Its President was the Chief Executive member, North Cachar Hill District and Sam Singh Hanse was the secretary. It consisted of frustrated Congress(I) leaders who were either defeated or won elections but deprived of political offices due to the emergence of Janata Dal in the center, state and the councils of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. But this party also could not project itself as a strong political force before the movement was formally started. The main reason of the failure was the lack of commitment of leaders related to the movement. In 1980, a fresh move for separation was led by the Chairman of the Karbi Anglong District Council along with some leaders of the district. The Chairman himself became the President and Roy Enghee a prominent leader its Secretary. In addition, both the President and the Secretary were the dissatisfied politicians (ibid).

Karbi Anglong Peoples conference was set up on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1978, the founder President was Lunse Timung and the Secretary was Samsing Hanse. The objective of this party was to end the autocratic rule of Karbi A- Darbar, to ensure fundamental rights to the citizens and to establish government with democratic, socialist and equal values, creating unity, peace and progress in the district. It was against the demand for a separate district for Hamren sub division. The party demanded for a separate state for the hill areas of Assam called Ratnagiri (Rongphar 2022 :277). Some members of the Karbi Adorbar, Modon Daimary led United Communist Convention and KAPC came together unitedly on 22 September, 1986 and formed a district based political party called the United People's Conference (UPC) and then KAPC became defunct.

The Separate State Demand Committee was formed in 1981 with Dhoni Ram Rongpi as the President and Biren Singh Engti as the Secretary. It organised processions, submitted memorandum and published leaflets. Almost all the leaders of the Committee contested in the boycotted election of 1983 and got elected. Thus the office bearers of the Committee were politically accommodated and there was little cry for separation. Moreover, the environment created during the post 1983 election was not congenial for a movement for separation (Bhuyan 1992:34).

In 1986, the movement for separation sprang up again under the initiative of the Congress-I Forces. The AGP had already come to power and wanted to consolidate its position. At that time, Samsing Hanse was the President of the District based political party, the Karbi Anglong People's Conference. Two weeks later after the formation of AGP, the District based new Political Party People's Democratic Forum was constituted under the leadership of Jayanta Rongpi on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1985. In December, 1985, there was an electoral understanding between PDF and AGP in the district for the Assam Assembly election. AGP supported PDF candidate Holiram Terang who won the election from Baithalangso constituency. In the other three seats, Congress's Rajen Timung (Bokajan), KAPC's Samsing Hanse (Diphu) and independent candidate Khorsing Engti (Howraghat) won the election. Samsing Hanse defeated PDF-AGP Candidate Dr. Jayanta Rongpi.

The most active movement for separation was launched by the Central Autonomous State Demand Committee formed on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1986 at Haflong. The ASDC is a broad based committee having a central committee with two conveners, two spokesmen and twenty one members Executive Committee. Just below the Central Committee, there existed the branches which are constituted as per the intensity of the movement [ibid]. Immediately after its formation, the CASDC leadership decided to pressurize the Central Government for the creation of an autonomous state for Karbi Anglong and NC Hills. A delegation of the CASDC led by Mongol Sing Ingti, the then Chief Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong District Committee visited the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1986 and submitted a memorandum demanding the creation of an Autonomous State for the hill districts of Assam.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1986, the ASDC was constituted and its aftermath, the party formally launched its movement for an Autonomous state on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1986 and a joint delegation of the ASDC comprising of Jayanta Rongpi and Elwin Teron, Bharat Kumar Timung, Dipendra Rogpi and Borsing Rongphar went to New Delhi to meet the Central leadership and to press for the creation of an autonomous state. The ASDC led Autonomous Movement reached its climax when the Karbi Anglong District Council [KAAC] was upgraded to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council [KAAC] following a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the ASDC and its allies on the one hand and the representatives of the Central and the Assam Governments on the other (Choudhury 2014:214).

### **Political Defection, Decentralization and derailment of Democracy**

Political defection is a major setback in the politics of N.C Hills and Karbi Anglong districts. Interestingly, the leaders and members of the political parties keep on switching over from one political party to the other, many a time on the eve of election.

In a major breakthrough, more than a hundred workers and leaders of Congress party of the Langsoliet area formally switched their allegiance to ASDC under the leadership of Raju Enghi, President and Rajkumar Gaur, a Adivashi Association leader of Langsolilet and others (*The Hill Times*, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2001).

A large contingent of ASDC and CPI[ML] supporters from villages had formally switched over to Congress in a simple function held at the residence of Men Sing Terang village headman (*The Hills Times* 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2006).

On 10 January, 2007, 212 party workers and leaders had joined to INC from other parties (*The Hill Times*, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2007).

In 2008, 26 ASDC leaders under Nilip constituency had joined Congress ahead of the Parliamentary elections (*The Hills Times*, 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2008).

On the eve of Bokajan town committee election, 12 members from the Bharatiya Janata Party had joined Congress. Shyamal Das, BJP leader along with 11 other members joined the Congress party (*The Hills Times*, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008).

Giving a jolt to the regional Autonomous State Demand Committee [ASDC] ahead of the forthcoming Hamren Town Committee election, as many as five hard core ASDC families of the area joined the Congress party by parting their ways with the regional party on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2008. These families joined the Congress party at a function held at the guest house of Hamren Agricultural department (*The Hills Times*, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2008).

The Karbi Anglong District Congress (I) Committee through a press release claimed that 46 families of Jungthung area under Mahamaya constituency belonging to the ASDC, CPI (ML) BJP and KAYF parties had formally joined the Congress in a meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2006 at the premises of Jungthung Lower Priiary School. (*The Hills Times*, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2006).

The top brass leaders from the Karbi community and the Chief Executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Tuliram Ronghang along with his 18 executive members (EMS) joined the BJP in 2016. The switching over of the CEM from the political party with whose ticket he won the election was considered a major blow to the Congress party as Karbi Anglong went for the Council polls in January 2017. This shifting of allegiance marked the transfer of power of the KAAC to the BJP from the Congress party. Prior to that, Sarat Brahma who was earlier the executive member of the KAAC had joined the BJP on the eve of the general election. Another MAC and former EM Ratan Engti was in the BJP for more than two years (*The Nagaland Post*, June 14, 2016). There are myriad instances wherein the elected leaders and party workers switched on different political parties to sustain their self-interests.

The Tenth schedule, popularly known as the Anti-defection Act was included in the Constitution via the 52<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Act, 1985. It sets the provisions for disqualification of elected members on the grounds of defection to another political party. As per the 1985 Act, a defection by one-third of the elected members of a political party was considered 'merger'. But the 91<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 changed this and now at least two thirds of the members of a party must be in favour of a 'merger' and it is considered valid in the eye of law. (*The Hindu*, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2022) Given that, the political parties take advantage of the clause and shift their allegiance from one political party to the other in a buck.

The North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council passed the Anti Defection Law in 2017 which prohibits party leaders and the elected members from changing parties frequently. The council was constituted in 1952 and since then, elected members shift their allegiance from one party to the other without any impediment. The 11<sup>th</sup> North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council has a record of members changing parties. Out of 28 seats, the Congress won 10 seats and the remaining seats were captured by the independent candidates. However, many independent candidates who joined the Congress and formed the government in the Council on June 2013 and led it till August 2015. The nine Congress members joined the BJP and with the support of other members, the BJP wrested power. After three months, three of the members again joined the Congress and the party formed the council. After the Assam Assembly election in 2016, many Congress members joined the BJP and a few of them joined the AGP (*The Telegraph*, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2017).

### **Merger with Nagaland**

A section of the Karbi-A Darbar emerged as a dissident group for restoring their socio-ethnic identity and stood for the merger of the Mikir Hills district with Nagaland and also merger of the Mikir Hills with the Jaintia Hill in 1964 (Athparia 1996 :209).

Given the devastating Council election result, the leaders of the Mikir Hill party constituted another party namely the Mikir Hills nationalist organization in 1972 to merge Mikir Hills with Nagaland. As Karbi Anglong is the repository of huge forest and mineral resources, the Nagaland Government showed its interest in the issue of merger and extended both money and material support to the party. Equally, it has the potential of generating revenue which would benefit the Nagaland Government. In a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on May 15, 1972 at New Delhi by the Mikir Hills Nationalist organization which stated, "When the Government of India appointed a one man commission for the boundary disputes between the Government of Nagaland and Assam, the people of Mikir hills being aware that the people now cut off from the then Naga Hill district by the Government of India's notification, 1875, paid taxes, got and renewed gun licenses etc. at

present Chumukdima known to the Mikir people as Jangmikedima” On 12<sup>th</sup> April 1972, Mikir Hills Nationalist Organization submitted a memorandum to the then Governor (Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura) BK Nehru at Shillong demanding for merger of Karbi Anglong District with Nagaland led by President Sarsing Terang (Rongphar 2022:69). It further stated, “We, see in this integration of Mikirs with Nagaland, a ray of hope for the preservation of the identity of Mikir people, their language, social customs and tradition. We see in this, the protection of our land, forest etc. from the more advanced and unscrupulous people from outside the district, outside the state of Assam and even outside the country, such as Nepalese. Moreover, in this merger, the wholeness of the district of Mikir hills, earned through years of toil, suffering and humiliation, will be kept intact. We see, in this justification done to the claims of Nagaland and protection of the hopes and dreams of the coming up youths and fulfilment of the sacred wishes of that great personality. In the able hand of the no less great daughter, the hope and strength of modern India in a modern world.’ (ibid 2022 :452-453).

But this move was totally foiled mainly due to two significant reasons--First, it was a party comprising of leaders only. Second, the Government of India was not at all interested in the move. K.V.K Sundaram, Advisor of the Home Minister reported relating to the query on the non-fulfilment of the demand for merger with Nagaland. ‘The chapter has been closed because both the Assam and Nagaland Governments have rejected the demand (ibid).

### **Interrogating Karbi Anglong media as the fourth pillar of democracy**

The role of media in Karbi Anglong is inadequate to articulate public opinion and to act as the catalyst of democracy. ‘Coverage by the media in Karbi Anglong of genuine economic, political, educational problems and sufferings of the masses is minimal. Maximum reporting in media in Karbi Anglong is done based on the views given by the Government or the police’ (Hanse 2007 :625). Media is also used as a mouth piece of the political parties, ruling and the opposition (ibid). The tendency to use media as a tool in the hands of politicians and public representatives is ominous since such entitlements many a time have the tendency to suppress truth. In some cases, politicians

and elected representatives craft out their own channels to justify and establish their views and projecting them as positive partners in the state's development process(Choudhury 2017:68). *Pherangke* was an Assamese daily which was financed by Bidyasingh Englung and Samsingh Hanse who were then affiliated with the Congress party. This newspaper focused on the socio-political issues and remained critical about the violent activities such as arson, torture and extortion etc.triggered off by the Autonomous State Demand Movement for Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. To counteract this newspaper, another newspaper *Latichari*(Assamese) was published by the Autonomous State Demand Committee as their mouthpiece(ibid). In Karbi Anglong, some of the newspapers are the mouth piece of the executive members through which they carry on propaganda activities. Hence, such newspapers could be termed as "Propaganda magazines or leaflets" that hardly serves the society[ibid]. Many a times, the media is unable to report the truth due to life threatening reasons associated with it. In addition, due to lack of employment facilities in Karbi Anglong, the media is a source of livelihood for many journalists and reporters and they are largely depended upon the funds given by the council.Hence, they are averse to report against the authority.

### **Gendering the Empowerment- the preponderance of Political dynasty**

In Karbi Anglong district, political dynasties have an edge over the women candidates who contest election individually. Women outside the dynastic families are treated as political 'outcasts' and their leadership skill is frowned upon. This perception has negative impact on the political empowerment of women who hardly get the opportunity to enrich themselves with the policy making as well as policy implementation in the political process. Noted political scientist of North East India V. Venkato Rao has observed that, 'In Mikir hills,power is concentrated in a few families although there is political rivalry between them and it may continue as long as there is no challenge to the monopoly of power by them.If a rival group comes up and claims a share in the spoils of office, all these families related to one another may sink their differences and gang up against the group.But the fact remains that there is no possibility of any such group coming into existence in the foreseeing future.Women also lack opportunities to win election without the patronage of male leaders or mentors' (Rao1987:261).

A few exception to this rule was Kabon Neli Timungpi who was the first women graduate from the Karbi Tribe, married to Wilson Khongmen of Assam High Court in 1934. Since then, she changed her name to Bonily Khongmen. In 1946 Legislative Assembly election, she defeated Mavis Dun Mowlong in the assembly seat of Shillong which was reserved for women by securing 1454 votes out of 2878 votes. It is pertinent to mention that Mavis Dun Mowlong was elected as the first women member of the Legislative Assembly in North East India in the 1937 Assembly election (Rao, cited in Rongphar :2022:20).Kabon Neli was also elected to the Indian Parliament in the 1950s(ibid).

In the 9<sup>th</sup> Karbi Anglong Council election,out of five female candidates contested the election, none was able to win.Their vote share in the said election was remarkably low than their male counterparts. In the 10<sup>th</sup> Karbi Anglong Council election, seven female candidates contested, out of which two were able to win. Interestingly, both of them belong to the dynastic families and possibly won with the aid of their male patronage. This lead us to argue that the voters of Karbi Anglong are yet to repose their faith in the leadership potential of women. The political parties are also less comfortable to provide tickets to the female candidates perhaps due to the fear of losing the election(Choudhury: 2016:210).

In the 13<sup>th</sup> Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council election held on 8<sup>th</sup> June, Tiluttma Hasnu and Kadom Terangpi won with BJP ticket are exception and deviation from the dynastic culture (Rongphar 2022:29).

## **Ethnic Upsurge andConflicts; Threat to peace and Sustainable Development**

Karbi Anglong is administered according to the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution to alleviate the tribal population of the district to a creative destiny. But it has failed to foster meaningful relation among the tribes nor does it ameliorate their socio-economic and political destiny. Consequently, ethnic conflicts have erupted in the multi-ethnic socio-cultural mosaic of the district. The district is marked by ethnic conflicts for the last two decades.

Karbi-Kuki Ethnic Conflict--2003-4

Karbi-Bodo Ethnic Conflict-2003

Karbi-Khasi Ethnic Conflict—2003

Karbi-Dimasa Ethnic Conflict- 2005

Adibhasi-Bihari Ethnic Conflict-2005

Karbi-Rengma Ethnic Conflict--2013-14 (Rongphar 2022 :112).

The poor implementation of the ceasefire ground rule and setting up of designated camp in the reserve forest area, failure of providing job by the MOU, short-sighted role of the media, lack of rational and scientific policy etc. aggravated the situation and prepared the ground for ethnic conflicts (Choudhury 2007 :170-176).

Tax collection by the terrorist groups, failure to adhere MOU, confusion over territories to be occupied in case of setting up of autonomous state, lack of economic development etc. have led to frequent eruption of conflict in the district (Mangattuhazhe 2008 :12-18).

Land is one of the principal reasons of conflict. In addition, there are competing claims over scarce resources. Rampant unemployment, high level of corruption, demands for overlapping homelands have further aggravated the problem (Choudhury 2008:242-243). The exploitation of resources by outside forces and encroachment of tribal land have created a volatile situation in the district. Nilamber Rongpi has highlighted, “The God-gifted natural resources of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills have been incessantly and indiscriminately exploited which have brought untold miseries to the hill men. Exploitation of bamboo, timbers, coal, limestone etc. coupled with unplanned and anti-native oriented tea industry have deprived many tribal families of their livelihood and have brought about a new dimension of influx disturbing demographic imbalance in the hill. Again the interests of the native tribal and without economic benefit of any form to the native, their natural resources are being drained out day after day” (Rongpi 2001: 110:111).

## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, it can be said that entitlements such as rights, equality, delivery of public goods, rightful claims over resources, gender justice, empowerment

and sustainable development are devalued in the ambit of hill politics of Karbi Anglong. The fierce alienation and chronic under development that the colonial administration envisaged in erstwhile Mikir Hills have seen not much change in post-colonial policy discourse. The cherished goal of the founding fathers of Karbi Anglong district for a fruitful political journey entails multiple snags leading to wide array of complex problems in the district. The mushrooming growth of 'internal colonisers' among the hill people is indeed a robust glitch that prevents resource mobilization and inclusive policy of growth of the hill tribes. What is more striking and ominous is the divisive politics that have penetrated into the nerves and roots of the system. This is clearly seen in the division of ASDC into three factions, KSA, women groups, media and ultra groups over scanty resources with long term consequences in civil society. All these have made devaluation of power a mockery in the hill district. Although autonomy is a catchy word, it is covered under the surface of divisive politics. Scientific management of land, economic development, transparency and commitment to the land and the people, ethnic and communal harmony should make their rightful places in policy directives and implementation. Hence, awareness, education and accountability among the ruler and the ruled could heal the lingering wound and make the political journey of the district a cherished one.

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# Tiwa Autonomy Movement Vis-A-Vis Tiwa Autonomous Council

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## **Introduction:**

The tribal people had put forward various demands during colonial rule for the preservation of tribal identities through the organization Tribal League, formed in 1933. After Indian independence most of the leaders of Tribal League joined the Congress Party and the organization became almost defunct. When the new Indian Constitution introduced democratic processes, sections of the educated middle class of tribal people sprung up to articulate the tribal grievances based on socio-political, cultural and linguistic issues. They thought their legitimate rights needed to be spoken to free them from exploitation. In 1953, Tribal League was reformed as All Assam Tribal Sangha converting the organization into merely a social welfare organization. The government recognized it as a competent body to scrutinize and issue Scheduled Tribe Certificate to the genuine tribal claimants and work as a social welfare organization. Most of the tribal people of Assam were not satisfied with the role of the All Assam Tribal Sangha as it was not very active to place their legitimate demands. The disappointed tribal people formed a separate political party, namely the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) in 1967. The growing ethnic identity consciousness among the tribal people led to the formation of many such organizations on tribe basis. The Tiwas coming to a common platform raised demand for autonomy with the formation of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills (Dima Hasao) Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. During 1960's they formed

an organization known as Lalung Darbar, whereby they could fight against injustices. Their movement gained intensity during 1990's led by All Tiwa Students' Union (ATSU). Due to the movement Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC) was formed in 1995, but it could not fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the Tiwas. So the movement for Sixth Scheduled autonomy continues till date. For the solution of the problem the study on its roots has significance.

### **Methodology:**

The method of data collection for the present study has been both primary and secondary sources. Observations have been made on the Tiwa movement and working of TAC since its establishment. The interview of selected respondents has been conducted. The secondary sources are published books, articles, journals and other documents.

### **Objectives:**

The objective of the study has been to know the root causes and consequences of the Tiwa movement for Sixth Scheduled autonomy under the Constitution of India; to find significance of the movement in the socio-political life of the Tiwas and to gather knowledge on the socio-political problems of the Tiwas. For these basic objectives the study has been carried out.

### **The background:**

When in 1952 Karbi Anglong and North Cachar (Dima Hasao) districts were formed under the provisions of Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the Tiwas too raised the demand of Sixth Scheduled Autonomous Tiwa District under the leadership of Abra Malang of Umswai of West Karbi Anglong. He was arrested and imprisoned for the agitation. The government sealed his properties, tortured and arrested his followers. During the 1960's hectic political and socio-cultural activities were started among the Tiwas. Lalung Darbar was formed in 1967 under the initiative of Inder Sing Dewri, which demanded an Autonomous District for the Tiwas under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In 1971 Sadou Asom Tiwa (Lalung) Yuba Chatra Sanmilon was formed which was renamed as Sodou Asom Tiwa (Lalung) Sanmilon later on. In 1977 in its Baropujia conference it took up some programmes of action for

the socio-economic and political development of the Tiwa people. When the reserved Morigaon Assembly constituency was shifted to Dhakuakhana in 1977 depriving the Tiwas from contesting from a reserved Assembly Constituency, it raised voice and protested. It demanded the reservation of Morigaon Assembly constituency should be continued. But their demand was not fulfilled. The Tiwas gradually aggrieved and started organizing for their legal demands.

### **The Movement of 1990's:**

The All Tiwa Students' Union (ATSU) was established in 1989 and took the leadership of Tiwa movement from Lalung Darbar and Tiwa Sanmilon. The tribal movements in other parts of the state inspired the Tiwa Students to be organized for three main demands. These were- (a) creation of separate autonomous District Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India; (b) inclusion of the Tiwas in the list of hills tribes living in Karbi Anglong and Meghalaya state; and (c) introduction of Tiwa language as a subject in the primary school of Assam and Meghalaya. The ATSU, after the formation, started movements in the form of demonstration dharna, mass rally, middle Assam bandh etc. It formed its wing's the All Tiwa Women Association (ATWA) in 1990 and Autonomy Demand Struggling Forum (ADSF) in 1994.

### **Formation of TAC:**

The Assam movement reduced the support base of Lalung Darbar and Tiwa Sanmilon. The changing situation with a weak organizational position made the two organizations irrelevant. Under those circumstances, with no means to survive, both the organizations came closer to each other and formed the Autonomous Lalung District Demand Committee (ALDDC), but left it inactive. But an announcement of Late Hiteswar Saikia, in a meeting at Lakuwa for granting autonomy to the Tiwa, Rabha and Mising brought to the minds of the old leaders a dish of hope. Both the ALDDC and ATSU pledged to work jointly in 1993, but the unity between two organizations did not last long. The ATSU continued its programme of active movement, but taking advantage of the situation the ALDDC and allied organizations signed the Tiwa Accord amidst protest of the ATSU and allied organizations in 1995 for the formation of Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC). The Tiwa Accord signed on 13<sup>th</sup> April,

1995 that introduces a boundary-less Tiwa Autonomous Council outside the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In the same way the Rabha and Misings Autonomous Councils were created in 1995 and for Sonowal, Dewri and Thengal were created in 2005. The Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) comprising four plains districts was also granted in 2003 under the provision of the sixth schedule. The six other autonomous councils are not under the Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India, but were created by legislating statutes for the respective tribes in Assam Legislative Assembly.

### **The Problem of TAC:**

By signing the accord a long cherished demand of the Tiwas for the autonomous district raised first by Abra Malang was to be fulfilled. The Tiwa Autonomous Council (TAC) was formed mainly to develop the socio-economic, political, cultural and educational conditions of the Tiwa people. It was the result of the long struggle of the Tiwas to gain autonomy since Indian independence. But most of the Tiwa people within the Council Area and outside the Council Areas were not satisfied with the TAC now. The TAC has failed to fulfill the aspirations of the Tiwa people for which it was formed by an Act of Assam Legislative Assembly. The Autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian constitution remained a distant dream for the Tiwas. But movement continues demanding the Sixth Schedule by the Tiwas. They also demanded inclusion of the Tiwa villages that remained outside the present TAC. There were many causes which increased the dissatisfaction of the Tiwas regarding their own Autonomous Council of present form.

The State Government of Assam gave 34 subjects to the TAC to develop the conditions of backwardness of the Tiwas, but, in reality, it was not working properly and the departments handed over to the TAC remained in name only. The actual power of the Council was vested in the hands of the State Government. Due to shortage of funds the Council faced problems in execution of development works fulfilling the aspirations of the Tiwa people. During investigation, it has come to light that the Council members had discussed the issues of shortage of funds and execution of 34 departments in the General Session of the TAC many times and forwarded proposals to the Government

to give more funds, but the State Government did not give it much attention. In later years the funds allotted was increased a little bit but the insufficient funds still could not satisfy the aspirations of the people. Present members also expressed dissatisfaction over fund allocation by the government during the interview and demanded more funds to be granted to the TAC so that they can take schemes for the development of the Tiwa people.

The other factor for which most of the Tiwa people dissatisfied with is the borderless nature of the Council. The Tiwa autonomy movement was mainly launched in demand for creation of a separate Tiwa Autonomous District. But it did not materialize by the government till date. The administrative power of the 'Council' that was created instead of 'District' was limited. The Council cannot do any work unless the State Government approves it. Though the Interim Council was formed in 1995 by the State Government of Assam, it took 15 years for them to hold elections for members of the TAC. It was only in 2010 that the first election of the TAC was held. For this also the people of Tiwa community had to start agitations. Besides these, the TAC was formed mainly for the Tiwa people living in plain areas and Hill Tiwas were almost neglected. Many Tiwa villages were left out at the time of forming the Council. Therefore, all these factors make the Tiwas unhappy and they are still taking the path of agitation to include the Tiwa under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The Government of Assam runs the TAC forming Interim Council up to 2010. The first Interim Council was formed by the Congress led Government selecting who had good relations with the ruling party. Narayan Kr. Radu Kakati was appointed as CEM of the council in 1995. When the ruling party in Assam changed in 1996, change of leadership in the TAC also became inevitable. The ruling AGP Government appointed Chidam Dewri as the CEM; other members were also changed. In 2001, the Congress party again formed the government in Assam and nominated Kamala Patar as the new Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Council. In this way the ruling party completely overtook the powers of the TAC. After the death of Kamala Patar, the State Government nominated Ramakanta Dewri as the new CEM of the Council.

The Interim Councils were formed on party line of the ruling state governments

and as a result these, there often happen large scale corruptions in the TAC functioning and instead of working for the development of the people, the members remained busy in satisfying their leaders sitting at Dispur who became the agents of the ruling party. That is why, several Tiwa organizations again took the path of movement demanding immediate election and this movement forced the Government of Assam to hold the election of the TAC in 2010.

The TAC is a little local-self government with very limited power. The Tiwa Accord had mentioned about the transfer of 34 departments to the TAC, but in reality it remained in name only. The TAC does not have the right to formulate any law to administer the TAC for the purpose of development of the Council area. It has to depend on the goodwill of the state government of Assam in running the TAC. The lack of judicial power in the hands of the TAC makes it completely reliant on the State Government. They had to obey the directions of the state Government.

As the TAC has no legislative and judicial power the state government of Assam keeps the financial power in the hands of the state government. The TAC cannot take any developmental schemes without the consent of the state government. For implementing any schemes they depend on the central and state governments for financial assistance. The state government annually sanctioned funds for the Autonomous Councils through the state budget for use in the Council areas. Thus the TAC remained an autonomous body in name only.

The TAC was formed mainly for the overall development of the Tiwa people living in various parts of Assam. The Council has 36 Constituencies and in its first general election in 2010 elections were held only in 30 Constituencies due to protest of non-Tiwa people in 6 constituencies of Kamrup (M) of Assam. In 2020 elections were held in all 36 constituencies of the TAC.

It has been observed that during the time of formation of the TAC, the constituencies were not formed properly for which disputes arose in many constituencies between the Tiwa and people belonging to other communities. Many Tiwa villages, having thousands of Tiwa population were left outside the TAC and on the other hand, many villages were included in TAC where the numbers of Tiwas were very few. This problem arose due to the inefficiency of the

government employees entrusted to prepare the voter list of the constituencies. The Tiwa leaders could not guide the government employees properly during the delimitation process of the constituencies of the TAC. In Kamrup (M) district six constituencies of the TAC were formed where the number of Tiwa population was only 8,936. On the other hand, in Dhemaji district the Tiwa population is around 40,000 but no constituency of the TAC is there. The Tiwa people living in Dhemaji are demanding formation of TAC constituencies and the problem is yet to be solved. So, they are dissatisfied with the present TAC. The state government actually deceived the Tiwa people in the name of autonomy and this was done mainly to derail the Tiwa autonomy movement for self identity, progress and prosperity.

Lack of power on land rights is another problem of the TAC for which the majority of the Tiwa people are not satisfied with the present Council. One of the main demands of the Tiwas during the movement was to protect traditional lands rights. The Tiwas who actively participated in the movement thought that the TAC would protect their land rights. But in reality, the land rights were not handed over to the Council and the State Government retained these rights. Though the Government had formed the Tribal Belts and Blocks, it failed to protect tribal lands in Assam. Many non-tribal people are continuously violating the rules of the Tribal Belts and Blocks. Various Acts, such as The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act, 2006, the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act of 1888 (which was amended in 1992) and other protective mechanisms have failed to protect tribal lands and resources. Like in other areas, encroachment in Tiwa people dominated Tribal Belts and Blocks areas still going on.

### **Conclusion:**

The Tiwa Autonomous Council was created under the provision of the 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India. Tiwa organizations had demanded 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule status to the TAC through which more powers can be exercised by the Council. That demand failed to draw attention of the government for which after the formation of the TAC in 1995, organizations of the Tiwas started a series of agitation programmes demanding 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule status of TAC. The government can grant more powers to the present Council if they can't grant Sixth Scheduled

Autonomous Council under the Constitution of India. It is important to look into the roots of the problem for a permanent solution. A solution should bring long lasting peace, progress and development instead of temporary pacification by a loose arrangement.

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# Struggle for Political Identity: A Study of the Chakma Refugees of Arunachal Pradesh

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## About the study:

*The displacement and statelessness are the words have long been recognized as relevant issues in international law. Nowhere the problem of displacement and statelessness is more acute than in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The Sri Lankans, Tibetan, Afghani etc. in India, Burmese in Thailand and Rohingya in Bangladesh, Vietnamese refugees in Cambodia and many ethnic Chinese in all parts of Southeast Asia are currently living a stateless life. Similar type of human rights abuses are suffering by the Chakmas of Diyun circle of the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Chakmas are the victims of the partition of the country in 1947. They were displaced from their original inhabitant of Chittagong Hill Tracts and subsequently migrated to different Northeastern states of India. They were rehabilitated in NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) by the Government of India are still fighting for citizenship rights and living a stateless life. The present paper examines the causes of displacement and statelessness of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh especially in Diyun of Changlang district. It examines the causes of reactions from the indigenous Arunachali tribes; the All Arunachal Pradesh Student's Union and even from the State Government. The paper concludes with study of the role of the Chakma organizations, the Union Government and the Supreme Court in their fight for acquiring Indian citizenship rights for the Chakmas with relevance of the study.*

## Introduction:

A few words such as displacement, migrations, refugee rehabilitations and statelessness were widely used in international spheres during the World War-II. Since then the displacement of people and communities has been one of the challenges facing the statelessness of people in different regions of the world. It obviously renders people homeless and is being deprived of their places of

abode. In Indian sub-continent several thousand of people have been affected by displacement.. At the time of partition of the country, the Northeast region of India is territorially organized in such a manner that ethnic and cultural specificities were ignored during the process of delineation of state boundaries, giving rise to discontentment and assertion of one's identity. The region has experienced massive displacement, migration and refugee problem causing statelessness in the wake of independence including the Chakmas of Diyun circle of present Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Methodology:**

The present study adopted multi method approaches of the study, which include historical, descriptive. Required data are collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. The primary sources include the firsthand information from the informants belonging Chakmas of Diyun circle and extensive field works. The informants were selected primarily from the knowledgeable person having good information about the Chakma history, polity and culture. The secondary sources such as relevant books, journals, periodicals and various websites have also been used in the study.

### **Objectives:**

The main objectives of the study are:

- i. To find out the causes of displacement, migration and rehabilitation of the Chakmas in the Diyun.
- ii. To identify the causes of opposition by the indigenous Arunachali to the rehabilitated Chakmas.
- iii. To know the present role of the Chakma organizations, Union Government and the Supreme Court of India on the issue.

### **Diyun Circle: A Brief Profile**

According to a legend prevalent among the local tribes of Diyun that the name Changlang owes its origin to the local indigenous word 'Changlangkan' which means a hilltop where people where people discovered the poisonous herb, as used for poisoning river water for trapping fish. The present Changlang district came

into existence through a gradual development of administration. Earlier it was a part of Tirap district and bifurcated by the Arunachal Pradesh Reorganization of district Amendment Bill, 1987. The Government of Arunachal Pradesh formally declared Changlang as the 10<sup>th</sup> district on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1987. The district lies in the southeastern corner of Arunachal Pradesh. It has an area of 4662 sq. km and lies in between 26<sup>o</sup>40<sup>'N</sup>-27<sup>o</sup>40<sup>'N</sup> latitude and 95<sup>o</sup>1<sup>'E</sup>- 97<sup>o</sup>1<sup>'E</sup> longitudes in the globe. The district is bounded by Tinsukia district of Assam and Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh in the North; and Tirap district in the West and by Myanmar in the South-East.

It is to mention that the highest numbers of Chakma refugees are rehabilitated in Diyun circle of Changlang district. To facilitate the administration, the entire circle is further divided into 31 revenue villages. The Diyun circle is mostly populated by the Chakma tribes. It is the most populous circle in the Changlang. As per the latest census report (2011), it has population of 32,007. Out of which 16,227 are male while 15,730 are females. The average sex ratio of Diyun circle is 966 and a total of 5,949 families have been residing in the circle. However, the population of Diyun circle has increased by 10.7 per cent in last 10 years. As per the census report of 2001, the total population was about 29,000 in comparison to the 32,007 of 2011. The Caste-wise male and female population as per 2011 Census Report may be presented in the following chart:



**Source:** District Census Abstract-2011.

## Displacement and Migration of Chakmas:

Unlike many other tribes, the history of the Chakmas is a record of distant migration. The word 'migration' has almost become synonymous with the Chakmas. The Chakmas belong to a tribal group which has for centuries inhabited the CHT of Bangladesh (earlier East-Pakistan). Since the beginning of the 19th century following natural calamities and socio-political disturbances the Chakmas were disintegrated and displaced from their original abode and started living a scattered refugee life in different parts of Assam, Tripura, and Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. After the partition of the country, the Chakmas which remained in East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) was displaced massively. The displacement was caused primarily due to the construction of the Kaptai hydroelectric project over the river Karnaphuli in 1962<sup>1</sup> with its funding from USAID (United States Agency for International Development). About 40 Per cent of the best agricultural land of CHT was submerged due to the commissioning of this dam. The project displaced about 100,000 indigenous people comprising about one-third of the total indigenous Chakma people who were forced to evacuate their native land. Finding no shelter, the Chakmas along with other community had left the CHT of East Pakistan and took shelter in India as refugee.

During interview with respondents in Diyun circle, a number of causes like- demand for amalgamation with India, abolition of pre-colonial Special status, lack of consensus among the Chakma leaders, construction of Kaptai Hydroelectric Project, religious discrimination, and communal tensions are also found mainly responsible for the displacement and migration of the Chakmas including those who were rehabilitated in the Diyun Circle of Changlang district. Finding no shelter, the Chakmas had left East Pakistan sought asylum in India as refugee. In 1964, about 60,000 Chakma refugees migrated to India. M. Chakma, an inhabitant of CHT of the erstwhile East-Pakistan, presently living in Kamakhypur, Diyun circle, expressed his anguish during interview and said,

*“ the Chakma people were worst affected along with other tribes by the bifurcation of the country in 1947. The Chakma people were mainly concentrated in the Chittagong district of the East Bengal before independence. The freedom fighters had tantalized the whole Buddhist Chakma people. Our forefathers supported the freedom movement in order to free the country from the clutch of the mighty British*

*Raj. The appeal and memorandums submitted by our people to amalgamate our land with the Indian territory was turned down without assigning any reasons. Even, I remember that some Chakma people hoisted Indian National flag to celebrate the Independence Day in our locality. But the leaders poured cold water to our long cherished dreams and plunged into grief the whole Chakma tribe and which helped the anti-people government to displace us forcefully from our land (East Pakistan).<sup>2</sup>*

### **Rehabilitation in NEFA:**

The Chakmas migrated in a hopeless and pathetic condition to the Lushai Hill district (now Mizoram) of Assam and Tripura from the CHT of erstwhile East Pakistan. According to the Government of India estimate, by the middle of 1964, at least 1, 40,000 persons including Chakma and Hajongs consisting of 2902 families had migrated to Assam. The then Government of Assam expressed their inability to settle such a large number of migrants in the state and requested for their shifting to other places. Even the Government of Tripura did not encourage these displaced Chakmas to settle in the state despite request from Chakma leaders. During that time a suggestion was made that a substantial number of families could be accommodated in NEFA as 'some surplus land was available there in NEFA agreed to accommodate some new migrants including the Chakmas under a 'Definite Plan of Rehabilitation'.<sup>3</sup>

But the rehabilitation of the Chakma tribes in NEFA ((now Arunachal Pradesh) become a headache for the administration. It may be mentioned here that the NEFA was administered by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India with the Governor of Assam acting as an agent to the President of India. On April 10<sup>th</sup> 1964, Vishnu Sahay, the Governor of Assam, in his letter No. GA-71/64, dated April 10, 1964,<sup>4</sup> addressed to the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha, pointed out that:

*"it occurred to me that we may get trouble between the Mizos and the Chakmas in the Mizo district. These Chakmas would be quite suitable people to go into the Tirap Division of NEFA where there is easily found vacant land in the area about which you and I have often spoken."<sup>5</sup>*

Vishnu Sahay, the Governor of Assam, decided to make necessary arrangement to settle more than 10,000 refugees to Tirap divisions of NEFA to avoid any troubles between local people (Mizos) and refugees. On April 16<sup>th</sup> 1964, P.N. Luthara, the advisor to the Governor of Assam, replied that 3000 families of

refugees may be rehabilitated and expressed his inability to accommodate 10,000 families. In the mean time there was strong opposition from the indigenous tribe against the rehabilitation plans in their areas. In April, 1966, Deputy Secretary (P&D) Shillong, wrote to the Liaison Officer, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation, NEFA, that:

*“in Lohit district we had contemplated to settle 1000 families but on account of opposition from Khamtis, Singhpos, and Mishimis, we had to slow down our program. We shall be rehabilitating nearly 2253 families by the end of 1966-67”.*<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of strong opposition, initially about 57 families of Chakmas from Government camp of Ledo in Dibrugarah were settled in Abhaypur block of Diyun Circle of the erstwhile Tirap district of NEFA. The Government records of Arunachal Pradesh indicate that between 1964 and 1969, a total of 2,748 refugees comprising some 14,888 persons were sent to the NEFA. Nearly 1000 members of the Hajong tribe, a Hindu group from Mymensing district of Bangladesh were also settled in these areas.<sup>7</sup> Initially these refugees were settled in 10,799 acres of land in the three districts namely, Lohit (214 families settled and 1192 persons altogether), Subansiri (now in Papum Pare;238 families and 1133 persons in total) and Tirap (now in Changlang :2146 Chakma families with 11,813 persons in total and 150 Hajong families with 750 persons in total). By 1979 these figures increased up to 3919 families consisting of 21,494 persons and 65,000 as per census in 1991.<sup>8</sup> In 2001, it has been found that there are more than 85,000 Chakmas refugees living in different areas of Arunachal Pradesh especially in Diyun circle of Changlang district. The following table (1) is the indicative of the population growth in Changlang district between 1961 and 1971 as:

**Table: 1**  
**Population Growth in Changlang District, 1961-71.**

Year	Total Population			Tribal Population		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	30,601	28,990	59,591	27,423	27,681	55,104
1971	51,774	45,696	97,470	34,493	34,352	68,845

**Source:** Dutta, Choudhury, S. (ed.) 1980. *Gazetteer of India, Arunachal Pradesh. Tirap District*, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Shillong, p.43.

### **Hindrances for Rehabilitation:**

The issue of rehabilitation of the Chakma refugees has been a matter of simmering discontent among the indigenous tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. There was strong opposition from the indigenous tribes against the Central Government's initiatives of the rehabilitation plans of Chakma refugees in their areas. It has been alleged by the local Arunachali tribes that the large influx of the Chakmas East-Pakistan (now Bangladesh) are responsible for major demographic imbalance and displacement of the indigenous population. The immediate consequence is that the problem of indigenous people getting marginalized and displaced. Apart from the psychological fear of being reduced to a minority in their own habitat, the local Arunachali tribes are afraid of losing control over their ancestral land.

In the wake of anti-foreigners agitation in Assam, the state Government of Arunachal Pradesh undertook a series of repressive measures against the Chakmas beginning in 1980. The All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) launched 'Refugee go back' movement serving 'Quit Arunachal Pradesh' notice to the settlers to leave the state by 30 September, 1995, in the wake of 'people's referendum rally' held on September 20, 1995 at Naharlugun, Itanagar.<sup>9</sup> All the major political parties including the ruling Congress-I Chief Minister Gegong Apang participated at the rally and vowed to resign from the primary membership of parties and organisations if their demand was not met by the Central government before the expiry of the deadline. As a consequence, a large of Chakma refugees fled from Arunachal Pradesh and took shelter as refugees in the neighbouring state of Assam. The reality is that the Chakmas are at risk of displacement for the second time who is regularly threatened with expulsion by influential Arunachal student's organizations. Even before that state government of Arunachal Pradesh undertook a series of repressive measure including social and economic boycott in support of the agitation programme against the Chakmas. For instance, the Arunachal Government vides its letter No. POL-21/80 dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1980, banned public employment for the Chakmas in the state. In 1994, the state government further directed 'withdrawal of all kinds of facilities 'from Chakma settlement areas'<sup>10</sup> afflicting gross human rights violations on the Chakma refugees.

The state Government of A.P. is of the view that even if the Central Government is obliged to confer citizenship on to the Chakma-Hajong refugees under Indira-Mujib Agreement in 1972 cannot settle them permanently within the state since ‘.....the Agreement [does] not take away the rights of the state Governments to restrict the entry of non-locals through the instrument of Inner Line Permit (ILP) and not to allow permanent settlements of non-locals in the state. The issue is not of conferment of citizenship rights on these refugees but against the permanent settlement of these refugees in A.P. Furthermore, while responding to the charge of violating the political sanctity of the Indira-Mujib Agreement of 1972 by demanding the removal of the Chakma-Hajong refugees from the state, ex Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Mr. G. Apang has remarked:

*“The Indira-Mujib accord was signed in 1972; our constitution came into being in 1950. The Indira-Mujib Accord has not mentioned specifically about Chakma and Hajong refugees of Arunachal Pradesh. Moreover, the Chakma and Hajong settlement in the state has been done violating the legal sanctity and constitutional provisions, the questions of violating the political sanctity of Indira-Mujib Accord does not arise”.*<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the ignorance of the Supreme Court’s judgment and indifferent attitude of the state government and dubious role played by the AAPSU made the Chakma refugee issue a more vexed politicized problem in the state. P. Chakma,<sup>12</sup> a resident of Avoypur-I, Diyun, Changlang of A.P. stated that,

*“...the present state of statelessness indicates a close link between the failures of the Central Government in extending the protections of Indian citizenship to the Chakmas on the one hand and their consequent statelessness and human rights violation at the hands of the state government and AAPSU, on the other”.*

The study also shows that the present state of statelessness has made them more susceptible to oppression at the hands of the state Government and the local Arunachali tribes, threatening from the AAPSU for mass eviction.

### **Role of the Central Government:**

The central Government often asserted that the Chakmas have a legitimate claim to India citizenship. The desire of granting citizenship to the Chakma in A.P. by the Centre turned the relationship bitter with the state. Since their resettlement in NEFA during 1964-69, the issue of granting citizenship to the Chakma

refugees had figured prominently in almost all the debates and was being considered seriously by the Central Government. It becomes clear from the S. V. Chavan's repeated remarks in this respect met with strong opposition from all quarters in the state. The AAPSU strongly condemned Chavan's initiative on granting citizenship to the Hajong and Chakma refugees and accused that it was an attempt to woo the voters at the cost of annoying the indigenous people of the state. It was only on 23 September 1992 that the first official pronouncement to this effect was made in the Lok Sabha by M. M. Jacob, the Minister of State for Home and Parliamentary Affairs. He categorically stated that being 'New Migrants', viz., refugees from Bangladesh who came to India between 1964 and 1971 respectively, are eligible to the grant of citizenship according to the policy of the Government on the subject and most of these migrants have already been granted citizenship. In fact, the central Government is strongly of the opinion that citizenship should be granted to the Chakma refugees to which they are entitled under the Citizenship Act, 1955, under section 5(1)(a) which provides for citizenship status by registration and the Indira-Mujib Agreement of 1972, which also reveals the centre's firm determination to settle them permanently in Arunachal Pradesh. This strong perception of the central Government on the question of Chakma citizenship issue was vindicated by the Supreme Court in its historic verdict delivered on 9 January 1996.<sup>13</sup>

### **Fighting for Citizenship Status:**

On September 9, 1994, the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Delhi brought the issue of Chakmas to the notice of the National Human Rights Commission,<sup>14</sup> which in reply issued letters to the Chief Secretary, Arunachal Pradesh and Home Secretary, Government of India for making inquiries in this regard. On October 15, 1994, the Committee for Chakma-Hajong Citizenship Rights filed a representation to NHRC, complaining prosecution of Chakma-Hajong refugees and the later brought the matter before the apex court. The Supreme Court in its historic judgment in January, 1996, in the case of National Human Rights Commission vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh directed the state government to provide adequate protection to the refugees to ensure against their forcible eviction.<sup>15</sup> The apex court also directed that application made by refugees for registrations as citizens under Section 5 of the Citizenship Act should be

properly acted upon by local authorities and forwarded the same to the central government for consideration.

Following the Supreme Court directions the Election Commission of India (ECI) after scrutinizing 15,000 applications 1,497 Hajong and Chakma tribes born in India between 1964 and 1987 were included in the Voters' List and allowed to exercise their franchise during the 2004 Lok Sabha election. For the first time in the history of their settlement in Arunachal Pradesh, a limited number of Hajong and Chakma were given voting rights as Indian citizens. There was a vehement protest against the order of the ECI in the state. The AAPSU submitted a memorandum to the ECI demanding revocation of the said order and decided to ban forthcoming Parliamentary Election on 5 May 2004. Even the Chief Minister Gegong Apang resigned from the All-Party Core Committee on the Chakma and Hajong refugee issue in protest against the inclusion of these voters in the electoral rolls. In the midst of severe protest, the ECI held that the non-inclusion of the 1497 voters implied a violation of the constitutional mandate given to it by Article 325. The state government, however, yet to take decision on rest of the Chakma refugees seeking Indian citizenship and whose number is growing day by day.

The Chakmas continues to face an uncertain future with a status worse than that of refugees—as a stateless people. The denial of right to nationality directly affects their personal security and makes them extremely vulnerable. The lack of citizenship and statelessness deprives them of their basic human rights such as the right to education, health, water, employment, freedom of movement and developmental facilities. This becomes vivid from the expression of 68-year-old villager V. Chakma of village, Dumpani-I, Diyun circle, Dist.-Changlang, that:

*“...I was just nine years old when I came to India. I and family fled Chittagong of East-Pakistan in 1964 along with thousands of other families. I have spent half of my life at Diyun, but I am still deprived of my voting rights. Because i am not a citizen of India,”*<sup>16</sup>

The deprivation of political rights of the Chakmas becomes obvious from the following table (2)

**Table -2**  
**Political Conditions of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh**

Political Status	Total Percentage
Having Right to Vote	10%
Not Having Right to Vote/Rejected	30+40=70%
Minor	20%
Citizenship Rights	0%

**Source:** Prasad C2013, *India's refugee Regime and resettlement Policy: Chakmas and the Policy of nationality in Arunachal Pradesh*, Kalpaz Publication, Delhi, pp.106-107.

The ignorance of the Supreme Court's judgment, indifferent attitude of the state government and dubious role played by the AAPSU made the Chakma refugee problem a mere politicized issue in recent time. The perception of the respondents of Chakmas of Diyun circle becomes evident from the following table (3):

**Table (3)**  
**Hurdles on the way of Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas**

	Respondents	Percentage
The Govt. of India	47	13.82%
The State Govt. of A.P.	80	23.52%
AAPSU	123	36.17%
The Local Arunachali Tribes	90	26.47 %

**Source:** Field data generated by the investigator

From the above table (3) it becomes clear that majority of the respondents considers AAPSU is the major hurdle in obtaining citizenship rights for Chakmas in A.P. In the absence of any explicit (refugee) statute it is not clear as to what shall be the legal status of refugees and how refugees shall be identified in India. At present the Central laws to tackle refugee problems in India are the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Foreigners Act 1946, the Foreigners Order 1948, the Passport Act 1967, the Emigration Act 1983 and above all the Indian constitution under Art. 21. are the primary documents dealing with the treatment of foreigners in India. However, the Foreigners Act 1946 prevails over

the other Acts. The most significant lacuna in the Act is that it does not comprise the term 'refugee'. Instead the term 'foreigner' was used to cover aliens temporarily or permanently residing in the country. In fact, Indian Government has dealt with refugee issues of different groups with a different administrative approach. According to an eminent legal expert Rajeev Dhavan, "Indian governance has not devised any systemic policy to deal with refugees, but has dealt with each particular crisis differently". As a result the present statelessness issue of Chakma remained an unsolved problem in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Recent Development:**

In its election manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections 2014, the BJP had declared India as 'a natural home for persecuted Hindus'. After it came to power at the Centre, the NDA government has taken several steps to simplify the process for granting long-term visa and citizenship to Hindu minorities from neighbouring countries. In 2015, the Centre was given a deadline by the Supreme Court to confer citizenship to the Chakma and Hajong refugees within three months. The Arunachal government approached the apex court an appeal against the order but in vain.

In fact, the initiative on the Chakma and Hajong refugees comes amid the ongoing row over the Central government's plans to deport Rohingya Muslims, who came to India due to alleged persecution in Myanmar. Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju, who hails from A. P., had recently raised the citizenship issue at a Northeast meet chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and attended by A. P. Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Rijiju and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval. After the hour-long meeting, Rijiju said that a 'middle ground' will be found so that the 2015 Supreme Court order to grant citizenship to Chakma-Hajong refugees can be honoured and the rights of the local population are not diluted. It becomes obvious that the Centre is trying to find a workable solution by proposing that the refugees will not be given rights, including land ownership, enjoyed by Scheduled Tribes in A. P, an official said. However, they may be given Inner Line Permits (ILP)-required by non-locals in A. P. to travel and work.

Once again, several organisations and civil society outfits in Arunachal have

been opposing citizenship to the Chakma and Hajong refugees. They contend that it would change the demography of the state. There was demonstrations and protest by the student's organisations against the move of the Central Government. Rijiju replied that "We are trying to find a middle ground so that the Supreme Court order is honoured, the local people's rights are not infringed, and human rights of the Chakmas and Hajongs are protected." Rijiju further added that a petition may be filed on the issue in Supreme Court soon.

### **Relevance of the Study:**

The present study on the displacement and statelessness of the Chakmas especially of Diyun Circle of Changlang District of Arunachal Pradesh' have more national as well as international relevance in the present context:

- It tries to draw the attention of the Government as well as the society for the eradication of their deprivation, exploitation, poverty, statelessness of the ethnic group, resolving the inter-ethnic conflict and to bring Chakmas into the mainstream.
- The work also identifies a number of factors that were responsible for the displacement and forced migration of the Chakmas from the CHT of erstwhile East-Pakistan with the help of available materials.
- The study tries to focus on the stateless refugee life of the Chakmas of Diyun circle of Changlang District and the role played by the Central Government, State Government, National Human Rights Commissions and even the Supreme Court of India in handling the issue of statelessness of Chakma in Arunachal Pradesh. This is the most relevant point of the study
- The study emphasizes that India needs a specific domestic refugee laws and policy to tackle massive refugee problem of the country including the Chakmas which is lacking till today. The massive refugees are treated by some domestic laws of the country which are not enough to resolve the massive refugee issue of the country.
- Moreover, living a refugee life for a long period, the identity and traditions

of the Chakma are on the verge of ruin. Like many other little known tribes the Chakmas are marginalized. The tribe is affected by poverty, illiteracy and political identity crisis. The study also tries to bring out that the tribe is neither represented politically to the Parliament nor the State Assemblies in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. It is because of their disintegration and scant in numbers in the state.

- The study will encourages further investigation and research about other tribes like Chakma refugees facing displacement and living statelessness life in the region and to protect them from violation of human rights.

**Conclusion:** There can be no question that the Chakmas migrated from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East-Pakistan and has been residing in Arunachal Pradesh for more than 50 years. Under the Indira- Mujib Agreement of 1972, it was determined that India and not Bangladesh would be responsible for all migrants who entered India before 25<sup>th</sup> March 1971. If the Tibetans who fled to Arunachal Pradesh on their own can be given Indian citizenship status, why can not the Chakmas, who were given valid migration Certificate and settled by the Central Government in Arunachal Pradesh. This is discrimination towards Chakmas and violations of International Conventions relating to the rights of refugees. More importantly, the state governments of Arunachal Pradesh and the Central Governments in the affidavit to the Delhi High Court have recognized that the Chakmas are indigenous like the rest of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, it is legitimate on the part of the Chakmas to claim Indian citizenship removing their statelessness in Arunachal Pradesh. At the same time, basic human rights of both the Chakmas and indigenous Arunachali tribals need to be protected and both the Central and State Government should come forward to fulfill their democratic obligations in this regard.

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# Language and Ethnonationalism: A Case Study of the Bodo's of Assam in the Post Colonial Period.

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## **Theoretical Background:**

Ethnonationalism denotes two words together ie ethnic and nationalism. Further the term together signifies to a wide range of socio- political movement or phenomena including what may be called nationalism, separatism, secessionism, sub-nationalism, ethnic insurgency, ethnic militancy, or sometimes simply regionalism. Generally ethnonationalism promotes and projects the primary idea that an ethnic community can claim or has the right over the political, social, economic and cultural affairs of the community within a state or a country and therefore has the absolute power of self-determination. According to Walker Connor ethnonationalism denotes both the loyalty to a nation deprived of its own state and loyalty to an ethnic group embodied in a specific state, particularly where the later is conceived as a 'nation state'. (Daniel Conversi, London, 2002). It is first expressed as parochialism, then tribalism, and finally as ethnonationalism. It is also seen that people who are under the influence of ethnonationalistic views and beliefs are readily prepared to act aggressively. (Dusan Kecmanovic: USA, 2001)

With the end of the Second World War in most of the parts of the glob a new wave of ethnonationalistic movements' emerged. And interestingly similarities have been seen among these movement in the context of factors and nature of the movement. The factors of the ethnonationalistic movement in different parts of

the world including India and its North-East are religion, language, tribe, caste, and culture. All these factors works as a catalyst for ethnic identity.( A.D Smith, London, 1991 & Dusan Kecmanovic: USA, 2001) Among them language and religion play the most decisive role in the growth of ethnonationalism. There are different approaches of study of ethnonationalism, viz Primordialist, Instrumentalist and Ethno-symbolist. And the Primordialist is of the view that culture is one of the chief signifying tool of ethnonationalism which included all the elements of day to day life made up of socio-religious and cultural practices, all kind of performing arts, dress-food and importantly language. Language not only gives identity to a person but also to a social group. Significantly it gives identity to a geographical entity and as well as to a nation. Moreover language is the medium as well as the expression of culture. Therefore, in any clash of cultures, in any crisis of identities, language is used as the instrument of political actions (P. Mazumdar, Guwahati, 2014).

Coming to the point of ethnic movements in India and its North East part, among the various causes of ethnic movement language and religion played the most vital role. Therefore in the post independence days in India, the linguistic province commission of 1948 and State Reorganization bill of 1956 were passed for the reorganizing of the Indian states on the basis of language. (Sanjib Baruah, New Delhi, 2015) And this new act paved the way for further growth of vigorous ethnic movements in Assam with the demand of separate state and in some cases autonomy. Moreover the ethno-political movements in NEI may be analyzed from different perspective based on the typology of the movement. And this Bodo movement came under the fold of separate statehood along with cultural rights viz demand of introduction of Bodo language and script as a medium of instruction in the school and colleges. Thus, under this theoretical background the present paper aims to focus on the script movement of the Bodos and language as a factor of the growth of ethnonationalism as well as separate tendencies and identity movement with autonomy among the Bodo's of Assam.

### **Hypothesis:**

Language is the prime factor of secessionist and autonomy movement of the Bodo's of Assam.

**Objective:** To discuss the development script movement of the Bodos in Assam. Make an analysis of language as a prime factor of autonomy movement in latter phase.

**Methodology:**

Only secondary sources are used in preparing the paper.

**Review of literature:**

Lots of significant work has done earlier on the concept and theoretical perspective of ethnonationalism. Among them Daniel Conversi in his work Ethnonationalism in the contemporary world: Walker Connor and the study of Nationalism, Dusan Kecmanovic in Ethnic Times: Exploring Ethnonationalism in the former Yugoslavia, A.D Smith in National Identity, have contributed to this field in the context of world. In the context of India and its North-East Sanjib Baruah in Ethnonationalism in India K.S Singh in Tribal Movements in India, S.K Chube in Plain Tribals in Assam Politics, North Eastern Affairs are worth mentioning. And specifically in the context of Assam and the issue of ethnic nationalism and movement Dr.Prafulla Mahanta, Hiren Gohain, Sanjib Baruah, Indibar Deuri, Sivnath Barman, Hiren Gogoi Amalendu Guha, H.K Barpujari's contribution is remarkable in the field of ethnic resurgences' and its root causes in NEI including Assam. Dr Khema Sonowal in her work 'Why Bodo Movement?' discusses about the origin, factors and development of autonomy movement of the Bodo's in Assam. Apart from this number of research work and papers are available on this subject. Most of the work focuses on the causes of the autonomy movement of the Bodo's in Assam. Therefore the present paper will try to highlight only on language as a major factor of entire autonomy movement of the Bodo's .

**Discussion:**

The Bodo's are aboriginal tribes of Assam. They are the in true sense the son of the soil. They constitute the largest plains tribal group of Assam. They are linguistically and ethnically distinctly different from the others. Presently they are living in the geographical boundaries of Bodoland Territorial council and mainly in the northern Assam. They felt that they are economically depressed and

backward in the educational development. Although a sense of socio-economic and cultural consciousness arose among the Bodo's of Assam in the early second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. They have their first social organization in the name of Bodo Chatra Sanmillon in 1918. With the establishment of All Assam Kachari Sanmilloni in 1927, it marked the beginning of ethnic consciousness among the tribals in Assam. There are lots of factors which forced the ethnic tribals of Assam to stand together and fight for their own cultural identity.

The first and foremost factor is the Assamese chauvinism. As quoted by Nari Rustomji that it was Assamese chauvinism, ironically enough, that diminished Assam and lost her tribal population (Nari Rustomji, 1983). A similar remark put forward by a Bodo student leader during the time of the movement that 'the creation of Bodoland is inevitable as Assamese Chauvinism has reached its peak' (Sivnath Barman, Ghy, 2013). Assamese chauvinism is a product of British imperialism. The policy of divide and rule of the British has created a wide gap between the ethnic tribal and non-tribals of Assam. The implementation of excluded and partially excluded areas keeps the ethnic tribals a mile away from the non-tribals in the pre-independence time.

The coming of the Bengali and Muslim migrant into Assam in different phases of time with different reasons create a tense environment among the Assamese chauvinist like Anandaram Dhekialhukan and latter on Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury became one of the most propounded chauvinists who formed the nationalist forums like Sangrakshini Sabha and Jatiya Mahasabha. The representatives of Assamese chauvinism thought that the ethnic tribals of Assam would be a part of this movement and they will be easily motivated. But they never tried to understand the emotion and problems of the ethnic tribals of Assam. And therefore with the passing of time this Assamese chauvinism itself became a factor of rise of ethnic nationalism.

Not only the chauvinism but also the superiority complex of Assamese middle class and their discriminatory behavior and attitude towards the ethnic tribals of Assam fuel into the gap. In several writings of renown Assamese writers mention was found that the position of ethnic tribals is very low standard. It was a social construct that ethnic tribals are untouchable. (Prafulla Mahanta, Indibar Deuri.)

So this discriminatory attitude of the non-tribal Assamese people was to a large extent responsible for the Bodo movement particularly.

Thus the ethnic tribals started to think that they will lost their identity if they continue to stay with the non-tribal Assamese. And with this thought the entire Kachari community of Assam joined their hand together and formed different social organizations among them. The chief aim of these organizations was to uplift their people socially, economically, culturally. The historicity of the language issue already creates a lot of tense in Assam between the Assamese and Bengali. Already the ethnic tribals of Assam under the influence of the Christian Missionaries started to write their own literature by using either Assamese or Bengali script. Importantly in 1893 at Tura conference of the Missionaries, they proposed to adopt Roman script for their writings.( Sivnath Barman, 2013). It encouraged the ethnic tribals to keep their records of society, culture and literature. In the post independence period, inspired by this background and little negligence of the non-tribal Assamese towards the ethnic tribal's , they felt the necessity of adoption of a script for their linguistic development. And in the meantime with the aim to develop and promote the Bodo language and literature the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was formed in 1952.( Khema Sonowal, Guwahati, 2013). M.S Prabhakar mentioned that the Bodos are at crossroads in their campaign to improve the conditions and status. They wanted to revive their language to unite and develop the Bodos.( Prabhakar, 1974).

The formation of Bodo Sahitya Sabha was one of the remarkable developments of the Bodo ethnonationalism. It was on this ground of linguistic nationalism, the Bodos of Assam tried to create their own geopolitical and cultural identity. In the year 1953 the Bodo Sahitya Sabha submitted a memorandum to the then Chief Minister of Assam Sri Bishnuram Medhi demanding the introduction of Bodo language in the primary schools in the Bodo areas. (K.S Singh, Sivnath Barman). The government of Assam in return tried to introduce a text book supposed to be written in Bodo language. But it was not accepted by them because it had a lots of Assamese words included as Bodo. In 1962, the Govt. Assam declared that Assamese is the state language of Assam. As a response to this language bill, a large procession of about 15000 Bodo people was organized by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha.( Basumatary, 1976) And in 1963, on the basis

of recommendation of enquiry committee headed by Sri Rupnath Brahma, the then Chief minister of Assam Sri Bimala Prasad Chaliha inaugurated the introduction of Bodo language as a medium of instruction up to class III at the Kokrajhar Govt. High School. It was also recommended that an Assamese easy rapid reader would be provided to the students to enable the Bodo students to take up education through Assamese from class IV onwards. But it was not acted as recommended, therefore the Bodo students found it difficult to continue their studies in Assamese from class IV. As a response to it, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha now demanded the Bodo medium should be continued upto class VI.

This medium movement united all the Bodo people and they express their grievances against the domination of Assamese language and hegemonic nature of the Assamese middle class. The govt. was bound to enforce police force to control the situation. Four number of students and two members of Bodo Sahitya Sabha was arrested by the police. There was a discussion between the Chief Minister of Assam and the members of Bodo Sahitya Sabha regarding the settlement of the issue of Bodo Medium. But the discussion did not bear any fruit as it was mentioned by the Education dept. of Assam that it could not be possible because Bodo was not a recognized regional language. The matter was placed before the central government to find out a solution. In the meantime the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in its annual session held at Ramfalbil on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1968 offered a ultimatum of two weeks' time, if their demand will not fulfill then they will started a mass movement after 28<sup>th</sup> February. And the agitation was started on date with 25000 people gathering followed by boycotting of schools and colleges. This medium movement was continued upto March and finally the government announced the introduction of Bodo medium at the secondary level.

Simultaneously with the medium movement another parallel movement for a separate statehood has also started among the plains tribals of Assam and the lead was taken by the Bodo's. It was in the year 1967 that Plains Tribal Council of Assam ( PTCA ) was formed. At the same year All Bodo Students Union was also formed. Under the banner of PTCA they felt that only full autonomy could provide them the necessary condition for preservation of their language and culture. This is how a language movement turns into a script movement then

autonomy movement. A new wave had touched the movement in the year 1972 by the announcement of Gauhati University that Assamese would be medium for college students under Gauhati University, which was supported by Assam Sahitya Sabha and All Assam Students Union. And this was strongly opposed by the Bengalis of Barak Valley as well as the Bodos in Brahmaputra valley. ( Manuj Nath, 2013 , Sivanath Barman, 2013) Therefore The Bodo Sahitya Sabha decided to launch a movement for their own script. Moreover the Sabha since its formation faced the problem of using the multiple scripts for Bodo language and felt the urgent necessity of a common script and therefore, in the 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference of Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 1970, the sabha unanimously decided to adopt the Roman script for their language. It is also declared the date of its effect from 1974-75 session. They formally inaugurate the use of Roman script by releasing a book written on Roman script name 'Bithorai'.( Khema Sonowal, 2013). The govt. Assam probably sensed a separatist tendency and refused to accept the demand of Bodo Sahitya Sabha. And this instigated the script movement to become a part of the Udayachal movement for a separate state for tribals of Assam. This Udayachal movement was lead by the Plains Tribe Council of Assam (PTCA) and getting the support of ABSU and BSS and thus became a mass movement. The sentiment of ethnonationalism was its highest peak during this phase. The entire mass movement was getting a threat with declaration of emergency by the central govt. in 1975. The central govt. by taking advantage of the situation and condition suggested the leaders of the movement to adopt Devanagari script for the Bodo language. Thus the Devanagari script was used in all the Bodo textbooks for school and colleges and in the offices also. But some Bodo youth found it difficult and they were not satisfied with the initiative of the govt. and the anti-Assamese attitude was increased among them. In the year 1985, before taking the charge by the first Asam Gana Parishad party, Hiteswar Saikia the then chief minister of Assam, declared Bodo as a co-language in the Bodo dominated areas.( Sivanath Barman, 2013). The script issue continued among the Bodos and it paved the way for another phase of autonomy movement by demanding separate statehood in 1987 and ended with the signing of Bodo Accord in 1993 with the formation of Bodoland Autonomous Council.

With the passing of time the BSS felt that the Devanagari script now became familiar and convenient for all the Bodo's and in fact it united them in one frame. Therefore in the annual session of BSS in the year 2000, it was resolved that Devanagari script for the Bodo's is taken and will permanently retain it. (Khema Sonowal, 2013) In the year 2004 Bodo language was included to the eight scheduled in the Indian constitution. (<https://www.mha.gov.in>)

### **Findings:**

In general the factors of development of ethnonationalism among the tribals of Assam are same. These are reaction to the marginalization of their historical narratives, caste system, Assamese chauvinism and feeling of deprivation and negligence in political-social and cultural aspects. But in the context of the Bodo's of Assam, language played the most decisive role. In fact the political movement of the Bodos, more or less emerged out of the movement for linguistic rights. (Chaube, 1973). The language unites them at the first phase and then after, it provoked them to fight for autonomy and separate statehood latter on. The formation of BSS, ABSU, NDFB, BLTF, etc organizations among them, signifies the understanding and rapid development of ethnonationalistic feelings, through which they started to work on the safeguard of their ethno-cultural and linguistic identity. So the language overall worked as a catalyst in this context. The acceptance of Devanagari script keeps them distinctly different from the Assamese language, culture and society. Moreover it is obvious that the ethnic consciousness among the Bodos has been increase to a great extent. In the recent times it has been noticed the script movement almost alienated the Bodos from the Assamese society.

### **Conclusion:**

The movement for Bodo medium in the initial stage and script movement in the latter phase promote and protect the Bodo integrity and there continua's effort for recognition of their language and script. The script became a unifying force of the Bodo's. It encourages the Bodo youths to form another socio-political organization among them in the latter phase viz the Bodoland Demand Legislative Party (2001). Apart from this the organizations like NDFB; BLTF (Bodoland liberation Tigers Front, 1996) continued their movement for separate

statehood. Hence we may conclude that the language is one of the prime factors of the growth of ethnonationalism among the Bodos of Assam.

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# **Tribal Politics in North East India: A Brief Study of the Emergence of Bodo Middle Class in Assam**

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## **Introduction**

The emergence of the middle class at a certain period played an important role in India society. The middle class in India is said to have emerged with the advent of the British rule. In Northeast India, the tribal people have undergone the process of transformation. The advent of British rule in the region has brought changes in the socio-economic and political sphere. The middle class in the hills emerged largely due to the introduction of western education, monetized economy and modernization. Similarly, the middle class emerged and grew rapidly in the state of Assam due to the process of modernization, introduction of modern education and monetization of the economy. The state of Assam is inhabited by numerous tribes with each tribe having their own culture, language, religion, traditions and way the way of life.

Like the others tribe in Assam bodo tribe also changed with times . Number of educated people emerged as a middle class and played a important role in transforming society and rise political consciousness among the bodo tribe. With the help of this group number of Organizations were formed in the Pre-British Or post-british period. Thus for the present study made to explore the emergence of Bodo middle class and role of the educated middle class in the Process of transformation and consolidation of Bodo national identity.

## **Conceptual Fframwork**

The key concepts of the paper are-Middle class ,Bodos and culture.The term of

the “middle class ”was first used to describe the emerging class of Bourgeoisie in Western Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the initial phase of development of the industrial economy, the bourgeoisie (the new class of Merchants and industrialists) stood between the gentry (land owning classes and the Aristocracy) on the one hand and the poor working classes on the other. As the industrial economy developed further, the land owning gentry declined and the bourgeoisie – Consisting of the big industrialists and financiers – emerged as the ruling class. The term Middle class began to be used for the independent small traders, professionals and artisans who stood in between the bourgeoisie on the one side and the working class on the other.

The development of middle classes in Indian is quite different from that of the West. It was in the nineteenth century, under the patronage of the British colonial rule that the middle classes began to emerge in India. Though they emerged under the patronage of the British rulers, the middle classes played an important role in India’s Struggle for independence from the colonial rule. During the post-independence period also, the middle classes have been instrumental in shaping the policies of economic development and social change being pursued by the Indian State, hence the need to understand the middle classes, their history, their social composition and their politics.

Another key concept to be used in the paper is “Bodos” Bodos are the earliest inhabitants of the Burlungbuthurserfang (Brahmaputra Valley); the Historians suggest these Bodo names of river, place and persons clearly confirm the long Bodo domination in the entire valley for long till British came to India. They ruled Assam since prehistoric days even before Ramayana and Mahabharata days. They are the Bodo speakers. They were variously called as Danavas, Asuras, Kiratas, Mlechhas, Later Mechas, Kacharis by the westerners Aryan Hindu Rishis Munis adventure travelers meaning Thereby they are non-Hindu, non-Aryan, non-Sanskrit speakers, non-followers of Vedas. Presently their race name is Boro or Bodo. They loved to be called ‘Bodo fisaBodosa’ (sons of Bodos). Elsewhere they are known as Dima fisaDimasa, TuiPraTipra (sons of River Confluence). They are common Bodo speake”

## **Objectives of The Paper**

1. To understand the role of middle class in the formation of Bodo identity.

2. To focus on the contribution of the middle class organizations in the upliftment of the Bodo community.
3. To find out the socio-religious and socio-political organizations formed by the middle class.

## **Methodology**

Methodology adopted in the present work are obviously historical and descriptive. Present work is based on the secondary source, books and internet are used for the collection of data about the topic. And also sources like article and journal also used.

## **Review of Literature**

Various Literature have been referred to supplement the present study for understanding the concept and theories used in the research and thus some of the relevant literature given below :-

1. “Why Bodo Movement” by Khema Sonwal gives us information about Bodo historical background, socio-political status, the different phases of the movement, the leadership of the movement, the participation of the Bodo people in the democratic electoral politics of India etc.”
2. “Hill Politics in India ” by S. K Chaubeit gives us information about the political evolution of the region from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when British administration was formally set up in Assam.
3. Chandan Kr. Sharma in his article, “The Bodo Movement: A Preliminary Enquiry into the role of the Middle Class and the State,” has explored the emergence Of the middle class in the Bodo society. The author has also discussed the Bodo identity formation under the leadership of middle class that opposed the formation of Assamese nationality. The article discusses identity formation into different phases.
4. “Vision of Upendra Nath Brahma Soldier of Humanity Award” by Ashok Brahma gives information of Upendra Nath Brahma early life and his role in the Bodo Land Movement, and his principals of equal distributions and anti-exploitations.

## Discussion

An attempt made to explore the role of the educated middle class as a catalyst in the process of transformation and consolidation of Bodo national identity. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the northeast has grown from ethnocentric tribal organisations to territorial autonomous structures through a profound process of change in all spheres of life and society led by an educated and sophisticated middle class.

### Emergence of Bodo Middle Class

The middle class emerged during the colonial rule in India. It is regarded as the product of 'English education, the rule of law, and the capitalist economy introduced by the British in India. The effect of modern socio-economic forces during the colonial rule and the Post-independent period is no different for the tribes living in different North-Eastern states of India. The annexation of Assam under British India brought changes in the prevailing socio-economic system, though the Government granted autonomous councils to the hill tribes in managing their internal affairs. The middle class among the Hill tribes is said to have emerged largely due to the influence of the Western economy and modernization (Brahma Anu Rani, 2019, p-37, 39). Like the other North-East states, in Assam also an effort made by the various "tribal" communities to locate themselves in the socio-political milieu of the colonial state. The Early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of various associations within these communities, which culminated in the emergence of the Tribal League in 1933. From the 1920s onwards, growing political consciousness with Congress mobilisations and emergence of caste associations like Ahom Sabha, Kaivartta Sanmilan) gave an impetus to the emergence of associations of "tribal" communities (Pathak Sunryasikha, 2010, p-61). Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the initiative of an educated middle class the Bodo Kacharis made certain progress in comprehending the politics of rights, representation and emancipation. In their effort to "develop", "uplift" or "improve" the conditions of the tribes, various attempts were made by this emerging leadership to locate the reasons for their backwardness and to introduce reforms in social practices. Kalicharan Brahma, Sitanath Brahma Choudhary among the Kacharis attempts to redefine tradition, ad-

justing to colonial modernity, were also the first steps towards the construction of the tribal identity(Pathak S, 2010,p-62).

The arrival of the Simon Commission in 1929 in the land of Assam provided an opportunity to the tribals for the first time to put forward their various grievances and aspiration to the commission. Various organisations belonging to tribal communities submitted their memorandums .Among those tribal communities the Bodo Kachari community is one who submitted memorandum to the commission. The commission took into consideration of the memorandum submitted by the Bodo community of Goalpara also and few representatives from the primitive and backward Tribes (Kalita P, 2018,p-222).The memorandum submitted by the Bodo Kachari community observed that they were depriving from the benefits of the reform and only the upper castes are enjoying the benefits from that (Pathak, 2010). To get rid of those situations, some conscious tribal leaders like Jadav Chandra Khaklari, general secretary of the All Assam Kachari Association demandedn their memorandum for a system of separate representative in the local council and one reserved seat for the Bodo community in the Central Legislature to the Commission in 1929 . The Bodo community felt that education is the key for Development and fight against backwardness and exploitation. Therefore, they raised the issue of illiteracy in their memorandum and demanded for special treatment in the fields of education and appointment stating that the Bodo people are being exploited and misled so they are unable to understand the value of reform and cannot save their members of the community from the hands of foreign moneylenders (Kalita P, 2018,p-223).

Essentially job-centric Bodo middle class had a vested interest in land As their forefathers belonged to the landed gentry. An interesting point that emerges from this formulation is that on the one hand, the world view of the emerging Middle class was different from its predecessors because securing government jobs and availing new Socio-political opportunities took precedence over landed interest, but on the other, its role as a liberating force was restricted because of its sustained interest in Land. Such contradictions in its class character led to the exclusion of issues like land reform from the agenda of the movements launched by the emerging Bodo middle (Gupta Susmita, 2014,p-12).

## Role of The Middle Class Organizations

The risk of losing their identity prompted the educated Bodos to form socio-cultural organizations towards the early part of the nineteenth century. These organisations played a major role in articulating and forming the ethnic identity consciousness among the Bodos. We can divide those organisations in pre and post independence period.

- a) Pre-Independence period : Regarding the role of the socio-cultural organizations in articulating the identity consciousness in the pre-independent period, it is imperative to examine and take into consideration the role of early Bodo educated youths, mostly Brahma followers, and the Youth organizations. The BoroChatraSanmilanni (Boro Students Association) was the first student organization of the Bodos formed in the year 1918 at a village called Khagrabari near Bongaigaon. The first convention was held in the year 1919 with Sobharam Brahma as president and Satish Chandra Basumatary as Secretary. The main objective was to 'achieve unity amongst the down-trodden Bodos, spread Education to bring about socio-economic development and to develop and keep alive the Boro culture and language. The major contribution of the Boro Students' Association was the development of Bodo literature by publishing magazines, books and dramas, etc. The founding Members of the Bodo ChatraSanmilani also formed the first literary organization, Called 'BoroClub'. Most of the literary works during the pre-colonial were contributed by the Members of the Bodo ChatraSanmilani, who were also members of the literary organization (Brahma A Rani, 2019, p-76, 77).

Another important socio-cultural organization of the Bodos in the pre-Independence period is Bodo MahaSanmelani (All Bodo Association). The members of The Sanmilani were mostly Brahma followers along with the educated section of the Goalpara district. The Sanmilani under the guidance of Kalicharan became the progressive platform for the Bodo intellectuals in Assam. The leaders of the organization took decisions and passed resolutions on the issues concerning Bodos that made a major impact on society. The women and youth wings of the organization helped in providing support base and recruits.

The resolution deals with a wide range of Socio-cultural and economic issue aiming at reforming the Bodo society(Brahma A Rani, 2019,p-77).

- b) Post -Independence period :During 1952-1967, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, the most important literary organization of the Bodos, Played a significant role in the assertion of Bodo identity and the issues of language and script were integral to such assertion. This period was marked by the articulation of demands like introduction of Bodo Language in the Bodo-dominated areas and the replacement of the Assamese script by the Roman Script. This phase of identity assertion was marked by the active involvement of the masses unlike in the previous phase. However, a major limitation of the Politics of identity assertion during this phase was that the middle class leadership hardly made any radical demands for the improvement of the lot of the common Man.

On January 13, 1967, Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi made an important declaration regarding the reorganization of Assam on a federal basis. This Enhanced the prospects for the fulfillment of the political aspirations of the Bodo middle class which was reflected in the demand for a union territory to be called “Udayachal” for the plains tribes of Assam. A new political organization, viz., Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) was formed to spearhead this territorial demand. The PTCA was, in essence, a Bodo political party although its name suggested a common political platform for all plains tribes of Assam. In this context, it has been argued by some scholars that the initiative to construct a pan-tribal identity of the plains-tribes of Assam always came from the Bodo middle class leadership which was not only more organized, but was also likely to play a key role in any future poweralignments (Gupta S 2014,p-12).

The All Bodo Students Union is one of the leading organizations of the Bodos. The attempt of the formation of the ABSU was made when some of Bodo students were assembled at Cotton College premises in the 1960's. A friendly discussion was made among those Cottonians about the Bodo students' organisations, sanmilans, and clubs of their respective districts and decided to form a student's union covering the whole of the region. Mr. SurathNarzary, a Cottonian was given the responsibility to convey a meeting within 1967 but he failed to

cover the whole of Assam (Kalita P, 2017, p-89). With the emergence of ABSU, a competitive spirit had grown among the various students community and with the effective leadership of ABSU, the Bodos gained immense strength and also sharpened the identity consciousness among the Bodos. The All Bodo Students' Union under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma systematically planned to organise the Bodo people for their collective goal of self-rule. In this respect, under the well organised auspices of the ABSU, the Bodo Peoples' Action Committee (BPAC) was formed on November 8, 1988 at Surjakhata village near Dotoma of Kokrajhar district. Karendra Basumatary and Sansuma Khungur Bwiswmuthiary were the Chairman and Convener of the BPAC respectively. BPAC took the responsibility to unite the Bodos from all the corners and maintained to coordinate among all the Bodo groups for achieving the movement for self-rule. (Kalita P, 2017, p- 102, 103).

Among all other Bodo organisations have great impact in the Bodo struggle. These organisations have touched all the sections of the Bodo people and society. Therefore, under their leadership, the Bodos became the most united, assertive and highly organised community in the region.

## **Conclusion**

Middle class emerged North-East India after coming of the British. The emergence of the middle class in the hills is mainly attributed to the modernity, introduction of western education. The socio-economic and political changes during the colonial period brought changes in the social structure of society. With time, social stratification in the form of class differentiation emerged in the Bodo society. By the mid-twentieth century, a middle class emerged in the Bodo society. Therefore the origin and development of both the political and non-political organizations of the Bodos and their efforts for interest articulation of their own community is justified. They organised the Bodo society and drive them in a planned way to achieve their desired aims and objectives after making them aware of their issues. Therefore they come to organised the unorganized Bodo society.

The middle class which has been instrumental in articulating demands of the Bodos and seem to have played an important role in transforming the Bodo

identity. Emergence of this class among Bodo people changed the Socio-political views. As a result these organizations help to growth political conciousness among the Bodo people.

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# Genesis of Karbi Politics: The Rise of a Nationality

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Like most of the tribal communities of the North East India, the Karbis too have their own system of traditional political institutions with a democratically elected king called the Lingdokpo at the apex of such a system. However, if one speaks about politics in the modern sense of the terms, it is pertinent to mention that the Karbi politics essentially started to take a formal shape during the post independence period of the county when a section of the Western educated Karbis undertook the task of organising the hitherto scattered community with a view to secure the attention of the British colonial administration. This led to the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the first socio-political organisation of the Karbis in 1946. The formation of Karbi Adarbar was landmark event in the history of the Karbi politics as the organisation was instrumental in putting forward the demands of the Karbi community in a systematic and forceful manner which ultimately led to the creation of the Karbi Anlong district in 1951 and grating of a district council for the tribe in the year 1952.

The Karbi Politics received the much needed recognition with the formation of a district for the tribe in the year 1951. However before assuming the present shape, the present Karbi Anglong district went through a phase of diverse administrative alterations. The journey of the Karbis for a district of their own started way back 1884, when the 'Mikir Hills Tract' within the administrative boundary of the then Nowgong district was constituted by a notification under the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulations of 1880. The tract included the hill region where the Karbi population was most numerous. In 1893, a part of this was transferred to the then Sibsagar district. Later on adjoining district

boundaries were slightly modified; as a result the 'Mikir Hills Tract' in 1913-1914, fell within the districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar. The Assam Frontier Tracts Regulations (Regulation 2) of 1880 enabled the British authorities to appoint Political Officers to look after "Any tract inhabited or frequented by barbarous or semi civilized tribes adjoining or within the borders of any of the districts included within the territories under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam."<sup>1</sup> The Regulation empowered the Chief Commissioner to declare (with the previous sanction of the Governor General) from time to time, that any enactment in force in a frontier tract would cease to operate, but without affecting the criminal jurisdiction of any court over European British Subjects. Though originally the Regulation was meant for the '*barbarous and semi civilized tribes*' but later, the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulations (Regulation 3) of 1884 was issued by the Governor General to empower the extension of the Assam Frontier Tracts regulation of 1880 to the hills which, though not frontier tracts within the meaning of that Regulation, "*inhabited or frequented by barbarous or semi civilized tribes*" and it was extended to the Mikir Hills on 12 November 1884.<sup>2</sup> The rules for the administration of justice in the hill districts were also modified to introduce them in the hill tracts. Accordingly, the Mikir Hills Tract which was created as a frontier tract within the administered district of Nowgong(now Nagaon) got only criminal justice initially. It was only after the constitution of the Lieutenant Governor's Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1905, a fresh set of rules covering civil justice in Mikir Hills was issued in 1906. Again, under the Government of India act of 1919,(based on Mantague-Chelmsford Report of 1918) the Mikir Hills Tract along with the other hill areas of Assam were designated as the 'Backward Tract.'<sup>3</sup> The other Karbi predominant areas of Jaintia Hills, Nowgong and Sibsagar were added in the set up.

### **Government of India Act of 1935 and the Karbi Politics:**

The Government of India Act of 1935 was a landmark event in Karbi political as the Act while recognizing the political rights of the Karbis for the first time provided an opportunity to the tribe to send a representative of its own to the provincial legislature. The Act can be termed as the facilitator for emergence of the Karbi politics in the real sense of the term. The Government announced

that the Act of 1935 would come in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1937. It provided an opportunity to the hitherto low profiled Karbi elite or the Karbi middle class to ventilate its political aspiration and test the political power along with the people of the plains of the then Assam. Political activities in the Mikir Hills tract got momentum as the Karbis started to prepare for the election to the provincial legislature provided by the Act. However, the political activities under the Act of 1935 was confined to the middle class of the tribe alone and the common people were completely detached from it as the Act provided property qualification as the main basis of enfranchisement.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the franchise was confined only to the Mauzadars, Gaonburas, persons with at least education up to M.E. level and the leading personalities of the tribe who were paying tax to the government. In the entire Mikir Hills tract only 171 persons fulfilled the criteria to cast their vote to elect the first ever representative (MLA) of the tribe to the Provincial Legislature. Three persons contested the election for the lone reserved seat of the Mikir Hills tract to the provincial legislature. They were Khorsing Terang, Thengkur Sing Ingti and Mohan Sig Teron. The general election throughout the country under the new Act was held in February 1937. Out of the total 171 voters in the Mikir Hills tract, 128 voters exercised their franchise. In the election, Khorsing Terang emerged victorious by securing 53 votes and thus he earned the rare distinction of being the first MLA from the Karbis.

As Khorsing Terang himself was a Mauzadar, he had strong influence among the gaiburahs which went a long way in his being victorious. This was the beginning of the political career of a great Karbi political leader who dominated the Karbi politics in the subsequent years till his death in 1955. The second election of the Assam Legislative Assembly was supposed to be held in 1942 but was postponed due to ongoing Second World War at that time. The second election ultimately took place on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1945. During this time the number of voters in the Mikir Hills tract increased to 298. In this election, Khorsing Terang who was the incumbent MLA from the Mikir Hills tract reserved seat again contested the election on a Congress ticket. His opponents in the election were Semson Sing Ingti, one of earliest graduates from the Karbi community and Biren Teron who was the Mauzadar of the then Mikir mauza of Duar Amla and who later become

the founder treasurer of the Karbi Adarbar, the first national organization of the tribe established in 1946. It is therefore clear that the triangular contest for the reserved seat of the Mikir Hills tract in the second general election was also confined among the middle class of the Karbis. In this election also Khorsing Ternag emerged as victorious by convincingly defeating his rivals.

### **Karbi Politics in the context of the visit of Governor of Assam:**

Karbi Politics received further momentum with the visit of Governor of Assam, Sir Robert Neil Reid to Mikir Hills Tract in 1940. This can be considered as one of the most historic event for the Karbi community of the Mikir Hills. En-route to Bokakhat, the Governor of Assam spent some days in the Mikir Hills tract. The visit of the Governor to the Mikir Hills tract created great amount of enthusiasm among the leading personalities of the Karbis who realized the importance of meeting the Governor from a close proximity and familiarize him about the deplorable condition of the Karbis living in the hill tract. It in fact provided an opportunity to the Karbi middle class to make a representation to the Governor on behalf of the Karbi people with a view to acquaint him about the various grievances of the Karbis and urge him to take initiatives for the amelioration of the same. The lead in this regard was taken by Semson Sing Ingti, one of the earliest graduates from the Karbis community who was serving as an Inspector of Schools in the then Mikir Hills Tract of the then Nowgong district, Khorsing Terang, the MLA from the Mikir Hills tract and Song Bey, an interpreting clerk at the Golaghat SDO office. A public meeting was organized at Monhangdijua on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1940 to welcome and felicitate the Governor. In that particular meeting, a memorandum was also submitted to the Governor by the Karbis under the leadership of Semson Sing Ingti. It was a red letter day in the history of the Karbi community in general and Karbi politics in particular as for the first time in history of the tribe a representation was made to the Governor demanding the socio-political rights of the Karbis. The Governor on his part suggested the Karbi leaders to visit Delhi to pursue the demand for a separate district for the Karbis. It is thus clear that the formal demand for a separate district for the Karbis began to take shape among the Karbi educated class from the visit of the Governor of Assam to the Karbis inhabited areas of the hills in 1940.

## **Formation of Karbi Adarbar: A Formal Platform of Karbi Politics:**

Though the Karbi middle became politically active in the aftermath of the Government of India Act of 1935 itself, the Karbis still did not have any organization which could bring them in to a single platform and speak for the socio-political rights of the tribe. It was found that towards the last part of the British regime in India, the Karbi middle class felt the urgent need of an organization for uniting the Karbis in to a single administrative unit who were then scattered in to different administrative regions and claim their political rights. The Karbi politics obtained a formal platform the formation of the Karbi-Adarbar, the first national organization of the Karbis in the year 1946. While naming the organization, the founding fathers of the Karbi Adarbar were probably influenced by the name of the Khasi National Darbar, the first national organization of the Khasis formed in 1923 with Olim Singh, the Raja of Khyrim as president and J.J.M. Nichols Roy, the doyen of Khasi middle class as the secretary. Nevertheless, with the formation of the Karbi A-Darbar, the members of the community started to ventilate their political aspirations in a more systematic and fruitful manner. The initiative in this regard was taken by Semson Sing Ingti, the first male graduate from the Karbi community, who was then serving as a Sub-Inspector of Schools in the then Mikir Hills Tract of the then Nowgong district and his father Thengkur Sing Ingti. They were assisted by some other prominent educated Karbi personalities of the time which included, Khorsing Terang MLA, Song Bey, Barelong Terang, Bonglong Terang, Sarsing Teron Habe(chief), Harsing Ingti Habe and many others.

With the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbi aspiration for a separate district of its own received the form of a systematic movement under the leadership of the first generation of the Karbi middle class. The leaders of the organization toured different Karbi inhabited areas of the then Assam with a view to organize the Karbi people and make them realize the importance of securing a district of their own. Apart from organizing the Karbi people and infusing a sense of nationalism among them, the Karbi Adarbar sent several delegations to Delhi to impress upon the Governor General for the creation of a district for the Karbis. All these Adarbar delegations to Delhi were led by Semson Sing Ingti, the most intelligent and the most eloquent of all the

contemporary Karbi leaders of that time. It was a time when the country was passing through a critical juncture.

### **Karbi A-Darbar Politics and formation of the District:**

The British rule in India was towards its fag end and preparations were on the way to grant complete independence to the Indians. The Constituent Assembly under the provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 was entrusted the responsibility of framing the new constitution of the would be independent India. The Karbi-Adarbar leaders well realized the significance of the time and the need of convincing the British authorities as well as the nationalist leaders of Assam about the creation of a separate district for the Karbis and ensuring constitutional safeguard for the tribe in the would be framed new constitution of independent India. As the sole mouthpiece of the Karbi people, the Karbi Adarbar submitted memorandum to the then Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clav in March 1947 urging him to ensure that the interests of the Karbis are taken in to account in the would be framed new constitution.

In pursuance of paragraph 20 of the Cabinet Mission statement of May 16, 1946, the an influential 'Advisory Committee on the Rights of the Citizens, Minorities and Tribals and Excluded Areas' was already set up by the Constituent Assembly on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1947 to make proposals for the administration of the tribal areas .The influential Advisory Committee in its turn set up three Sub-Committees to report and recommend on the issues relating to the tribal population of the country. One of these Sub-Committees constituted by the aforementioned Advisory Committee was The North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee with Gopinath Bordoloi as the Chairman. The Sub-Committee was popularly known as the Bordoloi Sub-Committee. Immediately after its formation, the Bordoloi Sub-Committee embarked on the tasks that were assigned to it and started visiting the hill areas with a view to secure the opinion, suggestions and various demands of the tribal leaders. As far has the then Mikir Hills was concerned , the Sub- Committee held consultations with the Karbi Adarbar leaders at Dimapur inspection banglow on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1947.

The Karbi Adarbar, as the sole representative of the Karbis also submitted a memorandum to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee on that particular day. In the

memorandum, the Adarbar leaders demanded first, a separate district should be established so that all Karbis could be placed under a single administration. They suggested that the Karbi area of 4,174 square miles of the Partially Excluded area, the Karbi portion of the Nowgong (now Nagaon), Sibsagar plains, North Cachar Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills should form the new district. A boundary commission should be set up immediately by the Assam Government to report on the areas which could conveniently be added to the then existing Mikir Hills Partially excluded Area. . The unrelenting efforts of the Karbi Adarbar for the creation of a district for the Karbis ultimately bore fruits when the Assam Government decided to announce the boundary of the Mikir Hills vide Notification No. TAD/R/31/50/151 dated 13.04.1951.<sup>4</sup> The United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was finally created by the Assam Government vide Notification No. TAD/R/31/50/201 dated 3rd November, 1951 as per Clause 3 of the Assam United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills (Administration) Regulation of 1951<sup>5</sup> and the district was formally inaugurated on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1951. The political region, so created was formed by combining the partially excluded areas of Nagaon and erstwhile Sivasagar (Mikir Hills Tract), Block-I and Block-II of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and North Cachar Hills (excluded area) Sub-Division of Cachar District. The most notable thing about the Bordoloi Sub- Committee Report was that it sought to reconcile the hill people's demand for 'political autonomy' with the Assam government's drive to integrate them with the plains. It proposed the creation of district councils with a view to protect the hill people from invading plains people. As per the provisions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of the independent India under Article 244(2), total five district councils were vested to six hills tribes of the North East India in 1952, including to the Karbis in the form of the Mikir Hills District Council.

The first election for 12 constituencies to the Mikir Hills District Council was held in 1952 and on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1952, the newly elected body of the Mikir Hills District Council(MHDC) formally took oath and assumed charge in an inaugural function held at Diphu which was attended by the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bishnuram Medhi. In that particular function, the Chief Minister of Assam formally inaugurated the newly constituted MHDC and

therefore the foundation day of MHDC is accepted as the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1952. In that inaugural meeting itself, Khorsing Terang who was then representing the Mikir Hills reserved seat as MLA since 1937 and who was also one of the most influential leaders of the Karbi-Adarbar since its formation in 1946, was elected as the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the first Mikir Hills District Council. The first Executive Committee (EC) of District Council led by Khorsing Terang also took charge on that day .

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion it can be said that the Karbi politics which started to emerge in an informal manner towards the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century gradually assumed a distinct identity and recognition with the formation of the Karbi Adarbar . With the formation of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbi aspiration for a separate district of its own received the form of a systematic movement under the leadership of the first generation of the Karbi middle class. Karbi-Adarbar, became the sole mouth piece of the Karbis in its bargaining with the Britishers and later with the Constituent Assembly for securing maximum political benefits for the Karbis. It was because of the efficient and farsighted leadership of the Karbi Adarbar, the Karbis were bestowed not only with a district of their own but also a special protection under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution. In the words of Dr. Dhruvajyoti Bora, the famous social scientist of Assam, “Karbi Adarbar a mainly nationalistic organization led by the middle class was able to unite the whole people and as a result the Karbi people won the right of autonomous administration in the form of a district and a District Council under the Sixth Schedule.”<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of the tribe under the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian constitution has further propelled the cause of the community for socio-political and economic upliftment. The seed of political consciousness sowed by the first generation of the educated Karbis has yielded the desired results in the due course of time. The Karbi nationality as a whole owes all its socio-political achievements to them.

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# Role of Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Conflict Resolution in North East India

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## **Introduction:**

Conflict not only destroys buildings it also negatively affects trust, hope, identity, family and relationships. Conflict is an extremely complicated, multi-faceted phenomenon which has occurred throughout history, and will likely continue as long as mankind exists. In order to reach peace and reconciliation after a conflict, it is necessary to establish legitimate centralized power; improve legitimacy of the state through civic participation; and provide funding supporting peaceful activities. Conflict peace building and conflict transformation require a wide range of actors, including: states and intergovernmental organizations; development and humanitarian organizations; international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and individuals and civil society leaders in affected societies. Since physical infrastructures are often destroyed in conflicts, some argue that it is necessary for the international community to become involved in these goals. Although actors at various levels may work independently to promote peace, there is often overlap and coordination between various groups in peace building efforts.

Northeast India, the confederation of eight states (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura) is home to around 200 indigenous communities. All these communities struggle for their own respective identity. Northeast has also been the theatre of the earliest and longest lasting insurgency in the country. The peacemaking and conflict

resolution employed to date have not worked in the ways that had been expected. The peacemaking and conflict resolution employed to date have not worked in the ways that had been expected. A re-evaluation of the conflicts is needed.

### **Concept of Civil Society Organizations:**

The term 'society' and 'civil society', commonly used interchangeably, have acquired some degree of conceptual differentiation. Civil society refers to the arena of collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Despite the lack of consensus on 'what is civil society', its return and resilience transcends its many ambiguities and multiple meanings. Theoretical difficulties have led academics like Sudipto Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (2002) to explore the connections between the western traditions of thinking about civil society, its historical entry into non-western theoretical discourses, and its transformed emergence in negotiating the complex realities of conflicts. Civil society means the phenomenon that arises when people organize themselves and act together in the space between the family, the state and the market. Civil society consists of formal and informal networks, organizations and institutions. People organize themselves on the basis of their common interests or needs, religious affiliations, for pure entertainment ... the list can be made long. In civil society one can also expect to find formal and informal institutions and mechanisms for peaceful conflict management. There is probably no society or culture that lacks mechanisms for handling conflicts of different types: village councils, ombudsman institutions, religious institutions and rituals, courts of law, democratic elections and referenda etc. Some of them are the responsibility of the state; others are part of civil society. Accordingly civil society is an extremely wide concept. It is much more than civil society organizations (CSO's). Civil society includes, but is not identical to, CSO's. The CSO concept (or NGO, here the concepts are used synonymously and are interchangeable with each other) is sufficiently wide to include classical popular movements and voluntary organizations, churches, foundations of different types and umbrella organizations. According to the Human Development Report 2000, every fifth person participates in a formal organization within civil society (Human Development Report 2000:5).

## **Role of civil society in broader peace building processes:**

Civil society activities can build bridges across divided societies. Civil society organisations participate in the effort to rebuild trust within and between communities, as well as to re establish the state-society relationship and renegotiate a social contract.

- **Civil society in democracy and good governance for peace building:**

Civil society has the capacity to serve a number of key functions in service of democracy and good governance in peace building scenarios. Civil society is envisaged as one of the pillars of any democratic structure, and thus is a paramount institution in restoring and consolidating democracy. Civil society may also facilitate participatory local governance mechanisms. Further, civil society can provide a check on political power. Finally, civil society strengthens elections, another pillar of democratic systems, by providing voter education. Civil society has the potential to play in regard to democracy and good governance in conflict-prone environments.

- **Civil society as a key pillar in a democratic system:**

A vibrant civil society is broadly considered one of the three main pillars of a democratic system, along with elections and capacity building for state institutions. The idea is to attain a diverse, active, and independent civil society that articulates the interests of citizens and holds governments accountable to citizens. Almost all international donors mention civil society as an important factor to influence decisions of the state, highlight civil society's responsibility for a democratic state and its dynamic role in pushing for social, economic and political change, or stress its role in encouraging open debate on public policy. Major bilateral donors, as well as international organizations, engaged in democracy and governance work are now giving attention to civil society development. The civil society is a key to the establishment and maintenance of competent citizen activity, a necessary component of democratic sustainability. These arguments are themselves often premised on Alexis de Tocqueville, who, in 'Democracy in America', considered civic engagement in associations to be schools of

democracy, capable of checking abuse of authority. Thus, civic virtues such as tolerance, acceptance, honesty, and trust are really integrated into the character of civic individuals through associations. Civic engagement in associations is thought to build confidence in democratic mechanisms, or, as Robert Putnam later described it, social capital. For Putnam, democracy may not be defined by associational activity, but such activity is what makes democracy work.

- **Civil society and participation in local governance:**

The notion of civic engagement of citizen organizations, associations, businesses, neighborhood committees, and the like has become central to the concept of local governance. Civil society organizations deliver services at the local level, provide information to the public, articulate interests in society, advocate for social needs and reforms, give opportunities for citizen participation and consultation, and provide technical services, such as gathering data on social problems. In post-war contexts, local government institutions may try to rely on more participatory and democratic governance models through partnerships with civil society organizations, which can introduce more participatory approaches to community level decision making. Building effective participatory procedures at the local level offers a strategic opportunity to build democracy and manage social conflict at the national level. Local governance with strong citizen involvement and meaningful participation forms the ground-level tier of democracy. Of course, the degree of application and impact of such mechanisms greatly varies from one context to the next, and often between regions inside the same country.

- **CSO's (Civil Society Organizations) in electoral processes:**

CSO's generally playing a key role in voter information and education activities, in encouraging broader participation and turnout. Voter education initiatives are of particular importance in countries with a limited democratic tradition. CSO's also often participate in electoral processes through domestic non-partisan election monitoring, enhancing the transparency of the electoral process and public confidence in the credibility

and legitimacy of an election. CSO's may also contribute by promoting codes of conduct for candidates, undertaking parallel vote tabulations, hosting public meetings or debates, and proposing and commenting on electoral reform.

- **CSO's contribution to justice and the rule of law:**

CSO's generally playing a leading role in justice and rule of law issues. This is probably one of the sectors of peace building in which they are the most active. Human rights NGOs often form the most vibrant and powerful component of local civil society. They frequently are the first institutions with which outsiders interact at the different stages of a violent conflict. They are particularly involved in monitoring and advocacy activities, playing a vital role in drawing global attention to specific cases of human rights abuse in conflict situations. They can also assist groups in developing capacity to seek justice, and are involved in different types of public education and training activities around these issues.

### **Background to the conflicts in India's northeast:**

Only with the independence of India in 1947 and in its wake the reorganization of international borders with eastern neighbors like East Pakistan/ Bangladesh, Tibet/ China, Burma/ Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan did India's Northeast emerge as a separate geopolitical region. The region has historically been one of the world's greatest migratory routes, cutting across such countries as Tibet/China, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. As a result, the region has provided a meeting ground of many races and communities throughout history. With the British discovery of tea in India's Northeast in 1821, the demand for plantation labour was met by encouraging migration mainly of tribal people from various parts of central India. As colonial rule was established in 1826, clerks and officers acquainted with English and the running of administration were brought into Assam on all sides by other territorially defined nation states. The region has become historically been one of the world's greatest migratory routes. It is essential to realize that the widespread identity crisis in Northeast India has been caused by the large scale migration of people from outside the region during past one hundred years and the total dependence of people on

the land and state's apparatus for a livelihood. The failure of various sections of the migrant population to adapt themselves to the local language, customs and traditions has further emphasized the identity crisis (Singh, 1987).

### **Conflict and peace in Assam: the role of civil society:**

A brief overview of conflicts in Assam India's Northeast has been the theatre of the earliest and longest-lasting insurgency in the country. The fear of immigrants continues to haunt the minds of the Assamese. Immigration in Assam is believed to have created pressures on land, caused unemployment to the Assamese people claiming themselves as native to the region, fomented social tensions and created ethnic and communal riots (Das, 1993). No authentic estimate is yet available on the actual number of non-Assamese foreigners settled in Assam. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP; Assam people's council) that emerged from out of the movement and formed the government in 1985 did little to deport foreigners. The party's performance in deporting non-Assamese was dismal (Das, 1998). Many immigrants who settled in Assam several generations ago assimilated into Assamese society and report Assamese as their mother tongue (Guha, 1980).

The immigration issue had occasionally burst into the open in the politics of Assam state since independence. It was only in 1980 that the Assam Literary Society (Assam Sahitya Sabha), one of the organisations leading the Assam movement came forward, and changed 'bahiragats' (outsiders) into 'Bideshis' (foreigners). Sources said before any concrete headway is made, civil society groups such as the Axom Sahitya Sabha will have a very crucial role in aggregating and consolidating the many communities that make up the greater Assamese community. Axom Sahitya Sabha is a socio-cultural body dedicated to promote the state's culture and literary activities. It has over 1,000 branches in the state and was one of the first such bodies to oppose Ulf's violent movement. The All Assam Students union (AASU), the organization spearheaded the movement (AASU, 1983). ULFA was established in on April 7, 1979, it was not until 1983 that the organization surfaced in the public arena and people become aware of its political presence in Assam. It started as a more militant stream of the Assam movement and gradually broke away from the moderate forces that were associated with it (Das, 1994). North East India has been a hotbed of

insurgencies, State action and ethnic violence over the decades. All these have resulted in the displacement of communities affected by violence and chronic insecurity. In most cases, the assistance extended to these displaced communities consists of poorly maintained relief camps and at best some monetary help. Left to their own devices by an unconcerned State, these displaced families diffuse into the landscape joining the troop of impoverished migrants. The multi ethnic Karbi Anglong District of Assam has been no exception to this violence after witnessing insecurity as a result of communal and insurgent violence. After the particularly violent period between 2003 and 2005 (where killings took place during clashes between Karbis, Dimasas and Kukis), there were a large number of families housed in relief camps; up to 40,000 people at one point. In this scenario the District administration came up with a scheme to rehabilitate families who could not return to their original villages. It involved relocating the affected villages around the District Headquarters of Diphu with an aim of providing a secure living environment. These mainly entailed reorganizing smaller villages scattered over a large area into a single large village unit which was located close to roads but far away from their old village sites and consequently their agricultural land. This rehabilitation effort is probably the only post conflict rehabilitation program that has been implemented in the whole of the North East. Over the years Northeast as a whole and Assam in particular has seen a lot in terms of violence and bloodshed. From armed struggle to ethnic clashes Assam has reeled under unprecedented violence. Armed revolutionaries and Government have an equal share in making Assam prone to such bloodshed every now and then keeping the common masses at the receiving end. If the armed organizations have spilled blood in the name of revolution and sovereignty, the government has got its license to kill in the name of bringing peace. The lawmakers have become the lawbreakers and the so called rescuers have also turned a blind eye towards all the misdoings. From clashes in between the ethnic communities to vague killings in the name of revolution has long been a problem of Assam.

### **Civic representatives:**

Civil society is usually distinguished from ethnic groups and communities existing in any society. Civil society is regarded as a space where individuals and groups enter by free will and always retain the exit option once they enter into it.

Literary bodies and organizations of students, teachers and workers, for example, fall into the realm of civil society. Such bodies as Vaishnavite monasteries (satra) and prayer halls (namghar) of Assam state are illustration of such ethnicity based organizations. The Assam Literary Society was formed in 1917 as the supreme literary body of Assamese intellectuals and litterateurs in Assam. These can be described as civic representatives (Baruah, 1997).

- **Peace groups:**

A second category of civil society organizations are those expressly set up with the objective of making the necessary preparations for peace dialogues between two or more warring parties and therefore facilitating a process that often culminates in the signing of peace accords.

- **Bridge-builders:**

A third segment of civil society consists of groups and organizations that play an active role in building bridges at the local level and thereby make coexistence of different communities possible. They play a crucial role in preventing conflicts between two or more communities from becoming full scale wars. These bridge building organizations want a political solution to the problem without indulging in violence and wanton killing. The bridge builders, like the civic representatives are rooted in the same ties that bind an ethnic group or community. Unlike, the civic representatives, however they work in a way that involves crossing the ethnic lines and thereby ensuring peace in the villages and neighborhoods (Das, 2007).

- **Popular initiatives:**

Civil society's role in making peace is also located in some yet unorganized, or loosely organizes, popular initiatives that mark its emergence as a force autonomous from both the state and the insurgents. Neither the government nor the rebels can ignore the importance of these initiatives and they go a long way in creating and nurturing peace constituencies in the region.

## **Conclusion:**

Civil society groups and initiatives play diverse roles in the conflicts afflicting

India's Northeast. Civil society cannot be regarded as a magic wand capable of managing and resolving all kinds of conflicts in all situations. The involvement of civil society groups and initiatives guarantee a durable and stable peace. These groups and initiatives play diverse roles, and some of them even contribute to producing and perpetuating conflicts. The state has seen many civil organizations that have given loud slogans about peace and decried the violence. Are the civil organizations serving its purpose? If yes, – then why the violence has not ended? If no, then where are the loopholes? It's high time the civil organizations should come together under one platform to resolve the issue. It's time to sit and discuss together than working for the cause of society. Thus the article has provided an overview of various approaches to peace building following a conflict, and building a culture of peace to mitigate and prevent violent conflict in the future. Conflict is an extremely complicated, multi-faceted phenomenon which has occurred throughout history, and will likely continue as long as mankind exists.

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# Issues and Challenges of Tribal politics with Special Reference to North-East India

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## **Introduction:**

Tribal's communities are among the most disadvantage and deprived sections of Indian Society. The Tribal's people are known as Adivasis. A tribe is a group of distinct people, dependent on their land for their livelihood. Tribal's are officially known as the scheduled tribes. They are small in Size but constitute most important sections of the society. Mostly tribal people in North-East India are resided in the rural areas of the state. They are facing various issues and challenges from the beginning and the constitution of India given various constitutional safeguard for protecting their rights, equality of opportunity and political participation i.e. article 330,332,335,342, fifth and Sixth Scheduled. In reality the life of tribal people full of challenges and they are facing various challenges in their day to day life.

North-East India is comprised of eight states, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. Geographically, the region shares the international border of several neighboring countries with Tibet in the North, Myanmar in the East, Bangladesh South-west, Nepal in the West and Bhutan in the North-West. Physiographically the North-East region Categorized into the Eastern Himalaya, the Patkai and the Brahmaputra and the Barak valley plains. North- eastern council is the nodal agency of the North-Eastern Region. The North-East region covered by the Brahmaputra,

Barak and Imphal Vellys and some Flatlands in between the hills of Meghalaya and Tripura. The North-Eastern region has a high rainfall, averaging around 10,000 millimeters and above this creates problems of the eco-system, high seismic activity and floods. The North-East India has a subtropical climate that is influenced by its relief and influences from the South-West and North-West monsoon. The Himalayas to the North, the Meghalaya plateau to the South and the hills of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur to the east influences the climate. The North-Eastern region also a Mega Earthquake prone zone caused by active fault planes beneath formed by the convergences of three tectonic plates viz. India Plate, Eurasian plate and Burma plate. The Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region is the deciding body under the government of India for socio-economic development in the North-Eastern Region

North-East India is rich in culturally, art, literature and national parks. There are famous national park are: Manas National park, Kaziranga National park, Orang National Park, Nameri National park, Clouded Leopard National park, Murlen National park, Mouling National park, Namdapha National park, Dibru-Saikhowa Naional park, Intangki National Park. The staple foods of North-East India are: - rice, fish meat, leaf vegetable, pork. All states in North-East India shares the handicrafts of bamboo, cane and wood carving making traditional weapons and musical instruments, pottery and hadloom weaving.

### **Review of Literature:**

Kumar(2005) in his article “ Identity Politics in the Hill Tribal Communities in the North-Eastern India” examined the issue of identity politics in the context of the historical experience of the hill tribes in the North-Eastern region because without historical prospective it is difficult to understand the dynamics of identity politics in the region and their impact on the socio-political relations among the tribal’s themselves and between the tribal’s and non-tribal’s community.

Bhattacharya(2007) in his article “ Tribal Politics of Tripura: A study in Electoral Behaviour” pointed out that political participation is one of the indicating factors in order to identify any caste or tribe. The author also mentioned that there was various mass movements of tribal people did due to political consciousness and awareness among the tribal people in Tripura.

Pathak(2010) in his article “ Tribal politics in the Assam: 1933-1947” deals with that the emergence of the Plains Tribal’s in the political map of Assam and in the 1940s the Tribal League reified the idea of a distinctive tribal identity mostly for political and social reasons.

### **Objective of the Study:**

1. To study the issues and challenges of Tribal politics in North- East India.
2. To study the importance of Tribal politics in North-East India

### **Research Question:**

1. What are the factors responsible for constraints Tribal politics in North-East India
2. What are the issues and challenges faced by the tribal politics in North-East India

### **Research Methodology:**

The present study deals with “issues and challenges of tribal politics with special reference to North- East India”. In order to conduct the study this is based on descriptive method and secondary sources. The secondary data collected through various relevant book, journal, article, thesis, internet, website, government records etc.

### **Importance of tribal politics:**

Scheduled Tribes are officially recognized tribal’s group of people who are among the India’s poorest socio-economic groups. The tribal’s people are mostly lived in forest areas and remote places and they have own culture, customs, practices and religion. The Indian constitution enlarged to political transformation of the country and adopted 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment acts provide for an opportunity for tribal’s included in the political sphere. There are numbers of studies done on tribal’s but very limited study conducted on tribal politics. The involvement of tribal people into politics is very important for overall development of community. The tribal’s are a primitive traints, a separate culture, geographic seclusion, apprehension about interacting with the greater

population and backwardness. The Scheduled Tribes are tribes notified under article 342 of the constitution which makes special provision for tribes, tribal communities, parts of or groups within which the president may so notify. Mostly tribes are depended in heavily forested areas that combine inaccessibly with limited political significance. The nature of systems of governance and their democratic practices of tribal communities varied from societies to society. The tribal politics is not new to India. It dates back to the era of colonialism, when several tribal communities began protesting against exploitative British policies. In independent India, Tribal politics revolves two major issues i.e. survival and identity. When it comes to identity one of the pertinent questions that arise is the distinction between tribes and caste because it is not possible to differentiate between a caste and a tribe in terms of size, isolation, religion and means of livelihood. The important aspects of tribal politics i.e. the resistance to the forces of industrialization remains a pertinent issues in tribal politics and tribal's responded to it in several ways. Many have succumbed to the forces of industrialization, displacement and others have joined various popular mass movements for their identity.

Tribal politics involvement is very much important for present society. Sometimes identity politics in the tribal communities reflects in terms of politics centering on the demands of preservation of identity. The tribal communities in the North-Eastern Region have been expressing fears of losing of identity as a result of increasing interaction with non-tribal communities. So, thats why through politics they demanded further constitutional and administrative provisions for safeguarding their tribal identity. The dynamics of identity politics in the region and their impact on the socio-political relations among the tribals themselves and between the tribal and the non-tribals communities. Thus, present time study of tribal politics in North-East India is very important for development of this community.

### **Issues and challenges of Tribal politics :**

Tribal's are most disadvantage groups of our society. There are many issues and challenges faced by the tribal's in the political participation. In independents India, tribal politics revolves around major issues like survival, identity and

demand for autonomy fuels the politics in the North-East India. These are discussed as follows:-

1. **Politics of Identity:** - The Indian constitution recognizes tribal communities under 5<sup>th</sup> scheduled and constitutionally they are recognized as scheduled tribes. Traditionally they are known as Adivasis. The tribal's peoples are socially exclusion is mostly due to discrimination on the basis of identity, which results, they are isolation from the society and not connected with others non-tribal's people. Due to identity erosion their political participation are very less. Another reason for identity crisis is displacement from their homeland due to development of various industries in tribal's areas. Disconnect from homeland sometimes they are settle in an urban areas and unawareness to the urban lifestyle have led to an identity crisis. This gave birth to various physiological issues and this issue impact on the tribal politics.
2. **Lack of education:** - Another challenges faced by the tribal politics is illiteracy. The literacy rate of tribal people is very low in comparison to non-tribal people. They are many reason tribal people facing to acquire education like long distance school, lack of adequate school facilities, illiterate parents, lack of awareness program, less subject wise teachers. Education is the key to spread awareness among people and through education can spread the social, economic and political awareness among the people.
3. **Land alienation:** - Another issue of tribal politics of North-East India is land alienation. The various government development project acquire tribal areas land and second factor of land alienation is migration of people from different places occupies are tribal land.
4. **Politics of development:** - Tribal's are mainly resided hills and forests areas. They livelihood mainly depends on the nature. But the development often come industrialization which promotes a uniform urban culture.
5. **Poverty and indebtedness:** - Majority of the tribal's people lived under poverty line. The tribal's simply their occupation related to hunting,

agriculture etc. Per Capita income of tribal's people very low in comparison to non-tribal's people. Most of the tribal's people lived under poverty and are in debt in the hands of local money landers and zaminders.

6. Displacement and Rehabilitation issues: - The government's acquisition of tribal territory for the development of various industries like steel factories, power projects dams etc and this are large number of tribal people displacement.
7. Health and Nutrition Issues: - The occupation of tribal's people mainly based on their agriculture, forestry and mostly income of tribal's is very low. Due to economic backwardness and unstable livelihood tribal's people did not fighting various diseases such as malaria, cholera, diarrhea, jaundice and facing various malnutrition related issues such as iron deficiency, anaemia and high newborn baby mortality rate.
8. Gender Inequality:- Another Challenges of tribal politics is gender inequality which is prevalent in tribal community. Some tribal community given equality opportunities and equality both men and women but some are not given equal treatment both men and women. 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment act provide 1/3 reservation for tribal's women specially increased the political participation of tribal women.

### **Constitutional provisions for supporting and promoting Scheduled Tribes :**

1. Article 15(4): Deals with special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.
2. Article 17:- Deals with abolition of Untouchability
3. Article 19:- Deals with freedom of speech and expression to every citizen of India.
4. Article 25: Deals with freedom of conscience and free profession, practice, and propagation of religion.

5. Article 45: Deals with free and compulsory education to every children in the age of up to 14 years.
6. Article 46: deals with special care of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.
7. Article 330: deals with the reservation of seats for Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People.
8. Article 334: Deals with reservation of seats for the Scheduled Tribes the representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination in the House of posts in connection with the affairs of the union or the State.
9. Article 338A: Deals with National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes. Established with the Objective of monitoring all the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Tribes under the constitution or other laws.

### **Suggestions and Conclusion :**

In conclusion, we can say that present time generally tribal politics in India and particularly the Tribal politics in North-East India growing and developed. There are various constitutional provisions and safeguarding, scheme policies given to the improvement for the tribal's but there is still adopting certain changes, schemes for the improve their participation and representation in the politics. Thus, now government has to undertaken in intensive efforts from the overall upliftment of the tribals.

There are various programmes and schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are intended to support and supplement other central ministries, state governments and partly of voluntary organizations and to fill critical gaps in institutions and programmes taking into account the situation of Scheduled Tribals through financial assistance. The scheme comprising social, economic, educational and political development of the people.

There are various issues and challenges faces by the tribals in the political participation and representation. In the present time tribals politics changing not only North-East India but also whole India. India elected its first president

from tribal community. Droupadi Murmu as the 15<sup>th</sup> president of India who change the tribal politics in India and set example of whole tribal politics. Her election has also brought renewed attention to the status of tribal communities in Indian Politics. Another changing scenario of tribal politics in North-East India i.e. National peoples party recognized as the national party from the first time in North-East India. Droupadi Murmu, president of India changing the scenario of tribal politics in whole India and National Peoples party changing the scenario of whole North-East India.

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# Colonial Representation of Tribe and Identity: A Study on the Karbis of Karbi Anglong

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## **Abstract:**

*Although the early anthropological works of the colonial era had described 'tribe' as isolated cohesive communities, colonialism had already brought irrevocable changes in the world. Colonialism is the policy of a country seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories with the aim of economic exploitation, political dominion and civil mission. Generally, colonial representation relies on political images of power and domination over others. This type of representation is a kind of discourse which likely creates a false ideology.*

*After India's independence, some of the socio-economically and politically marginalized ethnic communities had been incorporated within a list of Scheduled Tribes under the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1950. In this list, Karbi (Mikir) was included as dweller of the erstwhile Scheduled Hills District of Mikir Hills. One must look into the colonial period in order to get a better understanding of the genesis why only the Karbis living in the two Sixth Scheduled Hills Districts (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao) have been placed in the Scheduled Tribe list and rest of them living outside of it are denied any constitutional safeguard. For that, in this paper, an attempt is to be made to understand the process of colonial representation of the tribes in India and the historical development of the historical development of the same in post-colonial situations.*

**Keywords:** Colonial, Tribe, Identity

## Objectives of The Study:

- i. The present paper seeks to analyze the process of colonial representation of Karbi tribe.
- ii. To trace the changes that had pervaded on Karbi identity as an impact of colonialism.

## Methodology:

The present study relied on materials collected through secondary sources in the form of books, journals and articles were consulted.

## Introduction:

Colonial representation generally relies on political images of power and discrimination over others. This type of representation is a kind of discourse which likely creates a false ideology. After the independence of India, some of the socio-economically and politically marginalized ethnic communities had been incorporated within a list of Scheduled Tribes under the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1950.<sup>1</sup> Before the coming of the British, the Karbis lived in a sovereign state and they did not have any taste of subordination. Historically, the people of North East India were neither a part of India nor of Assam prior to the British colonization of this region. In 1833, the British government had recognized the administrative system for the hill areas by creating an act called 'Hills Tract Act'. The Tract Act had provided a separate system of administration for hill regions which was dealt directly by the Governor of Assam on the subject. All the development funds for hill areas were under the discretionary power of the Governor. According to the Hills Tract Act, a major procedure of the Ahom king system was adopted by the British to deal with the hill people.

**The Karbis:** Karbis are a group of tribal people living both in the hills and plains of the central part of North-East India, particularly Assam. They constitute an important ethnic group in the hill areas of Assam and also, constitute the

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1 Manasjyoti Bordoloi, *Colonial Representation of Caste, Tribe and Fragmented Karbi Identity*, in **Phurkimo**, Edited by Dharamsing Teron, AM Publications, Guwahati, 2022, p-41

majority group in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The Karbis were formerly known as *Mikirs*, however, it was replaced by the term Karbi in the year 1976 as per Government of India's Constitutional Order. They call themselves as *Arleng*, which means a man in general. Racially, they belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically, they belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. As per Robert Shafer's classification in the Journal of American Oriental Society (1940) the Karbis form a part of the Eastern branch of Kuki section under Burmic division of the Sino-Tibetan speech family.<sup>2</sup> Charles Lyall, in his book "*The Mikirs*" wrote: "The Mikirs are one of the most numerous and homogeneous of the many Tibeto-Burman races inhabiting the provinces of Assam."<sup>3</sup>

**'Tribe' in Colonial Perspectives:** In the colonial archive, records relating to 'tribes' tend to proliferate at certain moments of disjunction. There is today a rich scholarly debate on the colonial construction of a 'tribe' in India. Some scholars argue that the identification of sections of the conquered populations as a 'tribe' and caste formed part of colonial state's 'legitimizing ideology', while others underscore the role of indigenous agency in this respect, stating that together with European's notions of race, the colonial discourse on the tribe in India had also been informed by prevailing concepts and values among dominant caste groups within India.<sup>4</sup> The English East India Company's government in the early nineteenth century only had a marginal interest in the 'tribal' world, which figured in official perceptions as the backdrop for counter-insurgency measures. The political disruptions caused by the gradual obtrusion of the Company into these interior regions drew British attention to the 'tribal question' which was perceived to be a law and order problem. In the context of the changing nature of India's relationship with the tribal population, this paper also focuses on the construction 'tribes' in colonial India and how these came to influence contemporary India's understandings of this category.

Sanjukta Dasgupta observed about tribe that, "Smacking of evolutionist notions

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2 S. Kumar Chatterjee, *Kirata Jana Kriti: Indo-Mongoloids: Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 2008, p-22

3 Charles Lyall, *The Mikirs*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1972, p-1

4 V. Damodaran, *Colonial Constructions of the 'Tribe' in India: The Case of Chotanagpur*, in Biswamoy Pati (ed.) *Adivasis in Colonial India: Survival, Resistance and Negotiation*, Orient Blackswan, Delhi, 2011, p-58.

and long discarded in other parts of the decolonized world, the problematic category 'tribe' is still retained and enjoys acceptability in the Indian social and political discourse".<sup>5</sup> While today the term 'tribe' is increasingly replaced by expressions such as 'Adivasi', Scheduled Tribe, Indigenous People, the idea of exceptionalism has strengthened and often erases the heterogeneity of their historical experiences- even though recent research highlights the historical linkages and relationships involving these communities with other groups.<sup>6</sup>

This study explores and engages with a range of notions and ideologies- from the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial rule till the 1950s- that informed and shaped India's tribal politics. It argues that despite its intention of formulating new policies for ensuring a just and equitable development of tribal communities, the post-colonial Indian state has remained trapped within a conceptual ideological political predicament whereby it replicated much of the colonial rhetoric and colonial era representation of such communities. To get a better understanding of the genesis why only Karbis living inside the two Sixth Scheduled Hills districts have been placed in the Scheduled Tribe list and rest of them living outside of it are denied any constitutional safeguard one must look into the colonial period. Significantly, the term 'tribe' or 'tribal' was alien to the Indian sub-continent prior to the arrival of the Britishers. Classical Sanskrit had only usage of such terms as 'Arannyavasi' (forest dwellers) or 'Kirata' etc to refer to people who followed a non-Aryanised culture or way of life. In the Ashokan inscriptions, the term *Arannyavasi* is used to mean the people of non-Aryan faith and practices. According to B.P. Singh, as mentioned in his book, "The Problem of Change- A Study of North East India", 'kirat' or 'kirata' is a term referring to Mongolian origin.<sup>7</sup> However, no local term in classical Indian literature is commensurate to what, in anthropology, is meant by the terms 'tribe' or 'tribal'. Such words had been introduced for purely administrative purposes in colonial India. Under the colonial administration, communities living in the non-regulated areas and then in the scheduled districts came to be recognized by the colonial rulers as 'tribes'.

In 1935, in the Government of India Act, the colonial administration renamed

5 Sanjukta Dasgupta, *Imagining the 'Tribe' in Colonial and Post-Colonial Independence India*, *Politeja*, No. 2(59), 2019, p-108

6 *Ibid.*, p-108

7 B. P. Singh, *The Problem of Change: A Study of North East India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1987, p-31.

them as ‘backward tribes’, which was further modified after independence, when a list of scheduled tribes was drawn up.<sup>8</sup>

With the help of already discussed details one may get an understanding that during the British colonial rule application of anthropology played a crucial role to serve the interest of the then alien administration. But in the post-colonial situation, one may find that relentless use of many anthropological notions has contributed in the creation of many burning issues those are difficult to be resolved. Therefore, skipping the role of colonial anthropology and ethnography one may face hurdles to find out probable solutions of some of the issues that influence the entire discourse of ethnocentric polemic in the post-colonial Assam. Fragmented identity of the Karbis based on dwelling areas is one such issue.

Available documents suggest that based on prevalent anthropological concepts, the Government of India, in post-colonial situation considered a Karbi as ‘tribal’ only if he lives in an area that was once declared as his ‘scheduled habitat’. Under such a concept some of the recognized ‘tribal’ communities, in Assam, are placed under the category of ‘plain tribe’ (ST Plains) and others in the category of ‘hills scheduled tribes’ (ST Hills). However, there are many communities like the Karbi members of which lives in both, officially declared plains and the hills districts of Assam. Members of the communities like the Karbi, Dimasa and Tiwa live in both plains and hills districts of Assam. Till the year 2002, Dimasa living in the plains’ districts demanded a scheduled tribe status and Tiwas living inside the Karbi Anglong and erstwhile North Cachar Hills too demanded the same. To be mentioned, originally Tiwa had been placed under the scheduled tribe (plains) list and Dimasa in the scheduled tribe (hills) list. However, in response to the prolonged agitation of the Dimasa and Tiwa organizations, the Union Government of India, in the year 2002, after consultation with the Assam government awarded Tiwas living inside Karbi Anglong Scheduled Tribe-Hills (ST Hills) status and Dimasa outside the two sixth scheduled hills district the much awaited scheduled tribe plains (ST Plains) status.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, colonial anthropology constructed many nomenclatures, terminologies

8 Manasjyoti Bordoloi, *op.cit.*, p44

9 Ibid., pp-45-46

and concepts related to ethnocentric identities in India. Use of some such terms in the post-colonial India has significantly created many serious problems. Benedict Anderson observed about British colonization and their impact on certain communities that, “census, the map, and the museum together, they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.”<sup>10</sup> Dharamsing Teron further observed that, “the modern or post-colonial census seems to be no different as Karbis are enumerated by race and religion only in the two hills districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao while those living in other parts of Assam are consigned to either ‘generic tribes’ or ‘general’ categories.”<sup>11</sup> The Karbis were found in many places of the North East when the British officers did the ethnography of tribes. Agitation of the plains Karbis for a scheduled tribe status is one such problem. The extension of ideas about what a tribe is from the colonial British administration to post-colonial India has made Karbi a divided community. In the post-colonial India, its identity has been fragmented as plains Karbi and hills Karbi. Significantly, Karbis dwelling in the plains, within the plains districts varies from place to place in traditional practices, dress and language. Variations may be seen between Karbis of Kamrup or Morigaon with that of Nagaon and Sonitpur in terms of attire, linguistic pattern and observance of festivals. Indeed, though ethnographically the Karbis dwelling in the plains are similar with the kith and kin of the two hills districts, yet the popularly used nomenclature ‘plains Karbi’, on colonial anthropological line attempts to divide the greater Karbi community into two halves as the Karbis of the hills and the same of the plains.<sup>12</sup>

The continued exclusion of the Karbi community from exercising their constitutional right to an Autonomous State as committed to them by the Parliament may only cause more internal tensions and conflict situations. It is legitimate for the Karbis as other indigenous groups do, to aspire for preserving their historical identities. Despite some progress over the last decade,

10 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: A Brilliant Exegesis on Nationalism, The Nation (Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism)*, Verso, London, Revised edition, 2006, pp-163-164.

11 Dharamsing Teron, *Karbi Studies*, Vol 2, Assam book Hive, Guwahati, 2011, pp-15-16.

12 Manasjyoti Bordoloi, *op.cit.*, p-47

indigenous people around the world continue to live in hardship and danger due to the failure of the state to uphold their fundamental rights. Indigenous people are being uprooted from their lands and communities as a consequence of discriminatory government policies, the impact of armed conflicts, and the actions of private economic interests. Cut off from resources and traditions vital to their welfare and survival, many indigenous people are unable to fully enjoy such human rights as the right to food, the right to health, the right to housing, or cultural rights. Instead they face marginalization, poverty, disease and violence- in some instances extinction as a people.<sup>13</sup> The area of conflicts between tribal and non-tribal people arises due to insurgency problems, the role of political leaders and economic exploitation. The competition for economic and political opportunities, control over land, the establishment of the ethnic homeland, insurgent groups or extremist groups fighting on behalf of their community, preservation of one's identity, custom and tradition, government policies, protection of territorial boundaries, the feeling of becoming minorities and so on are the causes of ethnic conflicts that have taken place in Assam.<sup>14</sup> There prevailed a sense of fear and insecurity among the Karbi ethnic groups regarding their position and also about their failure in the political set up of Karbi Anglong. It may be said that colonial anthropology, to a considerable extent, is responsible for the emergence of many ethnocentric issues in Assam. About its impact, mention may be made of the present fractured identities of the Karbi community as 'Plains Karbi' and the 'Hills Karbi'. Likewise, one may find that due to colonial anthropological notion of what a 'tribe' is, the plains dwelling Karbis have been, till today, are not being recognized as a Scheduled tribe by the Union Government of India. Again, as an impact of the colonial anthropology, population of Karbis living in the administratively accepted plains districts of Assam has been shown in the Census Reports of India as 'zero'.<sup>15</sup> They may be considered as stateless even though they have been living within the state since a long time. Such a luminal situation has contributed to the creation of a

13 Stephen Lynn, *The Construction of Indigenous Suspects: Militarization and the Gendered and Ethnic Dynamics of Human Rights Abuses in Southern Mexico*, quoted in Dharamsing Teron, *op.cit.*, p-171

14 Chayanika Gohain, *The Ethnic Identity of Karbi: Challenge of Ethnic Identity*, Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, October 2020, Vol 7, Issue 10, p-2982

15 Manasjyoti Bordoloi, *op.cit.*, p-49

'sense of alienation' in the mindset of the plains dwelling Karbis of Assam. To allay such sense of alienation, change of approaches to understand the practical situation by the government with an attitude that will be not overshadowed by the limitations over-imposed by the colonial anthropology may be need of the hour in the days to come.

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# Tribal Identity Crisis: Special Reference to Karbi Anglong District of Assam

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## Introduction:

Tribal Societies in India have a very ancient and alive history and heritage of their own. The tribals are enriched with their own ethnic and unique cultural, religious, social, economic, and political structure passed from generation to generation for centuries but also differ widely in their habitat, level of development, farming and cultivating process, traditional values, customs, beliefs, etc. which is exposures to the world. Diversity is a prominent characteristic of the tribals of Northeast India. Historical data abounds with the fact that the tribals were the original settler and their ancestors had occupied the land centuries ago. But their history has been the subject of exploitation, subjugation, and marginalization.<sup>1</sup>

The question of identity or in the broader sense the ethnic question is very complex in Northeast India in general and Karbi Anglong in Particular. Historically speaking, the Hills tribe of Northeast India was not part of India before the British colonialisation of the region. However, different tribes living in the North-eastern hill region had some trade relations with the neighbouring inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley. They maintained their own distinct tribal culture traditions, taboos, and social system which were quite different from those of the people of the valley. The major hill tribes of the undivided Assam were *Nagas, Mizos, Khasis, Garos, Karbis, and Dimasas*. They had their geographical areas which were perpetuated without significant interference from outside. This was due to their location in areas geographically isolated and

1 Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.35, No.47 (Nov.18-24,2000), pp.4087-4091

different from the Brahmaputra valley. Almost all the tribals are believed to be the miscellany of primitive or ancient Mongolian migrants to this region. They established themselves in their present homeland in the remotest place. Needless to say, the tribals are undoubtedly the original natives of Assam. Even in the non-tribals dominant Brahmaputra valley today, it was the *Bodo-Kachari* tribe who were the first civilization in a real sense and they are the first natives of the valley.<sup>2</sup> The Karbi tribe is one of the oldest tribes of Assam, enrich with rich cultural heritage, folklore, and traditions. *Bishnu Prasad Rabha*, the great revolutionary, and visionary, recognized the Karbis as the '*discoverer of Assam*'.<sup>3</sup> He lovingly conferred the '*Columbus*' title on the tribe.

The growth of the spirit of ethnicity or ethnic-self affirmation among various groups leads to the aspiration for a distinct identity for themselves. Generally, the ethnic groups with a small population and faced with the competition for continuation with the larger groups tend to suffer from an identity crisis. This question of the identity crisis of the ethnic groups impels them to choice to various sorts of ethnic movements for demanding either autonomy or separation from the larger groups with the soul objectives to preserve their distinct identity and in addition to manage their affair without interfacing with the larger group whom they feel as the invaders of their distinct ethnic identity.

The Karbi Anglong District is consisting of the two hill districts of present Assam, one is Karbi Anglong District and another is NC Hills (presently known as Dima Hasao). Initially, in 1951, when the districts were carved out were known as the United *Mikir* and *North Cachar* Hills. In the year 1952, both the Karbis and Dimasas were granted autonomy in the form of separate district Councils under the 6<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Present Karbi Anglong by then was a sub-division, namely, the *Mikir* Hills and this was further renamed as *Mikir* Hills district in the year 1971 by separating the North Cachar district from it. Since, 1976, the name of the district was changed to Karbi Anglong. Again in the year 1995, the union Government by granting more powers to the Autonomous District Council upgraded it to Karbi Anglong Autonomous

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2 Hussain. 1987:1329

3 'Bishnu Rabha Rachanavali' (p.59), Published by Suren Baishya on behalf of Bishnu Rabha Sunwarani Gobeshona Samity, Nalbari, 1982.

Council. A Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) tripartite was signed on November 25, 2011 between Government of India, Assam Government and United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), in New Delhi on Friday, under which the Karbi Anglong hill district will get more power and Rs.350 crore special financial packages over five years.

### **The objective of the study: -**

The key objectives of the present study are listed below:

1. To study the responsible factors that led to the identity crisis in Karbi society.
2. To study the impact of the assimilation process of Karbi tribe with other tribes and non-tribes of Northeast India.
3. To study the consequences of identity crisis in Karbi tribes.

### **Methodology: -**

The existing study is based on descriptive methods and followed by qualitative research. Both primary and secondary sources have been used for data collection. Primary data were collected through direct interviews and scheduled. The primary data has been collected through structured questionnaires and interview and observation methods. The secondary data were collected through different sources written documents such as books, periodicals, journals, magazines, autobiographies, encyclopaedias and official records etc. Purposive sampling has done for the appropriate data collection and the sample size was 200 households. Several relevant data have been collected from OKDISCD (*Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development*), Tribal Research Centre for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, library of Assam University Diphu Campus.

### **Operational definitions:**

**Identity:** According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, the word 'identity' originated in the late sixteenth century from the Latin word 'idem' which means 'same'. The term states the fact of being who or what a person or thing is, and it also implies the meaning of close similarity or affinity. <sup>4</sup> Identity is a collective

4 Sriratana, 2008

aspect of a set of characteristics that defines a person or a thing. It is a term that is both inclusive and exclusive because based on one's identity one can get included or excluded in a group. One can project a particular identity of his at one time and another one at another time or a collective of identities depending on the factors that might motivate one to do so or put him in an advantageous position as compared to the others.

**Karbi Tribe:** Karbi tribe is the dominant tribe of Karbi Anglong District. Karbis are also found in other parts of Assam as well as in the North-eastern part of India, and also some pockets of Karbis are inhabitants in Bangladesh. The Karbis belong to the greater Mongoloid racial stock. Linguistically they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. The Karbis are divided into three divisions, viz. *Ronghang*, *Chintong* and *Amri*. The Karbis have five clans namely *Terang*, *Teron*, *Engbee*, *Engti*, and *Timung*. The main occupations of the Karbi tribes are shifting cultivation, hunting, and food gathering. But in present scenario the Karbis are much more developed in all sphere of life, viz. educationally, economically, politically, socially etc. It is worth mentioning that the Karbis, who have been classed as a 'Scheduled tribe' by the census of India, occupy an important position among the tribal communities of Assam in particular and Northeast India in general. The Karbis are classed as 'Schedule tribe' in twin Karbi Anglong District of Assam not beyond the boundary so far. They constitute the third largest tribal community in Assam after the *Bodos* and the *Mishings* the Karbis are the principal tribal community in the Karbi Anglong District. The Karbi Anglong district is the largest district of Assam and has an Autonomous administrative system vested by the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India. Ethnically, they belong to the Indo-Mongoloid race and linguistically to the Tibeto-Burman family of languages.

### **Identity crisis and demand for autonomy /separation in Karbi Anglong:**

The study of identity crisis and the process of ethnic identity formation had shown background reasons that bound them to recognize in social order. Migration and immigration of various caste and tribe to the region is the most prominent factor of arising identity crisis issue. Karbi Anglong District of

Assam is sharing its border with *Golaghat* on the east and the north, *Meghalaya* and *Morigaon* District on the west District and *Nagaon*, *Dima Hasao District* and *Nagaland* state on the south, that provide the walkway to the migrants to enter the region. Influx of illegal immigrants into the district has drowned massive protest from the dominating tribal inhabitant of the District.<sup>5</sup>

The identity crisis among the Karbis began to take shape before the independence of the country when a section of the educated Karbis formed the 'Karbi Adorbar', the First national organization of the Karbis in 1946 to put forward the demand for the creation of a separate district for the ethnic group. *Samson Sing Engti* took the lead he was then serving as a Sub-inspector of schools in the then *Mikir Hills* tract and *Khorsing Terang*, the first MLA from the Karbi tribe who was elected to the Assam Legislation Assembly from the *Mikir Hill tract* in 1937. It is worth mentioning that the prime motto of the *Karbi Adorbar* was to unite the hitherto scattered Karbi inhabitant areas into a single political entity to preserve the separate ethnic identity (cultural, linguistic, and political) of the tribe. The issue of identity crisis surfaced with a renewed spirit among the Karbis, particularly in the post-independence period of the country and this ethnic identity crisis issue was responsible for giving rise to the demand for autonomy /statehood in the region.

The issue of the identity crisis of the Karbis found prominence in the politics of the district after the AGP government under the leadership of *Prafulla Kumar Mahanta* in 1985. Some of the ultra-nationalist policies followed by the AGP government were responsible for creating doubt among the tribal population scattered in different parts of Assam including Karbi Anglong and *N.C.Hills*. Particularly two moves of the AGP government created mass discontentment among the ethnic groups of the region which in a way led to the autonomy movement for the safeguard of tribal identity in Karbi Anglong District. These factors were

1. The Secondary Education Board of Assam (SEBA) Circular No. SEBA/AB/Syll.11/85-86/1, Dtd.28<sup>th</sup> February 1986, according to 'Clause Four' of which the Assamese language was introduced as a compulsory 'Third Language'.

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5 <https://nagalandpost.com>

2. Introduction to a new 'Language Policy Making' is mandatory to know the Assamese language for all recruitment in Government Services.<sup>6</sup>

In the aftermath of the SEBA circular of 28<sup>th</sup> May 1986 and the employment question relating to the recruitment to the government service, a large number of socio-political organizations of the district including the Congress party while expressing their strong resentment felt the need of launching the statehood movement in an organized and united manner. In this regard, the Karbi Anglong Tribal Youth Organisation (KATYO) convened a meeting of all the socio-political, cultural, and student organizations of Karbi Anglong at Diphu Indoor Stadium on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1986. The two districts considered the above policies of the Government as a violation of Bimola Prasad Chaliha's commitment to not making the knowledge of Assamese compulsory for recruitment of government service. The people of the hill district considered the above move as the conspiracy of the AGP to impose Assamese culture among the ethnic communities of the district. A cross-section of people, ruling politicians, elderly politicians, and student association leaders of the region were agitated over the policies of the AGP government. Against the backdrop of such discontent among the people of the hill district, Congress leaders of Karbi Anglong and NC Hills decided to strengthen the autonomous state movement in the region.

The background behind the non-tribal and tribal conflict is some kind of economic exploitation, abolition of natural recourses by non-tribals, cultural assimilation, imposing rights over tribal land, decreasing the reservation of native tribals over their land, cultural hegemony, etc.

Additionally, from the research work, it has been found that in Karbi society, the traditional political system was run by the village council, and their traditional parliament is called Pinpomer. Eventually, a new modern political system started to take place in Karbi Anglong District during the Post-independence period, which eliminates the traditional political system from the mainstream of the society. Presently, a modern political system is found all over the Karbi Anglong District. Research shows that the youth generation is very rarely known about the original traditional political system of the Karbis. In terms of religion,

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6 L.R.Choudhury, the Echo, website: [www.theecho.in](http://www.theecho.in)

research shows that the Karbis are originally animists. Their ancestors followed the animistic form of religion. But in the present scenario, we see the existence of other religions like *Christianity*, *Bhaktitam*, *Buddhism*, *Sat Sangh*, *Ramakrishna Mission*, etc. Since the arrival of colonial rulers and the Christian missionaries, the impact of Christianity rooted among a greater section of Karbis. In recent years, many Karbis have accepted new faiths like – *Aron Kimi*, which is an outcome of the religious movement of Hinduism to the fore-such as, ‘*Lokhimon*’, a variation of *Vaishnavism* founded by *Kurusar Lokhon Engti Hensek*. Apart from that *Bhaktitom* trust was founded by *Ambika Tokbipi*, *Sat Sangh* (A reform of Hinduism founded by *Thakur Anukul Chandra*) including the *Honghari* religion of the Karbis.

The Karbi folklore, culture, and literature have gone through tremendous changes with the advent of Christianity. The Karbi people had to abandon many of their age-old customary laws once they accepted Christ into their lives. However, it is a grave concern that, with modernism, the Karbi society in the present context is marching towards a situation of ‘loss of cultural identity’.

In ‘Karbi Studies’ Vol-2, *Dharamsing Teron*, an eminent Karbi writer, and follower of animist faced a real crisis when he is required to give a mandatory declaration of his religion in an official or legal document, say for instance, filling up a census data. Such a situation grips him with a sense of imminent loss of identity as he forcibly submits it to the dominant culture.<sup>7</sup> Reinforcing his fear and reminding him of the stark reality. The 2001 Census of India has surprisingly recorded a sweeping 84.64% of the Karbis as Hindu. If the figure is not taken to be true, the situation for many animist Karbis becomes all the more vulnerable, as the vast majority of them are not ‘Hindus’, since the days of their forefathers. Thus, it seems that the traditional faith of the Karbis i.e., the animistic form of worship is in danger if further steps are not taken to gain its legal status in legal documents. As a result, many Karbis conceive of themselves to be followers of Hinduism, confusing themselves with the status of their original faith because of the imposition imposed on them by the legal documents and saying they are Hindus.

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7 Lartaso Terangpi, IJCRT.ORG. ISSN-2320-2882.

There is a separate provision in Assam for the administration of land in hill districts, i.e. North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong District. In the hill districts, the land is owned communally and no individual has a transferable right to land. The study has revealed that in Karbi Anglong District, the formal transfer of land to the non-tribals is very nominal but the actual transfer is large. In Karbi Anglong District, the 1974 report has found that temporary alienation of lands from the hands of the tribals to the non-tribals in the shape of *Paikas*, *Sukti Bandhak*, *Khoi Bandhak*, *Mena*, etc. is increasing at a very frightening rate. It goes on to warn that within the next few years, this temporary alienation of land might lead to a complete distortion of the tribal economy if it is not nipped in the bud.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, it can be summed up that the identity crisis issue in Karbi Anglong district the contention of Karbi identity and autonomy movement lead to a unique and complicated situation. The provision of the 'Memorandum of Understanding'(1995) and 'Memorandum of Settlements'(2011), when put into practice proved to be insufficient to fulfil the ethnic aspirations of the Karbis and the demand for autonomous separate state is still waiting to come to a logical end, although the provision is there under the Art.244(A) in the constitution of India. The spontaneous mass response that the issue of autonomy/separation received is a clear indication of the fact that aspiration for autonomy/separation intently persists among the members of the ethnic group as they are highly conscious about the preservation of their distinct socio-cultural and political identity. Under such conditions, the issue requires sensitive and delicate handling by the both the government of state and the central. The foremost step in finding a solution to the issue is to understand their aspiration and respect their cultural, economic, and social identity.

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# Effectiveness of the Government of India's Developmental Policies on the Tribal People of Assam: An Analytical Study

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## **Introduction:**

The tribal communities are known as the first origin of the earth. They are considered as the indigenous people of the society. They have more or less same pattern of living with different culture, customs, traditions, language and faith from one group to another. The term “tribe” originated around the time of the Greek city states and the formation of early Roman Empire. The Latin term “tribus” has been transformed to a meaning as “a group of persons forming a community and claiming descent from a common ancestor”. The google search engine describe tribe as “a social division in a traditional society consisting of families or communities linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, with a common culture and dialect, typically having a recognized leader”. Similarly Cambridge dictionary define tribe as a group of people, related families who live together, sharing the same language, culture and history especially those who do not live in cities or towns. Tribals are considered as one of the most significant communities in Assam. They are the huge contributor in overall growth of Assam. Most of the Tribal people in Assam are living in the remote areas. Some of them are cut off from the main stream of the state. The Central government and the state government of Assam have been taking various initiatives, policies and schemes for the welfare of the tribal people.

## **Objectives:**

1. To study the schemes, initiatives and policies taken by the Government of India for the Tribal people.

2. To analyze the effectiveness of all schemes, initiatives and policies on the tribal people of Assam

### **Research Methodology:**

The present study is based on availability of primary sources such as Government of India's documents, Government of Assam's documents, and all official documents from online sources. The primary sources are supported by secondary sources such as newspaper, journal, books, research articles and other online sources.

### **Government of India's developmental Initiatives and Policies:**

The population of tribals in India is around 8.2 per cent of the total population living in the country. Most of the tribal population lives in the states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Northeast India. According to the ministry of tribal affairs, there are 705 tribal groups notified by the government of India. There is maximum number of tribal communities with 62 in Odisha than any other states of the country. Seventy Five groups has been kept under the category of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) living in various parts of the country (GOL 2020).

### **Tribal Development in Pre-independence Era :**

Britishers ruled India for almost 200 years. During the colonial period different policies had been formulated and implemented by the britishers. All policies are according to the requirement, more or less in the interest of the colonial rule. The tribal community is the integral part of Indian society lives in forest and hilly areas. They were living more isolated life from the mainstream society than present time. For the tribal development, the British government formulated different policies in the form of acts that can be understood in three different approaches. Those approaches are such as isolationist approach, assimilation approach and integration approach.

For sake of the checking the deforestation and other forest affairs to have monopoly rights of the state over forest, the Indian forest act of 1865 and later on the act of 1878 were formulated. The government action affected the tribal's

and also non tribals as their rights over natural resources had been compromised. Because of that the tribal had access to the forest only at the mercy of British rulers. It gave rise to revolts and conflicts in the tribal areas and the people did not cooperate with the activities of the Forest Department (Pati and Dash 2002). The British government noticed the difficulties in administration of the wide spread tribal areas of the country. So they also adopted the isolation and segregation approach for the effective administrative control over tribal areas. It is also to protect and preserve tribal life and culture against the aggregation and exploitation of the advanced communities of the outside world. In order to bring the tribal community under special administrative control the then British government brought some specific provisions by formulating the Scheduled district act of 1875. Under the government of India act, 1919, the tribal areas were again divided into wholly excluded areas and area of modified exclusion (Shukla 2017).

### **Tribal Development in Post independence Era :**

Right after the independence, the government of India focused on the overall development of the country including various sectors such as industries, major dams, mining and various other developmental projects to boost the economy through five year plans. Aside from this the government was also much concerned about the affairs related to tribal's and accordingly formulated different policies and programs for the development of tribal community as a whole. The makers of Indian constitution felt the need of special treatment for the schedule tribes and it framed accordingly so that a developmental framework can be arranged for the downtrodden people of India. The Ministry of tribal affairs was set up in 1999 to look after all the affairs related to schedules tribes in India. The government of India took various steps for the development of the tribal people, making special provision of schedule areas in the formation of various constitutional bodies like National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

The National Commission Schedule Tribe is a constitutional body formed to look after the various issues faced by the tribal people and to hear their grievances. Initially, there was a single commission for Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes under the article 338 of the Indian constitution. It was only

in the year 2004, when National Commission for Schedule Tribe was separated from National Commission for Schedule Caste by the 89th amendment act of 2003. It also included a new article 388A in the constitution of India. Moreover, the constitution of India provides for a number of provisions under different articles for socio-economic and educational development and to preserve the tribal culture, language, tradition and customs of tribal communities living in India.

### **Constitutional Provisions for the Tribal People :**

The makers of the Indian constitution were aware of the fact that the tribal community in India needs special provision in the constitution to establish social justice and empowerment. Therefore several special provisions were made in the constitution for the overall development and to connect the tribal community to the mainstream India. Under the article 366(25) of Indian Constitution, the term “Schedule tribe” defined as “such tribes or tribal communities or parts as are deemed under article 342 to be schedule tribes for the purposes of this constitution”. The President of India has the constitutional power to specify or declare tribal communities or groups to be scheduled in relation to any state or union territory after consulting the governor of the concern region under Article 342. According to the articles 244 and 244(a), there are provisions for the fifth and sixth schedule for the special administration of the tribal people. The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 was introduced in the fifth schedule areas to secure local self governance by the tribal people. The constitution also provides for no prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Art. 15), Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Art. 16), Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc. (Art. 19), Promotion of Educational and Economic interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections (Art. 46). Under the article 338 A, the National Commission for Schedule Tribes was set up to look after the affairs related to Schedule tribes (GOI, 2015). These are some of the constitutional provisions made by the government of India for the Tribal People.

## **Initiatives and Policies :**

Formulation and implementation of equitable policies are the primary responsibilities of a state to give justice for the poor section of people living in the society. There are large number of tribal people are in India as compared to any other countries of the world. In order to accomplish the objectives of the development of the tribal's according to the constitution, the government has made several schemes, policies and programs for the overall development of the community.

### **Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS):**

Since 1977-78, Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS) is grant from Government of India. It is charged to Consolidated Fund of India(except grants for North Eastern States, a voted item) and it is an additive to State Plan funds and efforts for Tribal Development through schemes on education, infrastructure and livelihood pattern and it is important to address critical gaps. The tribal sub-plan is now called a schedule tribe component at central level is a dedicated source of funding tribal development across the country. A Scheme is called "Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Tribal Sub Scheme (TSS), also comes under umbrella scheme. The grant is used for economic growth of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Modified Area Development Approach (MADA), Clusters, Integrated Tribal Development Agency and dispersed tribal population. SCA to TSS covers 23 States viz- Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (GoI 2019a). Yet, in reality, the central assistance limited to some sate only.

### **Grant in Aid to Voluntary Organizations working for welfare of STs:**

There are many gaps among the tribal groups in the context lacking in administration in the tribal region, in the field of health, education, drinking water facilities, agro-horticultural productivity, social security and many more.

The prime target of the scheme is to achieve all the above goals and fill all the gaps. With the help of voluntary organizations, the scheme sets up an environment for socio-economic upliftment and the overall development of the Schedule tribes. It gives financial assistance to every innovative ideas and activities which has direct impact on the socio-economic development and livelihood patter of the schedule tribes. Through this scheme, the grant is given to any registered voluntary organization and nongovernmental organization who have been involved in the conduct and promotion of the welfare of the schedule tribes and they are registered under the Societies Registration act, 1860 for at least three years. Regular monitoring is also conducted by the appropriate authorities on regular basis over the utilization of funds granted by the government of India (GOI 2008 a).

### **Institutional Support for Development & Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce:**

Indian government grants aids to the State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations (STDCCs) and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd, a multi state cooperative under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The main objective of the initiative is to provide production, product development and preservation of traditional heritage support of tribal forest products and agricultural products and comprehensive support to the tribal people across the nation. Funds are important to carry out the above activities provides the tribal people a better infrastructure, design development, dissemination of pricing information, purchasing of products and support of government agencies for the sustainable marketing. The main objective of the scheme is to give institutional support to the products of schedule tribes and it also helps in advertising and development of activities for their livelihood. All are accomplished by some specific measures such as market intervention, training and skill up-gradation of tribal artisans and many more(GOI 2014).

### **Scheme of Centers of Excellence:**

The main aim of the scheme is to support and strengthen universities and reputed institutions with potential including NGOs, Registered professional organizations and autonomous bodies which works in the fields of tribal

development and research. The primary objective of the scheme is (i) To develop and fortify the institutional resource capabilities of various research institutes, NGOs and University Departments to conduct qualitative, action oriented and policy research on tribal communities (ii) To improve and upgrade the existing skills, knowledge of the NGOs, Research Institutes and University Departments so that they may be able to uphold the cultural diversity of the Scheduled Tribes of the country and their empowerment. (iii) To improve the efficiency of existing institutions for preparing appropriate strategies for tribal development with the corporation of Ministry of Tribal Affairs (GOI 2020b).

### **Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe Girls in Low Literacy Districts :**

The scheme targets to close the literacy gap between the general female population and tribal women by facilitating 100% enrolment of tribal women in identified areas or blocks and especially in areas those are affected by naxal. The scheme is implemented by Voluntary Organizations (VOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and autonomous bodies of the State or Union Territory Administration. The Panchayat Raj agency is also involved in monitoring the scheme (GoI 2008b).

### **Vocational Training in Tribal Areas :**

The scheme is launched to empower tribal people who are the most marginalized part of the society. It provides more employment opportunities and income generation opportunities to help socio-economic development of tribals. The regular inspections conducted by district collectors, commissioners, institutional authority in prescribed format. Furthermore, the concern ministry from central government also keeps a watch on the progress of the scheme (GOI 2009).

### **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Hostels for ST boys and ST Girls :**

The objective of the scheme is to provide hostels for the boys and girls belonging to scheduled tribes in different schools, colleges and universities under central, state or union territory administration. The main aim of the scheme is to provide hostels for the boys and girls belonging to the tribal groups in different schools, colleges and universities under the central and state government under the union

territory. Under the article 16 of Indian constitution provides for formulating special provisions for the socio-economic development of the deprived section of the society. The scheme helps in the eradication of low literacy rate and drop outs of tribal students. The agency which implemented the scheme give a quarterly report to the ministry of tribal affairs till the completion of the project (GOI 2020 c).

### **National Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students :**

From the academic year 2007-08, the scheme was started to encourage meritorious ST students to pursue courses at graduate and post graduate level in identified Government and Private Institutions of excellence in the professional fields such as Management, Medicine, Engineering, Information and technology, law and so on. The scheme provides full tuition fee with maximum of 2.5 lakhs per annum with living expenses of 2200/- per month 3000/- per annum for books and stationeries and 45,000/- one time grant for computer accessories (GoI 2017b).

All the above are some of the centrally sponsored scheme for the tribals.

### **Government of Assam's Welfare schemes for the Tribals :**

#### ***Schemes under State Plan***

- (i) Pre-matric Scholarship for ST : This is a State Govt. scheme where 100% fund is provided by the Govt. of Assam.
- (ii) Assam Bikash Yojana & CM's Special Employment Generation Programme :- Under the scheme, fund Programme were allocated for self employment of ST unemployed youths. Various schemes are taken up for generating self employment to ST unemployed youths.
- (iii) Grants to patients suffering from TB/Cancer and other malignant diseases:  
- The aim of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to those poor scheduled tribe patient was who are suffering from TB/Cancer and other malignant diseases and unable to bear the cost of medicines for their treatment.
- (iv) Grants to ST meritorious students: under this scheme financial incentive is

provided to meritorious ST students who have secured 60% and above in HSLC and HSSLC examinations.

- (v) Stipend for Craftsman Training: This is a state scheme and stipend is provided to the students of Scheduled Tribes who are admitted in the ITI's of Assam

All the above are the state plan schemes made by the Government of Assam (GOA 2023).

### ***Centrally Sponsored Schemes***

- (i) Post-matric Scholarship: The scheme is meant for ST(P) students. It is a centrally sponsored scheme fully funded by the Govt. of India.
- ii) Book Bank for Medical, Engineering and Agriculture etc. students: - Scheduled Tribe student studying in various technical institution are provided books under this scheme on 50:50 cost sharing basis between Govt. of India and Govt. of Assam.
- iii) Construction of Boy's Hostel:-This is a centrally sponsored scheme on 50:50 cost sharing basis between Govt. of India and the State Govt.
- iv) Construction of Girls Hostel: This is a centrally sponsored scheme with 100% central fund.
- v) Minor Forest produce: Under this scheme, fund is released by Govt. of India to State Tribal Development Corporations i.e. APTDC Ltd. to provide incentives to tribal who are engaged in procuring and sale of minor forest produce.
- vi) Coaching to ST for Central/State Civil Service Examination & other allied services. - Vocational Training through VTCs (Central Sector Scheme)- There are 10 Nos. of VTC in different district which are run by the ATDA, where training is provided to 1000 nos. of trainees in five nos. of trades every year. - Up-gradation of merit of ST students: - This is a central sector scheme with 100% central assistance from Govt. of India. The objective of the scheme is to up-grade the merit of ST student through special tuition in various Educational Institutions in Assam.

All the above are the centrally sponsored scheme for the tribal people of Assam(GOA 2023).

### **Effectiveness of all Developmental Policies, Initiatives and Schemes :**

Despite the schemes, initiatives and policies taken by the Central government and the State government of Assam, tribals are still deprived of their basic requirement in their day to day life. They are not only socio-economically and politically backward but also they face discrimination at large scale despite the constitutional provision. From the land alienation to the force displacement from their dwelling place, they have been exploited in many forms especially in the name of development. Tribal's lives are tied with the forest or nature and their tradition, custom and culture has a close connection with the forest. But the act of the government seems to be eliminating them from the access to the forest which is like a fish without water as the identities of the tribals are lies with water, forest and land( Jal, Jangal and Jamin). Despite the fact that the Forest Rights Act, 2006 gave the provision for certain rights to the tribal with regard to access the forest and its product. But it seems to be more in pen and paper and a big gap has been observed especially in the part of implementation. After the independence of 72 years, the condition of tribal community is not up to the mark as the country is growing rapidly.

The major issue towards the sustainable development of tribal community is the lack of awareness of policies and programmes made for the tribal people. According to the census of 2011, the government data states that the literacy rate among tribals is 59 percent. But it is a harsh reality that majority of the tribal's are still lacking in educational sector. In the early stage they left out their education and they don't have much knowledge about the policies and programs made for them and are unaware of their rights (Minz 2020). The social and economic backwardness is an important factor behind the emergence of the tribal ethnic nationalism in Assam. The problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy are acute among these peoples which led to the degradation of the overall living standard of these communities. Unemployment is a major problem which led to poverty and indebtedness and overall deterioration of living standard despite the unemployment scheme made by the Government of Assam.

The tribal people lack proper health care facilities, sanitation and safe drinking water. They don't have the access to safe drinking water. Similarly access to toilet facility and electricity is also not encouraging. Some of the other problems faced by the tribal people of the state can be mentioned as: identity crisis, land alienation, unemployment, ethnic conflicts, insurgency, witch-hunting, emergence of a rent seeking class, inter-caste inequality, multiculturalism etc. Witch-hunting is another problem faced by the tribal peoples especially for women rights despite the promotion of education by the government in the context of girls education. In this context, witch hunting, menace of dowry, absence of equal status to the women folk is also visible problems of tribal. The impact of globalization can also be noticed in case of the tribals especially, in culture. The threat of globalization to culture, norms and values are now visible (Buragohain)

For most of the Tribal people in Assam, agriculture is the main source of livelihood. But due to various reasons they are losing their land holdings. Apart from large scale encroachment by the immigrants, business communities for the purpose of industrial establishment, there are some local practices like Sukti, Bandhoki, Paiks etc. Due to poverty they have to sale their land through these systems to meet the needs of money. These policies of the Government have encouraged the tribal elites to raise new movements for more powers after achieving one stages of power. Moreover, due to this aspiration of power of the tribal leaders, the unity and integrity of the state has been shaken. A major problem in agriculture is the limited scope of setting accessibility and lack of knowledge in modern agriculture as they are not aware about the many new techniques of agriculture (Dewri 2018).

The status of the tribal children and women of the state is also better than their national counterparts. But they do not have access safe drinking water, toilet facilities, electricity and other facilities. Government has now provided various schemes and policies like Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY), Integrated Tribal Development Projects/Agency (ITDP) etc. for tribal development. But the real benefits are restricted to a few people only. Poor and illiterate people deprived from these opportunities.

## **Analysis :**

There are many policies and initiatives for the development of the Tribal people including central sponsored schemes such as constitutional provisions, Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS), Grants-in-aid under the Constitution, Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Grant in Aid to Voluntary Organizations working for welfare of STs, Institutional Support for Development & Marketing of Tribal Products/Produce, Support to Tribal Research Institutes (TRI), Scheme of Centers of Excellence, Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs), Strengthening Education among Scheduled Tribe Girls in Low Literacy Districts, Vocational Training in Tribal Areas, Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Hostels for ST boys and ST Girls, Pre-Matric (Class IX and X) and Post Matric Scholarship (PMS), National Scholarship for Higher Education of ST Students and all the Government of Assam's Welfare schemes for the Tribals. and all these schemes are based on health, education, employment opportunities but still most of the tribal people are facing issues in daily basis. Some of the state sponsored scheme such as Pre-matric Scholarship for ST, Assam Bikash Yojana & CM's Special Employment Generation Programme, Grants to patients suffering from TB/Cancer and other malignant diseases, Grants to ST meritorious students, Stipend for Craftsman Training, Post-matric Scholarship, Book Bank for Medical, Engineering and Agriculture etc. But despite the availability of all the scheme tribals are facing health issues, lack of knowledge of technology including agricultural problems and other challenges in their socio-economic sector. Therefore it can be said that the policies, schemes and initiatives taken by the Central Government and State government of Assam are not effective for the welfare and development of tribal people in Assam.

## **Conclusion :**

Development of the Tribal communities should be given top most priority by the Government in Assam. Every Government undertakes various development schemes for the development of the tribal peoples. But due to misuse of funds, corruption and lack of awareness among the Tribal peoples, it hinders the development process. Moreover the Autonomous administrative systems are

also fails to bring the expected change in the Tribal communities. So, proper study and research is need of the hour now. Tribals are hard working people and they can do everything including agriculture activities to hunting by practicing traditional method. They can also make medicines by preparing herbs and found in the jungle to cure various diseases. They lived in self-contained manner and neglect outer influences. So, scholars advised them to keep confined in National Parks or reserve areas to bring consciousness among them. If this is done they would surely come out in the mainstream of the society. They will have to participate in social, political and economic field for their development. They would have to completely abandon their some traditional method of activities which stand in the way of their development. Regarding health sector, most of the tribal people are still believer of traditional method rather than modern techniques of medicines. That needs to be strengthened and it can only be possible by improving literacy rate among the tribals. The policies of the government should not only focus on tribal development but it also need to focus on sustainable development of tribes with their rich culture, customs, traditions and language as the identity of the tribal people lies with their distinct culture and traditions which they have inherited from their ancestors. In this era of globalization, the tribal community is in urgent need of some specific policies and programs in order to protect and preserve their culture and identity as well as their overall development.

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# **The Effects of the Changing Political Parties and Their Ideologies on Tribal Society: A Case Study of Karbi Anglong**

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## **Introduction:**

This research paper investigates the intersection of politics and tribal society, specifically focusing on the effects of shifting political parties and ideologies in Karbi Anglong district of Assam, India. The Karbi Anglong district, named after the dominant tribe in the region –the Karbis, provides an ideal setting to explore the dynamics between politics and tribal communities, given its rich socio-political history and tribal cultural diversity.

Historically, the political landscape of Karbi Anglong has been shaped by a myriad of influences, from local tribal-centric politics to mainstream national ideologies. This political evolution has inevitably affected the societal structures, cultural norms, and economic practices of the region's tribal communities. However, the multifaceted impact of such political transformations has yet to be comprehensively explored. This paper aims to fill this research gap.

## **The study is guided by the following research objectives:**

1. To analyze the evolution of political parties and ideologies in Karbi Anglong and their effect on tribal society.
2. To understand how political shifts have influenced inter-communal relations, traditional practices, resource allocation, and developmental initiatives.
3. To investigate the response of tribal leaders, community organizations, and

traditional institutions to the changing political landscape.

This paper posits that political shifts, while contributing to the visibility and representation of tribal communities in broader political discourse, may also introduce challenges such as the potential dilution of tribal-specific issues and cultural erosion. By exploring this hypothesis, the paper aims to shed light on the complexities of politics and tribal societies, thus contributing to more informed, inclusive, and context-specific policy making.

### **Review of Literature:**

The interaction between political ideologies and tribal societies has been a subject of scholarly interest for many years. Previous literature in this field presents a vast array of perspectives and findings, thus providing a robust foundation for research studies

To begin, studies by Verma (1998) and Shyamal (2006) detail the evolution of political ideologies in India's tribal regions, giving substantial attention to the traditional tribal-centric politics in the northeast. These studies shed light on the early phase of political development in tribal societies, which revolved around autonomy, cultural preservation, and regional development. Their findings provide critical insights into the initial political ideologies that influenced the tribal communities of Karbi Anglong.

Furthermore, the works of Sharma (2007) and Jha (2013) focus on the transition of tribal politics towards mainstream ideologies, with particular emphasis on the influence of national parties like the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). They highlight the resulting socio political changes in tribal societies, making a compelling case for the exploration of this impact in the specific context of Karbi Anglong.

Another important area covered in the literature relates to the implications of political ideologies on tribal societies. Studies by Das (2010) and Choudhury (2015) elucidate the various effects of these ideological shifts, from changes in traditional practices and inter communal relations to variations in resource allocation and development initiatives. These works underscore the multifaceted impact of politics on tribal communities, providing a useful framework to

analyze the case of Karbi Anglong.

Additionally, several ethnographic works have provided rich accounts of the tribal societies in Karbi Anglong. These include studies by Terang (2007) and Bhat (2019), which delve in to the culture, customs, and societal norms of the Karbi tribe. Their works offer valuable cultural context, forming a crucial part of the socio-cultural analysis of our research.

However there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the comprehensive understanding of the influence of political parties and their shifting ideologies on the tribal societies of Karbi Anglong. Our research aims to bridge this gap by providing a detailed exploration of the topic.

Thus, the existing body of literature offers substantial groundwork for our study. It provides valuable theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and empirical findings, which inform our research design and analysis. However, our research seeks to build on these works by contributing new insights and a more nuanced understanding of the influence of political ideologies on tribal societies in Karbi Anglong.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

Our study draws upon a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework that incorporates concepts from political science, sociology, and anthropology to analyze the influence of political party changes and ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong.

The first key theoretical concept we utilize is from political science: the theory of political ideology. Political ideology, as postulated by scholars like Michael Freedman, refers to a complex set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas that underlie political actions and policies. Understanding political ideology allows us to comprehend why parties behave the way they do and how they influence societal structure and norms.

Next, we apply the sociological concept of social change to understand how shifts in political ideologies can trigger transformations within society. As

theorized by sociologists like Neil Smelser, social change involves alteration in the basic structures of a social group or society. By integrating this concept, we can investigate how changes in political ideologies impact social structures, relations, and practices within the tribal society of Karbi Anglong.

Third, we use the anthropological concept of culture to assess how changing political ideologies affect the traditional practices, customs, and beliefs of the Karbi tribe. Culture, as defined by anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, comprises the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through socialization. Thus, this concept helps us to examine the influence of political shifts on the cultural fabric of the tribal community.

Lastly, the concept of tribal politics and its implications for tribal societies forms a crucial part of our theoretical framework. Tribal politics, as studied by scholars like Virginius Xaxa, entails the political systems, behaviors, and ideas inherent in tribal societies. This concept enables us to appreciate the uniqueness of the political landscape in tribal regions like Karbi Anglong.

This multi-disciplinary theoretical framework will guide our exploration of the complex dynamics between shifting political ideologies and their effects on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong. The integration of these concepts will facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the political, social, and cultural transformations within the tribal community amidst changing political landscapes.

## **Methodology:**

To address the effects of changing political parties and their ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong, this research employs a qualitative methodology focused on document analysis.

### **1. Data Collection:**

The primary data for this study will be gathered from a variety of documentary sources:

- **Government Reports and Records:** We will analyze government reports, policy documents, and records related to Karbi Anglong. These may include official records on political party developments, developmental initiatives,

resource allocation, tribal demographics, inter-communal relations, and tribal affairs.

- **Media Reports:** Newspaper articles, editorials, and online news resources will be studied to understand public discourse and media narratives around political changes in Karbi Anglong and their impact on the tribal society.
- **Academic Research and Publications:** Existing academic literature, research papers, and books on the politics of Karbi Anglong, tribal societies, and political ideologies will be thoroughly examined. This will provide a theoretical and historical context to the research.
- **Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Reports:** Reports and publications by NGOs working in the region can offer valuable insights on ground realities, challenges, and community responses to political shifts.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

While document analysis does not typically involve human participants, it is essential to approach the documents respectfully, acknowledging the context in which they were produced and ensuring that interpretations and representations are fair and accurate.

This methodology of document analysis allows us to comprehensively study the effects of changing political parties and their ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong over time and across various sectors. It provides a robust framework for analyzing existing information from a multitude of sources, resulting in a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic.

### **Political Parties in Power: Ideologies, Policies and Impacts on the Tribal Society of Karbi Anglong :**

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council, established under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution on June 23, 1952, has been a pivotal institution in shaping the political, social, and economic landscape of the region. The Council, with a rich history of nine General Elections up until 2001, plays an instrumental role in executing political ideologies and formulating policies

that directly influence the tribal community's welfare.

Before the independence of India, the region, then known as 'Mikir Hills Tract', was classified as a 'Partially Excluded Area', following the 'Government of India Act, 1935'. Notably, the first election for a single seat in the Provincial Assembly took place in 1937 and 1945, with late Khorsing Terang emerging as the first elected legislator.

The period post-independence marked a significant turning point in Karbi Anglong's political timeline, with regular elections being conducted since 1952. A vital shift came after the formation of Meghalaya in 1972, which led to the establishment of separate parliamentary seats for both Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills.

From its inception until 1978, the District Council enjoyed a phase of stability under the governance of the Congress. On 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1946, Karbi Adorbar emerged as an organization representing the Karbi people. Sarsing Teron was appointed as the first president and Semson Sing Ingti as the general secretary of the newly formed organization. Its aim was to demand for a separate Mikir Hills district and to prepare cultural, political and geographical map, of Karbi Anglong. The regional party 'Karbi Adorbar', initially in alliance with the ruling Congress, lost power to the Janata Dal in the 1978 elections. A shift in power was again witnessed in 1984 as independent non-Congress candidates gained the majority, many of whom later defected to Congress.

An important development in the political landscape of Karbi Anglong was the rise of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) in 1986. The Autonomous State Demand Committee mainly focused on the left-leaning ideology and its main demand being an establishment of an Autonomous State for the Karbi people. It effectively ended the Congress monopoly by securing a majority in the Council, winning 22 out of 26 elective constituencies. Their dominance was reflected in the following 1996 elections, with ASDC retaining a similar win margin, leaving Congress with just one seat. During its rule, the ASDC, focused on road connectivity, Construction of B.Ed. College, recreation Park, development of tourism in Silbeta.

However, a split within ASDC in 2000 facilitated the return of Congress to power after a hiatus of 12 years. In the 2001 Autonomous Council elections, Congress won 13 seats while ASDC retained 10 and CPI(ML) secured 2. The 14<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Elections in 2002 saw Congress securing the lone seat for the two hill districts. Post-2000, ASDC and CPI (ML) have seen a continued decline against the Congress.

In the 2014 general elections, the 'Modi Wave' swept the nation. BJP won a total of 282 seats in the Lok Sabha. This wave not only gained an overall support from the general masses but also from the schedule tribes and scheduled castes. The party made use of populist slogans during the election campaign such as "Abki baar Modi Sarkar", "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" which was a huge success in securing the interest of the masses. After securing a majority in the Lok Sabha, the BJP government implemented several policies in the social and economic sector. Some of these schemes and policies are Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Demonetization, Goods and Services Tax (GST), Jan Dhan Yojana, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, and Smart cities mission.

Over the past two decades, there's been a noticeable increase in political awareness among Karbi Anglong's electorate, with a growing interest in national and international affairs. The contemporary electorate critically evaluates parties, candidates, and their voting records. However, the lack of access to information remains a significant hindrance.

### **Case Studies:**

In order to understand the impacts of shifting political party ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong more concretely, we delve in to two distinct case studies.

**Case Study1:** The Impact of Autonomous Councils on Karbi Anglong's Development\*\*

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) was established under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, providing the Karbi Anglong region with a degree of political autonomy. This local governance structure has been mainly driven by local political parties, who have emphasized tribal identity,

cultural preservation, and regional autonomy.

An analysis of the policies and initiatives under the KAAC showed that there was a clear focus on the preservation of tribal culture and language, with measures like the establishment of a cultural research institute and the promotion of the Karbi language in schools.

However, the local political dynamics also led to certain negative consequences. The region faced significant challenges in terms of economic development, with issues like inadequate infrastructure, lack of investment, and high rate of unemployment.

### **Case Study2:** The Entry of National Political Parties in Karbi Anglong

With the entry of national parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), there was a shift in the political landscape of Karbi Anglong. The focus widened beyond tribal-centric issues to broader national and state-level concerns.

An analysis of the BJP's tenure in the region showed an increase in development projects, including road infrastructure, education, and health facilities. However, it also revealed a potential dilution of tribal-specific issues and concerns. For instance, the push for the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) by the BJP faced significant opposition in Karbi Anglong due to concerns over the potential influx of non-tribal populations and the subsequent impact on the region's demographic composition.

In both case studies, the impacts of changing political parties and their ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong are evident. They showcase how political shifts can lead to transformations in social structures, inter-communal relations, and developmental initiatives, thereby impacting the overall welfare and development of the region.

### **Discussion:**

The role of political parties and their shifting ideologies in influencing tribal societies is a complex and multifaceted issue. In the context of Karbi Anglong, the influence of various political parties over time has been pervasive and transformative.

With the rise of local political parties and their ideologies rooted in tribal identity cultural preservation, and regional autonomy, the tribal societies in Karbi Anglong initially saw a period of increased focus on tribal rights and traditions. However, these political shifts also sparked a sense of ethnic consciousness among the Karbi tribe, which has had both positive and negative impacts.

On the positive side, this has led to a stronger sense of unity and identity among the Karbi people. It has also led to increased representation in political discourse and decision-making. On the negative side, the heightened focus on tribal identity as sometimes led to conflicts with non-tribal residents and other tribes, affecting inter-communal relations.

The entry of mainstream national parties like the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) marked another shift in the political ideologies influencing the region. While these parties brought a broader national perspective, there is concern that tribal specific issues may have been sidelined, leading to a potential dilution of tribal concerns. This shift has also resulted in significant changes in the allocation of resources and developmental initiatives, influencing economic practices and social structures within the tribal communities.

Interviews with tribal leaders and community organization representatives revealed mixed responses to these political shifts. While some welcome the broader perspective and developmental focus of national parties, others worry about the erosion of traditional practices and customs. The tribal leaders and institutions have been negotiating these political shifts, seeking to leverage the benefits while mitigating the potential drawbacks.

The review and analysis of government reports, media articles, and academic literature reinforced these findings. It is evident that the effects of changing political parties and ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong are significant and multifaceted. They have influenced the social, cultural, economic, and political dynamics of the region, and these effects continue to shape the tribal society in profound ways.

However, this discussion also highlights the need for inclusive, context-specific

policies that can address the unique challenges and aspiration so tribal populations amidst evolving political party dynamics and ideologies. Only through such a balanced approach can the welfare and development of tribal societies like Karbi Anglong be effectively promoted.

### **Research Gaps:**

The research on the effects of changing political parties and ideologies on tribal societies, such as the case of Karbi Anglong, has made significant strides. However, there are still several research gaps that can be identified:

- **Interactions between National and Local Politics:** While the study has examined the effects of both local and national politics separately, there is less understanding of how these two levels of politics interact with each other. The influence of national politics on local political dynamics and vice-versa is an area that needs further research.
- **Longitudinal Analysis:** Most of the current research provides a snapshot of the impact at a specific point in time. However, there is a lack of longitudinal studies that trace the impacts over time. Such studies can provide a more nuanced understanding of the process of change.
- **Impacts on Different Social Groups:** The study has largely treated the tribal society as a homogenous entity. There is a need for more research on how the impacts of changing political ideologies vary among different social groups within the tribal society, such as differences based on age, gender, occupation, or economic status.
- **Responses of Tribal Societies:** The study has looked at the impacts on tribal societies, but there is a research gap in understanding how these societies respond to the changes. The strategies that tribal communities and institutions use to navigate the changing political landscape is an area that requires further exploration.
- **Comparative Studies:** The research has mainly focused on a specific case study of Karbi Anglong. More comparative studies examining the effects in other tribal societies in India or other countries can provide broader

insights.

- **Policy Analysis:** While the research has pointed out the need for inclusive and context specific policies, there is a lack of detailed analysis of existing policies and their effectiveness. Research on policy analysis can help in identifying best practices and areas for improvement.
- **In-depth study of Inter-communal relations:** There is a need for in-depth studies focusing on inter-communal relationships within the tribal societies and how the shifts in political ideologies affect these relationships.

Addressing these research gaps can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of changing political parties and ideologies on tribal societies and can guide the formulation of more effective and responsive policies.

### **Recommendations:**

The findings from this study shed light on the significant impact of changing political parties and their ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong. Based on these findings, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Inclusive and Context-Specific Policies:** Political parties, whether local or national, need to create and implement policies that are inclusive and sensitive to the context of tribal societies like Karbi Anglong. Policies should account for the unique cultural, social, and economic characteristics of these societies and their aspirations.
- **Ensuring Representation of Tribal Interests:** It is crucial for political parties to ensure adequate representation of tribal interests within their party structures and policy agendas. This can involve empowering tribal leaders and creating platforms for tribal voices to be heard and considered in decision-making processes.
- **Balancing Development and Cultural Preservation:** While development is necessary, it should not come at the cost of cultural erosion. Political parties must strive to strike a balance between fostering economic development and preserving the rich cultural heritage of tribal societies. This might involve policies that promote sustainable development practices

or programs that support and promote traditional tribal occupations and crafts.

- **Promoting Inter-Communal Harmony:** Given the potential for political shifts to create or exacerbate inter-communal tensions; there is a need for political parties to actively promote inter-communal harmony. This could be through initiatives that foster inter-cultural understanding and cooperation, or through policies that ensure equitable resource allocation among different communities.
- **Facilitating Continuous Dialogue:** As political landscapes evolve, continuous dialogue between political parties and tribal communities is key. Regular consultations, town hall meetings, and public hearings can ensure that the impacts of political shifts are monitored and addressed in a timely manner.
- **Encouraging Research and Data Collection:** More research and data collection on the impacts of changing political ideologies on tribal societies is needed. This can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understandings of these impacts and inform the development of more effective and responsive policies.

These recommendations aim to address the challenges posed by changing political parties and their ideologies on the tribal society of Karbi Anglong and promote the overall welfare and development of the region. The implementation of these suggestions requires the collective efforts of political parties, tribal leaders, community organizations, and policy makers.

### **Conclusion:**

The journey through this research has revealed a complex interplay of political party ideologies and tribal societies, with special reference to the Karbi Anglong district. The transformation in political ideologies, from local tribal-centric ones to broader, national ones, has undoubtedly left its mark on the tribal societies in the region.

It is clear from the findings that political parties, both local and national,

have been instrumental in shaping the socio-cultural, economic, and political landscape of Karbi Anglong. The political ideologies, particularly those focusing on tribal identity and cultural preservation, have led to a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness, unity, and political participation among the tribal population. On the other hand, the entry of national political parties and their broader ideologies has resulted in a significant shift in the focus of development initiatives and resource allocation. However, these political shifts have not been without their challenges. Inter-communal relations, traditional practices, and cultural identities have all been affected to varying degrees. The responses of tribal leaders, community organizations, and traditional institutions to these political dynamics have been mixed, indicating a need for careful navigation through these changes.

The study concludes by recommending inclusive, context-specific policies that consider the unique challenges and aspirations of tribal societies amidst evolving political dynamics. It is crucial for the welfare and development of these societies that their needs and perspectives are taken into account in the political discourse.

Furthermore, the research also highlights the need for further exploration in this area, suggesting a few future research directions that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play. These include the examination of the impact of political ideologies on other tribal societies in India, an in-depth study of the responses of tribal societies to these shifts, and the implications for governance in tribal regions.

This research study, though focused on Karbi Anglong, provides insights that are relevant to any study of the interplay between politics and tribal societies, and it opens the door for further scholarly exploration of this critical and complex area.

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# Development Through Autonomous Councils in Tribal Areas of Assam: Issues and Challenges

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## **Introduction:**

The tribal areas and states of North East India are inhabited by fairly homogenous group of tribes with mutually exclusive tribal social system. The Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) are designed to confer a considerable amount of autonomy on the tribal population through their elected representatives not more than twenty four in number elected on the basis of adult suffrage for a term of five years.(Para 2 (1), & Para 6 (A), Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India) The tribal of the North East India have a distinct cultural milieu and live a life of their own, having a strong root in their respective culture and tradition. The hill tribal people do not adopt the life pattern of their neighbors in the plains. Their laws of inheritance, marriage and their customs are very much different from the plains people of mainland India. This is the reason why internal autonomy was granted so that they may in due course take their rightful place in the country.

## **Local Self Government:**

Local self governance, in essence is a government formed by a group of free people to manage and regulate their own affairs<sup>1</sup>. It is a multi-dimensional organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. In political terms, it is concerned with the governance of a specific local area, constituting a political sub-division of a nation state or other major political unit. In the performance of its function,

it acts as the agent of the state for the realization of democratic values and its benefit. The concept and practice of local self governance in India is as old as its history. During the Cholas heydays, they developed a highly efficient local self government<sup>3</sup>. In the same manner, albeit in varying degree, evidences of self governance are to be seen in almost all the kingdoms of Indian sub-continent. In British India, Ripon took the initiative to give its due place in his scheme of governance, though not in democratic spirit. During the national movement for independence and in Independent India, Mahatma Gandhi championed the cause of Local self Governance which now crystallized in the form of Panchayati raj. Panchayati raj was introduced in the country with great fanfare.

Autonomous District Council (ADC) is based on the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The idea behind the setting up of Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India is to provide the tribal people of North East India with a simple administrative set up which can safeguard their customs and ways of lives and to provide autonomy in the management of their affairs. ADCs not only give the hill people of North East India, training on local self-government but also try to bring faster economic development by associating people with the developmental works through their representatives in the Autonomous District Council. (Hansaria,1993, p.9)

### **The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution:**

Articles 244(2) and 275(1) to the constitution of India contain provisions for the administration of the tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. This classified hill districts into autonomous and non autonomous areas. The autonomous district may be subdivided into autonomous regions if there are different scheduled tribes in it. The Governor was empowered to include any area in the list of autonomous areas, create new autonomous districts, unite two or more autonomous districts or parts thereof so as to form one autonomous district, define the boundaries of any autonomous district and finally exclude any area from the list of autonomous district. The Sixth Schedule to the constitution allows for the formation of Autonomous District Councils by the tribal communities themselves. The strength of the District Council was fixed at a maximum of twenty four members. Members are to be

directly elected on the basis of adult franchise for a period of five years. The Governor was, however, empowered to nominate certain number of persons and the numbers so appointed by the Governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor. Each district council shall have a chairman and a deputy chairman, to be elected by the council itself. This Schedule extended the legislative power of the District Council to allotment, occupation or use of land for agriculture and non agriculture purposes, other than categorized as reserved forests, management of unclassified forest, and the use of canal or water courses for the purpose of agriculture, control of Jhumming or other forms of shifting cultivation. Besides these the council has power for appointment of chief or headmen, their successor, inheritance of properties, marriage and all other social customs. The District Councils derived their income from land revenue, forest administration of justice, taxes on animals, values and boats, professions, trades and grants from government etc.

### **Autonomous councils of Assam:**

In Assam there are several autonomous councils. This is mentioned bellow-

- Bodoland Territorial Council.
- Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.
- North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council.
- Missing Autonomous Council.
- Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council.
- Tiwa Autonomous Council.
- Deori Autonomous Council.
- Thengal Kachari Autonomous Council.
- Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council.

### **Powers and Functions of Autonomous Councils:**

The ADCs have been empowered to enact legislations for the welfare and development of the tribal people of the North East India. The ADC may also be described as a 'State in miniature' having all the paraphernalia of a government like Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. It has full autonomy to legislate and

administer on subjects like Land Revenue, Primary Education, Customary Laws etc. assigned to it under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

### **Legislative Powers/Functions:**

The ADCs have powers to make laws for allotment of land, use of land other than reserved forest for purpose of agriculture, grazing, and shifting cultivation. They also have power to establish village councils, public health, and appointment of village chiefs, laws on marriage, social customs, money-lending and trading by non-tribals within the autonomous district. (Para 3, Sixth Schedule) All the laws and rules passed by the ADCs have to be assent by the Governor of the state.

### **Executive Powers/Functions**

The ADCs have the executive power to construct or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle, ponds, roads and water ways, land revenue, forest, primary education, taxes, administration of villages and towns, etc. (Para 6 & 8, Sixth Schedule)

### **Judicial Powers/Functions**

ADCs have the power to constitute village courts, District Council courts in the autonomous area for adjudication or trial of suits and cases or customary laws in which both the parties are tribal. (Para 4 (1), Sixth Schedule) But it cannot try cases involving offences punishable by death, transportation of life or imprisonment for not less than five years. The Autonomous District Council courts are courts of appeal in respect of all suits and cases tried by the village court and the Subordinate District Council Court. No other court except the High Court and the Supreme Court of India have jurisdiction over suits and cases decided by the Autonomous District Council Courts. (Para 5 (1), Sixth Schedule).

### **Issues and Challenges**

**Misuse of Power:** From the study it is known that, the power of nominations in the ADCs have been misused on several occasions. The purpose is to give representation to minority or unrepresented tribes in the district. (Chaube, 1999, p.110) The power of nomination is generally vested in the hands of the

Governor of the state. But it is experienced that, on some occasions the power of nomination is misused for narrow party gains since the state government has the final authority to recommend names for nomination in connivance with the Chief Executive Member of the ADCs. Often such persons are nominated who would support the party in power in the ADC.(Prasad, 1997, p.64).

**Political Patronage and Favoritism:** The ADCs have framed service rules to manage and regulate the service of their employees. Despite the rules framed by the ADCs, the staff has increased excessively. The ADCs make appointment to teachers and other staff and increase the number of schools without providing adequate infrastructure to the schools. In various ADCs , most appointments for various posts were made with a view to extending political patronage without considering for the qualification of persons.(Prasad, 1994, p.25)Further, the appointment of the teachers was hardly made on the basis of merit in ADCs of Assam.(Bhattacharjee, 1997, p.165) Therefore, there were some teachers who were not qualified enough to teach in the primary schools. The teachers also never got their salaries on time. In various ADCs, misuse of government funds for schools development was also evident since there had been no expert inspecting officers. And in the appointment of teachers, favoritism and political influence played a vital role. (Tariang,1997, p.76) Such situation led to the decline in the standard of teaching and the quality of education.

**Lake of Good Initiative:** Under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, the ADCs are empowered to make laws relating to allotment or use of land. (Para 8 (1), Sixth Schedule) In Meghalaya and in the hills of Assam, no land can be mortgaged, leased, bartered, gifted or otherwise transferred by tribal to non-tribal without the permission of the ADCs. Although the ADCs have power to make laws for land development and land revenue, hardly any significant steps have been taken to initiate land reforms which hold the key to prosperity in tribal society.(Ray, 1999, p.260) In the ADCs of different areas, land revenue collection could not be made since the control over land remained with the village chief and Headmen. Revenue from the grazing lands in the karbi hills and some other hills went to the village chief instead of the ADCs. (Chaube,1999, p.109). In the hill areas, food scarcity caused by drought, irregular collection of land revenue due to ethnic conflicts and deplorable communication made the

collection of revenue small and complicated in the ADCs areas of Assam state. (Bhuyan, 2008, p.169)

**Loopholes and leakages in the process of collection of the taxes:** The study reveals that tax is an important source of the ADCs' internal income. The ADCs have framed certain regulations for the collection of taxes in their areas. The ADCs collect taxes on profession, trades, callings, employments, animals and boats, entry of goods into markets for sale and tolls on persons and goods carried in ferries. But, collection of taxes was not done regularly and properly since the ADCs neither enforced the regulation strictly nor realized the amount efficiently. (Prasad, 1997, p.67) No attempt was also made by the ADCs to raise its revenue by exploiting its financial resources available to them. (Prasad,1997, p.68). The receipt from the source of taxation was not adequate as there were loopholes and leakages in the process of collection of the taxes. It was alleged that taxes collected by the official hardly reached the coffer of ADCs of Assam in its entirety. Thus, there was an allegation of siphoning of tax amount by the concerned officials.

**Inadequate as well as Unworkable Funds:** Funds for carrying out developmental activities as provided according to the present system are found to be inadequate as well as unworkable. In some ADCs' adequate money was asked from the state government for the purpose of construction of communication in rural areas, implementation of forest schemes and salary for the staff but the state government released inadequately. (Das,2002, p.16) Similarly in N.C. HillsADC (NCHADC) of Assam, during the annual plan 1997-98 and 1998-99, an amount of Rs. 7.07 lakh had been allotted to NCHADC for the department of Information and Public Relation but there was a shortage of Rs. 4.07 lakh for payment of salaries of officers and staff. (Souvenir,1999, p.51) Thus, it has been observed that the funds released as grants-in-aids by the state governments were far from being sufficient to meet the actual requirements of the ADCs.

**Interest to the neo-middle rich class:** It is also observed that the ADCs served the interest of mainly the neo-middle rich class or classes of rich traders, contractors, bureaucrats and educated who had emerged from within the tribal society of North East India due to enlarging money economy on developmental

activities. Their emerging socio-economic structures in the tribal areas did not allow the benefits of the ADCs to flow towards the weaker section of the tribes. (Prasad, 1997, p.68) Besides that, the elected members of the ADCs and the office bearers who were normally from the elite group of the tribal society had vested interest in preserving the exploitative structure and that they were not likely to do anything that would strengthen the position of the poor in their areas. The members of this group held power of decision-making in the ADCs. (Prasad, 1997, p.69)

**Lake of proper Coordination:** On the relationship between the ADCs and the state government, the Constitution of India has not provided a proper coordination of the ADCs administration with the administration at the state level. The state government has no constitutional authority to assess and review, guide and advise the ADCs. (Ray, 1999, p.263) The administrative experience and guidance of the officers of the state government are not utilized by the ADCs in their everyday operation. There have also been reports of state undue interference in the working of the ADCs. The relationship between the ADCs and the state government is cordial when the same political party rule both in the ADCs and in the state but when the ruling party in the ADCs is different from the state then there have been obstructions from the state government in different forms.

**Ineffective Governmental Laws:** It may further be observed that forest is another main source of the ADCs' income. Most of the income received by ADCs comes from the forest resources and hence a reduction in the income from forest source results in tremendous financial hardship for the people. Most of the tribal villagers depend on forests for crops cultivation and for other livelihood. The vast forests are the source of sustenance for the poor section of the tribal people of North East India. But relentless *jhumming*, (shifting cultivation/Slash and burn method of cultivation) extension of *jhumming* frontier, cutting of timber by external interest and agencies have resulted in depletion of forest cover, depletion of forest resources and degradation of land. Such factors contribute to the decline in revenue collected by the ADCs. ADCs of Assam and Mizoram were also trying to control shifting cultivation. But, in these areas, forest conservation laws were generally ineffective. (Ray, 1999, p.261) There is serious problem of deforestation in these ADCs areas.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be said that ADCs in some aspects fail to fulfill the hopes and desires of the tribal people of North East India. It has only strengthened identity politics. Social and economic development has been ignored. The birth of the ADCs was held with anticipations and aspirations as it was thought to be sign of political and constitutional advancement for granting autonomy to the ethnic minorities in areas of North East India. But the hopes was largely destroyed and frustrated, by every aspect of development such as per capita income, health status, education, housing, poverty level. Due to above mentioned issues and challenges most of the areas of ADCs are remained poor and backward. Thus, unless the above problems are rectified, tribal development will always be a distant dream in spite of the existence of ADCs in North East India.

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# History and Politics of Tribal Identity Prevailing in North East India With Special Reference to Karbi Anglong

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## **Introduction:**

North East India, popularly known as the ‘Seven Sisters’ state; Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Nagaland, along with a lone brother, Sikkim, formed as a part of it in the year 2002. The name ‘Seven Sister’ was coined by a journalist in Tripura named Jyoti Prasad Saikia during a radio talk show because of its interdependence and commonness in them. It is one of the most culturally diverse regions of the world, inhabited by more than 200 tribes with an area of 262,184 km<sup>2</sup>, covering 8 percent of India and a population of about 51,670,000 as per 2022 population census. The region shares an international border of 1,395 km with Tibet in the North, 1,640 km with Myanmar in the East, 1,596 km with Bangladesh in the South West, 97 km with Nepal in the West and 455 km with Bhutan in the North West. The North Eastern States were formed during the British Raj in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Bhutan and Myanmar isolated them from traditional trading partners. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ahom and the Manipur kingdoms fell to a Burmese invasion, leading to the whole region engulfing into the British raj after its first war. After India got its independence, the North East region consisted of Assam and the princely states of Tripura kingdom and Manipur kingdom. Gradually other states are form- Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in

1972, Arunachal Pradesh in 1975 and Mizoram in 1987 were formed out of the large territory of Assam. Manipur and Tripura remained Union Territories of India from 1956 until they attained its full fledged statehood in the year 1972.

With a number of more than 200 ethnic communities, speaking different languages, practicing different customs, inadequate distribution of facilities among the different tribes present in the state, caused conflict among them and is demanding recognition and preservation of their language. Adding to these struggles is the unrecognized identity given by the majority of the mainland India because of the difference in not only the customs but because of the differentiation in the appearance of the North East people. That is why the North East region is a troubled place with lots of insurgency, ethnic conflict, identity conflict and armed conflict.

### **Objectives:**

1. To understand the cultural diversity of North East India, which homes to a various tribes of indigenous communities.
2. To understand the socio-political dynamics, as these regions witnessed various socio-political movements, conflicts and struggles.
3. To analyze the complex process of identity formation in this region.
4. The study of identity politics aims to analyze the various ethnic conflicts and tensions and to understand the complexities in it and working towards peaceful resolution.
5. Examining marginalization and inclusion as the politics of identity in North East India involves the issue of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination faced by certain ethnic groups. It aims to understand the historical and contemporary factors contributing to the marginalization of specific communities and identify strategies for their inclusion and empowerment.

### **Major conflicts of Northeast India:**

The history of Northeast India is rich and diverse, characterized by vibrant tapestry of cultures, ethnicities, languages, tribes, kingdoms and beautiful

landscapes. This region, also known as the Seven Sister States, comprises the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura, along with the mountainous region of Sikkim and the hills areas of West Bengal. Historically, The Northeast has been a land of various indigenous tribes and kingdoms. It has witnessed the rise and fall of many of many kingdom and empires, as well as interactions with neighboring regions and countries. Northeast India has experienced various conflicts throughout its history, which have been driven by factors such as ethnic, linguistic, religion, and socio-political differences. Some of the major conflicts in Northeast India include-

1. **Insurgency Movements:** The region has witnessed several long-standing insurgencies by different ethnic and separatist groups; these groups have often demanded greater autonomy, independence, or the redrawing of state boundaries. Notable insurgent groups include the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland ( NSCN), and Bodo Liberation Party (BLT), among others. These conflicts have resulted violence, loss of life, and displacement of communities.
2. **Inter-ethnic Conflicts:** Northeast India is home to a diverse range of ethnic communities, and tensions between different ethnic groups have occasionally resulted in violent conflicts. Disputes over land, resources, political power, and cultural differences have been contributing factors to inter-ethnic conflicts in the region. For instance, clashes between the Bodos and immigrant Muslim communities in Assam have led to violence and displacement.
3. **Border Disputes:** Northeast India shares borders with several neighboring countries, including China, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. Border disputes and conflicts over territorial claims have occasionally emerged, leading to tension between India and China in Arunachal Pradesh and the India-Bangladesh border disputes in Meghalaya and Tripura are example of such conflicts.
4. **Identity-based Conflicts:** The politics of identity and the demand for recognition and preservation of cultural and linguistic identities have also contributed to conflicts in Northeast India. Communities have

expressed concerns about cultural assimilation, language dominance, and encroachment on their way of life. These conflicts have manifested in demand for separate states, cultural preservation, and political autonomy.

5. Resource conflicts: Northeast India is endowed with abundant natural resources, including forests, minerals, and hydroelectric power potential. Conflicts have arisen due to disputes over resource ownership, control, and benefit-sharing. These conflicts often involve clashes between communities, government authorities, and corporate interests.

### **Identity formation of Northeast India :**

The identity formation in Northeast India is complex and multi-dimensional process influenced by historical, cultural, socio-political, and geographical factors. The region is characterized by its diverse ethnic groups, each with its distinct identity and cultural practices. Northeast India is home to numerous ethnic communities, including the Nagas, Bodo, Assamese, Manipuris, Mizos, Tripuris, Arunachalis, and many more. These communities have their own language, traditions, and culture practices. The diverse ethnic composition of the region plays a crucial role in shaping individual and collective identities. The historical context of Northeast India has influence the formation of identities in the region. The region has a rich history of ancient kingdom, migrations and interaction with neighbor regions and cultures. Historical events, such as the Ahom rule in Assam, or the Naga resistance against colonial powers, have shaped the collective memory and identify of different communities. Language is a significant marker of identity in Northeast India. The region boasts a high linguistic diversity, with numerous languages and dialects spoken. Communities often associate their language with their cultural heritage, and linguistic identity plays a crucial role in shaping a group identities. The distinct cultural practices, rituals, art form, and folklore of each ethnic community contribute to their identity formation. These cultural elements provide a sense of belonging and serve as symbols of group identity and pride. Various socio-political movements in Northeast India have played a significant role in shaping identity. Movements for autonomy, self-determination, and preservation of cultural rights have emerged in response to perceived marginalization and assimilation. These

movements have mobilized communities around shared identity narratives and demands for political recognition. The geographical location of Northeast India, separated from mainland India by the narrow Siliguri Corridor, has contributed to a sense of distinctiveness and isolation. The region's geographical features, such as mountains, rivers, and dense forests, have shaped cultural practices, livelihoods, and the sense of identity of the communities residing there.

Discrimination against people from Northeast India by the mainland India has also been seen. It is an unfortunate reality that the people from these regions often face stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination when they move or interact with people from other parts of India. One of the major factors is the cultural, ethnic and racial differences between them are their distinct physical features, language, cultures and traditions set them apart from the dominant population in the mainland India. This often leads to ignorance, misconceptions, and stereotypes which leads to Racial slurs, derogatory comments, and even physical violence's are inflicted upon them. These discrimination is the result of lack of awareness, understanding and acceptance of the diversity within India. Media representation of the people from Northeast also plays a role in it, as they depict the region as exotic or different, reinforcing the idea that they are somehow different from the mainland India.

In recent years efforts has been made to raise awareness and rid of these stereotypes leading to discrimination. Organizations and individuals have been working towards fostering inclusivity, promoting cultural exchange and challenging stereotypes.

### **Karbi History:**

The history of Karbi tribe is an emerging literary piece in academic discourse. This tribe is one of the major ethnic groups in North East India, especially in the hilly region of Assam. Since the Karbi tribe, also like many other tribes didn't have a written documentation about their origin, migration and settlement, their exact history is unknown. However, there were many interpretations by the British colonial ethnographers, Indian scholars and various regional scholars who had tried to give some references about Karbi history. But they were either influenced by meta-narratives or are deprecating in nature. For instance, S.K

Chatterjee had used the term 'Kirata jana' to refer to 'Indo-Mongoloid tribes' (Karbis included), living in the mountainous regions as the "sons of rakshasha".

The tribe was once known as 'Mikir' but, the origin of its name has various interpretations by different scholars. In Deben Gogoi's *Karbi Prasanga* tells the story of Thireng-Vangreng, a Karbi king who has a daughter name, Mekri, who was married to a Naga prince. Since the Nagas couldn't pronounce her name properly, thus the name Mekiri came into existence which ultimately becomes Mikir. Another story tells of the Karbis entering Assam and they had a cat with them but they lost it. So, in search of that cat they encountered the other community and when asked what they were looking for, they couldn't communicate because of the language barrier but could only reply with "Mengkiri" and the other community interpreted as them introducing themselves, hence the name came into existence. Similarly, there are various other instances on how the Karbis got their name as Mikir while the people of Karbi Anglong address themselves as Karbi.

Due to the uncertain theories applied by different cultures, the Karbis decided to research by themselves. One of the Karbi scholars who have taken the initiative is Dharamsing Teron and other Karbi scholars. The main source of their research is oral narratives such as 'Mosera kihir' and 'Kecharhe alun'. According to Esther Bensadon (2013), oral narratives passed down from generation to generation relates to the communities environment and symbolic spaces. One of the Karbi oral narratives argues that "Borli-e, a Karbi forefather – his son once suffered from a serious illness. Borli-e worshipped Hemphu, the family deity for the recovery of his son, but his daughter-in-law was also going through a labor pain. So, Borli-e instructed a spirit name Panjak to help in the process of delivery. Panjak agreed and did accordingly, but during the time of the feast, he was not offered food as the daughter in law was hiding from the public eye. Hemphu noticing that, he offered a portion from his food and seeing that, others followed suit. The people introduced themselves as 'Thekar Kibi Aso' and hence the name Karbi came into being.

Many scholars have considered that North East periphery is a passageway that connects the mainland with the East and the South East Asia so; they conclude that, that is where the people of the North East have migrated from.

“In very ancient time they moved southward to arrive at Burma, wherefrom their different batches migrated in different directions. One group moved westward along the lower hills of the Himalayas and extended up to the Western Himalayas. Another group migrated southward to reach Southeast Asia via Burma and the adjoining territories. The third group entered Northeast India and established themselves in the Northeast corner of the region. At later period members of the first group started entering Assam in small groups via Northern passes of Bhutan and Tibet.” (Dhanaraju, Vulli, and Dharamsing Teron. “Introduction.” *Karbi Past and Present*, 7-8) In the mean time, they divided themselves according to their religion, their number of groups, similarities, their preferable habitat, assuming different names. The Karbis as a result of migration reached Rongkhang by crossing Barapani and established their capital at Socheng but later during the Burmese invasion; they had to take refuge in the deep jungles and high hills and later on changed their capital back to Rongkhang.

Identity politics in North East India has revolved around demands for greater autonomy, self-determination, and preservation of cultural heritage. Numerous ethnic insurgencies have emerged over the years, fueled by grievances related to land rights, economic disparities, and political representation. These movements have sought to assert their unique identities and protect their socio-cultural fabric from perceived threats. “Language has been a powerful tool for indigenous people across the world in order to overcome the injuries of imposed change, political exclusion and loss of identity.” (Dattaray 78) Due to the indigenous people lack of power, unequal distribution of facilities and being in the constraints of state legal systems, they have been involved in seeking cultural justice, while rearticulating and re-identifying the collective self. The demand for the Karbi district was already proposed by the people even before India’s independence, led by Samson Sing Engti, Khorsing Terang and others, but they were not approved immediately as they had other problems at hand. There was a mixed reaction towards it but after much discord, finally the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district came into existence in the year 1951, November 17. The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, formerly known as Mikir Hills District was also formed on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1952 and the name was renamed as “Karbi Anglong” on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1976.

## Conclusion :

In conclusion, the history and identity politics in North East India has promoted a lot in shaping the regions of the current India we have now. The diverse ethnic, linguistics, and cultural group in the regions contributed to making the country more vibrant. Historically, North East India has been characterized by a long history of indigenous tribes and kingdoms, each with their distinct cultural practices and identities. The region's geography, with its isolated valleys and mountain terrain, has contributed to the preservation of these unique identities and fostered a sense of autonomy and self-governance among the local communities.

However, the British invasion has led to various challenges and conflicts related to identity politics. The region's complex demographic setup and the artificial boundary created, often resulted in tensions and conflicts between different ethnic groups, each trying seek political power in order to preserve and protect its own kind. Furthermore, the illegal immigrants from neighboring countries and regions have also been a significant factor in identity politics. The fear of losing cultural and linguistic dominance has led to demands for the protection of indigenous rights and stricter immigration policies. These concerns fueled tensions between indigenous communities and are posing a challenge for fostering unity among them.

In recent years, there have been efforts by the Indian government to address these issues and initiatives has been taken, like, the signing of peace agreement with insurgent groups, devolution of power to local governments, and the promotion of cultural diversity. Overall the history and identity politics of North East India are deeply intertwined, reflecting the region's rich tapestry of cultures and the challenges faced in reconciling multiple identities within a larger national framework. The path forward lies in fostering dialogue, understanding, and inclusive policies that empower local communities and honor the region's diverse heritage.

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# Tribal Identity Question in Northeast India

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## **Introduction**

The Northeast Indian region comprises of eight states- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Northeast India is an abode of multiple ethnicities. There are around 220 ethnic tribal communities and more than 220 dialects in Northeast India (Jain, 275). The region is socio- culturally different from rest of India and the states are also diverse and distinct from each other politically, socially and culturally. The political landscape in these states is closely entwined with the cultural identity of the populace (Outlook).

The population of the region is the result of ancient and continuous flow of migrations from Tibet, Indo-Gangetic India, the Himalayas, Present Bangladesh and Myanmar. Some of the various ethnic groups inhabiting in the eight states of North Eastern region are Adivasi, Assamese, Bhutia, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Baite, Bodo, Chakma, Chhetri, Chorei, Dimasa, Garo, Gurung, Hajong, Hrankhwil, Jamatia, Karbi, Khasi, Khamti, Koch, Kom, Kuki, Limbu, Paite, Vaiphei, Zou, Teddim, Simte, Gangte Lepcha, Lushai, Meitei, Mishing, Mizo, Poumai, Mao, Maram, Tangkhul, Anal, Monsang, Naga, Nepali, Noatia, Paite, Pnar, Purvottar Maithili, Rabha, Reang, Rongmei, Singpho, Sylheti, various Tibetan tribes, Tamang, Tiwa, Tripuri, Naga(Jain, 275).

## **Ethnic conflict**

Ethnic conflict is currently present in all the regions and sub-regions of the world. For the purpose of claiming their ethnic rights, ethnic communities are mobilized

almost everywhere in the world. Even the western developed countries like USA, Canada, Great Britain and erstwhile communist countries provide examples of ethnic mobilization. It is seen that modernization leads to more ethnic demands and more economic development leads to ethnic conflict.(Gogoi, 1). Ethnic conflicts and insurgency is motivated by politically constructed antagonism in India. Different ethnic groups residing in North East India coming from different directions having different racial stocks speak different languages and have different socio- cultural traditions. The alienation of ethnic group in different socio-economic and political sphere results in the emergence of ethnic conflict in northeastern region. For the sake of preserving their identity, various ethnic groups are posing serious threat to the political stability and national integrity. Ethnicity is politicized as an instrument of politics where organization or mobilization of people is important. Thus in politics ethnic groups play a very important role. North Eastern region is called conflict ridden area because of the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. Some of the ethnicity based conflict are Kuki-Naga ethnic clashes (1992-1998), Meitie- Muslim (1993), Kuki-Paite (1997-1998), Chaksesangs- Tangkhuls (1995-1995). The ethnic conflict emerged through the feeling of deprivations and unreturned expectations towards concerned community. Assam in the post independent period witnessed ethnic violence in linguistic form. After passing the Official Language Bill by the state assembly inter-ethnic clashes started between Assamese and Hindu Bengalis causing massive deaths and destruction. (Gupta,292).

## **Identity Crisis**

Northeast India is located between Indic Asia and Mongoloid Asia. The geographical conditions serve as an important factor of identity crisis. Cultural plurality of northeast India and assimilation into tribal and non tribal is another reason of identity crisis. The demand for separate identity is very high in northeast for which various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups undertook numerous movements.

The northeastern region is an ethno-linguistic-ecological historical heritage which characterized the ethnic population.

Colonisation of the British started in 1826 and ended in 1898. Initially the

Britishers followed non-interventionist approach in Assam but in 1873, the Inner line was introduced where no one could pass the line without license. The local then resisted the colonial interference and often attacked them.

A sense of self-esteem got infused as a result of association with Christian missionaries and spread of education among the tribes. This led to the birth of ethno nationalism among the Nagas, Mizos and Manipuris.

In the Brahmaputra valley there was simultaneous revulsion for Assamese linguistic- cultural dominion. Thus this led to the discontentment among the Bodos, the Karbis, the Ahoms and many others.

By 1930s the tribal people demanded participative representation in Legislative Assembly. The Khasi, Ahom, Naga, Mizo, Sodo, Miri and Deuri communities demanded “ethnic representation”.

The feelings of in-group-out-group that perceived marginalization and minority consciousness are the main factors causing ethnic unrest.

The impact of Christianity on the socio-cultural life of the people and spread of education forms a reason of social force formation.

The promises made by the colonial power were never fulfilled as a result the Naga Movement began in 1947. Life and property were affected when the Indian state undertook counter insurgency measures.

Language, culture and religion are connected with peoples’ emotion and these are being used as an instrument of politics. To preserve the distinct linguistic identity of the Bodos, Missing, Tea Tribes etc ethnic conflicts are mobilized and organized. Political deprivation among the tribes resulted into the feeling of regionalism among the ethnic groups. They are of the view that without political power, economic development is not possible. Therefore they get involved in politics (Ghose,2021).

### **Tribal Identity**

With a population of over 70 million, India is home to numerous tribes. About 55% of tribals lived in Central India, 28% in West, 12% in North-East,

4% in South India and 1% elsewhere and covers about 15% of the country's area. Tribal people constitute about 8.14% of the country's total population. A tribe is a group of individuals who have lived in a specific location from time immemorial. According to anthropology, the tribe is a system of social organization that includes various local groups like- villages, districts, a common territory, a common language, a common culture, a common name, political system, economy, religion and belief, primitive law and own education system. Constitutionally a tribe is he who has been mentioned in scheduled list of Indian constitution under Article 342 (i) and 342 (ii). (Sivakumar, et al., 6). According to Gillian and Gillian "A tribe is a group of local community which lives in a common area, speaks a common dialect and follows a common culture" (Rangnatha, 29).

In the globalization process, the search for identity is a basic concern, where the creation of viable identities was a fundamental issue (Mohapatra). The presence of ethnic violence, extremism and insurgency is the focal point in India's Northeast region. Mismanaged political affairs leading to fear and existential crisis have increased in Northeast India. When talking about identity politics, it alludes to the urgency of preservation of their identity. The people of the region remained politically vital and strategically vulnerable. Tribal communities have been facing treats and are close to social extinction due to subsequent interactions with non- tribal communities and excess immigration. This threat of exclusion is leading to the emergence of extremist organizations challenging the sovereignty and integrity of the Indian Constitution. The complexity of political dimension of identity in India has been a threat to linguistic cultural subjugation and economic negligence.

The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1874 introduced an order to protect the minorities of the indigenous groups in the hills of Assam by restricting foreign entry. The hill areas of Assam were Balkanized into Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas in 1935. During the British era various job opportunities were produced in tea plantation region, oil and coal field of Assam which led to the population inflow of Muslims from the Bengal province. Thus political rivalry cropped up on the basis of origin namely Assamese and Bengali, and on religions-Hinduism and Islam. Colonial anthropology plays a very critical

role in Assam (Ghose, 2021). There is internal immigration from the states and external immigration from neighboring nations that naturally resulted to inter-ethnic conflicts. To meet the demands of various ethnic groups and to break down the emerging anti- Indian sentiments of northeastern region's people the government created four states- Nagaland in 1963, Meghalaya in 1972, Arunachal and Mizoram in 1987. In 1950 several communities were placed under schedule tribes by the provision of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe Act.

### **State Formation**

The ethnic demand for homeland created a number of small states in the northeastern region. The present Nagaland was formally known as Naga Hills created in 1866, was a district of Assam under the Bengal Presidency of British Rule. Nagaland was inhabited by 17 major tribes. To these tribes land was the main asset both in term of territory and survival. British arrived first in the western part of Nagaland that led to advent of education, trade, commerce and modern government. While the eastern part of Nagaland suffered poor road connectivity. This geographical and historical disparity between the two groups led to political fallouts for the Nagas in the form of a demand for separate statehood. On 1 December 1963, Nagaland became a full fledged state as a consequence of 16<sup>th</sup> Point Agreement signed between the Government of India and the Naga People's Convention on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1960 (Outlook, 2023).

Meghalaya became an Autonomous State as per the provision of Article 244(A) created in 1970 and attained full-fledged state on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1972. The seed for separate state was planted in 1920s but became a pronounced movement from 1947 to 1960s. After independence, Assam expressed its desire to fully assimilate the hill states by making Assamese language their state language. This caused the Khasi, Garo and Jaintias to unitedly protest the inclusion of Assamese Language Bill. This is one of the reason for separate state demand (meghalayaat50).

Arunachal Pradesh was upgraded into Union Territory in 1972 and in 1982 became a state. It was possible to interpret Arunachal Pradesh's promotion to statehood as a move by the Indian government to indicate the region's national claim to China.

The Mizo hills district was earlier known as Lushai Hills district before 1954. Discontentment with the government relief work for the victims of the famine mautam in 1959-1961, the movement for independence began in Mizoram. Mizoram attained statehood in 1987.

A treaty was signed between independent India and Sikkim under which the latter retain its special status as a protectorate of India. Sikkim thus became the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of India in 1975.

## **Conclusion**

It is not possible to eradicate ethnic assertion from our society as every group tries to preserve their identity. There is a need to protect the identity of the ethnic group instead of removing their identity. The role of government is to provide equal status and recognition of all ethnic groups and the role of civil society is to keep the feeling nationalism. Regionalism and peaceful negotiations with the insurgents and secessionist groups will help avoid ethnic conflict in northeastern region. In the last few decades the northeast Indian politics is designed by politics of identity through language, culture, religion, caste etc. Therefore the central and state governments are to take positive steps to resolve identity issues.

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# Tribal Politics as Politics of Difference in North East India with Reference to Assam

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### Introduction :

The writing of Iris Marion Young, Will Kymlicka, and others showed that politics of difference, tribal politics, and identity politics are emerging issues in cotemporary political theory that scholars have emphasised. These have become a central factor in the study of political issues and concepts developed recently. According to **Leslie Pal's** description of the politics of difference, the core assumptions of individualism are that differences are positive and that treating individuals as abstract citizens ignores social and cultural characteristics that define identities. This politics of difference contends that significant differences are suppressed consistently and systematically. A 'difference perspective' promotes collective identities as a foundation for claims and emphasises the importance of those identities in public policymaking. The politics of difference has always been a policy that recognises and promotes diversity (Pal 2017). Such differences have been seen in our region by discriminating from the mainstream in education, language, culture, beliefs, etc., which influence and exist in every part of the tribal region.

### Tribal Politics :

In simple words, 'tribal politics', sometimes defined as a group of individuals or communities who develop politics due to racial, ethnic, or cultural reasons, as well as people who are willing to defend their political views through representation and political autonomy.

In the piece, '*Op-Ed: A Cure for Tribal Politics? Try Learning from Actual Tribal People*,' reports the Los Angeles Times, noting that the terms 'tribalism' and 'tribes' were polarised. Devaka's idea of Morton Fried's in "The Notion of Tribe" is that tribes are constantly expanding through movement, marriage, and trade links. The administrator selected 'tribal' chiefs, missionaries standardised 'tribal' languages, and ethnographers codified 'tribal' cultures, according to Devaka's concepts of tribe. Because of this history, his idea of tribal identities was claimed and occasionally brought into dispute (Premawartha 2020).

In this article, '*Politics of Language, Religion, and Identity: Tribes in India*,' 'tribe' is defined as people who are distinct from those of mainstream culture. Define that language, race, and region are essential factors of differentiation in NE India. Post-independence, this caused a rearrangement of society and politics in India. He conceptualises how colonial administrators and ethnographers began to identify tribes as people who professed animism or tribal religion (Xaxa 1363).

### **Understanding tribes and the politics of difference :**

When we look at our country's multicultural (by Will Kymlicka) society, for example, we see that people are all quite different, but because they are unique, we group them under one country. When we bring all communities into one country, such as India, we push them to conform and adopt our way of life, according to the phrase "politics of difference." So the tribals become irritated, and although all they want is to be them, the issue is that we fail to remember their differences. Being different is not an enemy; it does not imply we should live apart because, while we are different, we also have a lot in common and have gone through similar events in life.

In his article, "*What is the Politics of Difference?*" he has characterised difference politics as broadening the realm of enforcement of the democratic, heterogeneous public from municipal, regional, and nation-state levels to the global level. However, the cosmopolitanist movement in politics of difference and the "self rediscovery" of civil society are least satisfactory at the institutional level (Tebble 259).

## Types of Politics of Difference :

In the book '*Structural Injustice and the Politics of Difference*', "the author defines the term politics of difference as synonymous with 'identity politics.' Young distinguished between two types of politics of difference: (i) a '**politics of positional difference**' with a politics of cultural diversity; and (ii) a '**politics of cultural difference**.' *First*, the '**politics of positional difference**' approach defines social groups formed by structural social processes. Groups with diverse positions in structural processes have unequal possibilities for self-development, access to resources, and making their own decisions (Young 80, 82–83). For example, socioeconomic class is a structural grouping related not only to position in the social division but also to decision-making processes and group-divided practises. Disability, structural inequality, racial inequality, and gender inequality are all attributes of positional difference politics. *Second*, political theorists and others engaged in public debate on the significance of group diversity for freedom, equality, and justice continue to advocate for the '**politics of cultural difference**.' The 'politics of cultural difference' provides public accommodation and support for cultural differences. In "*Justice and the Politics of Difference*," Young refers to indigenous people's cultural claims by establishing positive groupings and credits political theory with cultural differences in politics. It aims to promote the politics of cultural diversity. Even Will Kymlicka deals with the group in unique ways that identify them as groupings in 'societal culture' with socially disadvantaged groups (Ibid., 94 & 95).

According to Kymlicka's 'theory of cultural difference,' political societies are divided into two cultural groups. *First*, a political society is made up of two or more societal cultures; fairness necessitates tolerance for one another's practises and modes of cultural expression; and *second*, a liberal society recognises these cultural diversities publicly. Young's politics of cultural diversity has preoccupied political theorists more than the politics of positional difference. It tends to restrict groupings to ethnic, national, and religious groups. Limit justice in freedom and autonomy rather than encouraging people to develop capacities and live a life of well-being (Ibid., 97 & 111).

In the "*Three Models of Group-Differentiated Rights*," identified are (i) rights

granted to individuals; (ii) rights granted to individuals who share a particular trait; and (iii) rights granted to individuals who practise a specific religion. Group-differentiated measures are intended to “protect a particular ethnic or national group from the destabilising impact of decisions made by the larger society.” Mitnick has access to a culturally differentiated right that distinguishes between people and a cultural group: the freedom to exclude others. These rights may be crucial in allowing people to further develop their own cultural identities and groups. Cultural self-exclusion needs liberal understanding and helps people define themselves (Mitnick 235-36 & 255–256).

### **Literature Review :**

The related literature may be review to consider the following points:

**Bwanali, Peter Nathaniel (2004)**, in his dissertation, urges the politics of difference to respond to types of group-based oppression. This concept requires the realisation of self-development and self-determination. ‘Self’ as an individual and a social group articulates the autonomy of a self that is not separated from social relations and recognised the socio-cultural environment. It urges moral equality among persons as a necessary precondition for socio-political justice as the goal of politics of difference.

**Saikia Runjun (2018)** urges that ethnicity is part of tribal identity, and they struggle to preserve their political authority, territory, and natural and material resources. Northeast India is mainly a land of diverse ethnic and tribal groups. It is described as the cultural mosaic of diverse tribal communities, linguistics, and ethnic identities attributed to the politics of difference. It urges that to reduce the conflict, efforts must be made to bring about positive peace.

**Baruah, Juri (2019)**, urges in his article that ‘tribal politics’ was first used by the colonial rulers in Assam. This became a question of identity in the representation of ‘indigenous people’. He mentioned that Kalicharan Brahma Bodo, along with Sitanath Brahma Choudhury and Semsonsing Ingti among the Mikirs (Karbi), were pioneers and submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission demanding a separate political set-up for the indigenous and the tribals of Assam. He urges that the All Tribal Party League (ATPL) lead the argument for

self-representation, self-determination, and local control. Such a tribal league has the characteristics of 'separateness' and 'differentness' from others.

**Mahana Rajakisor (2019)**, in his journal, urges that language make a difference in politics and the development of the region. As stated, Santals have not only different languages and identities but also different cultural actions. The Santals tribe needs to revive their past customs, traditions, and culture through writing, teaching, and the celebration of cultural festivals. It urges the Ol-Chiki movement to regain tribal identity and ethnicity. This movement demanded strengthening the tribal Santal identity and ethnicity. It formalises the recognition of Ol-Chiki as an ordinary Santal by the rest of society.

**Patir, Dreyfuss, and Shayo (2021)** distinguish two 'group models': ethnic groups and minority groups. Tribal politics refers to the existence of individuals whose political action is mainly motivated by group loyalty. Encourages people not to identify with the group to which they belong. People who have a sense of pride or prestige are more likely to identify with their group. Tribal politics can be called 'economic,' referring to changes in socioeconomic groupings, and "cultural," as changes in identity effectiveness.

**Supriya Dey and Dr. M. Singh (2021)** urge that the north-eastern local inhabitants feel and demand to preserve their identity. For this reason, the people of different tribes in this region are assimilating some local Assamese into their daily lives. Because of their orthodox mindsets, they lose their specific statehood identity. They feel they have Indian nationality because of their original tribes. The political parties indulged in this regionalism and worked accordingly.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Northeast India is home to a sizable tribal population, which includes the majority of the Nagas, Khasis, Garos, Mizos, Kukis, Bodos, Karbis, and Dimasa. These communities are divided by several states and have administrative boundaries as well as national borders. The demands for autonomy in the North East range from full statehood to autonomous district councils. There is a mix of specific legislative protections for tribals on the one hand and repression by the police and army on the other. The designations 'tribal,' 'primitive,' 'savage,' or

'wild' have been used to designate persons who have resisted violent operations of pacification in this region. Andre Beteille (1974) emphasised the difficulty of distinguishing castes and tribes based on size, isolation, religion, and means of subsistence. Tribes were reliant on shifting farming, which degraded the forest. This sparked disputes regarding whether tribals should be left alone, integrated into mainstream society, or assimilate. The Indian Constitution divides scheduling into two types: area-based and community-based. The administration of scheduled regions and tribal lands is addressed in Article 244 of the Constitution. The Sixth Schedule covers tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram, while the Fifth Schedule covers nine states, which is regarded as the main difference between the two schedules. The Sixth Schedule acknowledges the right to self-government through independent district and regional councils with legislative authority. Sixth Scheduled Tribal Communities manage forests, regulate shifting cultivation, choose chiefs or headmen, have property inheritance, and have distinct social norms. This formed and differed from others in the state and region and was interpreted as a divergence in politics, culture, and customary laws. Colonial policies that excluded areas and severed linkages between hills and plains fuel secessionist politics. Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas, and other communities fought for autonomy, resulting in the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council. This study focuses on tribal politics and customary law, as well as the native community's identity and progress.

### **Objective of the Study :**

Following are the aims of this paper:

- a) To study the concept of the politics of difference.
- b) To analyse the concept of self and self-determination as a components of tribal political justice.
- c) To study the influence of tribal identity and politics on political difference.

### **Research Questions :**

- i) How have tribals become different from the mainstream in terms of politics, culture, language, etc., and how are they protected in the Indian context?

- ii) How do concepts of “self” and ‘self-determination’ aid the ethnic group’s desire for political justice?
- iii) How does the topic of group-differentiated rights or ethnic group politics articulate the politics of difference in Assam and the Northeast?

### **Methodology :**

This paper used secondary sources, and the required information was collected from the related articles, journals, and downloaded books that are effective in this study area. A descriptive method is used in this analysis. Such a study may be described here in detail. Tribal politics and differences in Assam are considered in the sample of data collection.

### **Discussion and Finding :**

#### *Shape of Tribal Community and Political Difference*

It is obvious that a sample of tribal people in the northeast region has been discussed. This related literature supply, by focusing on the secondary sources and using the required information of the local residents of the northeast and tribal local people in particular, is committed to preserving tribal identity. After a successful autonomous political movement, northeast tribal communities lack the unifying factor of brotherhood that emerges from mainstream social issues. Both Indian governments are not taking an urgent interest in development, and therefore, tribal communities adopt and emerge as politics of difference and politics of identity and recognition become big questions. The tribal communities of the northeast, along with Assam, have national, ethnic, and religious differences. They need support for cultural differences and desire self-determination. To conclude, it finds that it needs to remove uneven treatment to recognise group distinctions. Another solution is to either compensate or empower unfavourable groups. The celebration of the Karbi Youth Festival is one of the best examples of differences in culture, traditions, beliefs, and the richness of ethnic communities. Another fact that is found in this study concerns socioeconomic differences and group practises in politics. Language is one of the main factors to recognise in politics and public debate as important to group variety for freedom, rights, equality, and justice. It remains adequate for the politics of cultural difference and recognition.

## **Political Difference and Inequality :**

On the basis of the politics of difference, Young has identified five faces of inequality: a) **exploitation**, or the disenfranchisement of a group from making work rules; b) **marginalisation**, or the removal of a group from work and social life; c) **lack of power**, or the incapacity of a group to engage in decisions that affect its members' lives; d) **cultural exclusion**, or when a dominant group claims its own experience as common; and e) **methodical violence**, or when a group must live with a genuine anxiety of violent intervention. Tribal cultures need fairness in expression, and liberal societies address these cultural diversities.

## **Types of Differentiation by Tribes :**

Tribes' differentiation has three types: rights offered to persons, rights granted to individuals in specific characters, and rights granted to individuals in specific religions. It concludes that the Sixth Schedule under the Constitution of India must be sanctioned to safeguard tribal development, preserve traditional practises and customs, and provide a separate identity. It found the autonomous councils as the apex body with elected members and the traditional institutions, or village councils, as social hierarchy, at the bottom. The clan-chief system is only under the sixth schedule and recognised under the Indian Constitution as a politics of difference and recognition.

## **Conclusion :**

To summarise the preceding debate, it is obvious that the North East region and India are diverse. In fact, tribal traditions are distinct in the northeast, which possesses tribal unique identity with distinct ethnic identities, communities, languages, cultural variations, beliefs, and political systems. To protect its interests, the tribal community organised massive protests to obtain political autonomy and rights. After the autonomous revolutions, the problem has yet to be resolved. The region is suffering greatly as a result of illegal immigrants, an unwelcome population, and opposing beliefs in their mindsets. In NER and Assam, the public service delivery mechanism is inadequate. Reasons like tribal politics, difference, and recognition must be resolved solely by government action. The tribal communities developed in their mindsets, which attributed

to politics of difference and politics of recognition for their own regional and local level up-gradation. Both governments should take sufficient responsibility for tribe satisfaction, and their interest in preserving their indigenous customs, beliefs, folklore, traditions, rituals, etc. has an impact on this burning issue.

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# Autonomy Movements in North East India: A Study of the Kamatapur Movement of Koch Rajbangshi Community in Assam

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## **Abstract:**

In the contemporary period autonomy movements play a vital role in the socio-economic and political aspects of North Eastern society of India. Sometimes, it makes very complex situation within the concerned state. As like other autonomy movements of North-east India, the autonomy movement of Koch Rajbangshi people is also considered as prominent. To protect their history, culture, language and distinct identity, they launched an autonomy movement in Assam which is known as Kamatapur Movement. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1949 an agreement was signed between the last Koch king Jagaddipendra Narayan of Cooch Behar and the government of India by which Cooch Behar was annexed with the Indian Dominion. Hence, they raised the demand for formation of separate statehood within the Indian dominion and also raised several demands to the government. But, in the recent time the formation of Greater Kamtapur state for Koch Rajbangshi people is a very complex matter. According to the leaders of this community, the annexation of the Cooch Behar with Indian dominion is the root cause for marginalization of their history, heritage, art, culture and language. Thus, it was considered as the prime reason that led to the Kamatapur Movement in Assam. In this paper, an attempt has been made to understand the autonomy movement of Koch Rajbangshis and to find out the root causes of Kamatapur Movement along with its demands.

**Key Words:** *Autonomy, Cooch Behar, Identity, Kamatapur, Koch Rajbangshi, Movement*

## **Introduction**

The concept of autonomy has been becoming a burning topic of attention in the last few decades. Due to ethnic conflicts around the world, the importance of autonomy movement is increasing rapidly. Movements for autonomy have marked the political discourse in North East India for long time. The aim and objective of autonomy movement is not only to bring change in the existing system of the society but also to protect their distinct identity, culture, traditions and customs. In the last few decades, North East India has been witnessing a series of autonomy movements which are mainly centered on political demands for statehood.

The autonomy movement led by the Koch Rajbangshi is very old which is known as Kamatapur Movement. This movement is quite different from the demands of other ethnic communities of India. Most of the ethnic groups of India are using their ethnic names for their proposed state like Bodo people demand for separate Bodoland, Gorkha people of west Bengal demand for Gorkhaland etc. In case of the Koch Rajbangshi community, they are demanding for separate Kamatapur state which is rooted in the historical memory of their ancient Kamatapur Kingdom and they are also not used their ethnic name for their proposed separate state. Historically, the Koch Rajbangshi community had rich culture, heritage, language, tradition and distinct identity during the rule of Koch kings but in later period mainly after independence especially with the merger of their historical homeland with the state of Assam and West Bengal, they have gradually lost their distinct cultural heritage and identity in the melting pot of majority Assamese culture. This has eventually birth the Kamatapur movement which is demanding separate statehood for Koch Rajbangshis since since mid and late 1990s with the formation of All Assam Koch Rajbangshi Students Union (AAKRSU) in 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 1990 in Assam.

## **Objectives**

There are mainly two prime objectives of this paper which are given as below-

1. To understand the Autonomy Movement of Koch Rajbangshi in Assam
2. To find out the causes of that led to the emergence of Kamatapur Movement and its demands

## **Methodology**

The paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. It is primarily based on secondary data. The secondary data are collected from several published materials in form of books, journal papers, magazines and from other internet sources.

## **Kamatapur Movement and Its Causes for Emergence**

The Kamatapur Movement of Koch Rajbangshi is a historic one. Although, the historical root of Kamatapur Movement was in the colonial period but in case of Assam, the movement gained its momentum after the 1980s. It was actually the expression of frustration of the people on the politics played by the government towards their demand for Scheduled Tribe. In Assam, there are several organizations which raised the demand for the separate Kamatapur State like All Assam Koch Rajbangshi Students Union (AKRSU), Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO) which is a militant group in nature. Besides, there are also other non-governmental and literary organizations like Koch Rajbangshi Sahitya Sabha which are continuously working for socio-cultural development of their community.

There were a number of reasons that led to Kamatapur Movement which are as below-

Firstly, as per the history of Assam in the period of pre-British rule in India, Maharaja Naranarayana of Cooch Behar captured all the small state of entire North East India in 16<sup>th</sup> century and established Koch Kingdom. But on the eve of independence, an agreement was signed between last Koch king Jagaddipendra Narayana and the government of India and annexed Cooch Behar with West Bengal as a district in 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1950. Therefore, the leaders of Koch Rajbangshi opined that this kind of degradation of Cooch Behar state is a unlawful and unconstitutional work.

Secondly, the culture, literature and language of the people of that area are different from the people of West Bengal and Assam. In the present period of time, the indigenous people (Koch Rajbangshi) of the area have been losing their historical glory, culture and prosperity and also face suppression, domination and endless exploitation in all aspects of their life.

Thirdly, the economic conditions of the Koch Rajbangshi have been declined day by day. Since they are mainly dependent on agriculture, therefore this region remains industrially backward.

Fourthly, the negligence of the Central and State governments towards the demands of Koch Rajbangshi people is another major cause that led to Kamatapur Movement.

Fifthly, the migration of Hindu refugee from East Bengal had played a very crucial role in creating feelings of insecurity among the Koch Rajbangshis. Bengali Scholars like Soumen Nag mentioned that the Hindu Refugee from East Bengal developed their own culture, education and modernity of their language as a result of it, Indigenous Rajbangshis started to losing their culture, language and land. Further, they became minority due to the flow of immigrant in their region.

### **Demands of Koch Rajbangshis**

There are several prominent demands raised by the Koch Rajbangshis to protect their culture, language and identity which are mentioned below-

- 1) Demands for the formation of separate Kamatapur State which includes six districts of North Bengal namely Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur and Malda. On the other hand, they propose some districts of Assam namely, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Marigaon, Darrang, Sonitpur to Lakhimpur.
- 2) Inclusion of Kamatapuri language under the Eighth Schedule of Indian constitution.
- 3) Rescheduling Koch Rajbangshis of Assam as Schedule Tribe (ST) which was given in 1996 through a presidential ordinance.
- 4) Promotion of the Kamatapuri language and culture through both state controlled radio and All India radio and Television.
- 5) Seats should be reserved for the Rajbangshis in technical and educational institutions for their higher education.

- 6) Vishwa Mahavir Chilarai's birthday on Maghi Purnima should be declared as state holiday by the government of Assam and West Bengal.
- 7) Koch Rajbangshi leaders also demands for the establishment of 'Maharaja Naranarayana Cultural Complex and Research Centre in the undivided Goalpara district in order to preserve, protect and spread their glorious cultural heritage.

Although they raised several demands in front of the government but their major demands remains formation of the separate Kamatapur state, recognition themselves as Scheduled Tribe (P) and inclusion of Kamtapuri language into the Eighth schedule of the Indian constitution (Saikia, 2019).

### **Analysis and Suggestions**

Kamatapur Movement is an inter-state conflict whereby the people of Koch Rajbangshi community demanded a separate state for themselves within the Indian Union. But in the contemporary time, due to complexity of this issue the formation of separate Greater Kamatapur will not be so easy. In the process of formation of Greater Kamatapur, it will not only include the areas of Assam but also areas of others states such as West Bengal. So, as a solution to this problem both the central and state governments should provide utmost importance to the aspirations of the Koch Rajbangshi people within Indian Constitutional framework. Further, due to influx of large number of Caste Hindu Bengalis from West Bengal to this areas of Koch Rajbangshis are led to creating the feeling of insecurity among the local people and lead to identity crisis. Therefore, in order to protect their identity, culture and language the government should take some steps and to increase the prospects of progress and peace. On 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1996 the government of India declared Koch Rajbangshi as Scheduled Tribe but for only three months through an ordinance of President of India. After that a bill was introduced in floor of parliament for the regulation of the ordinance that recognized Koch Rajbangshi as ST but due to some political conspiracy of upper caste politicians and ignorance of the government the bill was not passed and hanged in the parliament. Therefore, at present Koch Rajbangshi demand for ST (P) status, which is one of the oldest one. So, if they are given the status of ST (P) without hampering the existing Scheduled Tribe people then it will be able

to solve this issue to some extent or else it will lead to emergence of new conflicts among the tribes. In Assam this issue of Koch Rajbangshi is entirely politicized by the national and regional political parties. Before every election they make promise to schedule them but in practically after election they keep silent on this issue. According to the provision of Indian constitution the government can declare any community as Schedule Tribe on the basis of five criteria which includes indication of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, economic backwardness and shyness of contact with other communities. In 1994, The Tribal Research Institute of the Assam government stated that there is enough justification to declare the Koch Rajbangshi as ST and on the basis of this report the Register General of India agreed to include them in the Schedule Tribe category of Assam but in later the Register again stated that the Koch Rajbangshi do not fulfill the five criteria and so they cannot be included in the category of ST. While the community makes self assertive evaluation among themselves then they find that they fulfill all the five criteria which have been ignored and undermined by the centre (Saikia, 2019).

In addition to these, attempts should be made for the establishment of Maharaja Naranarayana Cultural Complex and Research Centre which they demand to protect, preserve and spread their rich cultural heritage.

Moreover, survey should be conducted by the governments to know about the socio-political and economic conditions of the Koch Rajbangshis in the recent time. After getting the result of those surveys, the governments should take needful steps towards the development of the community rapidly.

The language controversy is another important issue of Koch Rajbangshi and in order to fulfill their aspirations their mother tongue should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution. Along with all these efforts, spreading quality education and creation of job opportunity can also solve their economic problems to some extent.

## **Conclusion**

The Autonomy movement of Koch Rajbangshi is considered as a major concern in the recent period of time in North East India. The demand of separate

Kamatapur reflects about the issue of nationalism within nationalism. It can be considered as a battle by a community to protect, preserve and develop their distinct identity. The root of the movement was in the colonial period. The merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal played a very significant role in the present Kamatapur movement. Issues of poverty, economic backwardsness, educational backwardness and identity crisis and relative deprivation are some important factors that shape the Kamatapur Movement in Assam. However, formation of separate Kamatapur state will not benefit the Koch Rajbangshis if their rights are not protected within the state.

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# Political Conflict of Bodos : Roots and Negotiation for Peace

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## **Introduction:**

The Bodos are one of the largest plain tribes of state of Assam. Their population being concentrated mostly on the north bank of Brahmaputra river and some of them are scattered in different parts of Assam. The advent of democratic politics in India did not bring much respite to the socio-economic plight of the plains tribes of Assam and belying the hopes of the tribal leaders at the time of independence, the conditions of the tribes actually worsened under the new political and administrative arrangements. The plains tribes of Assam were deprived of the Constitutional protection that the tribes in the hill areas of Assam enjoyed under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. This happened because while the hill tribes were acknowledged to be entirely separate from the non-tribal people in the plains, the plain tribal were seen as yet another sub-nationality of the Assamese. The protection accorded to Scheduled Areas and Tribes under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution also could not be availed of by the plains tribes in Assam as it was not applicable in the state. This Constitution discrimination deprived the plains tribes like Bodos, Misings and Rabhas from getting any type of type of autonomy which their counterparts elsewhere in the country could get as enshrined in the Constitution.

## **Objective of the study:**

The present study focus on the political conflict of the biggest tribe of Assam. Following are the main objectives of the this study-

- To understand the cause of the raising political consciousness among the Bodos and the background of identity politics.
- To know the Negotiation of the conflict and the Peace
- To understand the government different policies to address the conflict.

### **Methodology:**

With the above objectives historical and analytical method are adopted. For the present study relevant data are collected from secondary sources such as book, journals, news and internet.

### **Discussion:**

The political conflict was the result of a long drawn process of identity formation among the Bodos starting from the colonial period and gradually becoming much more assertive in the post colonial period. There are many reasons behind the arise of political consciousness among the Bodos . Some of the vital causes can be explained as below.

### **Socio-Economic Background:**

The socio-economic condition of the Bodo was in a very pathetic. Problems of land alienation, poverty ,indebtedness ,unemployment , economic exploitation and cultural and political neglect became acute among the tribal. The state government decision to make Bodo an associate official language in Kokrajhar district and in Udalguri sub-division was a half hearted measure which long remained unimplemented. The condition of Bodo medium schools was decidedly pitiable and little effort. In the third and fourth grade jobs there was a huge backlog till 1986. According to the data nearly 10,000 jobs of Schedule Tribes were kept in abeyance. These long standing socio-economic grievances of the Bodos combined with a rising political consciousness among the Bodos.

### **Brahma Faith:**

In the beginning of the twentieth century social reform movement like the Brahma movement by Kalicharan Brahma focused on the social discrepancies and hierarchical nature of Assamese cast Hindu society. He was not only the in

his mission men like Charan Mandal, Jaladhar Mech, Karan Mandal, Dafadar Chaburam Mandal are socially important in this field. They traveled in the villages spreading the messages and explained that unlike other religions Brahma faith was not contradictory.

### **The Middle Class:**

Which has been instrumental in articulating demands of Bodos in the various phases seem to have played very important role in the upliftment of the Bodo identity. From the beginning the issues of language and script were integral in Bodos identity politics. The demand for a territorial unit of all plain tribes of Assam was supposed to be an inclusive political arrangement but the Bodos numerically larger and its middle class leadership being more organized than its counterparts among other tribal groups and to assume a predominant role with in a such arrangement.

### **The All Bodo Students Union(ABSU):**

Is a student organization (non-political) of Assam. The ABSU was formed in 1967 with the objective to provided a platform for plain tribes to raise their issues and demands. The ABSU plays major role in the movement of plain tribes. The ABSU supported the six year long movement led by All Assam Student Union(AASU) against illegal immigrant in the year 1979 to 1985. The AASU leaders accused illegal immigrant Bangladeshis as potential threat to the identity of Assamese people. The influx of peasants from this community was one of the main cause of alienation of tribal lands from tribal people. So ABSU joined hands with AASU in this movement. When the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government came to power after Assam Accord , a circular was issued by the Secondary Education Board of Assam in 1986, with the direction to make assumes paper compulsory in secondary classes. The Bodo under the leaderships of ABSU together with Bengali minorities fought vehemently against this circular. The ABSU and other tribal organization treated the circular as threat to their language. The ABSU also protested against the Assam administration dominated by Assamese official who helped non tribal peoples to get land illegally in the 33 tribal belts and blocks.

### **Plain Tribal Council of Assam(PTCA):**

Formed in the year of 1967 to represent the issues of and demands of plain tribes within political framework. The PTCA led the political movement of the plain tribes including Bodos. The PTCA demanded a separate homeland for plain tribes of Assam in the nature of union territory. The PTCA viewed Udayanchal the name of proposed territory could ensure identity culture and tradition of the plain tribes of Assam. The PTCA launched a political movement for creation of separate of Udayachal on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1972 with the objective of autonomy. The ABSU supported the stand of PTCA and joined them in the movement for Udayanchal. In 1986 the leadership of ABSU was handed over to Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma in the conference of ABSU held in Darrang District. From then the political movement for separate state has been taken over by the student organization. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1987 the ABSU under Upendra Nath Brahma submitted 92 points charter of demand to the then Chief Minister of Assam Prafulla Kr. Mahanta.

The ABSU held a mass rally for the first time with the demand of separate state in Bodo dominated districts of Assam under the leadership of Upendra Nath Brahma and the ABSU started mass rally and protest against administrative machinery with the demand of separate Bodoland in Assam.

When ABSU resumed its movement in February 1989 after a brief suspension for to create a peaceful atmosphere for discussion it faced rising opposition . It lead to rise Bodo insurgency. The formation of militant group such as Bodo Security Force (BSF), with an agenda to liberate the Mongoloid dominated Indo Burma region.

### **Negotiation and the Peace process:**

There are several round of talks held among the ABSU and the GOI and Assam government as well. The 9<sup>th</sup> round of talks was held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1992. But no positive result was come out . The ABSU organized hunger strict and call 1001hour bandh . Realizing the complexity of the situation the Home Minister S.B.Chawan assured the Bodo leaders to resolve problems. In 1993 Rajesh Pilot was charge with the responsibility to look after the issue of Bodoland . Finally an

agreement was reached to resolve the issue and on the basis of mutual agreement of Bodo leaders and the government authorities on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1993 with the provision to create Bodoland Autonomous Council according to the accord.

The ABSU supported BLT during the talk period between GOI and BLTF. The Bodo Peace Accord was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2003, to provide political autonomy to the Bodo. The formation of BTC was welcome by the large section of Bodos.

The ABSU submitted a memorandum to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh along with the their allied group seeking early solution of Bodoland issue as soon as possible. A new peace agreement was signed on 27 January 2020 between the GOI and government of Assam one side and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland and ABSU and the other. The boundary of BRT will be redrawn to make Bodo speakers majority within the region. The agreement also makes the Bodo language with Devnagri script an associate official language of Assam.

### **Conclusion:**

The conflicting strands of demands made by different Bodo organization and their varying modes of operation found expression in inter-group violence that characterized the movement throughout and continued in the post movement period. Thus the division within the Bodos regarding their method and goals was considerable, especially as the PTCA , the ABSU- BPAC combine and the Bodo Security Force (BSF) pursued diverse line of action.

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# Participation of Women in Politics with Special Reference to North East India

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## **i. Introduction:**

North East India which is also known as eight sisters comprising of states – Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura where women have also always played a major role in many peace building and in social movements. The groups of women are very strong in this region and they are also traditionally very cooperative. But the political participation of women in North East India is still lacking behind though the Constitution of India have provided equal opportunity for political right for both men and women. Though North East India is a large region, the women in this area could not become the leading role in politics. Women in India have always been given lower status than men. Women were subordinated on various grounds on their powers and positions, but it is seen that women representation is very less in parliament and State Legislatures. Political right for women is not only for their voting right but to participate in various political activities like in contesting in election, representing in parliament and legislature etc. and as a party workers to fight against the crime like – rape, molestation, sexual harassment, abduction, dowry deaths and domestic violence. So the modern women has become very conscious of their right provided by the Constitution by which the women empowerment has become popular in this present world and made the women self dependent as the United Nation Deputy Secretary General once said Women are empowered all of a Society benefit.

## **II. Statement of the Problem:**

The main intension to write this paper is to point out the participation of women in politics in North East region as well as to analyses their political rights as provided by the Indian Constitution. Political participation of women can overcome the gender inequality. It can also point out crimes against women of North Eastern region which hampered their participation in politics and this also become one of the reason of lacking behind in political participation. So it is to be point out that in the North Eastern region that are the problems and prospects which hamper the women in representing themselves in Indian politics.

## **III. Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of the study are given below:

1. To draw out the major problems and prospects of North East women in political participation.
2. To highlight the participation of North East women in the parliament and the state legislature.

## **IV. Methodology:**

The paper has been based on Secondary data which has been collected from various books, through internet, government website and Journal.

## **V. Result and Discussion:**

Reasons for low participation of women in Political system. They are discussed as follows:-

### **Illiteracy:**

Most of the women in North East India are Illiterate. So illiteracy has become a barrier to women to participate in politics. Most of the North East women are unaware of their political right due to the lack of awareness, Girls, child are neglected in most of the Indian communities. They are force to stay home to do domestic works and they miss their school.

**Imbalanced Gender Ratio:**

Gender inequality in society is also one of the factors that lead to less participation of women in politics. Though the Indian constitution was given equal rights to both men and women but men enjoys more political power than women.

**Lack of Training and Skills Workshops:**

In order to make aware of women political rights they should be given leadership training and skill workshop.

**Lack of Economic Independence :**

Lack of Economic independence has become one of the factors of North Eastern women in political participation. Their financial issue has limit their participation in politics. Women do not get adequate financial support from the political parties to contest the elections.

**Poverty:**

In North Eastern region most of the people faces the problem of poverty which also affect their political participation. So the poor people mostly focus for their survival activities and first they will try for their basic needs before they participates in politics, rather their times and interest will be limited for their participation in politics.

**Domestic Violence:**

Domestic violence against women occurs not only in North East India but also in developed and developing countries alike. Though government guarantee women's equality and full rights and the constitutions of the country, governments denied women legal freedom to achieve such rights. Indeed Domestic violence is also the leading cause of less participation in politics by the women in North East India.

**Lack of Political Network:**

Political networking in North East region of India is also lacking behind which block the newcomers due to lack of openness in political decision making and democratic awareness among the people.

**Unfriendly Environment:**

In North East India most of the women are uneducated for which their insecurity has driven them out from politics. Political parties also create unfriendly environment to women where they need to struggle for the space in the party by facing various dimensional issues.

**Family Responsibilities:**

Women are the one who always take the responsibility in taking care of their children and their men at home and do all the household work. Their time continues till the child is dependent on parents for care.

**Lack of Safety:**

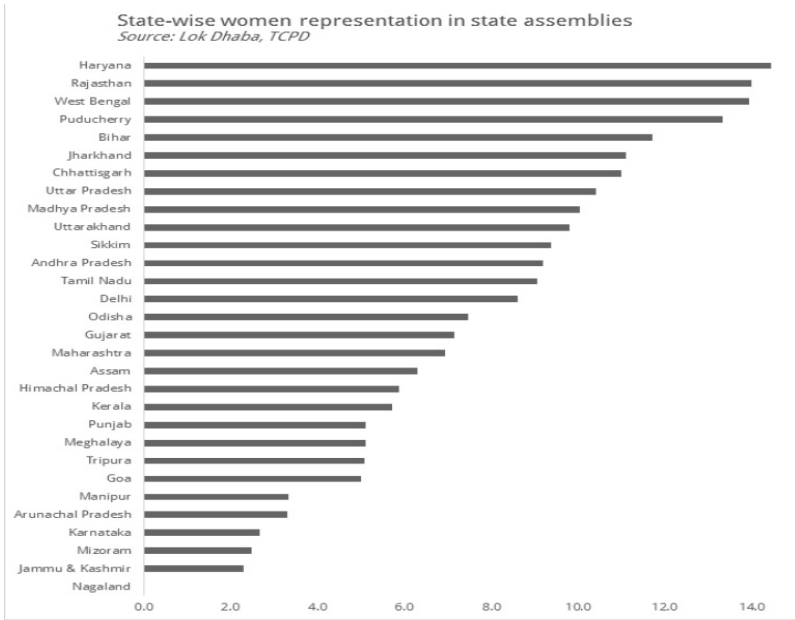
Slander and abuse are the barriers where women feel no safety in politics and that prevent them from running in politics which encounter them during campaign. So, lack of safety drive out their political participation.

**Representation of North East Women in Indian Politics:**

In North East India the representation of women in political institution is different in all the eight states. For example let us look over to Assam where no any single women MLA was there in the year 1972 but gradually in 2006, 10 percent MLAS were women candidates. In Tripura also only one women MLA and zero women MP to the lok sabha has been elected whereas in Arunachal Pradesh there had been only one women MP has been elected. Thus the overall result of the states shows a huge gender gap in North East India.

Now, let us again look to 2023 Assembly elections in three North East States of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura have poor presentation of women in the new legislature. In the state of Meghalaya out of 36 women only 3 women candidates succeeded. In Meghalaya the female voters is marginally higher than that of male voters in the state assembly. In Nagaland women started to take part in the legislative assembly election in 1982. But they all got unsuccessful till the 14 Nagaland legislative elections held on 2023. Out of four women candidates two of them were successfully elected for the first time in Nagaland. It took 41 year for Naga women to become legislators for the first time. In Nagaland the

numbers of male and female voters in nearly equal, Whereas among the three states Tripura had a better score with nine women candidates out of 21 women who contested elections in the states Assembly. The number of women's in the state electorate is lower but there was a higher voter turnout among women than men. The representation in legislature is essential for women political empowerment as it will enables them in decision making process and plays a vital role in policy making demand accountability in government.



The above given chart shows that the North East States stand at an average of 3.7% where only two women participated from per legislature.

## VI. Findings and Suggestions:

It is found the participation of women in politics in North Eastern part in India is very less due to the various reason which has been discussed above and it is seen that the male participation in politics in always leading than the female candidates. It is not found any increasing in percentage of women candidates in the state legislative assembly. The representatives from the 8 states is still lacking behind. So in this regards I would like to suggest that state and national political

parties should give the opportunities to women of North East India to take part in every election by making them aware and conscious about their political right. In North East India women also always face gender inequality that insecure their participation in politics. So there should be no any discrimination regarding gender. Every men and women should be given equal right and opportunity. Last but not the least every girl child should get protected and make them educate to overcome illiteracy and to get their equal right.

## **VII. Conclusion:**

Though men and women are given equal rights by the Indian Constitution but still the participation of women in politics is still lacking behind in the North Eastern region of India. So every woman should insure their political rights by removing gender inequality in politics. So women are also lots to achieve and conquer by participating in politics and they should be made confident and conscious to meet their rights provided by the constitution. Thus male dominated political system of India should stop and give equal opportunity to women in politics.

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# Participation of Women in the Bodo Movement in Assam: A Historical Study

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Women, the inseparable part of the society play a significant role in the socio-economic and political activities. The social scientists opine that without the participation of women in the socio-economic or other developmental activities a nation or society cannot progress. P.C.Sikligar rightly says, “Women constitute half of the humanity despite being endowed with certain particular features—both physical and temperamental. Men and women are complementary to each other. Their diverse physical and temperamental qualities together form the complete race. Hence, logically both should have equal status.” As women constitute the half of the humanity, an act which is done by men alone can't be done successfully.

It is a well-known fact that there are a number of tribal groups in Assam with their own culture and tradition. Among them the Bodos, the largest ethnic group of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam are the earliest settlers of Assam. In the Bodo society the women always enjoy an independent and respectable position in all aspects. Their participation in politics is also worthy to be mentioned. Mrs.Promila Rani Brahma, the Ex-Agricultural Minister of Assam hails from the Bodo community. The two MLAs of Assam namely Kamali Basumatary and Rekha Rani Das Boro are also from this ethnic community. In the Panchayat level politics also the Bodo women's participation is remarkable. In this regard mention may be made of Champa Basumatary, Renu Sonowal and Alai Basumatary Chapaguri, Ghoramari in the district of Sonitpur. The women actively participated in the freedom struggle too.

The active participation of Bodo women in politics definitely shows that their participation in the autonomy movement was appraisable. During the autonomy movement along with men the Bodo women also actively participated.

### **Objective:**

The main objective of the paper is to highlight the role of the women in the Bodo movement in Assam. An attempt will also be made to study the contribution of these women in signing the Bodoland Accord in 1993. In preparing the paper mainly the secondary sources like books and journals are consulted.

### **Participation Of Women:**

The participation of women in the Bodo movement in Assam was seen when the script movement was going on in 1974. The Bodo people of Assam demanded that Roman script should be granted for writing their language. But the Government of Assam was not in a position to recognize it. So, the script movement was made a popular one and the movement took a new turn when Malati Rani Narzary, Hirabai Narzary, Mira Rani Basumatary etc. came forward to take part in it.

### **Formation Of Aatwwf:**

The formation of All Assam Tribal Welfare Federation (AATWWF) on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1986 under the Presidentship of Pramila Rani Brahma was a turning in the history of the Bodo women in Assam. Under the initiative of Upendra Nath Brahma, the ABSU President and the other members of ABSU namely Sansuma Khungur Biswamithiary, Subhas Basumatary etc. **AATWWF** was formed to maintain the rights of the tribal women of Assam. The AATWWF was formed mainly with two objectives-

- a) To work for the welfare of tribal women and
- b) To spread the aims and objectives of the ABSU movement to the rural areas, particularly among the illiterate Bodo women.

The constitution of the AATWWF contains, "It is considered expedient to form a federation of the women folk belonging to all tribal groups of entire Assam to

unite themselves in a common platform through mutual understandings being imbibed in a common ideology with a view to fighting for ensuing rights and justice of the tribal women in the spheres of socio-economic, political, education, cultural and for their emancipation from their socio-domestic drudgery and thereby to enable themselves in rendering services to the promotion welfare and preservation of the indigenous self-identity of all tribal groups living in Assam.”

It may be mentioned that an executive meeting of the Darrang District Committee of AATWWF was held on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1989 and in that meeting it was resolved to distribute *aronai* (a traditional wrapper of the Bodo people of Assam) to the members of the Bodo volunteer Force. As a custom *aronai* was to be wore by the Bodo men who went to the battle field. In the same manner the women were directed to weave *aronai* for the youths who took part in the movement for a separate state.

This is to be noted that during the Bodo movement the Government also undertook suppressive measures. Bidyasagar Narzary in his book *Upendra Nath Brahma-Life and Philosophy* has mentioned that in such an incident on 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1989 about 500 Bodos were killed and 100 insured. As a result of this 100000 Bodos also rendered homeless. On 15<sup>th</sup> August about 55 Bodos were killed and 1000 houses were set on fire. Bidyasagar Narzary further mentions, “The Assam police personnel have looted ornaments, jewellerys, money, valuable household articles and burnt down granary- stores damaging paddy, rice and other food stuff of lakhs of tons. During the village raids and operations, Assam police personnel have not only burnt down the houses and properties but also deliberately killed over 5000 innocent Bodo people and gang rapped 500 Bodo girls and women. Mass arrests, brutal tortures and molestation of womenfolk have become a routine work for the Assam police jawans.

Until now, more than 500 innocent Bodos are being kept on false charges in different jails of Assam without proper food and medical cares.” During the movement the members of the AATWWF performed their duty as messengers too. They used to carry secret messages from activists to the members of ABSU. Sucheta Sen Chaudhury rightly mentions, “In 1989, one of the AATWWF members was sent by the ABSU President Upendra Nath Brahma to the ABSU

volunteer Force Chairman Premising Brahma. She travelled all the long way from Kokrajhar town by train and bus reached a village situated in the border of West Bengal and Assam. She went back with a message from the ABSU president.”

The Bodo women also undertook some literary programmers. They organized seminars, published megazines to encourage the women to involve themselves in the ongoing movements. The topic like “The Role of Bodo Women for long term Struggle for the Creation of the Bodo Land”, “The Role of Bodo Women in Building Great Bodo Nationality through long term Struggle”, “Role of Bodo Women in Social Reforms”, “The Role of Bodo Women in the Present Movement” etc. reflect that the Bodo women were very much concern of their demand of the separate Bodo state. The Bodo women also expressed their views on the movement of their community for a separate state with the help of literature. The various aspects of the movement were reflected in their writings. Bina Bala Gayary of Suban Khata village published a book of poems.

Interesting was that during the Bodo movement the women of this community was given nursing training to serve the ABSU and ABSUVF activists. Sucheta Sen Chaudhury mentions “One of the AATWWF leaders who was the head of a nursing team in Kokrajhar, told that during peak years of the movement (1989-1991) most doctors left their jobs and the printing health centres of Bodo dominated areas were deserted. Even medicine was not available. At that time the trained girls were helpful to the villagers. Apart from nursing the activity they performed duties of doctors.”

### **Conclusion:**

The participation of women in the Bodo movement ushered a new chapter in the history of the movement of the Bodos of Assam. It was seen that the Bodo women involved in an indirect manner. But the role they performed during the movement was not negligible at any cost. They tried their best to mobilize the people to engage themselves in the ongoing movement. Another important tusk they performed during the movement was that they left no stone untried to eradicate the evil practices prevailed in their society like addiction of male to country liquor, wife beating, polygamy etc. As stated by Sucheta Sen Chaudhury during the movement the Bodo women performed the following important activities:

- a) Explaining the programme of the ABSU to the people from time to time.
- b) Convincing people to remain alert about army and police.
- c) Selecting young girls for nursing training and
- d) Approaching people to help the ABSU and ABSU VF members with food and shelter.

In fact, the women participation in the Bodo movement undoubtedly helped the movement to go ahead with desired result. The united efforts of both men and women ultimately led to the signing of the historic Memorandum of Settlement on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1993. As a result of this the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) came into existence.

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# Human Rights in Karbi Anglong During COVID-19 Pandemic

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## **Introduction:**

Coronavirus originated in the city of Hubei province in China early the end of December 2019. Later, which is regarded as covid-19 pandemic by the World health organisation. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. The virus is spread from infected persons mouth or nose in small liquid particles when the cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathes. Best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the diseases and how the virus spreads. Protect ourselves and other from infection by staying at least 1 meter apart from others, wearing a properly fitted mask, and washing our hands or using sanitizer. And also get vaccinated ourselves and follow local guidance.

The universal declarations of human rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Human rights are rights inherent to all human, regardless of races, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, etc. everyone is entitled to this rights without discrimination.

Violation of human rights can take place either directly or indirectly. Violations can be either intentionally performed by the state or come as a result of the state failing to prevent the violation. When a state engage in human rights violation, various actors can be involve such as police, judge, prosecutors, government officials and more. The violations can be physically violent in nature such as

police brutally, while rights such as the right to a fair trial can also be violated, where no physical violence is involved.

## Literature Review

- SnehalWalia, 2020: Covid-19 pandemic place a major threat to public health throughout the world. government mass ensure the protection of basic human rights including the rights to internet access, information and education specially this situation. right to education been violated as a result of the restrictions imposed on internet by government such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Myanmar, Jammu Kashmir in India. ine Jammu and Kashmir students where unable to access the online learning classes being helped as a result of covid-19 lockdown.
- S. Sekalala, 2020: in order to reduce the spread of covid-19, government introduce emergency measure that constrain individuals freedoms, social, and economic rights and global solidarity. This regulatory measures have closed schools, workplaces transist system, cancelled public gathering, introduce mandatory home confinement.
- S. Tafesse,2020: Education is the pillar of every country's development. In the world, most schools, colleges, and universities are closed to control the spread of the COVID-19. The school closure brings difficulties for students, families, and teachers. So, distance learning is a solution to continue the education system. However, distance learning is challenging in developing countries because many parents have not themselves been to school, lack of ICT infrastructures, computers, radio, and television. The poor and digitally-illiterate families with lower educational levels children with poor learning motivation are more suffering in this situation and this increases inequality.
- B. Odigbo, 2021:Covid-19 Pandemicenforced by the law contravened some peoples fundamental human rights. The enforcement of lockdown were not significantly respectful of human life and dignity. The emergencies declaration of log down where discriminataly and the countries against minorities and vulnerable groups.

- Mohammed R. M Elshobake, 2022: some measurements that have been taken by countries to confirm the covid-19 have constituted violations of human rights and did not comply with the legal conditions to restrict human rights. Hindi the Corbet 1920 make in healthcare system, health inequities, racism and discrimination, undermining the right to freedom of expressions and the right to access information, gross negligence in protecting detainees from covid-19 infection, all of these constitute clear violations of the principles of international human rights law.

### **Objective of Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to explore human rights violation cases in Karbi Anglong during Covid-19 Pandemic in accordance with the international human rights laws.

### **Research Methodology**

Through contents analysis and descriptive methodology. Data were collected through observations and to telephonic calls. data are used both primary and secondary.

### **Covid 19 in Karbi Anglong, Assam**

The Assam government has announced a complete lockdown in seven districts where the positivity rates of Covid-19 cases are high. A total ban on the movement of all public and private transport in the seven districts, though goods vehicles are allowed to operate.

### **Here are the latest guidelines issued by the Assam government:**

- There will be a total ban on the movement of all public and private transport in the seven districts, though goods vehicles will be allowed to operate.
- All the workplaces, business and commercial establishments, shops, restaurants and other eateries, cold storages and warehouses will be closed till further order in these districts where high positivity rates prevail.
- These facilities will remain open up to 1pm every day in 16 other districts

where 'moderate' Covid-19 positivity rates have been recorded, and the curfew will remain in force from 2pm to 5am. These districts include Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Kokrajhar, Barpeta, Nalbari, Baksa, Bajali, Kamrup, Darang, Nagaon, Hojai, Tinsukia, Dhemaji, Cachar, Karimganj and Karbi Anglong.

- Sivasagar and Dibrugarh districts will be kept under a strict vigil for the next one week by the authorities, Mahanta said.
- The curfew will also be enforced from 5pm to 5am in Dhubri, Kamrup Metro, South Salmarā, Majuli, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Udalguri, West Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Charaideo and Hailakandi where the Covid-19 situation has improved, the minister said.
- Business establishments will be allowed to operate up to 4pm in these districts.
- All inter-district passenger transport services will remain suspended.
- The government banned public gatherings in the districts which fall under the containment zones, while up to 10 people are allowed for marriage and funeral programmes in other places.
- Wearing of face mask is compulsory in public places and other restrictions such as the odd-even formula for plying of vehicles will continue to remain in force, the minister said.

Partial Lockdown is imposed in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts by the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council 's Authority. Markets, offices and other commercial establishments were mostly closed across the Districts. However, Through an order, the district administration has asked the grocery shop owners to avoid gatherings and use minimum staff. The district administration has also fixed opening hours for grocery shops from 8 am to 4 pm and has ordered the grocery stores to sell vegetables, eggs, fruits etc., from the same sale point. Meanwhile, the administration is pondering about the possibility of providing food at the doorsteps of quarantined people.

Police and district administration, Diphu Municipal Board (DMB) and Greater

Diphu Bazaar Committee carried out spraying of disinfectants in Diphu market after a thorough wash with hose pipe of local fire-tenders. A team of fire-fighters sprayed disinfectants on buildings and roads.

DMB chairman Rah Kro said, “Today the DMB and Greater Diphu Bazaar Committee have jointly carried out the spraying of disinfectants in Diphu market. The areas which are not covered today will be covered the next day.”

The West Karbi Anglong district administration fixed the opening hours of grocery shops from 10 am to 3 pm. In West Karbi Anglong, a quarantine camp is being set up at Kuthepi. Police have restricted the entry of outsiders in all entry points of inter-district and inter-State borders. The police have stepped up vigil at Forest Gate Bazaar of Kheroni in West Karbi Anglong district bordering Hojai district. Meanwhile, a few households with medical emergencies have been facing difficulties. An elderly man was seen carrying his wife to a pharmacy located a few kilometres away from Kheroni Chariali on a bicycle.

In West Karbi Anglong, a quarantine camp is being set up at Kuthepi. Police have restricted the entry of outsiders in all entry points of inter-district and inter-State borders. The police have stepped up vigil at Forest Gate Bazaar of Kheroni in West Karbi Anglong district bordering Hojai district.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination centres/hospitals in Karbi-Anglong and West Karbi Anglong provide by KAAC.**

These are the list of vaccination centres in District Karbi-Anglong and West Karbi Anglong

#### **COVISHIELD Centres (Karbi Anglong)**

1. Howraghat CHC Session Site, Howraghat
2. Dokmoka MPHC Session Site, Dokmoka
3. Chowkiholā PHC Session Site, Chowkiholā
4. Manja PHC Session Site, Manja
5. Phuloni MPHC Session Site, Phuloni MPHC Session Site

6. Langhin MPHC, Langhin
7. Dengaon MPHC Session Site, Dengaon
8. Borlangfer MPHC Session Site, Borlangfer
9. Deithor MPHC, Deithor
10. Dhansiri MPHC Session Site, Hidim Garo Gaon GB House
11. Rajapathar MPHC, Rajapathar MPHC
12. Centre Bazar MPHC Session Site                      Centre Bazar
13. Dolamara PHC, Dolamara PHC
14. Diphu Urban Session Site, Diphu
15. Bokajan CHC                      , Bokajan CHC
16. Diphu Medical College Hospital, Diphu
17. Balipathar PHC Session Site, Balipathar

### **COVISHIELD Centres (West Karbi Anglong)**

1. Mailoo                      Mailoo
2. Taradubi MPHC                      Taradubi
3. Bithung Rengthma SC Bithung
4. Umsowai                      Umsowai
5. Hamren Civil Hamren
6. Sildubi MPHC, Sildubi
7. Tumpreng SHC1, Tumpreng
8. Tika HCW, Tika Boithalangso
9. Boithalangso, Boithalangso
10. Hanlokrok MPHC, Hanlokrok

11. Zirikinging BPHC, Zirikinging
12. Kheroni Model Hospital, Kheroni
13. Ouguri, Ouguri
14. Donkamoakm CHC, Donkamokam

### **COVAXIN centres (Karbi Anglong)**

1. Diphu Urban COVAXIN Site, Diphu
2. Borpathar PHC COVAXIN Site, Borpathar PHC
3. Chowkiholes COVAXIN Site, Chowkiholes
4. Dolamara PHC COVAXIN Site, Dolamara PHC
5. Borlangfer MPHC COVAXIN Site, Borlangfer

### **COVAXON (West Karbi Anglong)**

1. Donkamoakm CHC (N), Donkamokam CHC
2. Boithalangso BPHC1, Boithalangso

### **Discussion and Finding**

women are one of the vulnerable section of society who have faced human rights violations related to physical abuse and emotional. As many of my responder responses that most women face problem they firstly address are those pregnant women who wear unable to go hospital due to lake of transportations during lockdown and far distance of hospital location. Secondly , they have loss of the income sources so the face problem to get their daily needs for themselves

Marginalised workers, migrant workers and daily wagers sections of people who suffered in all fields. The surprise impose of locked down left this sections of people with their hand without food, savings and shelters. Migrant labourers were trouble to return their native land after shutting down all business, all transports and all incomes possibilities.

Meanwhile, a few households with medical emergencies have been facing

difficulties. An elderly man was seen carrying his wife to a pharmacy located a few kilometres away from Kheroni Chariali on a bicycle.

In the midst of national wide Lockdown following the outbreak of deadly Coronavirus (Covid-19) seven workers from West Karbi Anglong, Districts who worked in private restaurant in Kohima city of Nagaland, returned to Karbi Anglong District on foot. This information was informed by social worker Joyhind Engleg to media. Soon after that he collected their information he also informed the administrator about the matter and all the arrangements were done by the District Administration. These seven migrant workers reach diphu around 5pm and they were all taken to hospital for medical attention and kept them under home quarantine.

Food distribution and other essentials to the people struck inside house is continuing throughout the district, student's organizations, NGOs, government employees, police, CRPF, religious institutions, village and ward committees are continuing distribution of aid at their personal level.

Food distribution in the district is inequality to a family who doesn't have ration card. Families' doesn't have ration cards they have been denied food items. Upper Dikrong is an area where almost all families depend on selling locally available parsley and herbs and working as manual labor for their livelihood. Due to the lockdown they cannot sell vegetables or risk for wage earning. Reportedly people of the whole area are under distress due to scarcity of food. As Village headman Kamal Engti state that, "Few families who possessed BPL or ration card received some food items from the government" informed that 21 out of 37 household of Kathar Engti village, 22 out of 26 houses from Kania Terang village, 15 out of 26 houses of Monsing Teron village, 6 out of 15 houses of Hemari Engti village and 25 out of 45 families from Niling Sangma village do not have ration cards. .

Educational institutions were force to shutdown during the pandemic and transitions of students and teachers to online teaching learning and create lack of motivations in students, lack of in-persons interaction, face infrastructure problem etc. most of the rural students where dropped their studies due to lack of technology. as my observation and the response from my responders, address during lock down all though they suffer allows of an avoidable problems,

the most biggest lost they mention is the quality of education. Due to online learning and online examination process the educational institutions produce quantity of graduates but let behind the quality of education.

Slowly taking online class after some time in the lockdown period onwards. Initially Online classes feel better. Where there was a complete change in the situation of the class's atmosphere. After a month came to know that there are lots of disadvantages to this type of education. Finally came to know that this virus is not a blessing to students but a foreshadow of the student's further life to adjust the Online mode of education. The shift in education is totally different from all the education career. This type of online course seen in Software Engineers attending from home. Taking time to adjust in college courses. There are significant disadvantages because there is a huge loss in jobs, lives, and the economy of the Country. The main disadvantages for students are:

- In online classes, the adoption rate is around 50-60% whereas in the classroom the adoption was around 80-90%. Online classes affect the eyes of the students due to long hours in front of the blue screen
- Small children like the playschool and the primary grades must not have this type of class because they have low concentration power, and these small kids do not have the ability to sit for a longer time in front of the blue screen.
- Lots of poor students do not have access to laptops and computers; all these students are naive, think there should not be this disparate education.
- Surely there are lots of disadvantageous factors like there are no exams; students are being given marks by the internals. This may impact their career in the future. These factors are going to be a foreshadow to the child further life.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be said that the pandemic entails a dreaded crisis to the humanity which needs ardent, prompt, rational and active intervention. At the same time, awareness needs to be created about the disastrous Impact of

the disease. Since Karbi Anglong is yet to make economic and political progress, encroachment of such disease entails serious consequences. Hence policies should be formulated at the behest of the downtrodden women, children, old and infirm etc. Simultaneously, basic facilities must be conferred to the stakeholders through proper implementation of the funds. Last but not the least, in a vulnerable situation socially and economically vulnerable people are the victims of double marginalization and distress. A holistic policy needs to be framed to improve the lives of the Sixth scheduled tribes as per the aspirations of the Constitution makers.

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# Impact of Migration on Tribal Communities: A Study on North East India

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## **Introduction:**

Tribal Migration in Northeast India is not a new phenomenon. It can be happened by various factors. In the context of North East of India, population growth rate is one of the factors. The region has had a high population growth rate. Northeast India has more than 220 ethnic groups and an equal number of dialects such as Assamese, Garo, Khasi, Jaintis, Bodo, Karbi, Bhutia, Lepachas, Kukis, and so on. In this region, the Bodos form the highest indigenous ethnic group. The hill states of the region like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland are predominantly occupied by tribals. The region's population is the result of an ancient and continuous flow of migration from Tibet, Indo-Gangetic India, the Himalayas, present-day Bangladesh and Myanmar.

In this region many tribal people in Northeast India live below the poverty line. Human resource is one of the most important of the region and also rich in its natural resources. This region is also highly characterized by the unemployment. Even so, agriculture is the backbone of the economy of tribal people because it is a main source of income. But the nature and pattern of tribal migration have changed in the contemporary period. In the present time the patterns of tribal migration towards cities for adequate employment opportunities mainly occurred in the unorganised sectors. They are engaged in factories as a labour, working as domestic servants, bus and truck cleaner, rickshaw pullers, street hawkers, petty traders, construction workers and house maid workers. Therefore they willingly or unwillingly migrate from one place to another in search of work

and to earn a livelihood. They can migrate within the same district, between rural and urban; within the same state, between rural and rural or urban and urban; another state or even another country. In fact they face various problems in their work sites for example sexual harassments, malpractices, Accidents and so on.

In Northeast India, most rural tribes are self-employed, whether it is on their own farms or in small enterprises. Most rural jobs are poorly rewarded and poorly paid. Rural work, especially farming, is often hard, sometimes monotonous and frequently dangerous. Given these problems, it is not surprising that many rural workers migrate to urban areas or manufacturing industries to try to find better paying jobs. Improvements in communication and transportation have created the conditions for large-scale internal movement of people at unprecedented levels. The question of employment is one of the significant issues of development. In the north-eastern states of India, where economic growth is not very dynamic, unemployment is a very common story. The main objective of this study is to give a glimpse into the story of migration in the North Eastern region and relate it to employment and education levels.

In modern time tribal migration in north east India is widely spread in various sector. The roots of tribal migration are vast with overpopulation burden, forest degradation, agriculture and other factors pushing the largely innocent tribals into urban setups in search of livelihood and occupation.

Therefore, tribes are primitives of society and primitive people usually live in forest areas. Traditionally it is seen that tribals are forest lovers and totally dependent on nature for livelihood. Over time, tribal's ancestral livelihoods and occupations have been destroyed due to modernization, industrialization, urbanization and changing development policies of the government. Loss of their ancestral occupation and livelihood led tribals to migrate towards urban areas. Apart from the policy effects and population pressures the changing social structure i.e., family disturbance, violence, crime, theft, and political disturbances in the locality are other major factors to influence tribal migration from one place to another place. So, present study is to find out the causes and impacts of migration on the tribal communities of North-Eastern Region and also its effects on recent trends on tribal politics.

## Causes of Tribal Migration in North east India:

The tribal can be classified a Forest Dependent Population. Traditionally the life of the tribal population was closely associated with their habitat, including the flora and fauna. With due course of time their sole livelihood sources have been destroyed with changing development policies of government, rapid industrialization, urbanization and excess pressure of population explosion. Non-availability of alternative economic opportunities and sources of livelihood forces many tribals to migrate to urban set-ups in search of alternative livelihoods. Apart from the livelihood issues the other problems like domestic violence, political rift, theft, crime, etc. are the other major causes of their migration to live a peaceful life at the destination.

## Tribes in North East Indian:

North East Indian Tribes constitute a major part of the Indian tribal community and are largely spread over all the states of North East that includes Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam, and Sikkim. Northeast Indian region is considered one of the most culturally distinct parts of India inhabited by more than 200 interesting tribes. Northeast Indian tribes include the Addis, Aptanis, Angami, Ao, Rengma, Nishi, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Lusai, Kukis, Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Bhutias, Lepchas, Nepali, Riang, Tippera and Tripuri. So, North East Indian tribes will include a brief description of their lifestyle, origins, customs, traditions, and festivals.

State	Tribal population (in lakhs)	Percentage of total population	Major tribes
Assam	33.00	12	Boro (or Kachari), Karbi, Koch-Rajbanshi, Mishing, Mishimi and Rabha
Arunachal Pradesh	7.05	64	Galong, Nishi, Wancho and Adi.
Manipur	7.40	35	Thadaou, Tangkhul, Kabui, Inpui and Rongmei
Meghalaya	19.90	86	Khasis, Garo and Karbis

Mizoram	8.40	95	Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Pawi, Mara, Bawn, Tlau, Ralte, Pang, Hualngo and the Bait
Nagaland	17.70	89	Angami, Ao, Lotha, Sumi, Sangtam, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak
Sikkim	1.03	23	Lepchas and Bhutias
Tripura	9090	31	Reang, Chakma, deobarma, Halam, and Usai

(Source: Bajaj; Ali and Das, 2003)

### **Origin of North East Indian Tribes:**

The North-East Indian tribes can be mainly associated with Indo Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burmese and Proto Austroloid ethnic groups representing the Asia-Austrian culture in the Indian hill country. The trends of these ethnic groups are visible in appearance as well as the traditions followed by these communities. Ethnically and linguistically they provide a cultural bridge between India and Southeast Asia on the one hand, China and Inner Asia and Burma on the other hand.

### **Major tribes in North East India:**

Starting from the tribal community found in Arunachal Pradesh which recognises at least 25 types of tribes, it includes 16 major tribes in Nagaland and even more in other states of North east India. Some of the major tribes frequently found in India are Garo tribe, Khasi tribe, Jaintia tribe, Adi tribe, Aptani tribe, in Arunachal Pradesh, Kuki tribe, Bodo tribe and Deori tribe of Assam who are scattered in the northeastern region of India.

The people of Bodo tribe comprise 5.3 percent of the total population of Assam. They are the largest ethnic and linguistic group of Brahmaputra Valley. The Garo people are tagged as the second largest tribal community of Meghalaya. Adis are one of the major tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh. They are very democratic in nature. The tribal region of north east often witnesses some

tribal groups who have migrated in all the states of North east notwithstanding manmade political boundaries. One such Tribal group is the Kuki tribes who are available in all the parts of North eastern states. Along with the Garos and Khasis these are the next popular group of north east Indian Tribes.

### **Society of North East Indian Tribes**

Socially, these tribal communities follow three types of lineage systems: matriarchal, patriarchal and patriarchal. Apart from different festivals, these tribes have different languages, as each tribe has its own language. Each tribal group is known by a different name. Some of these are divided into tribes. Dual organization is also found among some tribes of Orissa. Almost all tribes are composed of clans, which are exotic. In north-eastern India, social stratification is found among some tribes, such as the Monpa and Apatani of Arunachal Pradesh. 3 % of the total population of Assam belong to the Boro tribe. They are the largest ethnic and linguistic group in the Brahmaputra Valley. The Garos are identified as the second largest tribal community in Meghalaya. Adis are one of the major tribal communities in Arunachal Pradesh. They are very democratic in nature. The tribal region of the Northeast often witnesses some tribal groups that have migrated to all the states of the Northeast despite the man-made political boundaries. One such tribal group is the Kuki tribe who are found in all parts of the northeastern state. Along with the Garos and Khasis, they are the next most popular group of Northeast Indian tribes.

### **Culture of Northeast Indian Tribes**

Northeast Indian tribes can be distinguished for their cultural trends which are characterized by their festivals, customs, dances, arts and other social events that these tribal groups observe. Each tribe can be classified separately by the costumes they wear, the ornaments they wear and the dances they perform. Northeast Indian tribes enjoy dance, music and drama which are a part of their rich tribal culture. Some of the main dance forms are Ponung, Rekham Pada, Ajima roa, and Mi Su'a. Religion of North East Indian Tribes

According to religion, these tribes generally follow Christianity while religions like Buddhism and Hinduism are also followed in some parts of North East

India. The North-Eastern tribes had no conventional religion and believed in their tribal gods mainly 'Doni-Polo'. The tribals had a traditional religion that believed in the existence of souls. Before the origin of Christianity, the hill tribes of the Northeast practiced animism.

### **Occupation of North East Indian Tribes**

These tribes are mainly engaged in agriculture and agriculture is their major occupation. Cultivation of jhum and nadrachara is widely practiced in this region. In addition to agriculture, the tribal communities of the Northeast depend mainly on weaving and animal husbandry. The women community mostly engages in weaving and handicrafts which are famous throughout the country.

### **Festivals of North East Indian Tribes**

Different tribes of North East India have different festivals. Some of the festivals celebrated by the northeastern tribes are Nyokum, Sekrenil, Ngada, Ka Shad Suk Mynsim, Ka Pom-blang, Nongkrem, Ka-shad Shingviang-Thangiap, Ka-shad-Kinjoh Khaskain, Wangala etc. Thus, the Northeast Indian tribes represent the most colorful culture in India. Tribal life in India represents an entirely separate strand of Indian community.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the Tribal Migration in North East India.
2. Analyze the socio-economic situation of Tribal Community in North-East India.
3. To make Suitable Suggestions for improve their quality of Life of the tribal community.

### **About the study Area:**

The North-eastern region comprises of the seven states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, popularly known as Seven Sisters. It also covers the Himalayan state of Sikkim. According to the census 2011, the total population of the region is about 45 million, and

Assam contributes the highest (68%) of the total population. Therefore India is having the largest concentrations of tribal population of the world (8.2%) and North East region occupies 8.55% of the tribal population in India. Out of the eight state in North east India, Four states have majority numbers of tribal people especially Mizoram (94.5 per cent), Nagaland (89.1per cent), Meghalaya (85.9per cent), and Arunachal Pradesh (64.2 per cent) Census 2011.



Source: from Internet

### **Conclusion and Suggestions:**

Migration is a basic way to improve the life of the tribal people in north east India. They can migrate due to lack of availability of job opportunities. They faced various problems especially train accidents which is highly affect on labour migration. Therefore, the government can take proper attention on local migrants of the unorganized sector in north east India. It is the responsibility of

Government or local administration to make awareness about available facilities and perfect recognition of migrant labourer. If the migrant people are given proper training to improve their skill on their required area of interest they can have a better live in their native place.

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# Tribal Politics in North-East: An Overview of Issues and Challenges

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## **Introduction:**

There are about eight(8) states in north eastern region of India They are calledtogether as “Seven sisters” earlier. These States are- Assam, Meghalaya, Tirpura, Monipur, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram. These States have their own identities,issues,challenges and emerging trends of life style.

It is very difficult to define who are Tribals ? If we define Tribals are the original resident of this areas,then a question will arise that others are not denizen of these areas .If we follow Indian Independence, inspite of Tribals several other unreserved Tribes were original residents of these areas although they are not recognised or enlisted as Tribals after independence of India.For recognising constitutionally or legally a caste into a Tribal caste or Tribal Area agitations or even violent movements happened or going on political process in this region. For caste politics - Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram etc. have been separated from original larger Assam . If such trends continue specially Muslim castes (Sub)will be politically exploited in this region.

## **Issues of Tribal politics:**

It is very complex metter. What will be the issues of Tribal politics? It is dificult to determine. There are several issues like the concept of “Son of the Soil,” conservation of Areas, reservation in Government jobs, greater facilities, self rule, greater autonomy, provision of autonomous council , Statehood demand,even in extreme form Separation demand from Indian Union becomes too critical.

Actually Tribal politics starts with the concept of “Son of the Soil” and ends with the establishment of Statehood or demand for separation from Indian Union.

‘Son of the Soil’ concept is a very complex issue. If we take the example of Barak Valley in Assam, the original Tribe is known as Kachari or Kasari . Now a question rises that who are Kacharies or Kasadies ? Whether Hindu Tribal castes or Muslim tribal castes are considered as kasadi ? If Muslim tribal Kasadies like Laskar,Barbhuyan,Chowdhury,Dakhaia,Maimal,Patowary etc. are not considered as original tribal castes, there will be no existence of Muslim in the valley.So this “Son of the Soil”concept can be relevant to other States of North-east Region too.

### **Challenges of Tribal Politics:**

Identity preservation of Tribal Castes is a major challenge in the North-East Region.It may be for existence of various castes in a state since Ancient period and arrival of other castes after independence of India. If one Tribal caste becomes politically dominant or ruler other castes feel they are deprived and exploited. If one caste has all the advantages including land owning, then other tribes may challenge for entity. If one particular “place” is protected for one tribe other existence may be denied. If jobs of Government are reserved for one tribe others(Generals/Unreserves) equity will be challenged. Then there will be no constitutional balance of “Right To Equality”.

At the same time , if the Central Government is in line with tribal Government of the State, there is understanding. Similar Governments may lead to develop the Area or State through the concept of “Developmental politics”. But the reverse or opposition types of Governments may become obstacle of each other . In this concept , as powerful,Central Government may deprive or exploit the Tribal Areas or States.

### **Emerging Trends of Tribal Politics:-**

If one Tribe demands have been fulfilled gradually since independence, new kind of tribes and demands arise. If one tribe is legally recognised as tribal others raise demand for their entity. By the way one area is recognised as tribe area as like Bodoland for Bodos,another one for Karbi Anglong for Karbies such

waves of demands are continuing for Dima Hasau, Tiwas, Kuchrajbongsis etc. in Assam. If such trends continue, what will happen to Generals or Unreserved in Assam. This kind of traits may be relevant to other States of North-East Region too.

The most important recent trend of Tribal politics which takes shape of violent movements can be cited as “Civil War” in Monipur State. This is a fight between Kukis and Meithis Tribes for protecting existence. In this fight, several houses are burnt and many lives are also shot dead by Para- Military Forces for prevailing law and order.

At the same moment, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah is holding talks with top dignitaries and leaders of the Monipur State for peace building. We also hope peace building is necessary. Now a question arises if Kukis and Meithis are given for unreserved or Generals. In another sense, if only Hindu Castes are given Tribal Status, what will happen to Muslims sub - castes. In practice Tribal politics becomes a trait of exploiting Muslims in the North-East region of India.

### **Conclusion :**

To conclude, it is to be cited that as Indian Constitution declares India a “Secular” country, we should consider all of Indians as equal. For balancing “Right To Equality” all Tribals, Castes, religious people should be treated equally in all the States of North- East region of India. It is also suggested that Central Government should take necessary steps for development of all Tribals either of Hindus or Muslims equally for preserving “Secularism”.

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# Tribal Politics in North East India: The Emergence of Middle Class in Assam (Special Reference to Karbi Community)

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## Abstract:

The 19th century had seen drastic change in the sphere of eco-political and socio-cultural field in India. With the coming of British imperialist their direct rule had pushed the common Indian household more towards the middleclass society in India as well as in Assam. Their introduction of western ideology and education under the colonial rule had some influence & impact among the life of the common tribal people of Assam. Among them were the Karbi tribe. And the emergence of middle class in the Karbi community was one of the significant developments in the hill tribes of Assam. Therefore, it is also important to actively learn about the Karbi community which also plays a vital role in the History of Assam. This actively demonstrate that the middle class are imbibed by the spirit of western thought and ideology and had resulted in the criticism of the feudalistic and traditional system of India or Assam. And so, it gave birth to renaissance and reformation movement which led to the revivalism of their own culture.

**Keywords:** *Emergence, origin, tribal, influence, impact, cultural.*

## Objectives:

The main reason for the study of this objectives is to know about the term “middle class” and its emergence which is believed to have an impact in the revivalism of their own culture.

- To provide an overview concept of the middle class.
- To study the factors responsible for the emergence of the Karbi middle class.
- To study the role of the educated middle class of the Karbi community in the cultural renaissance.

### **Methodology:**

The data/sources used in the preparing of this work is secondary sources.

### **Literature review:**

To study the present topic various literatures have been referred to supplement for understanding the concepts and the theories used in this research and thus some of the relevant literatures pertinent to the present study are given below:

- Padam Nepal & Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (2012) 'Politics of Culture, Identity and Protest in North-East India' gives an overview of the mutual imbrications of culture and politics in the context of contemporary developments of various protest movements in India for the articulations of identities, local rights and privileges during encroachments of the state on the population in the name of development and progress.
- Sanjay Sen (2023) 'Social and Economic History of Assam' is totally based on the socio-economic history of ancient, medieval and colonial Assam. This book dealt with the development of caste system, religious beliefs, agriculture and land system, the social organization, trade and commerce, various agricultural regulations, plantation economy, development of modern industries, transport system, education, the emergence of middle class, development of literature and press growth of Public Association had been analysed.
- Dr. Pallabita Das (2019) 'Emergence of Sonowal Kachari Middle class: A study', gives us a Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the middle class as well as the Emergence of Sonowal Kachari Middle class and the role of educated middle class in their cultural revivalism and their struggle for their identity.

- Dharamsing Teron (2009) 'A Tribute to Semsonsing Ingti: Father of Karbi Nationalism' gives us an overview of the most iconic figure of Karbi Anglong whose intense commitment towards his own people helped shaped its destiny.
- Dr. Kamal Chandra Pathak (2020) 'Genesis of Elites & Middle class in India with Special Reference to Assam: A Review on the Erstwhile Study of Colonial Period' gave us an overview of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century had seen drastic change in all sort of sphere with the coming of the British & Missionaries. And how their direct rule had pushed the commoners towards the middle class influencing them with the Western though and education which ultimately given birth to renaissance and reformation movement in their societies.
- Don Sonowal & Sharat Mech (2020) 'The Role of Assamese Educated Middle class in the Cultural Renaissance of Assam in Nineteenth Century' gave us the idea of a middle class and let us know that the concept of middle class came from the Educated & Employed people because during that period Assam nation was led by educated middle class and they were the reason behind the beginning of the cultural renaissance in Assam.

### **Introduction:**

For the people of India the idea of a middle class came after the arrival of the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Which had brought a new change of wave in all sort of sphere. The people were experiencing exposure towards the western thought and ideology. Also, the education system brought about a sense of renaissance which imbibed in the hearts of the Karbis that a change in the system was required and they were in a sense feeling neglected. The following topic will try to focus on the issue more briefly.

### **Overview concept of the middle class:**

The middle class is an urban concept which originally developed in Europe with the breakup of feudalism followed by the emergence of commercial and industrial bourgeoisie in the newly developed town and cities. it basically emerged in the west and as a result of economic and technical changes. On the contrary in India, they emerged mostly due to the change and consequences in the system

of law and public administration (Dr.Pathak 2020). The middle-class people play major role in a country. And different scholars have expressed different opinion on the concept of the middle class as there was no proper definition for it. However, we can definemiddle class as a class of people in the middle of social hierarchy as a common definition. It has three division upper middle, middle and lower middle class. The term was first used in 1745 by James Bradshaw in his work 'A Scheme to Prevent Running Irish Wools to France '. The position of middle class is between the higher and lower caste and is generally neither rich nor poor (Dr. Das.P 2019). The middle class emerged out of development in economic disparity in the society. They are found almost in every country of the world and plays an important role in the construction and destruction of the nation. The rich became richer and the poor became poorer but it was the middle class who have been adversely affected. That is why, there is so much of criticism against the government. There are some characteristics of a middle class which are class position, class consciousness, and hegemony over the common masses, government and the society. They are known to be the cleverest, talented and opportunist. They make the intelligentsia of the nation. They actively read and write in the newspaper highlighting their opinion over the achievement and failure of the government in the day-to-day basis moulding their public opinion. Because of this nature they are in a constant struggle with the society as both the higher and lower class criticized them out of envy and emulation which develops into a social problem (Dr. Pathak 2020).

Thus, this actively demonstrate that the middle-class people are considered to be the most useful groups in any society because they had the ability to make greater impact in the nation as they are opinionative and are imbibed by the spirit of western thought and ideology that resulted in the criticising of the feudalistic and traditional system of India or Assam. Which gave birth to renaissance and reformation movement that led to the revivalism of their own culture.

### **Factors responsible for the emergence of Karbi middle class:**

Assam came under the colonial yoke just after the occupation of other provinces of India. As a lately developed and emerging class the influence of Indian middle class was seen clearly on the Assamese middle class. simply because it was a colonial creation. And just as that many other tribes of Assam got influence by

their western ideology and it contributed to the growth of self-assertive movement in Assam. Among them the Karbi tribe were also one which plays a vital role in the history of Assam. The Britishers created various administrative post for the local people including the tribals such as revenue officer, mauzadars, patwari, Choudharis, lawyers, engineers etc... for the upliftment of the common masses of Assam. In the hilly areas, some tribals chieftains were engaged as a translator or interpreters so they could learn the local languages and communicate with the commoners. The coming of the missionaries specially the American Baptist missionaries introduce them to the western education so that it would made easier for them to preach and spread their religion. They came to some tribal populated areas of Assam and chooses Sadia as the mission centre were a few Karbis were converted to Christianity a century ago. The British for their administrative interest introduce English education for lower section for it will give them basic knowledge but they were abit hesitant for the higher section because it would end their exploitation and supremacy over them. But it had created a prepared base for educational and intellectual development of the community. The missionaries did a lot for the development of Karbi language and spreading of education among the Karbis .They set up one mini printing press with a light weight printing machine that could be lifted and carried by one person were they produce translated and published holy books and school textbook for the commoners .they also introduce newspaper or article, pamphlet, gazelle,etc exposing them to the western culture and giving them information about the current situation of the country .which ultimately led to rise of nationalism or for the demand of their identity.

So, it is clear that to a large extend the Karbi middle class emerge as a result of colonial impact and the increase in the trade and commerce, English education, tea industry, fuel etc... as it was the root cause for the emergence Although the numbers were few among the different ethnic communities, they still played an important role in bringing socio-economic and political changes for their own community.

### **Role of educated Karbi middle class in cultural renaissance:**

Till the arrival of the British, the Karbi did not have well defined territories of their own. But when the British came to North east India the area inhabitat

by Karbis were called Mikir Hills Tract. Letting people recognise the political, cultural ethnic and linguistic peculiarities of the Karbis. The areas were under the political control of the Ahom kings before the British came and had been subjected to deep Assamese cultural influence. Although educationally backward, but of their association with the advance communities of the plains district, the areas were placed under the partially excluded area, making the Karbi's eligible to participate in the political process of the provincial Govt. After the political reformation brought by the Govt. Of India Act 1935. This led to the rise in the number of educated youths there, and it arises the consciousness about their cultural and ethnic reformation which led to the demands for separate identity. With increase mobility of ethnic groups, resulting from access to education and government jobs there grew a strong feeling towards their culture which resulted in the development of ethnic movement. Among them the most prominent leader that rose out was Semsonsing Ingti who was the founder and 'Father of Karbi Anglong'. He was the only man who dared all odds imagining a political community for the Karbis who remained scattered over a wide area. It was his fierce sense of imagination that had guided him to realize that it was possible to unite the Karbi's into a single political community. He was from the 20th century where modern democracies was just an emerging idea in India Semsonsing Ingti in 1937 dared to march his little idea of Karbi homeland by sending a memorandum to Sir. Robert N. Reid when he visited Mikir Hill. He knew that he alone couldn't make an impact for demanding a district for the Karbi's so, in 1966 Semsonsing Ingti with a handful of his fellow nationalist formed the Karbi Adorbar with a view to bring the scattered Karbi under a single administration and spearheaded the district demand movement. The nationalist such as Sarsing Teron Habai (Habe) of Hongkram, Harsing Ingti of Longre, Biren Teron mouzadar of Duar Amla, Borgoan and Langtukso Ingti Borgoanbura of Silimkhowa, Moniram Langne of Deithor, Barelong Terang of Diphu, Rev. Hondrovel Milik of putsari, Dhoniram Rongpi (ex-Assam Minister) of Hongkram, Joysing Doloi (ex-CEM/KAAC of Diphu and Khorsing Terang (ex- MLA) John Kathar of Borthol, Khoyasing Deithor and Song Be of Golaghat committed to himself. Karbi Adorbar came into being as a weapon to draw the first political, cultural and geographical map of a Karbi homeland at the threshold of the birth of a new Independent India (Nepal.P/Chakraborty.A.S 2012).

## Conclusion:

The study of ‘Tribal Politics in North – East India: The emergence of middle class in Assam (special reference to Karbi community) is an attempt to understand and explore the changes undergone by tribal community specially by the Karbis in the sphere of eco-political and socio-cultural field in India during the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the coming of the British and Missionaries in Assam. Their introduction to Western ideology and education had given exposure to the thought of cultural revivalism and also got job opportunities under the Indian government. Moreover, with the role of educated youths a sense of negligence emerged as a result the self-awareness in a sense that they were different linguistically and culturally, also a sense of lacking behind emerged among the local youths in comparison to the general Assamese. A sense of segregation and discrimination occupied the Karbi youth which ultimately resulted in the renaissance and reformation movement in Assam.

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# Human Right Education in North East India: Need and Importance

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## **Introduction:**

In a world where diversity is both celebrated and challenged, the fundamental notion of human rights serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path toward equality, justice and dignity for all individuals. Cosmopolitan of human beings are called human right. Human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Human rights are the claims associated with humanity, protected and supported by society and law. Human rights are inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are the fundamental rights of an individual and education play an important role for promotion and protection of human right. With the help of proper education an individual can aware about their basic rights, their civil and political rights, their social economic and cultural rights.

Human rights education refers to the process of promoting knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills related to human rights principles, values and standards. It aims to empower individuals and communities to respect, protect and fulfill human rights for themselves and others. According to UN resolution of November 2011, human rights education means, a lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn respect for dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies. Human right education refers to education, training and information

for the purpose of building a universal culture of human rights. It encompasses the provision of knowledge, skills and information with the objectives of fostering a global human rights culture. A comprehensive education in human rights consists of two components: knowledge and information on human rights and mechanisms that protect these inalienable rights. It involves sharing knowledge, imparting skills and shaping attitudes to promote respect for human rights, freedom, equality and peace. It aims to cultivate of human rights among individuals, within societies and across nations. The ultimate aim of human rights education is to form attitudes and provide knowledge which lead to desirable practices of human rights for all.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The main objectives of the present study are

1. To analyze the human rights in Indian Constitution
2. To find out the causes of violation of human rights in North East India
3. To discuss the need and importance of human rights education in North East India.

### **Methodology:**

The methodology of this present study had been done in a descriptive manner. The required information was carried out with the help of different secondary data sources like books, e-journals, articles etc. as well as from different relevant websites.

### **Profile of North East India:**

Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim are eight states were collectively called North East states of India which are located in the north east of country. These states cover an area of 2,62,184 square kilometers approximately 8.00% of the geographical area of the whole country. Geographically, the Northeast is surrounded by the international borders of Tibet in the North, Myanmar in the east, Bangladesh in south-west, Nepal in the west, and Bhutan in the north-west. This region is characterized by its

hilly terrain, dense forest, and numerous rivers and waterfalls. The population of Northeast is highly diverse, with numerous indigenous communities and ethnic groups include Bodo, Karbi, Naga, Khasi, Mizo, Tripuri, Manipuri, Meitei and many others. This region is known for its rich cultural diversity, stunning natural landscapes and unique ethnic communities.

### **Analysis of the objectives:**

#### **Human Rights in Indian Constitution**

The Constitution of India is the longest written constitution of any sovereign country in the world. This Constitution is known for its extensive provisions on human rights, and provides fundamental rights to all its citizens. The fundamental rights are defined as the basic human rights of all citizens. These rights are defined in part III of the Constitution irrespective of race, place of birth, religion, cast, creed or sex. The fundamental rights, equivalent to the human rights, included in the Indian constitution are:

1. **Right to Equality:** The right to equality is one of the chief guarantees of the constitution of India. Article 14-18 of Indian Constitution highlights the right to equality. This includes equality before the law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth and equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.(Ali,L:248)
2. **Right to Freedom:**Article 19 to 22 ensure various freedom such as freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, and freedom of profession, occupation, trade or business. Article 21 protects the right of life and personal liberty and it has been interpreted by the courts to include a wide range of rights such as right to privacy, right to livelihood,
3. **Right against Exploitation:** The right against Exploitation, contained in Article 23-24, lays down certain provisions to prevent exploitation of weaker section of the society by individuals or the State. Article 23 and 24 prohibited human trafficking, forced labor and child labor.
4. **Right to Freedom of Religion:** Article 25 to 28 provides religious freedom

to all citizens and ensure a secular state in India. It ensures the freedom of individuals to manage their religious affairs. Article 25 guarantees all persons the freedom of conscience and the right to preach practice and propagate any religion of their choice.

5. **Cultural and Educational Rights:** Article 29 and 30 protect the right of minorities to preserve their language, script and culture. Article 30 grants religious and linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institution of their choice.
6. **Right to Constitutional Remedies: Article 32** empowers citizens to approach the Supreme court of India to seek enforcement, or protection against violation of their Fundamental Rights. It provides individuals with a direct avenue to seek judicial remedies for the violation of their fundamental rights.

Additionally, the Indian Constitution also provide Right to education Act,2009, makes education a fundamental right for children between the age of 6 and 14 years. The state is obligated to provide free and compulsory education to all children in this group. The Constitution of India also includes provisions related to the protection of woman's right, right to Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, and safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention.

### **Causes of violation in North East India**

The North East region of India is home to diverse ethnic groups, and each group has its unique culture, language and history. Over the years, the region has experienced various challenges, some of which have resulted in human rights violations. There are some factors that have contributed to violations of human rights in North East India:

1. **Insurgency and Armed Conflict:** The region has witnessed several insurgencies and armed conflicts involving various ethnic groups and militant organizations. These conflicts have often resulted in human rights abuses committed by both state security forces and insurgent groups, including extrajudicial killings, disappearance, torture and arbitrary arrests.

2. **AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act1958):** The Armed Forces Special Powers Act1958 has become a major cause of human rights violation in NE region which is extra judicial in nature, a law enacted in certain parts of North East India, grants extensive powers to security forces in areas designated as “disturbed.” This law has been criticized by human rights activists for providing impunity to security forces and enabling human rights violations, including excessive use of force, custodial killings and sexual violence. (Nurjaman& Mazumdar:515)
3. **Ethnic Tensions and Communal Violence:** The region is characterized by significant ethnic diversity, and interethnic tension have occasionally escalated into violent clashes,leading to human right abuses. Communal violence, fueled by issues such as land disputes and resourceshas resulted in killings, displacement and the violation of minority rights.
4. **Lack of Development and Infrastructure:** Some part of North East India have experienced underdevelopment, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and clean water. These socio-economic disparities can contribute to the human right violationof certain communities.
5. **Discrimination and Stereotyping:** Stereotypes and discrimination against people from the North East, who often have distinct physical features and cultural practice, have been a persistent issue. People from this regionhave reported facing racism, harassment and violence in other parts of India, which violates their rights to dignity, equality and non-discrimination.
6. **Migration, Refugee Issues and territorial conflicts:** The North East region shares borders with neighboring countries and issues relatedto migration and refugees have emerged. There exist territorial conflicts and violations within the North East states, including between Manipur and Nagaland, Nagaland and Assam, Meghalaya and Assam, Mizoram and Assam, Nagaland and Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. (Das:7)Conflicts and persecution in neighboring countries and within the states have resulted in the displacement of people, leading to human right concerns.

## **Need and Importance of Human Right Education:**

Human right education is crucial component of promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. It refers to the process of learning about, understanding and promoting human rights principles, values and standards. Every year a section of people belonging to minority groups suffers and these group of people are not able to enjoy their basic human rights because of insurgency activities, extortion, territorial problem etc.in North east region of India. Knowledge is the best defense for human beings to protect their rights violation; education is the basic source which will provide the information about the human rights. Here are some reasons highlighting the need and importance of human rights education;

1. **Awareness and empowerment:** Human right education increases awareness about fundamental human rights, their historical context and their importance in contemporary society. It empowers individual to understand their own rights and the rights of others, enabling them to stand up against injustice and violations.
2. **Promotion of Equality and Non- Discrimination:** Human rights education foster a culture of equality, respect and non-discrimination. It helps individual recognize and challenge prejudices, stereotypes and discriminatory practice, promoting social cohesion and inclusion.
3. **Prevention of human right violation:** By educating individuals about human rights education helps prevent human rights violation. It equips people with the knowledge to identify and address potential violations, thereby contributing to the prevention of abuses.
4. **Empathy and Respect for Diversity:** Human rights education promotes empathy and respect for diversity. It encourages individuals to recognize the inherent dignity of every person, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender or other characteristics, fostering a culture of tolerance and acceptance.
5. **Social justice and Sustainable Development:** Human rights education emphasizes the interconnectedness between human rights, social justice

and sustainable development. It arises awareness about the importance of addressing poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and other challenges and promote sustainable development.

6. **Legal and Institutional Awareness:** Human rights education equips individuals with knowledge about national and international human rights laws, institutions and mechanisms. It enables them to understand how to access justice, seek remedies for violations and engage with human rights bodies and organizations.

### **Conclusion:**

From the above discussion it is clear that the human right violation in North east India is a matter of grave concern. Though Indian Constitution provide fundamental rights as human rights, which is equal for every citizen of India but still there are various causes of violation of human rights in North east India. Its residents continue to face numerous hurdles and violations of their fundamental right. There is no doubt that education has a major role to play for protection and promotion of human rights. Education is the most powerful instrument to solve any problem of nation or a society. It always serves as the betterment of a nation and humanity by making people aware of human rights situation at local, regional, national and international. India has taken important initiatives for promoting human rights education through educational organizations such as UGC, NCERT and NCTE in all over the country. Human rights education is mandatory to ensure sustainable development for socio-economic and cultural progress in the society.

In summary we may say that human rights education is essential for building inclusive and peaceful society. By promoting awareness, empowering individual and fostering respect for human rights, it contributes to the prevention of violations, the promotion of equality, and the over all well being of individuals, communities and a nation.

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# Tribal Politics and Globalization

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## **Introduction:**

A world without borders is one which people should be able to live anywhere, work anywhere and contribute anywhere for the world is one. The people have a beautiful dream that of living in a world without borders. But for all these people, this remains a dream, as no one has been able to actualise it. The concept of world without borders is quite an achievable target. So we can say that a world without physical borders may not be achievable, but a world without psychological borders is quite attainable for any one. It is possible for globalization. Along with Globalization, as more and more physical and geographical borders are crumbling a global village. Globalization has resulted in significant changes in the knowledge of economy, politics law, education and technology.

Tribalism in a political sense refers to the strong political solidarity typical of post-truth politics. North-East India is considered as one of the most culturally diverse regions of the world, is a land inhabited by more than 200 tribes. ... examples of prominent tribes are Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Adi, Mizo, Karbis, Nyishi, Angami, Konyak, Bhutia, Kuki, Rengma, Bodo and Deori.

## **Tribal politics:**

India is the homeland of a large number of ethnic groups and cultures. These communities, believe to be the earliest inhabitants of the century, live in forest, hills, plateaus and naturally isolated regions and are differently termed as Vanjati (forest caste), vanavasi (forest -inhabitant), Pahariya (hillment), adimjati (primitive caste), Adivasi (original settle), Janjati (folk communities) and several such other names signifying either their ecological or economic or historical, and

cultural characteristics. Among these nomenclature the most popular term is “Adivasi” while the constitutional name for term is Anusuchit Janjati(scheduled tribe). STs are indigenous, have their own distinctive culture, are geographically isolated and are generally living in lower Socio- economic conditions.

Tribal politics is where groups are usually formed in politics because of racial ethnic and cultural factors. Usually tribal politics also means people are willing to defend their political opinion without any facts and opinions can't be changed without facts.

For example, many African-American people vote democrats in the US , which has quite a complicated history.

In the U.K many working class people would for the labourparty, since the conservation party ( the party in power) often make life difficult for these people.

Tribal politics means following a particular path of policies more associated with a political party dogma rather than the general good of the country and all the people.

Tribal politics in India relates to the representation of tribal communities in the political process at various levels of governance. Tribal; who are the indigenous people of India, are estimated to make up around 8% of the country's population and are spread out across various states.

The constitution of India recognizes the status of tribal communities and provides for various safeguards for their protection and development. A number of tribal- specific laws have been enacted, such as the panchayats ( Extension to scheduled areas) Act, 1996 ( PESA ) and forest Rights Act 2006, to protect their land and resources.

Tribal politics also goes beyond these laws and involves the competition and negotiation between various political parties often make various promises to the tribal people, such as economic and social development, protective of tribal rights, and uplifting their living standards.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to recognize and empower tribal communities in India, with the establishment of various tribal rights

groups and political parties dedicated to their cause. However, there are also concerns about the marginalization of tribal communities in the political process and need for greater representation and participation of the tribal people in decision-making at a levels of government.

### **Globalization:**

globalization refers to the integration of global economics, industries, Market, culture and politics making around the world free form socio-political control and reduces distances between regions/countries through a global network of trade, communication, Immigration, and transportation. The shift in the domestic balance of power between capital and labor that globalization promotes by rewarding mobile factors thus transfers into shift in domestic polices. Social democracy because less likely because capital's incentives for cross-class compromise are lowered by its growing power globalization entails a functional need to transfer a certain degree of political authority to international entities but this transfer inevitably fuels the politicalication and contestation of global governance.

Globalization decrease the cost of manufacturing this means that companies. The average cost of goods is a key aspect that contributes to increase in the standard of living. Consumers also have process to wider variety of goods.

Globalization on politics refers to the ripple effect and continuity of political relationship between countries. Settings up international organization such as the UN , NATO, WTO, which debates and regulate international politics and trade is also an example of this type of globalization.

Globalization in political terms refers to the process of expanding political interdependence among nations, States and other actors across the globe. It involves the increase in the flow of political ideas, values, polices and practices across national borders and the growth of international institutions and organizations that promote cooperation and collaboration among nations.

Political globalization has been driven by various factors such as Increasing importance of global issues such as climate change, economic inequality, terrorism and human rights that require collective action. It has also been

facilitated by technological advancements in communication and transportation which have made it easier for different nations and individuals to interact and form alliance.

### **Impact of globalization on tribal politics:**

GlobalNGOs working for tribal uplifting .Tribal handicrafts getting recognition across the world. Globally conservation agencies have recently recognized and pushed for role of tribal communities in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration. The contact with outsiders helped in eradication of superstitious practices among tribals. Ex: Burial of new born along with dead mother in Khasi tribes has been stopped. Tribals were one of the least educated groups. The entry of administration brought education standards to improve their lives. Ex: VanavasiKalyan schools, Eklavya Residential schools.

Through principles of Tribal panchsheel, environmental protection laws, Tribal sub plans and constitutional protection under constitution in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> schedule India has been able to effectively develop tribal societies without encroaching on their lifestyles, however much is still desired on this front.

The new Industrial policy paved the way for Tribal Land alienation. This result in the alienation of tribal lands for various purposes like construction dams, mining projects, setting up of wildlife sanctuaries, construction of government infrastructure.Globalzation has helped to remove isolation of tribals from rest of the country. They have been introduced to outside practices, that has brought some sort of behavioural changes. This has helped in national integration and unity.The positive effects of globalization include economic advancement and the reduction in poverty, creation of jobs, greater access to technology, cultural diversity and tolerance, emergence of new social movements and greater transparency. Potential benefits of globalization for the economy include increased choice, higher quality products, increased competition, economies of scale, increased capital flows, increased labor mobility and improved international relations.Tribal people reside in remote areas such as forests and hills which had prevented cultural contact with modern population. Modernization and globalization has allowed greater contact between tribal and non- tribal populations. Globalization has affected the culture, language and lifestyles of tribals in India.

Globalization has led to the spread of democratic values and ideas. This promotes transparency, accountability, and good governance in the Indian political system. Opening up of the Indian economy to foreign investors has increased dependence on foreign trade and investments.

The impact of globalization on tribal politics has been the subject of much debate. While globalization has been known to pose significant challenges to traditional Tribal societies, it has also brought about several positive changes, especially in terms of policies. Some of the positive impacts of globalization on tribal politics are:

1. **Recognition of tribal rights:** Globalization has credited awareness about the rights of tribal communities. International organization have been working towards protection the rights of tribal communities and governments have been forced to listen to their demands.
2. **Increased political representation:** Globalization has led to the emergence of tribal political leaders who have been successful in gaining representation at the regional, national and international levels. This has given tribal communities a voice in the political process.
3. **Improve access to resources:** In many cases, tribal communities have been marginalized and excluded from the mainstream economy Globalization has led to the opening up of markets which has given them better access to resources and economic opportunities.
4. **International networking:** Globalization has created networking opportunities for tribal communities. They are more connected to other indigenous communities across the world, and this has presented them with the opportunity to share ideas and experiences on how to protect their culture, language and traditional practices.
5. **Increased awareness:** Globalization has led to increased awareness about the cultures, traditions and issues faced by Tribal communities. This has made it easier for them to get support and feedback from the global community.

Overall, while there have been significant challenges associated with Globalization in tribal politics, these positive impacts have led to significant changes in the way that Tribal communities are represented and perceived in the global community.

The globalization may effect tribal politics negatively. Globalization is associated with rising prices, loss of job security, lack of health care and tribal development programmes. Globalization may also weaken the Constitutional protections, in terms of education and job reservations, given to tribals. Globalization may occur monetary crisis which has badly effect tribal politics. Globalization has been brought about significant changes that have affected political, economics, social and cultural aspects of tribal communities. While there are some positive impact of globalization on tribal politics, there are also several negative impact that cannot be ignored. Some of these negative impacts are :

1. Displacement of tribal communities: useglobalization has resulted in the encroachment of tribal lands by companies and industries leading to the displacement of tribal communities. This has resulted in a loss of traditional cultural practices and identity.
2. Economic marginalization: Globalization has led to greater access to resources, But it has also resulted in the exclusion of tribal communities from the benefits of the global economy. Often, they are not allowed to participate in the economic development process, leading to economic marginalization.
3. Loss of language and cultural Heritage: Globalization has led to the erosion of traditional languages and cultural practices of tribal communities. As a result, their culture identity has been lost, and they are forced to adapt to the mainstream culture.
4. Political marginalization: while globalization has increased political representation for some indigenous communities, It has also led to the marginalization of other communities. Tribal communities of ten lack the political power to safeguard their interest, leading to political marginalization.
5. Exploitation: Globalization has created Avenues for exploitation of tribal communities, whether it is through cheap labor, land acquisition or cultural

appropriation. This exploitation often leads to the further impoverishment of the tribal communities.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the negative impacts of globalization on tribal politics cannot be ignored. While it has brought about significant changes, it has often done so at the expense of the cultural, economic, and political rights of tribal communities. It is critical that policies and practices are developed to safeguard the rights of indigenous communities while also ensuring that they can benefit from the opportunities presented by globalization.

Globalization affects tribals differently. Urban and educated tribals may benefit from the increased opportunities for work that come with the influx of foreign companies and investments. These employment avenues are complemented by greater opportunities to receive education and skills training of the higher quality. The new technology that define this era, in particular the computer and internet may be accessible to the groups of tribals. Globalization is associated with rising prices, loss of job security, lack of health care and tribal development programmes.

### **Conclusion:**

Tribals are part of the Indian society, at the same time they are different. The tribal population is defined as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. They are the most vulnerable section of our society living in natural and unpolluted environment far away from civilization with their traditional values, customs and beliefs. Globalization may also weaken the constitutional protections, in terms of education and job reservation given to tribals. So the government should frame special policy and programmes that are required to address these differences especially on the context of globalization. Article 46 of the constitution places an obligation upon States to promote the interests of scheduled tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. It must be mentioned that displacement of tribals from their lands amounts to violation of the Fifth schedule of the constitution as it deprives them of control and ownership of natural resources and land essential for their way of life. The forces of globalization are creating barriers for tribal people to come together to identify and acknowledge commonality.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That, corporate companies should support creation of infrastructure for school development such as toilet, drinking water facilities, computer and language labs, students development, capacity building of teacher, school management, skills development and vocational training, improvement of ashram school and human resources.
2. That, most of the tribal population depends upon agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood; corporate should take active efforts in training the displaced tribal population in alternate trade/ business/ vocation so that they can adjust with the new life.
3. That, corporate companies should initiate 'scholarship programs' exclusively for project affected Tribal school and college going children to encourage them for excellence.
4. That, the members of tribal communities should be made capacity by the collective and construction efforts of government and industry to help them to enjoy the fruits of growth and development.

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# Role of Education in Separate State Movement in North East India: Special Reference to Karbi Anglong

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## **I. Introduction:**

The North-East region of India is bounded by China to the north, Bhutan to the west, Bangladesh to the east, and Myanmar (Burma) to the south. It comprises eight states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Among these, Assam is the largest state in terms of land area in this region. It includes the Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley, both of which share international borders with China, Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal (Daulagajau, 2015). The Karbi Anglong District is situated in the central part of Assam, bounded by the state of Nagaland and Golaghat district in east, Hojai district in the west, Golaghat and Nagaon district in the north and Dima Hasao district and Nagaland in the south. The district with dense tropical forest covered hills and flat plains is situated between 250 33' – 260 35' North Latitude and 920 10' - 930 50' East Longitudes.

Karbi Anglong is a district in Assam State of India. It has a total of 4 Blocks in this district. The district has a total area of 10,434 sq. km. There are 7 towns and 2,921 villages in this district. Karbi Anglong population is estimated to be 1,329,276 in 2023.

Karbi Anglong is one of districts of Assam in India, Karbi Anglong population in 2023 is 1,329,276 (estimates as per adhar uidai.gov.in Dec 2023 data). As per 2011 census of India, Karbi Anglong has a population of 956,313 in 2011 out of which 490,167 are male and 466,146 are female. Population of Karbi

Anglong in 2022 is estimated to be 1,262,334 inhabitants. Literate people are 557,214 out of 314,253 are male and 242,961 are female. People living in Karbi Anglong depend on multiple skills, total workers are 383,441 out of which men are 246,193 and women are 137,248. Total 163,800 Cultivators are depended on agriculture farming out of 128,566 are cultivated by men and 35,234 are women. 20,595 people works in agricultural land as labour, men are 12,631 and 7,964 are women. Karbi Anglong sex ratio is 951 females per 1000 of males. Next Karbi Anglong Census will be in 2022-2023.

The Karbi people are an ethnic group primarily residing in the Karbi Anglong district. They have been advocating for greater political and cultural rights, as well as autonomy, within the Indian federal system. The movement seeks to address the socio-economic disparities, political marginalization, and cultural assimilation faced by the Karbi community.

One of the key demands of the Karbi Anglong movement has been the creation of a separate state called “Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council” (KAATC) or “Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council” (KAAC). The objective is to establish a self-governing body with more legislative and administrative powers to address the specific needs and aspirations of the Karbi people.

The district has a diverse population consisting of various ethnic groups, including the Karbi, Dimasa, Bodo, and Adivasi communities. The major languages spoken in Karbi Anglong are Karbi, Assamese, and English. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people in Karbi Anglong. The region is known for cultivating crops such as rice, tea, jute, mustard, and fruits. Apart from agriculture, the district has significant potential in sectors like tourism, horticulture, and handicrafts.

Karbi Anglong has faced certain challenges such as infrastructure development, connectivity, and insurgency issues in the past. Efforts have been made by the government to address these challenges and promote the overall development of the district. Education provides access to historical knowledge and allows individuals to understand the historical context of their region. If the people of Karbi Anglong perceive historical injustices or grievances, education can

amplify their demand for rectification or redress. Such historical consciousness can contribute to a sense of distinct identity and aspirations for self-governance.

### **Aspiration for statehood:**

The area that comprises the present district of Karbi-Anglong was outside the political sphere of the Ahom kingdom prior to the British colonization of this region. After the recommendation of Simon Commission, the hill area of Karbi Anglong was given a different status under Section 92 of the Government of India Act 1935 and area was placed under the category of “Partially Excluded Areas”. The Government of Assam by this law holds no political power over the excluded areas which were administered under the special power of the Governor.

In the year 1937, political leaders such Semsonsing Ingti, Seng Bey and Khorsing Terang in a memorandum to Assam Governor, Sir Robert Neil Reid, demanded a separate hill district for Mikirs. A regional political forum, called Karbi-A-Durbar, was formed to intensify the movement.

After the formation of Indian Union, several ethnic communities of Northeast India like Naga people, Mizo people, Bodo people and Khasi people began demanding separate statehood and a complete independent identity for their own. These demands were agitated both by common people and by a group of insurgents. The Congress Government of Assam in 1960, declared Assamese language as the official language of the State ignoring existence of multiple tribes and languages, causing discontent among the various indigenous tribes, which formed majority of erstwhile state of Assam. This led to the formation of Nagaland State in 1963 and State of Meghalaya in 1971. The then unified districts (Karbi Anglong district & Dima Hasao district) were invited to join the newly created Meghalaya. The twin districts vetoed to join the newly created State of Meghalaya, after the assurance of greater independence from State of Assam.

Former M.P. Dr. Jayanta Rongpi representing both Karbi Anglong & NC Hills in the Parliament during his tenure.

Though the same assurance by State of Assam remain partly or wholly unfulfilled and diluted through decades. This led to several memorandums, wave of

agitations in the twin Districts of Karbi Anglong district and Dima Hasao district complaining of lack of fulfilment, infiltration in the Sixth schedule, ignorance and imposition of Assamese towards these districts by the State of Assam.

In 2013, in a joint agitation Bodo, Dimasas and Karbi disrupted transport service through highway and railway in their respective districts. Eventually, leading in loss of 2 lives due to police firing and damages to many public and private property.

The district is also a hotbed of militant activities who aspire to achieve statehood through violence. UPDS, now defunct, has come over ground for overall good, peace and development of the region and people.

## **II. Objectives:**

- To study the role of education in creation of autonomy district of Karbi Anglong.

## **III. Methodology:**

The paper is primarily descriptive and analytical, relying on secondary data obtained from various published sources such as books, research journal papers, magazines, and internet resources.

## **IV: Importance of Education:**

Education enables individuals to become more aware of their rights, identity, and historical context. It can empower them to question existing power structures and advocate for their interests. In the case of Karbi Anglong, education may have contributed to the awareness and assertion of Karbi identity, leading to demands for greater autonomy or a separate state.

Education plays a crucial role in the creation of a separate state movement in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Education contributes to the establishment of an autonomous district in the following ways:

- **Awareness and Empowerment:** Education raises awareness among the local population about their rights, identity, and the socio-political dynamics of

the region. It empowers individuals with knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to articulate their aspirations for self-governance.

- **Unity and Mobilization:** Education fosters a sense of unity and collective consciousness among the residents of Karbi Anglong. It enables them to understand the historical, cultural, and social factors that bind them together, promoting a shared identity and purpose. Educated individuals can effectively mobilize others, rallying support for the autonomous district movement.
- **Leadership Development:** Education plays a crucial role in nurturing leaders who can advocate for the creation of an autonomous district. Educated individuals are equipped with the necessary skills to articulate their demands, engage in negotiations, and represent their community's interests at various levels of governance.
- **Policy Understanding and Advocacy:** Education enables individuals to comprehend the nuances of policies, laws, and regulations. It equips them with the knowledge to critically analyse existing governance structures and advocate for reforms that align with their aspirations for self-determination and autonomy.
- **Economic Development:** Education equips individuals with the skills needed for economic development. By improving their employability, it enhances the overall socioeconomic conditions of the region. This economic progress further strengthens the case for an autonomous district, as it demonstrates the capacity of the local population to govern and manage their resources effectively.

Education plays a vital role in the creation of a separate state movement in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. It empowers individuals, fosters unity, develops leaders, promotes policy understanding, and contributes to economic development. These factors collectively enhance the prospects for establishing an autonomous district in the region.

## **V. Historical overview of Karbi Anglong district:**

The Karbi Anglong movement refers to the political and social movement for

the autonomy and self-determination of the Karbi people in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam, India.

The Karbi Anglong District Council was established on November 17, 1951, and later renamed as the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council on June 23, 1952. Similarly, the North Cachar Hill District Council was formed on April 29, 1952, and later renamed as the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council on September 13, 1995. Both councils, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, are constituted and operate under the Assam Autonomous Districts (Constitution of District Councils) Rules, 1951, as amended.

The demand for autonomy or statehood arose as a means to address the challenges faced by the hill tribal people residing in the N.C. Hills district of Assam (Gassah, 1989, p.81). In response to this, the Action Committee of the Mikir Hills and N.C. Hills Leaders Conference was formed, which submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India in June 1973, urging for separation from the state of Assam in accordance with Article 244 (A) of the Indian Constitution and the establishment of an independent state. The formation of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) in 1986 further revitalized the call for autonomy, aiming to preserve the language, culture, and traditions of the hill tribal people of Assam (Dutta, 1993, p.5). Consequently, after a decade-long movement led by ASDC, Karbi Student Union (KSA), North Cachar Hills Students Federation (NCHSF), and Dimasa Student Union (DSU) advocating for the creation of an “Autonomous State” encompassing the N.C. Hills and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed as a compromise between the Chief Minister of Assam and the leaders of these organizations on April 1, 1995, in New Delhi, with the support of the Government of India (Souvenir, 1999, p.14). Although statehood was not granted to the N.C. Hills district, the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution was amended in 1995, granting greater autonomy through the provision of thirty additional powers to the N.C. Hills Autonomous District Council (Souvenir, 2008, p.14). Additionally, the amendment in sub-paragraph 3 of paragraph 2 of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India specified that the Autonomous District Council would be referred to as the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC) (The Constitution of India, 2001, p.204).

## **VI. Discussion and Suggestions:**

The region has witnessed longstanding demands for separate states, driven by various socio-political factors. This study examines the role of education in shaping and influencing the separate state movement, highlighting the educational disparities and aspirations of the people in Karbi Anglong District. The article also provides suggestions for leveraging education as a catalyst for socio-political change and development in the region. This article aims to shed light on the role of education in the separatist narrative, focusing on how education has influenced the aspirations, consciousness, and mobilization of the people in Karbi Anglong District.

### **• Educational Disparities and Alienation:**

One crucial aspect of the separate state movement is the existence of educational disparities and the resultant sense of alienation among the marginalized communities. Karbi Anglong District, characterized by its diverse ethnic composition, faces challenges such as inadequate educational infrastructure, lack of quality education, and limited access to higher education institutions.

### **• Education as a Catalyst for Mobilization:**

Despite the existing disparities, education has emerged as a potent catalyst for mobilizing communities and shaping their aspirations for a separate state. Education has played a pivotal role in fostering a sense of identity, political awareness, and consciousness among the youth in Karbi Anglong District. Educational institutions, both formal and informal, have become platforms for discussing political issues, organizing protests, and nurturing leadership qualities.

### **• Empowering the Youth:**

Education, particularly at the higher levels, has empowered the youth in Karbi Anglong District by providing them with skills, knowledge, and critical thinking abilities. Educated youth are more likely to engage in political discourse, advocate for their rights, and participate actively in the separate state movement. Education has also empowered women, enabling them to challenge traditional gender roles and contribute to the movement.

Education has a pivotal role to play in the separate state movement in North East India, particularly in regions like Karbi Anglong District. By addressing educational disparities, empowering the youth, and promoting inclusive and quality education, it is possible to harness education as a catalyst for socio-political change, development

## **V. conclusion:**

In conclusion, the role of education in the separate state movement in North East India, with special reference to Karbi Anglong, has been significant and multifaceted. Through this research article, we have explored various aspects that highlight the influence of education in shaping the aspirations and mobilization of the people in their pursuit of a separate state. Education has played a crucial role in empowering the local population, particularly the youth, by providing them with knowledge and critical thinking skills. Education has helped them understand their rights, assert their identity, and demand political autonomy. The dissemination of information through schools, colleges, and other educational institutions has contributed to raising awareness about the socio-political issues surrounding the separate state movement.

Furthermore, education has provided a platform for political discourse and organization. Educational institutions have become spaces where like-minded individuals can come together, exchange ideas, and form political organizations advocating for a separate state. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and challenges faced in the role of education within the separate state movement. Unequal access to quality education, especially in remote areas, hinders the full participation of all sections of society. Socio-economic disparities, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of educational resources pose significant obstacles to inclusive and equitable education. Addressing these issues should be a priority to ensure that education continues to play a constructive role in the movement.

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### **External links**

[https://www.indiagrowing.com/Assam/Karbi\\_Anglong](https://www.indiagrowing.com/Assam/Karbi_Anglong)

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# Development of North East India

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## **Introduction:**

North East India in context of India occupies a distinctive place due primarily to its geographical, historical, social, cultural and political features. North East India comprises Seven States: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. It is surrounded by foreign territories like Bhutan, Tibet- China, Burma and Bangladesh. North East India occupies an area of 25,000 sq km. Largely hilly areas comprise about 7% landmass of India.

North East India is the homeland of a large number of tribes. There are 145 tribes/communities of which 78 are large each with a population of more than 5000. North East's durable disorder is often explained by the region's supposed underdevelopment and poor integration into the pan-Indian 'mainstream'.

The India government has pumped enormous resources into the development of North East India in order to remove what it apparently sees as the structural cause of insurgencies. This has had significant impact on the region's physical infrastructure, social and political life. Democracy deficit, circumstances that would disappear when the region catches up with the rest of India - economically and emotionally.

## **Object of Study:**

- i. Based on secondary data
- ii. Based on Qualitative method
- iii. Descriptive - on the Development of North East India

## **Economic Problems of North East India:**

- i. Rapid growth of population
- ii. Natural Calamities
- iii. Geographical Isolation
- iv. Poor transport and communication facilities
- v. Waste of Natural resources
- vi. Lack of skill personal
- vii. Lack of Entrepreneurs and Managerial talents
- viii. Lack of Efficient Administration
- ix. Terrorism
- x. Unemployment

## **Agriculture:**

Economy of North East is mainly agrarian in character. Practice of agriculture is to great extent traditional. Even today in some parts of hilly region's primitive types of farming ( Jhuming) is also found. But still this region's is sluggish in agriculture development, reason behind this lagging is lack of appropriate strategies which is needed for the development of available natural resources, inadequate availability of infrastructure facilities and low adoption of improved technology which is needed for the development of agriculture sector.

There are many region's in North East, which are only dependent on agriculture sector, they needed a green revolution which will help in reducing poverty and boost our economy more. But this green revolution mood be adequately lacked by our financial institutions, marketing functionaries and Research and Development. Agriculture provides livelihood to 70% people's of this region's population. In Mizoram, there are 51% . People's in rural areas who are practically dependent on agriculture.

Rubber and Bamboo are among the important agriculture produces. Tripura is

also the chief production of Rubber and Bamboo after the second Kerala state by the India Rubber Board. The region's also produced large numbers of crops such as rice, wheat, pulses, jute, cotton, sugarcane, fruits and vegetables. There is also scope for dairy processing and poultry, fishery processing in the region's. National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) which has lots of experience in grabbing this opportunity.

### **Infrastructural Development:**

In study the role of infrastructure in development of a region's and assessing the effectiveness of infrastructure. The availability of infrastructural facilities has many direct and indirect bearing on the development of an economy. Development of agriculture and industry depends directly on good infrastructural facilities. Agriculture production required irrigation, power, credit, transport facilities etc.

Industrial production requires not only machinery and equipment but also Skilled man- power, management, energy, banking and insurance facilities, marketing facilities, communication facilities, transport services in the form of Railway, Roads and Water ways etc. All facilities and services constitute collectively the infrastructure of an essential pre- conditions increasing agricultural and industrial production of a region's.

Inland water transport can be a viable, cost - effective alternative in plains areas of North East Region's give high cost of expanding other mode of transportation. It will also create employment opportunities, promote tourism and open up inter - country routes for trade and commerce.

### **Skill Development:**

Economy of North East states, any underdeveloped region's of world, is the prevalence of low level of technology and poor skill of worker's . Most of the productivity unity are carried with the term as inferior technologies judged by modern scientific standards.

According to the study on development and employment generation potential of the North East states between 2011 and 2021 region's will have only 2.6

million jobs. The magnitude of unemployment can be study from finding of National Sample Survey and the data provided by employment exchange. A part from thesev the uneducated person's also don't give their names registered with the Employment Exchange.

Even half of totally demand is from Assam only i.e. 1,234 jobs. Apart from low demand, there will also be a supply of 17 millions people's in 2011-2022 , an excess of 14 million people's are jilob seekers.

### **Population :**

The Population of North East India in comparison to all India, increased from 2.89% in 1951 to 3.78% in 2001. Among various states of North East Region's of India, the geographical areas of Arunachal Pradesh is the highest at 83,743 sq. Kms. In terms of population, Mizoram is smallest state among North East reasons of India.

The decades growth rate of population (1991-2001) is the lowest in state of Tripura 16.03% followed by Assam(18.92%) and highest in state of Nagaland (64.53%) followed by Sikkim (33.06%). The region's growth rate of population (21.61%) is higher than the national average of 21.35% during 1991-2001. Density of population varies from 13 in Arunachal Pradesh to 340 in Assam followed by 305 in Tripura.

### **Government steps towards the Development of North East India:**

India government have several steps towards the North East socio - economic development of these region's. The government concerned needs to spend a huge amount of finances which mey be collect from its various sources. Government spend this collected amount of finance on various socio - economic administration and on many others activities. Therefore, the government earning and spending on its various activities becomes a separate branch of economic.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been declared North East as special economic zones (SEZ). This is the reasons central government has implemented of various schemes to attract investors in North East people's. These are as follows-

1. Subsidiary at approx 90% is given for transport cost of raw materials.
2. Income tax exemption for the five years for the new industrial units set up in the region's.
3. Growth center and IIDC to be converted into total tax free zones for the next ten years. Same benefits will also be given to new industrial units for their substantial expansion.
4. Exports promotion Zones are also set up by the states for North East people's
5. Capital investment subsidy (CIS) is also provide at 15% of investment in plant and machinery, with maximum ceiling of Rs 30 lakh. Eligibility conditions will be same as in case of tax benefits.
6. Interest subsidy of 3% on working capital loans will be provided for a period of 10 years. Eligibility conditions will be same as in case of tax benefits.
7. A comprehensive insurance scheme for industrial units to be designed, in consultation which GIC and 100% premium to be borne by the India government for 10 years.

The issues of development of North East India draws attention to the 'Problem of social, economic and culture engineering of our diverse society'. The region's has its own peculiarities and it's rich natural resources, but comparatively poor performance lies at the root of financial crises threatening these states. Since 2014 overall situation in the North East states has significant improved.

In the last 10 years, the region's has seen a 70% decrease in insurg incidents, a 78% decrease in security free casualties and an 80% decrease in civilians death. There is a great deal of racial, linguistic and ethnic diversity, presenting complex problems to regional and natural partnership in development efforts and of regional and natural integration. Region is further burdened with problems relating to the assertion of national, sub- national and ethnicity identity and to refugees issues. Since 1997, years 2019 has scen the lowest number of insurgency incidents and civilians and security forces casualties. The insurgency problems and recurring floods/ natural calamities annually required a lot of financial resources meant otherwise for development purpose.

## **Conclusion:**

The issue of development in North East region's has its own peculiarities and it's rich natural resources, but comparatively economic backwardness. The reason of these problems is the financial crises from the central government, so that why now Central government more focusing on the financial implementation in these areas with the helps of various schemes, projects, national projects, international organization such as Look East policy, ASEAN for economic cooperation with various Asia countries.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been declared North East as a Special Economic Zones(SEZ) . The share of industrial sector increase more than share of agriculture and allied activities. The change in institutional enterprise supporting economic enhancement and growth at a social level also required economic incentives, which can only be support by political will.

For the growth of North East areas, an integrated and balanced strategy must be used, with a focus on industrial growth, environmental preservation and ethnic aspirations of the local population. By addressing security issues in the North East states and encouraging more private enterprise to invest in the region's , the North East Region's must be connected with the rest of India.

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# Effect of Leadership Approach and Leaders Consciousness Among the Tribal People on Learning Organisation with Special Reference to Dokmoka Area of Karbi Anglong District

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## 1.0 Introduction:

The child is a future leader of our society who may lead mankind to a sustainable, peaceful and global community we need to impart them with schooling in the real sense where they can learn, to learn and live together. Leadership is not something people are born with –it is a skill we can learn. There is a core of mindsets, which are expressed through observable behaviours, which then lead to measureable outcomes. Focusing on behaviours let us be more objective when assessing leadership effectiveness. The key to unlocking shift in behaviour is focussing on mindsets, becoming more conscious about our thoughts and beliefs, and showing up with integrity as our full authentic selves. There are many contexts and ways in which leadership is exercised.

This new approach to leadership is sometimes described as “servant leadership.” While there has been some criticism of the nomenclature, the idea itself is simple: rather than being a manager directing and controlling people, a more effective approach is for leaders to be in service of the people they lead. The focus is on how leaders can make the lives of their team members easier—physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Research suggests this mentality can enhance both team performance and satisfaction [1].

In this new approach, leaders practice empathy, compassion, vulnerability,

gratitude, self-awareness, and self-care. They provide appreciation and support, creating psychological safety so their employees are able to collaborate, innovate, and raise issues as appropriate. This includes celebrating achieving the small steps on the way to reaching big goals and enhancing people's well-being better human connections. These conditions have been shown to allow for a team's best performance [3].

More broadly, developing this new approach to leadership can be expressed as making five key shifts that include, build on, and extend beyond traditional approaches:

1. beyond executive to visionary, shaping a clear purpose that resonates with and generates holistic impact for all stakeholders
2. beyond planner to architect, reimagining industries and innovating business systems that are able to create new levels of value
3. beyond director to catalyst, engaging people to collaborate in open, empowered networks
4. beyond controller to coach, enabling the organization to constantly evolve through rapid learning, and enabling colleagues to build new mindsets, knowledge, and skills
5. beyond boss to human, showing up as one's whole, authentic self.

Together, these shifts can help a leader expand their repertoire and create a new level of value for an organization's stakeholders. The last shift is the most important, as it is based on developing a new level of consciousness and awareness of our inner state. Leaders who look inward and take a journey of genuine self-discovery make profound shifts in themselves and their lives; this means they are better able to benefit their organization. That involves developing "profile awareness" (a combination of a person's habits of thought, emotions, hopes, and behavior in different circumstances) and "state awareness" (the recognition of what's driving a person to take action). Combining individual, inward-looking work with outward-facing actions can help create lasting change. Leaders must learn to make these five shifts at three levels: learn to make these

five shifts at three levels: transforming and evolving personal mindsets and behaviors; transforming teams to work in new ways; and transforming the broader organization by building new levels of agility, human-centeredness, and value creation into the entire enterprise's design and culture[4].

An example from the COVID-19 era offers a useful illustration of this new approach to leadership. In pursuit of a vaccine breakthrough, at the start of the pandemic Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel increased the frequency of executive meetings the frequency of executive meetings from once a month to twice a week. The company implemented a decentralized model enabling teams to work independently and deliver on the bold goal of providing 100 million doses of vaccines in 12 months. "The pace was unprecedented," Bancel said.

### **Awareness, Authenticity, Empathy, Purpose:**

These are a few characteristics of conscious leaders. According to Robinson, while it used to be more niche, the idea of conscious leadership has been around for a while, and concepts such as servant leadership or mindfulness in workplace touch upon the principles of being a conscious leader.

"Consciousness is a tricky word in and of itself," says Robinson, adding that a board or leadership team might ask, "can we measure it?" and "how does it add value to our bottom line?" But that's missing the point of conscious leadership. "If your company cannot articulate how it makes people's lives better, then you may want to rethink your organization's purpose," she says.

### **1.1. Conscious leadership**

Conscious leadership is not directly quantifiable, you might be wondering, what is the point then? The point, for one, is to create sustainable business practices and workplace cultures. Leaders are suffering from burnout too, and they can't be change makers if they're struggling to keep up with the demands of their job in our post-pandemic climate. A 2021 study by Life Works and Deloitte revealed that 82 percent of senior leaders finish work feeling mentally or physically exhausted, and a quarter of senior leaders are considering resigning. Conscious leadership helps build resilient workforces and organizations – and yes, that also translates into improved productivity and greater impact, but not

at any cost. It considers that people make up systems, that they need certain things to thrive, that they are constantly growing and evolving and so should the systems that they are part of, and banks on the idea that focusing on those things will create organizations that also evolve and thrive, which will create better solutions in the process[6].

## **1.2. The tribal leader:**

A true leader has vision, knows traditional ways, shares and develops leadership, serves and protects the tribal community, develops trust and shows respect for all tribal people. They are chosen in time of need because they have vision toward the future. A true tribal leader assumes a leadership role, not because he or she has chosen that leadership position, but because that leadership role has chosen him or her.

The tribal leader is responsible for the public safety and welfare of the people of that tribe. As authorized by tribal government, the tribal leader can:

- Coordinate tribal resources needed to prevent, protect against, misguide against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents of all types.
- Amend or suspend certain tribal laws or ordinances associated with Emergency management.
- Communicate with the tribal councils and community and help people, business, and organizations cope with the consequences of any type of incident.
- Negotiate mutual aid and assistance agreements with other tribes or jurisdictions.
- Request Federal assistance and declaration of disaster under the Stafford Act through the Governor of the or by direct request to the President when it becomes clear that the tribe's capabilities will be insufficient or have been exceeded.
- Effect to deal directly with the Federal departments or agencies can work directly with the tribe within existing authorities and resources.[2].

### **1.3. Learning Organization:**

Learning organizations are “the organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together, through personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking” Senge (1990). In the present study, which has been conducted in an educational setting, a senior secondary school has been considered as a learning organization[1].

### **1.4. The location of the study**

Dokmoka is a town and a town area committee in Karbi Anglong district in the state of Assam. A place about 85 km from Diphu to Nagaon towards and NH-36 passes through it.

### **1.5. Methodology**

The researcher has followed the pragmatic research philosophy as the epistemological framework in the study which is also the philosophical foundation of the present research. The pragmatic research philosophy recommends and supports the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single research study.

### **1.6. Sample of the study**

The researcher collected data of 20 teachers as purposive sample from three schools of the Dokmoka area of Karbi Anglong district such as a) Dokmoka higher secondary school b) Krist Jyoti English high school, Dokmoka c) Saint Xavier English school, Dokmoka.

## **2. Result and Discussion:**

The data comprising of twenty leaders analysed for assessing the dominant leadership approach of the leaders i.e. to identify whether they have a dominant transformational and dominant transaction leadership approach. The assessment of the dominant leaders approach was done with the help of multifactor leadership

questionnaire (MLQ) which assess three possible leadership approaches of a leader, namely transformational & laissez-faire leadership approach. However, the developers of the multifactor leadership questionnaire. The scoring of MLQ suggests that the score of a leader for any specific leadership approach is the mean of questions of that particular leadership approach. On the basis of the obtained mean scores for transformational and transactional leadership questions in MLQ, the leaders were identified for their dominant leadership approach.

**The table 2.1 shows the total number of participants involved in the study**

	<b>frequency</b>	<b>percentage</b>
Male leaders	12	60%
Female leaders	8	40%

**Table 2.2 shows the total number of transformational and transactional leaders with respect to gender as**

	<b>Transformation leader (%)</b>	<b>Transactional leaders(%)</b>
Male leaders	7(35%)	5(25%)
Female leaders	5(25%)	3(15%)

This shows the total number of transformational and transactional leader with respect to gender. The table shows that after initial analysis of the assessment of leadership approach 12 leaders turned out to be having transformational leadership approach as the dominant leadership approach and 8 leaders had dominant transactional leadership approach.

The findings from the present research clearly indicate that the transformational leadership, which is more humanistic and conscious form of leadership approach.

### **Conclusion :**

Children are future leaders of our society who may lead mankind to a sustainable, peaceful and global community, we need to impart them with schooling in true sense where they can learn and live together. Such an education does not focus

on cramming of facts but on learning in a constructivist manner. School is very crucial place for imparting education and enhancing the learning among students. Therefore, in order to have a positive impact on students learning the schools must develop as learning organisations and provide opportunities for teachers to learn and develop Zederayko and Ward(1999). Various studies have revealed and emphasised that leadership of any other variable. Since leaders have to face the rapidly emerging challenges of present times, they need to be aware of and use multiple facets of their personality in order to lead their organisations effectively.

The findings of the present research suggest that the leadership approach and leaders' consciousness affect the learning organization. It was found that learning organization scores of schools lead by transformational and highly conscious leaders were statistically significantly better as compared to the scores of schools lead by transactional, moderately conscious and low conscious leaders. At the same time the possibility of intervening variables cannot be eliminated completely.

The discussion of findings from present research conclusively implies that the transformational leadership behaviors and the leaders exhibiting highly conscious behaviors have greater and positive impact on the learning organization. The transformational and highly conscious behaviors of the school leaders have positive effect on the professional growth of staff, development of consensus on group goals, building of shared vision, and help the school to move towards developing into a learning organization.

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# Securing our Forestry with People: Role of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council

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## 1. Introduction:

The total geographical area of Karbi Anglong District is 10,434 sq kilometer. It accounts 13.3% of total geographical area of Assam. The Landscape ecological studies of forest of Karbi Anglong indicates high amount of landscape heterogeneity promoting greater biodiversity. These forest areas are natural museums of living giant trees, a treasure house of rare, endemic and endangered species, a dispensary of medical plants, a garden for Botanists, a bank for economically important organisms, a paradise for nature lovers and a laboratory for environmentalists.

According to 2011 census the total population of Karbi Anglong is 956,313, of which male and female were 490,167 and 466,146 respectively. In 2001 census, Karbi Anglong had a population of 813,311. The district is dominated by Karbi tribe, besides karbi is Lalong (Tiwas), Dimasa kocharis, Rengma Nagas, Kuki, Garos, Khasis and Shyams occupy various pockets of District and maintain their ethnic identity.

Since 1987 the forest cover of the country is being assessed biennially by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) using remote sensing technology. FSI also prepares thematic maps using aerial photographs and carries out inventory of natural forests as well as trees outside forests. State Forest Department (SFDs) make details assessment of the forest resources including species, compositions, growing stock, site quality, status of regeneration etc. There are 775 territorial divisions in country.

Changes in forest cover and the economic contributions of forest to development have created many different patterns across the Globe. But the basic pattern of deforestation accompanying the initial period of economic growth followed by a phase during which forest area and cover stabilize and then slowly begin to recover seems to be remarkably consistent with obvious difference in timing. The Specific reasons for this pattern differ in some cases these reasons are primarily owed to changes in the distribution of economic activities from agriculture to industry to service sectors, in other cases to active government policies aiming to improve forest cover or penalize illegal extraction and in yet either cases as a result to the role of international capital and Trade. But under all these patterns of loss, stabilization and recovery the constant is the contributions forests make to international trade, national economics, employment and households' income. (United Nations Forum on Forest, 2023)

Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) play a vital role in supporting Livelihood security, development and poverty reduction, especially for the rural communities living around forest areas (Cocks and Wiersum 2003; Cokc sedge 2006; Enda mana et al.2016). It is also important that they are not traded through organized markets and do not appear in national economic statistics even though millions of forest dwellers harvest large quantities of NTFP for both subsistence and commercial use, either regularly or as an eminency (Shanker et al. 2004).

Forests provide ecosystem services such as timber, food, fuel, fodder, non-wood products and shelter-which are essential for human being. At the same time, they contribute to soil and water conservation, carbon storage and clean air. When forests are substantially managed, they can be healthy, productive, resilient and renewable ecosystems, which can thrive while at the same time providing essential goods and services to people worldwide. (United Nations, Department and Economics and Social Affairs, 2019)

## **2. Objectives:**

- I. To study the current status of Forest resources and identification of treats.
- ii. Promote co-operation between public and government in Karbi Anglong district.

### **3. Methodology used:**

The study is based on the secondary sources only. All the data are collected from online sources which are available in websites. The data are from Autonomous Council Forestry Department., UN environmental programme report, WWF survey report, Research Open sources articles, Forest Department of Assam Report, Booklet of Karbi Anglong. On the other hand, it is the empirical research study.

### **4. Profile of the Study:**

The Assam United District of Mikir Hills and North Cacher Hills (Administration), Regulation 1951, published in Gazette Vide Notification no TAD/R/31/ 50/190 dated the 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1951 came into force on the 17<sup>th</sup> November through a notification issued on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1951.

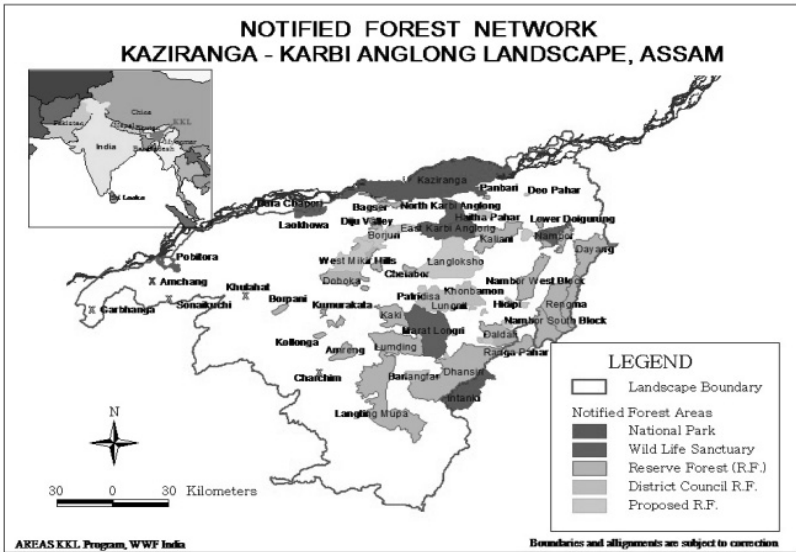
Earlier on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1951, the Governor had issued the regulation after exercising the powers conferred by clause (b) of Sub paragraph (1) of paragraph 19 of the sixth schedule to the constitution of India, which was assented to by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad at New Delhi on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1951. The district covers an area of 5,883 square miles or 15,237.0 square kilometers and lies between latitude 24<sup>o</sup>54' and 26<sup>o</sup>41' N and longitude 92<sup>o</sup>09' and 93<sup>o</sup>53' E approximately.

The district was bifurcated to form two separate districts namely Mikir Hills district and North Cacher Hills district in 1970. The Mikir Hills Autonomous District was renamed Karbi Anglong Autonomous District vide government notification no TAD/R/115/74/47 dated '14<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

The largest district of Assam is Karbi Anglong. About 85% of total geographical area is covered by hills. The highest peak is Singhshon, 1360 meters. The area located between the northern and southern hills of Diphu sub-division, it is characterized by undulating plains of subdued reliefs, The plain area consists of valleys of the Jamuna, Kapili and Dhansiri in the eastern part. The minor streams are Kalioni, Borapani, Patradisa and dikharu.

In pursuance of O.M.No HAD/57/95/309 dated 31/12/1996 from govt of

Assam, the administration control of forest department has been transferred to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council while role of the state government has become advisory in nature. The forest area controlled by three territorial divisions namely Karbi Anglong East Division, Karbi Anglong west division and Hamren.



## 5. Current Status.

As per the report of Forest Survey India (1999) 6044 square kilometers of the district are under dense forest while 2776 square kilometers are open forest cover.

The important forest types are

1. Moist semi evergreen type.
2. Moist mixed deciduous type.
3. Rivera in type
4. Miscellaneous type with scattered pure or mixed patches of bamboos.

Most Semi evergreen type is rich in species like Badam, Amari Cham, Tita sopa, Nahar, Bhelu, Gomari, Poma, Bonsum , azhar, Simul, Odal etc, Mixed type

forest including Haldu, Bohera, Simul, Ghogra, Azhar, Odal, etc. The Riveraine forest includes Khaire, Sissoo, Simul, Urium, Kokoli etc. Miscellaneous forest type includes as Amari, Sopa, Cham, Bonsum, Bogipoma, Gonosorai, Dhuna and Hingori etc.

### 5.1: Land use and land coverage:

The following are the major land use cover category that is identified in Karbi Anglong.

Land use pattern	Area (in Hac)	Percentage
Build up land	126	0,01
Agricultural land	139731	13.99
Forest Land	436515	43.64
Shifting Land	423885	42.38

Source: Survey report of +Aaranyak, biodiversity conservation.

### 5.2: Wild Biodiversity:

Aaranyak, biodiversity conservation in the North East India in their report reveal that the wild biodiversity of Karbi Anglong is not well known. But studies and survey report of different organizations have revealed it is one of the sites for conservation of threatened and endemic flora as well as fauna.

### 5.3: Plant Diversity:

The plant diversity in Karbi Anglong is mainly sub-tropical. The Salient trees special species are summarized.

Sl no	Local words	Botanical names
1	Lali	Amoora walichi
2	Amlokhi	Embica officials
3	Amora	Spondies mangifera
4	Bogi poma	Chikrassia tubularis
5	Bhelu	Tetrameles nudipora
6	Borpat	Alianthus gradis

7	Cham	Arto carpus chaplasha
8	Dimoru	Ficus glomerata
9	Gendheli poma	Dysoxglum hamiltonii
10	Ghogra neam	Melia azedarch
11	Hatipoila	Petrospermum
12	Hilikha	Termenalia chebula
13	Hollock	Terminalia myriocarpa
14	Jam	Syzygium cumini
15	Kanchan	Bauhnia Spp
16	Khokan	Duabhamga snnerativ
17	Manipuri sim	Parkia roxburghin
18	Neem	Azarirachta indica
19	Sonaru	Casia fistula
20	Sationa	Albizia scholaris
21	Tita sopa	Michellia champaca
22	Udal	Sterculia villosa
23	Gomari	Gmelin Grandis
24	Bhola	Morus Laevigata
25	Haldu	Adina Corodifolia
26	Koroi	Albizia procera

Source: Survey report of Aaranyak.

#### 5.4: Scrubs:

The salient feature under Shrubs in Eupatorium, Oderatum, Laportea, Crenulata, Alpinia allughas, Litsea and Salicifalia.

#### 5.5 Climbers:

The important climbers are Mezonuruon, Cucullatum, Embelia, Ribes, Acacia pinta, Mikenia Scandens, Zizyphus rugosa etc,

#### 5.6: Bamboos:

Karbi angling is very rich in Bamboo species.

Sl no	Local assamese name	Botanical name
1	Katoha banh	Bamboosa arundinacea
2	Bhaluka banh	Bamboosa Balcooa
3	Bijuli banh	Bamboosa pallide
4	Bewar (karbi words)	Bamboosa khasiana
5	Jati banh	Bamboosa tulda
6	Footong (karbi words)	Dendrocalamus Patellaries
7	Kako banh	Dendrocalamus hamilyonii
8	Muruli banh	Melconna bacciferi

Source: Survey report of Aaranyak.

### 5.6: Anima IDiversity: Mammals:

The salient feature of mammals in Karbi Anglong are Asian Elephant, Royal Tiger, Leopard, Marbled Cat, Indian Bison, Himalayan Black Bear, Sambar, Barking Deer, Hegdeer, Hoolock gibbon, Pig- tailed macagues, Stumptailed, Slow lorries, Serow, flying Squarels etc.

#### Birds:

Aaranyak and Dr. A, U. Choudhury mentioned 400 species of birds in their survey. The salient birds are

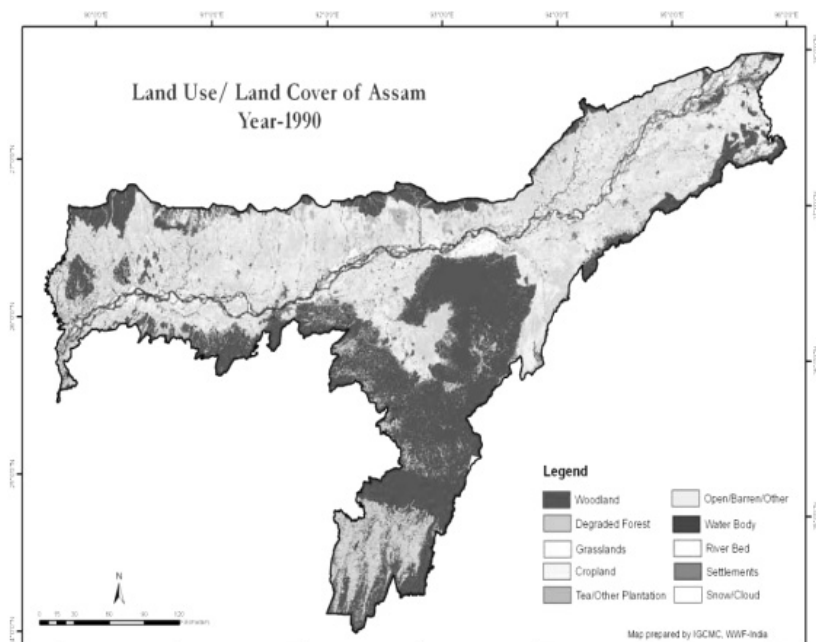
Sl no	Local Assamese	Scientific name
1	Wreathed Hornbills	Duabanga Sonneratoides
2	Rufous necked hornbills	Aceros nipalonsis
3	Great Pied Hornbills	Buceros bicomies
4	Indian pied hornbills	Anthracoceos malabaricus
5	Red jungle fowls	Gallus gallus
6	Khaleej Pheasant	Lophura leucomelana
7	Peacock pheasant	Polyplectron Bicalcaratum
8	White winged wood duck	Cairina scululata
9	Blyth.s baza	Aviceda jerdoni
10	Crested serpent eagle	Spilornis cheek
11	Black brested baza	Aviceda leuphotes

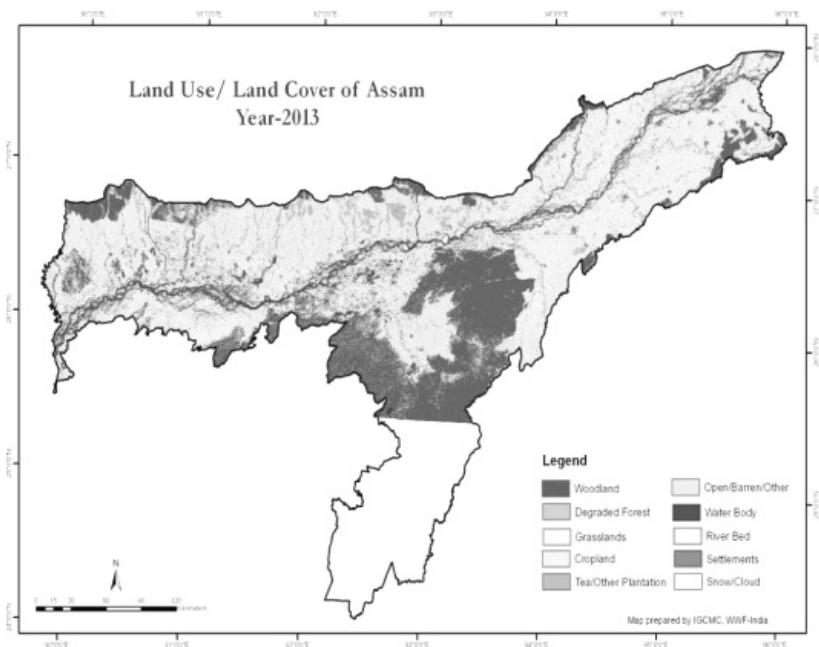
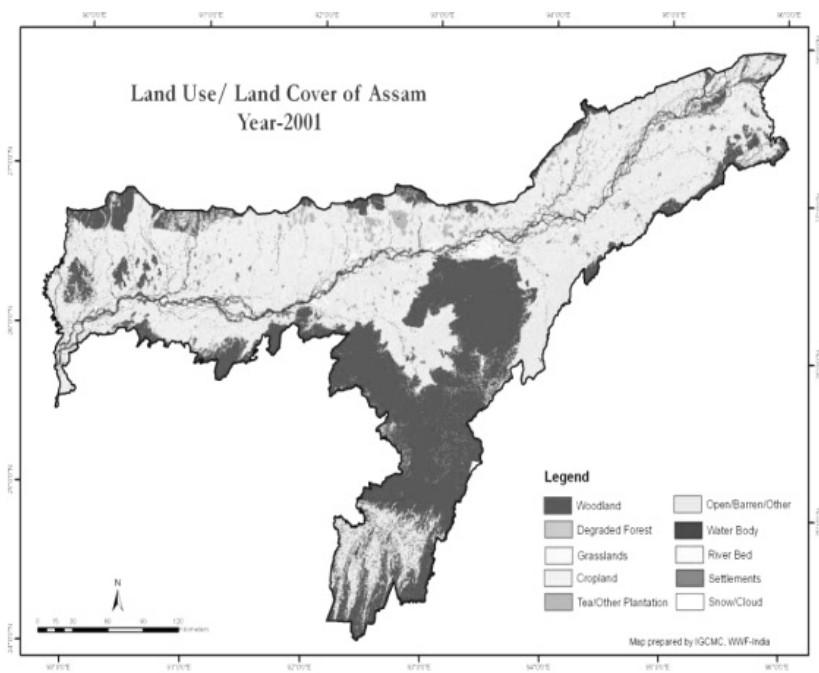
12	Green imperial pigeon	Ducula aenea
13	Tiny Lorikeet	Loriculus vernalis
14	Red breasted Parakeet	Psittacula alexandri
15	White breasted water hen	Amaurornis phoenicurus
16	Coton teal	Netlapus coromandalianus
17	Lessar whisling teal	Dendsocygna javanics
18	Large rsocket tailed drongo	Dicrurus paradiseus

Source: Aaranyak.

### 5.7: Forest -Loss scenario:

Recently, a group of ecologists from University of Maryland studied through Satellite data that Assam lost 14.1% green cover due to large-scale deforestation and destruction of forest resources in the last 20 years. Karbi Anglong tops the list having lost 97.4 kilohectares (Kha) of green cover followed by Dima Hasao with 63.2 kha.





According to FSI (2017) out of total 10,434 sq km geographical area of the district 7983 sq km is under forest cover.

The legal status of notified forest is

Sl no	Legal forest	Forest area (Sq km)
1	State Reserve Forest	1962.06
2	District Council Reserve Forest	1011,26
3	Proposed Reserve Forest	1317.01

Source: FSI report, 2017

### 5.8: Tiger as threatened:

Tiger is one of the most charismatic species on Earth. It is also one of the most threatened. Only the Tiger population in India is 2023, on the 50<sup>th</sup> year of project in India.

Today, Tigers are being poisoned, shot, trapped and snared to meet the demands of illegal wild life trade.

#### Major threats in Landscape:

- \* Illegal felling and encroachments in the forest area.
- \* Non sustainable extraction of timber and non- Timber For.
- \* Large scale developmental projects/activates (Roads, dams etc.)
- \* Natural Hazardous like floods.
- \* Poaching and trade in wildlife parts.



Poaching and trade in wildlife parts.



Destruction of Plants.



Unprecedented draught situation/ natural hazardous



Habitats Destruction.





সোনালী মেকুৰী (Golden Cat)



মাৰ্বল কেট (Marbled cat)



হোকোৰা বাঘ (Black Panther)



गोधफुतुकी बाघ (Clouded Leopard)

### Extinct Animals



हाती (Elephant)



### 4-lane construction in Karbi Anglong:

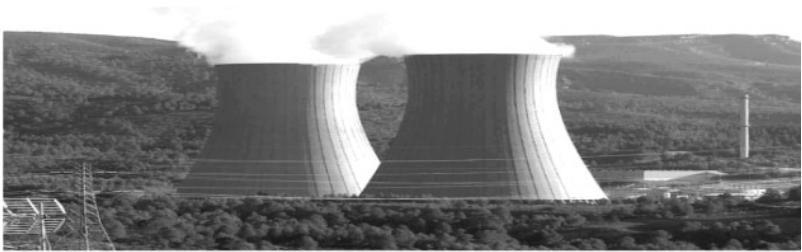
Proposal No-FP/AS/ROAD/125122/2021. The name of the project for which Forest Land is required: Widening/up-gradation of NH-29 from 2-lane to 4-lane divided National Highways from Dabaka to Lahorijan (Karbi Anglong East Forest Division part) under Bhartmala Pari yojana.

Area of Forest Land proposed for diversion (In hacter):14.56

Non- forest land required for project (In hacter):209.599.

For construction of this road, National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation LTD declares that as per the assessment based on Detail survey in forest area and Topo- Sheets reference, the project road is passing through Sildharpur RE, Patradisha DCRF, Longnit DCRF under Karbi Anglong East Forest Division in State of Assam. The extent of the forest area is completely unavoidable due to the location of the project. The project completely violates the Environment (Protection) Act -1986. It is also not based on Cost-Benefit Analysis. If someone ask whether the process for settlement of Rights under the Forest Rights Acts 2006 on the forest land proposed to be diverted has been completed then answer is about yes.

### **Big-Dams project :**



**Assam Power Generation Corporation Limited (APGCL) is coming up with a Hydroelectric power project with a capacity of 24 MW. The project is in the West Karbi Anglong District of Assam near Borpani, Moriento. The tender is in the opening phase for financial bid assessment as of July 2022.**

### **6. Promote Co-operation:**

In 1995, the center for Environmental Law (CEL) World Wide Fund for Nature

India approached the apex court to enquire into the manner in which National Parks and Wild life sanctuaries are being managed in the country.

In the specific context of Kazironga National Park (KNP), the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT) have intervened in order to protect the park as well as the landscape abutting this park. These interventions include important directions involving a ban on mining in the Karbi Anglong Hills, traffic management on the highways running alongside the park and other steps to remove manmade obstructions in the wildlife corridors, thereby freeing animal movement within the landscape.

Highlighting the importance of continuity of Kazironga National Park with Karbi Anglong Hills, the NCTA in its 2014 report stated as “The ecological integrity and long-term survival of wildlife in this area will depend on maintaining Kazironga flood plain with Karbi Anglong hills and surrounding hills as single landscape complex”.

As per the Environmental (protection) Act 1986, the Central Government may take into consideration proximity of the concerned site to Protected Area (PA) under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and to ensure protection of wildlife corridors.

According to CEC findings in its report from 2019, the forest department under the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council was allowing illegal mining to carry on inside the forest tracts instead of cooperating with the Kazironga National Park authorities in deterring the practice. This was being done under the pretext that stone is the prime material used for the construction of roads and bridges and the council derives the power for making laws on roads and bridges as para3(a) (1)(b) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule to the constitution.

The directions of the Supreme Court and the NGT in the three petitions related to conservation of Karbi Anglong Hills/KNP are based on the certain principles. The foremost environmental obligation of the State enshrined in Article 48A of the constitution, according to which, “The State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and safe-guard the forest and wildlife of the country.”

Apart from Article 48A, the courts have also placed reliance on a few

environmental principles such as the public trust doctrine, precautionary principles and sustainable development when it comes to wildlife management.

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972(WPA) provides for the protection of species of wild animals, plants and their natural habitats. It has also established authorities for the implementation of its provisions and includes regulation on hunting, management of PA and restrictions on trade in wild animals.in spite of the strong legislation in conservation, there is the problem of poaching, habitat degradation, human wildlife conflicts and diversion of protected areas and continued unabated. Another concern for wildlife conservation is threats posed to wildlife habitats and free movements of animals from various infrastructure development project.

The National Forest Policy, 1988 emphasises on creating massive people's movement through involvement of village communities living close to the forest in protection and development of forests. Pursuant to this policy, the Government of India issued a notification in June, 1990 requesting the State Governments to involve local communities in the management of forests. It is envisaged that the communities, in lieu of their participation in protection and development of forest areas, will be entitled to sharing of usufructs in a manner specified by the concerned State Forest Departments. This has led to the development of Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme.

## **7. Conclusions and Suggestions:**

It is the study of forestry in Karbi Angling district. The evergreen forestry is now in decline due to heavy pressure of population. The most of the parts of forest regions have been transformed into perforated areas resulting illicit cutting of forest trees. fragmentation of forest also results as a threat to the existing biodiversity as the reserve forests consist of varied richness in plants and animal species. The autonomous Council has taken initiatives to protect the biodiversity but people's involvement seems to less participants. At present the forest land area is declining due to people's illegally cutting the trees and occupied the hilly parts for their own interest. In hilly areas, it is observed, majority people planted Rubber for business and wild animals' loss their habitat due to big plantation of domestically planted by the local masses. Therefore, People's movement in

protecting forests and supplementing government is the need of the hour.

**Suggestions:**

1. To maintain orders of all Central Government regarding Biodiversity.
2. To increase revenue returns from authorized activities.
3. To prevent damages to Forest area from unwanted resources violations.
4. Involvement of public, NGO, Ecologists and Biodiversity researchers.
5. Increase skill levels of forest technicians and forest managers in prevention and monitoring programme.
6. To meet sustainable development.
7. Reduce vulnerabilities that can opportunities for unwanted activities to occur.
8. To plan more trees after harvesting.
9. Forestry innovations initiatives are required for using information and communications artificial intelligence and other cutting edge technologies to save forestry cost and labor.
10. Make future policy and research to give grater consideration to the interdependence.

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# A Study on the Political Importance and Significance of the Tea - Tribe Community in Assam

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## **Introduction:**

During the colonial era, the British started tea plantations in Assam and brought in laborers from the tribal communities of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha to work on the plantations. These workers were collectively known as the Tea-tribe community in Assam although they have not given the ST status yet and they have since formed a distinct cultural and social group in the state. Over the years, the Tea-tribe community has gained political representation and has played an active role in shaping the state's politics. In the early years after independence, the community's leaders were prominent in the struggle for better rights and working conditions for the tea garden workers. The Tea-tribe community, also known as Adivasi, has a significant political importance in Assam. This community has a significant population in Assam due to their historical connection with the tea industry. The Tea-tribe community has been demanding ST (Scheduled Tribe) status for a long time. The demand for ST status is primarily to safeguard their cultural identity and political empowerment. The Tea-tribe community faces social, economic and political difficulties because of their non-Scheduled Tribe status. They are also the target of various forms of discrimination, which hamper their political and social empowerment. The electoral role of the Tea-tribe community in Assam is immense. They are primarily concentrated in upper Assam, the Brahmaputra Valley, and the Barak

Valley. The Tea-tribe community constitutes over 17% of the state's population, making them a crucial factor in elections.

In past elections, the Tea-tribe community has voted for various political parties and has had a significant impact on electoral outcomes. Their voting preferences and patterns can influence the success or failure of political parties and candidates in an election. Recognizing their importance, political parties in Assam make specific promises in their election manifestos to attract their votes. The Tea-tribe community's agenda includes demands for Scheduled Tribe status, better socio-economic conditions and political empowerment. Political parties that address the Tea-tribe community's issues are more likely to secure their votes during the elections.

### **Objectives:**

1. To study the various dimensions of the Tea-tribe politics in Assam.
2. To study the political importance of the Tea-tribe community.
3. To study the recent trends in the Tea-tribe politics in Assam.

### **Research Methodology:**

This study is based on secondary data. The researcher has collected secondary data from various articles, newspaper, magazines, journals, books, leaflets, pamphlets etc. After collecting the data the researcher has done the analysis with descriptive method.

### **Discussion:**

In elections the Tea-tribe community has played a vital role in determining the political fortunes of various political parties in Assam. Therefore, political parties in Assam are keen to pursue the votes of the Tea-tribe community by fulfilling their demands and addressing their issues. Recognizing their importance, various political parties have promised to address their issues if they come to power.

The Tea-tribe community has emerged as a crucial political force in Assam's politics and political parties' attention towards their issues is expected to increase in the coming days. The Tea-tribe community in Assam is politically significant for various reasons:

1. The tea industry in Assam is one of the largest employers of the Tea-tribe community. As a result, they have a considerable stake in the political decisions that impact the tea industry, including policy decisions related to wages, working conditions and land rights.
2. The Tea-tribe community comprises a significant portion of the population in the Assam region. Politicians, therefore, cannot ignore their electoral influence and political parties must ensure that they address the concerns and grievances of the tea-tribe community to win their support.
3. Historically, the Tea-tribe community has been politically marginalized and their demands for recognition and representation have been largely ignored. Political parties are now realizing that ignoring the concerns of the Tea-tribe community will only lead to further alienation and potential vote losses in the state.
4. With the rise of regional and ethnic politics in Assam, the Tea-tribe community has emerged as a significant electoral force, further increasing its political importance. Political parties are now more eager to address their longstanding demands for political recognition and representation.

The Tea-tribe politics in Assam primarily aims to safeguard the rights, interests, and cultural identity of the Tea-tribe community, also known as Adivasi, who have played a significant role in the tea industry and constitute a significant population in Assam. The objectives of the Tea-tribe politics in Assam include:

1. Demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) Status: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam demands the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Tea-tribe community to provide them with social, economic, and political empowerment and safeguard their cultural identity.
2. Better Socio-economic conditions: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam aims to address the socio-economic problems faced by the Tea-tribe community, such as poverty, lack of education, and healthcare facilities, to improve their living conditions.
3. Political Empowerment: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam aims to increase

political participation and representation of the Tea-tribe community in government bodies and administration.

4. Recognition and inclusion: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam seeks recognition and inclusion of the Tea tribe community in the mainstream society and the Tea-tribe community is considered an integral part of Assam's history and culture.
5. Equal opportunities: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam aims to create equal opportunities for the Tea tribe community in education, employment and entrepreneurship, to uplift their living standards etc..
6. Overall development: The Tea-tribe politics in Assam aims for the overall development of the Tea-tribe community and focuses on their issues and problems to create a healthy and sustainable environment for them.

The basic objectives of the Tea-tribe politics in Assam revolve around the demand for a better socio-political environment for the Tea-tribe community, their recognition and their inclusion in Assam's growth and development. The Tea-tribe community in Assam has been an essential part of the state's history and politics. They belong to various tribes such as the Santhal, Munda, Bhumij etc. and have been demanding the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for social, economic and political empowerment.

In recent years, the Tea-tribe community in Assam has seen some new trends in their political engagement, such as:

1. Emerging Leaders: in recent period the Tea-tribe community has been producing young leaders who are actively fighting for the community's rights and recognition. These leaders are using various platforms to create awareness and mobilize support for the community's issues.
2. Formation of New Political Parties: With the emergence of new leaders, the tea tribe community is also creating new political parties to represent their interests. For example, the newly formed political party Adivashi National Party of Assam (ANPA) is committed to fight for the rights of the community.

3. **Unity amongst Tribes:** The Tea-tribe community is also creating alliances and building bridges among themselves to fight for common issues. The recent formation of the Adivasi(Santhal, Munda, Bhumij) SahityaSabha is an example of such efforts. The community understands that unity among their various groups and tribes among the community is crucial to address their challenges, demands and issues effectively.
4. **Alliances with Other Political Parties:** The Tea-tribe community is also building alliances with other political parties to increase their political influence and gain power in government. For example, the ANPA has formed an alliance with the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) and the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) for the Assam Assembly elections in 2021. Besides, BharatiyaJanata Party recently has formed a cell called BharatiyaJanataPartyChahMorcha (BJPCM) particularly for the welfare of this community.

As such, the Tea-tribe community in Assam is moving towards more political engagement and strategies to gain social, economic, and political empowerment. The emergence of new leaders, political parties, alliances, and united efforts amongst tribes is a promising sign for the community's growth and recognition. The Tea-tribe community, also known as Adivasi, is a significant political force in Assam as they hold a substantial number of votes in many constituencies of the state. The Tea-tribe community has a historical association with the tea industry and plays a critical role in the social and economic fabric of Assam.

### **Conclusion:**

The political role of this community is as such considered a crucial factor in elections in Assam. In recent years, there has been an increase in political participation and activities among the Tea-tribe community, with many people from the community contesting elections and winning seats. Their support has been critical for political parties seeking to form the government in the state. The community's political influence has also led to the formulation of policies aimed at their welfare, such as the provision of housing, healthcare, and education to the tea garden workers.

In conclusion, the Tea-tribe community in Assam is a politically influential group that has played a significant role in shaping the state's politics. Their support is crucial for political parties and their demands for better rights have resulted in policies aimed at their welfare. The political importance of the Tea-tribe community in Assam is unquestionable, given their numbers, stake in the tea industry and electoral influence. Political leaders must take into account their concerns and integrate their demands into policy-making to ensure that they are not left behind in the rapidly changing political landscape of Assam.

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# Role of Middle Class in Politics of Assam: A Study of Karbi Anglong District

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## **Introduction:**

The concepts of 'Middle Class' originality developed in Europe with the breakup of feudalism followed by the emergence of commercial and industrial bourgeoisie in the newly developed towns and cities. The 'Middle Class' are those, who are neither rich nor poor. They may be divided into two groups, the Upper Middle Class and the Lower Middle Class. The position of Middle Class is in between the higher and lower classes of the society. According to Karl Marx, "Middle Class people are the unhappiest creatures in the society, they try their best to become rich and remain worried." He also said that there are two fundamental classes in every society, i.e. a minority groups of 'non-producers', who have the control on means of production and they used this position of control to extract surplus product from the majority group of 'producers' which is the source of their livelihood. This Control of means of production yields political control over the society. In this type of class structure, the controlling position of the Middle class is only transitional not static. For Marx the middle classes were self-employed peasants and the petty bourgeoisie because they continued to own the means of production. They worked with and without employing wage labour. The theorists from sociology, political science and other social sciences have been assigned much more significance to the 'Middle Class'. Max Weber though agrees with Marx's division of classes which are essentially defined in terms of economic. Weber's conception on class is quite different from Marx. Unlike Marx, Weber argued that classes develop only in the market economies

in which individuals compete for economic gains and the classes are groups of people who share similar position in a market economy and by virtue of this fact receive similar economic rewards. Their economic position or “class situation” determines how many of the things considered desirable in their society they can buy.

In the initial phase of the industrial economic development, the bourgeoisie emerged as new class of merchants and industrialists were between land owning classes, the aristocracy and the poor working classes. Due to the industrial economic development land owning gentry were declined and the bourgeoisie those consisting of the big industrialists and financiers emerged as the ruling class. The term middle class has been started to use for the independent small traders, professionals and artisans who stood between the bourgeoisie and the working class. These classes grew in numbers with the development of towns, cities and increasing urbanization. These groups were later called as “Old Middle Classes”.

The emergence of “New Middle Class” is outcome of the further expansion of industrial capitalist economy and the rise of big corporations with large complex organizational structures. G D.H. Cole attributed two reasons for the emergence of new middle class. They are, firstly, an increase in the number of public schools and spread of education and secondly, for the spread of joint stock companies. These developments fostered large-scale enterprises and brought into existence a new class of salaried managers, administrators and others. According to Lockwood, the rise of the white-collared salaried class to the developments of corporate capitalism and the emergence of big organization were responsible for the upliftment of new class. The crucial difference between the “old” and “new” middle classes are their position within the economy. The Old Middle Classes occupied that position by the virtue of their being placed outside the polar class structure and they were neither part of the capitalist class nor of the working class. On the other hand new middle class were not enjoying such kind of autonomy because of being a part of big organizations.

In India Middle Class is the result of British colonial rule and their imperialist policies. According to the B.B Mishra, Middle Class is “the class of people which

arose as a result of changes in the British social policy and with the introduction of the new economic system and industry and with the subsequent growth of new professions.” During the British era there are four kind of Middle Class, they are (a) the Commercial Middle Class and brokers those were found with the foreign companies and indigenous small industries; banking sector. They are basically related with plantation sector. (b) Moneylenders, Brokers and Banias etc. (c) the industries middle class was very small because the growth of industry was very slow. And (d) the Educated Middle Class comprised of a class of professionals which emerged with the introduction of western technology. The changes in the system of law gave rise to a class of lawyers and engineers etc and higher educated. Indian middle classes showed their allegiance to British government because their economic life was completely depending upon government. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ram Mohan Roy, Debendra Nath Tagore etc. are supported to British rule in India.

The roots of the Middle Class Assam could be trace back to Mauzadar and vaishnava satras. Emergence of middle class in Assam was not in remarkable number till 1860 but then it was growth to an influential numbers. Some renown persons like Dutta Dev Goswami; Hem Chandra Goswami; Pitambar Dev Goswami from Upper Assam and Abdul Majid; Ghanashyam Barua; PNG Barua etc. from mauzadar families. According to Amalendu Guha three are types of influence are clear on the newly developed Assamese middle class: -

- a. The spread of British administration and its associate infra-structure.
- b. The activities of the Christian missionaries, particularly the American Baptists.
- c. The direct and indirect impact of the Bengal renaissance.

With expansion of western education emerged the New Assamese Middle Class at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and it's have been played an influential role in social life of Assamese. The Assamese middle class was the compound product of the Colonial Bureaucracy, English Education and Tea Plantation Industry. Though the three components played mutually supportive role, the social formation of the class was flexible and it was capable of absorbing newer elements. Though

the Assamese middle class was not a ruling class during the Colonial period but it was able to maintain dominance over the Assamese society.

In the district of Karbi Anglong, both government and non-government official workers such as bureaucrats, teachers, writers, doctors, engineers, pleaders, preachers, journalists, big and small entrepreneurs and rubber planters etc. constitute the Middle Class. In the emergence of middle class in district has also the outcome of the British colonial rule (which leave an imprint on entire northeast as well as the nation), specially the role of Christian Missionaries and their English education. Like other parts of India, Karbi middle class were also the result of English Education and they have played in the formation of the 'Karbi Anglong district' and it has been playing a great role into the politics of Karbi Anglong district till date.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study the meanings and characteristics of Middle Class of the Society.
2. To study the role of Middle Class in the Politics of the Region.

### **Methodology of the Study:**

The Study has been conducted on the basis of Secondary sources of Data. Data has been collected from the Documents and records of the various offices of the district, judicial records and incidents of political violence; election manifestos; election campaigns; constitutions of the political parties and District administrations and other directions; views and opinions of the civil society as well as the Middle Class intellectuals will be considered as a source of information for the study etc. and books, journals, magazines, News papers and internet sources, too. Historical method, descriptive method and Analytical method will be used for analysing and interpretation of data.

### **Role of the Middle Class in Politics of Karbi Anglong:**

The Karbi Middle Class in the Politics of Karbi Anglong district has been a playing dominating role. In pre-independent period, educated youths like Sardoka Ingti, Thengkur Sing Ingti, Semson Sing Ingti, Khorsing Terang, Soi Soi Terang, Sarsing Teron Habe, Harsing Ingti Habe, Barelong Terang, Song

Bey, Chatra Sing Teron, Chandra Sing Teron, Joising Doloi, Dhoniram Rongpi and many more others from middle class have a clear vision of a district for the upliftment of Karbis in 1884 and when constituted 'Mikir Hills Tract' under the then Nowgong district. The Government of India Act, 1935 Karbis got the opportunity to send their representative in the provincial legislature for the first time. Karbi Adarbar leaders Song Bey, Bareleng Terang and others meets Bordoloi Sub-Committee and submitted memorandum for the establishment of separate district for Karbis in 1947.

After Independence in 1947 another generation of Middle Class had emerged and performed an important role in the politics of Karbi Anglong district. Biren Sing Ingti, Dr. Jayanta Rongpi, Holiram Teron, Bidya Sing Engleng, Khorsing Engti, Mongol Sing Engti, Jotson Bey, Mojari Hanse, Sum Ronghang, Joy Ram Engleng, Tuliram Ronghang (present CEM, KAAC) and others from the New Middle Class people of the district. The United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district was created by the government of Assam, vide notification no. TAD/R/31/50/201 dated November 3, 1951, according to Clause 3 of the Assam United District of Mikir and North Cachar Hills (Administration) Regulation, 1951. According to the provision of Sixth Schedule under Article 244(A) of Constitution with five other district councils the Mikir Hills district council vested to six hills tribes of northeast in India on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1952. They placed demand for separate state for Karbis after the introduction of Assam official Language Bill on October 10, 1960 in the State Assembly of Assam. The All Party Hills Leaders Conference (APHLC) was formed as a unified political Platform demanding a separate united hills state known as Northeast Frontier state. Later APHLC was fragmented as results of decision of the Indian union to recognize the state of Assam. On based of this development new regional political party was formed on January 1, 1970, known as 'Mikir Hills Progressive Party' (MHPP). Erstwhile the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District Council were divided into two separate political and administrative districts as Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills district. The separate state demand of the hills leaderships was at its peak during the period between 1960 and 1970s. Karbi Anglong remained an integral part of Assam sustained by some minimal autonomous power, while Meghalaya headed on to become full-fledged separate state.

Karbi Anglong also experienced of socio-political and as violence where the people from the middle class of the district has engaged. It is traced back to early 1972, the Mikir Hills Nationalist Liberation Organization (MHNLO) was established based on extreme ideology by merging of various social and political organizations like the Mikir Hills District Youth Congress (MHDYC); Karbi Jirsong Amei (KJA); Mikir Hills Progressive Party (MHPP); Karbi Student Association (KSA) etc. with the formation of Karbi National Volunteers On the other hand the Karbis were moved to an organized track by the newly formed Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDS) on November, 1985. Under its patronage on 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1986, the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) was formed and it was the beginning of a new political era in the history of Karbi Politics. The motto of the ASDC was to creation of the Karbi Anglong district as an Autonomous State under the provision of the Article 244(A) of Indian Constitution instead of earlier separate state demand. The formation of the Karbi National Volunteer (KNV) on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1994 and engaged in organized active militant activities in the district and another militant group was evolved on 12<sup>th</sup> September the Karbi Peoples' both of this group has the same was to achieved separate Karbi State within the Indian Union for the social, economic and political emancipation of Karbi people. This could be only possible after attainment of a separate state and the attainment of Hemprak Kangthim (separate homeland) is the ultimate solution. With the same intention Karbi Peoples Force (KPF) were also formed. After a decade, the historic Memorandum of Settlement was signed in a tripartite agreement between Central Government; State Government and the agitating leaderships on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1995. This is transforming the status of District council to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC). The political transition from District Council to an Autonomous Council changed the political power structure within the council for the first time a full-fledged regional political party took over the political regime of the Council. The political transition that occurred in the aftermath of the accord privileged the leaders of the regional political control not only the political sphere of the district but also phenomenally intrigued the state politics at large. The KAAC was entrusted with more political autonomy to prepare its own annual financial budget and preserve its social and cultural heritage. The Constitution of KAAC was attempted to decentralize

the governance and involve the tribal masses in determining their own political future which also remains as an important benchmark for a successful democracy in the district of Karbi Anglong. After coming into power, ASDC perpetuated its autonomous movement for preservation of its socio-political and economic identity and political exercises were implemented by the base structure of both the ASDC and the KSA leadership through going in the country side and organizing free educational coaching and giving helping hand in the agriculture. Thus the urge to politically sustain as a socio-cultural entity embracing modern politico- economic structure remains an inevitable phenomenal feature of the emerging Karbi leadership in particular and the whole tribe in general. Political decentralization through the regional committees of ASDC-KSA was exercised in relation to employment and resource control which politically motivated the masses to continue the political hegemony of the ASDC for more than a decade long. The ASDC from KAAC, as a tribal political front continued its movement for Autonomous state in the post accord period too which was resumed after the ASDC withdrew its support from the AGP (Asom Gana Parishad) led state government in 1997 and till the Autonomous State movement came to be ceased in the wake of political fragmentation with the ASDC on 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2000. After various violence activities in the district, KNV and KPF merged into a common platform United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) on 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 2000 under the leadership of Mr. P. Dili. Later UPDS fractioned into two groups and the anti-talks fraction renamed its group as Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation (KLNF), engaged in large violence activities to exercise its impact on government. That leads Political instability within the regional political front created power vacuum that initiated the National political party to disseminate their propaganda. The state assembly and council election that followed after this phenomenal incident were won by the congress party and this is the end of an era of regional governance. Due to the high aspiration of the political leaders, political dictation and political incompetency has caused the downfall of ASDC.

However the divided forces came to an understanding to launch a common platform after signing of Karbi Accord on 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011 between the governments of India, government of Assam, UPDS and the Peoples' Alliance for

Peace Agreement (PAPA). This has paved the way for structural up gradation of council. After the accord UPDS disband formally, most of its leaders geared up for the general election of the council which would hold on 2012. Both UPDS and PAPA demand for dissolution of Congress run council government until the execution of the general election of council. Signatories of the agreement like Horen Sing Bey, Kangjang Terang and Surjya Rongphar from the banner of PAPA won and become the member of KAAC. This involvement into the parliamentary politics with the landscape of regional politics has established a new era in the politics of the district. on the other hand ASDC was dissolved on December 1, 2012 for reunification of all regional fronts started to take shape culminating in the formation of Hills State Demand Party (HSDP) in 2013 and the HSDP again dissolved by another unification of political platform named as Hills State Demand Council (HSDC) was formed on 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2015.

After the emergence of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) into politics of India in 2016 for the first time with a huge majority seats in 2016 and the subsequent council election that hold on 2017. This was the sudden rise of BJP in to the power politics after constant struggle and this has important effects in the politics of Karbi Anglong district which visible on present socio-political as well as economic changes of the people. Their movements for self-determination and safeguard of socio-cultural heritages to developed independent political entity. Their struggle with some sort of achievement under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution and it is interest to hold control over power structure embedded with independent legislation, executive and financial power and to implement Karbi Customary Laws. the political transition in Karbi Anglong politics such as from ASDC to Congress; Congress to BJP at present and the middle class people are become die hard supporter of right wing BJP's. It was the result of involvement of karbi middle class people into the programs or social institutions organized by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its various wings, such as Charity, Educational Thrusts, Friends of Tribal Society, Ekal Vidyalaya, Shishu Shiksha Samiti, Art of Living etc. they are working continuously in a mission mode among the hills terrain and remote to remotest areas of the district to bring into the middle class as well as the other class in to one umbrella. The district is also the home of many others ethnic groups like

Bodo, Dimasa, Rengma, Naga, Kuki, Mizo, Paite and a significant numbers of non-tribal people like Assamese, Bengali, Bihari, Nepali, Adivasis, Marwari and others. Another significant change was the joining of Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma to BJP and with Sharma Dr. Tuliram Ronghang with his executive body and other supporters EM joined BJP on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2016 and it was the main reason of the downfall of United Peoples' Alliance (UPA) lead Congress government in the district council as well as in the state assembly. Till then the politics of Karbi Anglong under the leadership of Dr. Tuliram Ronghang and his executive body consecutively successes to occupied the council to present with the supports of other middle class, civil society, common masses. At present Karbi Politics is in peace mode and the common masses keep sleeping without the fear of violence, bandh, rallies, arson, killing, and extortion etc. which earlier prevails in the district. It has been seen that when the middle class were in peace, there is everyone able to be in peace and prosperity. So middle class always plays a vital role into the politics of the district of Karbi Anglong.

### **Conclusion:**

Throughout the study it has found that like middle class role in French Revolution, Russian Revolution, American Revolution as well as the significant role in Indian freedom movement to present political structure and it's functioning of the political organization. Pre-independent or colonial period or after the independent the middle class has been playing an important role in the politics of Assam. Being one of two hills district of Assam, Karbi angling has experienced many ups and down in political arena. In the politics of Karbi Angling district the emergence of Middle Class is the result of the English Education. After their emergence the middle class were played very crucial role in the development of political scenario in the district. From the District Formation to District Council; District Council to Autonomous Council all these development and achievement are the results of the effort and active political participation of the Middle Class of the district.

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# Tribal Autonomy & Separate State Movements in North-East India

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The Tribal Autonomy Movement in North East India for Formation of Meghalaya. The Autonomous District Councils of the Garo Hill, the Khasi Jaintia Hills, the Lushai Hills (Mizo Hills) the North Cachar Hills and the Mikir Hills. The preservation of the identity, race, language and culture of the Hill People in the sixth schedule; District, the District Council with adequate power to safeguard their interest social, economic and political and the attitude of the people of the plan was once of contempt and subtle hostility towards the hill people.

The hill areas of North-east India were uniformly administrated until 1937 as a relatively backward track exclusively under the Chief Commissioner. However, in April 1937 there was a bifurcation of the administrative pattern. The Lushai Hills, Naga Hills, North cachar Hills and the North-East Frontier Tracts were called Excluded Areas, excluded from ministerial jurisdiction. The Garo Hills, the British portion of the Khasi and jaintia Hills and Mikir hills were partially excluded areas. The excluded areas were guarded by the inner line which restricted the entry of outsider without permit. The hill district thus developed a special kind of identity and this has remained as a crucial factor for political development.

The announcement of 11 September, 1968 contemplated the establishment of an autonomous state of Meghalaya. The jurisdiction over thwo districts, Garo Hills and Khasi and Jaintia Hills Districts. The autonomous district of Mikir

Hills and The North Cachar Hills were given the option to join the Autonomous State on the basis of a resolution adopted.

The tribal movements in North-east India stand in a category by themselves because of its history and geopolitics. Several tribes in the region reside in close proximity to the international boundaries and have ethnic, cultural affinity with the tribes across the border. The Hill areas of the North-east were not completely intergraded with the political and economic system of the British regime and the Inner Line is in vogue even today, isolated the tribal regions of the North-east from the other parts of the country. Considering the geopolitical factor, the relative isolation from the rest of the country, the predominant form of tribal movement has been political, seeking goals of autonomy and freedom with reliance on measures ranging from constitutional agitation and insurgency. The tribal movement in North-east India is a reflection of the struggle for regional identity thought based upon ethnic consideration. However, the basic reason for the tribal movement is the conflict between actual wielders of political and economic power with those who want to be masters of their soil and destiny. As aspiration rise and economic development is uneven and slow, militancy is bound to increase. The emerging middle class and the educated sections in the tribal society are bound to take up cudgels against their adversaries.

The two hill districts of Assam have been demanding an autonomous state since 1970, to chart out their political, social and economic destiny. The two hill districts, North cachar and Karbi Anglong had the option to join the state of Meghalaya which became an autonomous state on 2<sup>nd</sup> april 1970. However, the two decided to remain as a part of Assam because of the promise of greater autonomy given by the then government in the state. Thus an Autonomous State Demand Committee was constituted for the creation of an autonomous state to safeguard the language, culture and tradition of the hill peoples of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong.

The Demand for Autonomy/Statehood in Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills, the demands for autonomy/Statehood has become a major issue. The demands for autonomy stem for the set sentiment people have towards a region, community or the tribe to which they belong. It implies the expression of distinctiveness in

respect of race, culture, culture or language, it is also a concern to protect and preserve one's identity.

A memorandum to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for the creation of an autonomous state comprising for implementation of article 244(A) of Indian constitution the 3ST (H) District of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao (North Cachar Hills).

The two hill, district of Assam, namely-Karbi Anglong District and Dima hasao District are the only remaining hill districts of Assam. The other hill district was constituted into the present Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The two hill are geographically contiguous and some of its principle features are the following.

Between 24 degree 54 mins North and 26 degree 41 mines North latitude and between 92 degree 8 mines East and 93 degree 53 mines longitude. Total areas 15237 sq. KM.

**The boundary of the propose autonomous state is as follow:**

1. East : The state of Nagaland and jorhat district of state of Assam.
2. West; The state of Meghalaya Nowgaon district of Assam.
3. North : Nowgaon and partly of jorhat district of Assam.
4. South: Cachar district of the state of Assam.

There are tribal areas contiguous to the district. It cannot be reasonably explained why those areas were not included in the district at time of their formation.

**Topography:**

1. The Mikir Hill at an average altitude of 740 meters above sea level.
2. The kopili, Jamuna and Dhansiri valley at an average altitude of 200 meters above sea level.
3. The North Cachar hills at an average altitude of 1050 meters above sea level.

The beautiful blend of hills and plain make the district ideal for all sorts of

auricultural activities. The districts also have a number of swift running rivers ideas for tapping hydro electricity.

### **People:**

58% of the total population of two district are tribal's of the Indo-Mongloid astock. When the district was created the tribal percentage was must higher. The major tribe are the Karbis, the Dimasa, the Kuki-Chin tribe, the naga tribe, the Lalung, the Bodos and the jayantias in the descending order of number.

### **History:**

The present of Karbi Anglong district from time immemorial, was ruled by Karbi chief, and Dima Hasao (N.C Hills) and the adjoining areas were ruled by the Kacharee Kings. They were sovereign and had mixed relation with surroundings. The Ahom king even sent give to the Karbi Chief recognizing his sovereignty. Only as late as 1838. The British tried to nbring the Hillman into some kind of the revenue settlement. The North Cachar Hills was annexed to the British territory even later in 1854, after the death of king Tularam Senapati, and after the surviving the members of his family were the pensioned off.

Until the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao (Mikir Hills and N.C Hills) both areas were sovereign and were never under the rule of the plain of Assam although they had political adjustment at different times. After the British took over, they recognized the political, ethnic, culture and linguistic peculiarities of the reason and they tried to find a suitable administrative system for the areas.

When the simon commission was appointed, the problems of the two hill tribals were also look into. The commission recognized the area as a deferent political unity and recommended peculiar method of administration were by any law passed by the state legislative council would not be applicable in the hills area unless approved by the governor.

Even the government of Assam had recommended that union of hills and plains was article resented by both of the parties. The legislative council had resented the people of the plain feared that their own political growth were being thwarted by their being yoked with the backward tracks. During the initial British period.

The prominent view of both official and non official were against the inclusion of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, and others hill tribal areas within the province of Assam.

### **The white paper of 1933:**

The white paper of Indian constitutional reforms accepted the Simon Commission recommendations and also the classification of the EXCLUDED and the PARTIALLY EXCLUDED areas. Mikir Hills fell within the partially excluded area where the governor was the sole controller and administrator. The legislative could have discretion on matter relating to the area only with the prior permission of governor. Even the minister had no constitutional right to advise the governor on matters relating to the area.

### **The Bordoloi Committee:**

The Bordoloi committee recommended that the tribal's should be allowed to evolve from their tribal institution and at the same time their contact with the civilized world should be maintained so as to make them aware of progress of the outside world. The committee recommended that the tribal should be vested with powers on land, forest, agriculture, local laws and village town management.

As a result of the Bordoloi committee recommendation and the memorandum submitted by the concerning tribal's, Mikir hills tract and N.C Hills were constituted into the united Mikir and North Cachar hills district and put under the administration of the state of Assam along with other tribal areas, viz-Kashi Hills, Garo Hills, Lushai Hills and Naga Hills was granted districthood and in 1976. Mikir Hills district was renamed Karbi Anglong district. Hence Karbi Anglong (Mikir Hills tract area) and North Cachar Hills area were inducted into Assam India by the British.

It is therefore clear that Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills district are the exclusive domains of tribal and this fact has been given mandatory sanction by awarding them with the provision of the sixth schedule of the constitution. Under para 3 of the sixth schedule the tribal are given the exclusive right to determine the allotment, occupation or use or the setting apart of land, within

the tribal areas as specified in the table appended to para 20 of the sixth schedule. Karbi Anglong and N.C Hills district are specified as part-1 in the table the two district have therefore, been granted autonomous powers with the sole purpose of protecting the interest, the right and the privileges of the tribal's within the specified area should be endangered.

But putting the tribal areas under the patronage of the state of Assam has turned out to be a costly historical blunder. As already noted, various committees looking into the affairs of the tribal's and the responsible official of the erstwhile provincial governments of Assam had uninformedly expressed the view that the union of hills and plains would have adverse consequences, and the Bordoloi committee had thought it otherwise and had put the tribal areas within the state of Assam. But whatever has happened to the tribal's. Since then are described very briefly in the following point with special reference to the tribal of Karbi Anglong and N.C Hill district.

1. The relations between the people of the Assam plain and hill-man have always been one of the obligatory conveniences politically, culturally and also economically the thickly populated and more advanced plain of Assam have always dominated the ignorant, poverty-stricken and very and thinly populated Assam hills. The people of Assam plain have always felt and acted superior to the hill-man having been looking upon are obliged to feel neglected, distant and inferior. This 'complex' being the traditional trait of the larger Indian communities, their attitudes towards indu-mongoloid tribes of the north east cannot be reformed unless the tribal are allowed to develop and nurture their genius in their own way and win the respect of the larger Indian communities.
2. The suppressive language policy of successive government of Assam is another domination the hill-man have been subjected to time and again. The attempt to make Assamese as the state official language and to impose the language on the tribal's was made in 1962 and upon receiving unfavorable reaction from the non-Assamese communities of the state, the government had settle for a three language formula viz, Assamese in the Brahmaputra plain, English in the hills areas and Bengali in the Barak

valley. However, the hill-men began to doubt the prospect of their unique linguistic, traditional and cultural heritage and the demand for the creation of the hills state was intensify which led to the Assam reorganization Act 1971.

3. The hills area has been turned into a sanctuary for the overflow of job seekers, contractors and other businessman of the Assam plain. Assam is burdened with population explosion and almost vertical escalation of unemployment problem with the boom of university degree holders. As the appointment authority and the contract allotment authority are with the bureaucrats who are almost all from the larger communities of Assam plain and they are under the contract of Assam government, obviously, candidates from the plain area of Assam are given preferential treatment in the appointment of jobs and in hills, the hill-man are discriminated upon on such matter over 90% of government employees and about 95% of all contractor and businessmen in the hill area from the plain of Assam.
4. The provisions of para 6 of sixth schedule of the constitution are not only inadequate but also no conducive of all round development of the hill area. Whereas the constitution provide that the governor may entrust certain executive function to the District Councils on the subjects specified in para 6(2) of the sixth schedule or any other matter of the state and whereas during Assam re-organization of 1969 at the government of Assam had dissuaded the leader of Karbi Anglong and N.C hills from joining the state of Meghalaya on the unwritten understanding that the tribal of two hills would be awarded with the greatest autonomy possible within a state, by transferring certain subject of the state to the district council, the Government's implementation of the understanding have fallen for short of expectation of the hill people. As a demonstration of the attempt to fulfill it unwritten commitment the government of Assam had by it office memo no. HAD.218/77/155 adted 14th November 1979.

The white paper of 1933, on India constitution reforms accepted the Simon Commission recommendation and also the classification of the excluded and the partially excluded areas. Mikir Hill fell within the partially excluded area where

the governor was the safe controller and administration. The legislative could have discretion on matter relating to the area only with the prior permission of governor. Even the minister has no on matter relating the area.

**Part I:** Excluded Areas, North-East Frontier, Sadiya Balipara and Lakhimpur, the Naga Hills districts and the Lushai Hills district.

**Part II:** Partially excluded areas, North Cachar Hills in the Cachar District, the Garo Hills District, The Mikir Hills in the Nawgong and Sibsagar district, the British person of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, other than Shillong Municipality and the cantonment.

### **Conclusion:**

Taking everything said and unsaid into consideration, the people of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao have Judiciously concluded that the concept of equality, fraternity and freedom is a Convenient myth being use only play upon tribal innocent facts speak louder than mere words and there is no doubt whatever that the illiterate and poverty-stricken tribes of the two hill district have been taken advantage of their wealth and recourses plundered, their legitimate rights and subtly curbed and their language and cultural support.

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