

ROLE OF ETHNIC IN PRESENT DAY POLITICS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AHOM MOVEMENT FOR TRIBAL STATUS

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Abstract

Science independence different ethnic groups of North –East started their ethnic movement to assert their ethnic identity in different ways with definite aims and aspirations. As a result of it, some definite ethnic groups of different came into existence. Their seems to be no contention amongst the different ethnic within the states itself. Specially in Assam, it is experiencing such harsh result on contention. Still non- tribals like ahom, Chutia, Konch etc have been demanding to get the Schedule Tribes Status within the sixth schedule of the constitution which is the significant step for gaining political autonomy.

The Ahom as distinct ethnic groups of Assam are organizing themselves through their organization in different levels in Assam. The ahom along with other five ethnic groups in assam have been launching movement in different times. Infact, when the Ahom increasingly felt that they remained much more backward than other reactions of the state then they organizing a sound footing body for their development. Basically they have for getting paid attention to include the ahoms in to the scheduled Tribes of the Indian constitution on the basis of their socio-economics backwardness. In view of this, the issue had gained considerable importance in present day politics and would made to analyze the different phases of movement for tribal status of Ahom.

Introduction

The process of identity formation among different ethnic groups in India is not a new phenomenon. In some cases, generic identities are paving the way for the emergence of specific identities. The fast growing awareness of the different ethnic groups have been a common phenomenon through India in Particular since the middle of the Nineteen Century. It is fact that, there are full of diversity in respect of physical structure, Social status. Livelihood, traditional dresses etc. in Noth East India. Among them, some of the ethnic groups of the people is comparatively low in respect of social, economic and cultural status. Therefore, the elite section of this group who organized their respective groups in order to develop their diver's problems. They have developed the ethnic movement for maintaining their identities, language customs, tradition, cultures and their religious traits. This paper is an attempt to highlight the role of Ahom as an ethnic group in Assam and its organization and movement for tribal status.

The biggest ethnic group in North-East India, the role of Ahoms has been significant since their arrival in this land as ruling group of people almost in Assam. The Ahom organization have been playing an active role lunched the social movements for the cause of greater interest of their respective community. Demand Ahom in Assam of course the chief aims and objectives of these movements of Tai Ahom is that to include the Tai Ahom of Assam in the list of Schedule Tribe of the Indian Constitution and to respect their identity by preserving the historical movement, language , religious and cultural practice of the Ahoms.

Objective of the Study:

The two objectives of the present study are formulated as follows-

- 1) To examine the factors which led to the movement for tribal status of Ahom in Assam.
- 2) To evaluate the phases of movement and its result.

Research Question:

The following research questions are formulated for uphold the findings

- 1) To what extent the movement for tribal status of Ahoms is relevance in the present day polities ?
- 2) How far the inclusion of Tribal status of Ahoms in Indian Constitution to fulfill the socio-economic and political aspiration of the entire community ?

Methodology:

The study is mainly based on explorative methods with the application of primary and secondary sources. The relevant government reports and documents, memorandum submitted to the government by the Ahom organization as primary sources. Besides, the relevant books, Journals are utilized as secondary source to uphold the findings of the study.

Content Analysis:

In fact, it is noted that the Ahom rule for Assam for long Six hundred years. The history of Tai Ahom is the history of Continuous; gradual administration process of a very reach ancient royal culture emerged and developed on the bank of Hwang –Ho-river with the indigenous cultures of local Mongoloid Tribes that lived on Bank of Brahmaputra. It provides integrated fabric comprising of all the ethnic Mongoloid tribes inhabiting in this region into a composite Assamese society under a benevolent strong administrative structure provided by the Tai Ahoms. They have their own language and reach cultural heritage with a distinct way of life. After establishing the glories six hundred years of administration, the Ahom were emerged as one of the most powerful ethnic groups in Assam. But due to irreconcilable contradiction and under historical forces they lost their political power practically after the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826. Thus the Ahom were being reined under development and backward during the British period. The British period deprive and neglected the Ahom in cases, socially, economically and politically. Further, free inflexion of foreigners, illiteracy of the people in the publicity of Western education in the educational institutions were also some reasons for remaining underdeveloped of this caste.

It is an important that the first revolution of Assam against the British in Assam was started under the leadership of Gamdhar Konwar, who was the Tai Ahom noble Prince and Piyoli Phukan respectively had met with failure because a selection of Assamese caste Hindu elite helped and supported the British imperialist for their own vested interests.

The Britishers degraded Ahoms a ruling race by keeping them deliberately away from being appointed in the Government job and ultimately putting them in a lower position of the contemporary Hindu social hierarchy. Hence, from the time media steely after getting indolence of the country, the Tai Ahim organizations have been pressing the central Movement leaders to adopt an attribute of non interference and tolerance in the matter of pertaining to ethnic tribal sensibilities. It is pertinent to mentioned here that the chameleon tendencies of the modern western cultural imported during the British rule post back the Ahomes to become and agricultural tribe leading to the present stage of backwardness socially and economically while they had continued their independence struggle against the British imperialism in India. A cunning section of people took advantages and had deliberately exploited them during this period. Causing further social and economic deterioration of the Tai Ahoms people.

During this period, the Tai Ahom community through their organization the all Assam Ahom Association has been demanding a just share an authority in the political setup of the country and sought separate electorate for the preservation of their own culture. After independence they were included the list of Other Backward classes along with the other original tribes of Assam which could not compensate the serious historical and socio economic set back, the Tai Ahom community as a whole had suffered due to oppression by the british and later by the non Tai Ahome elite section of the society from pre-independence period. It is a historical fact that during the British rule, the Ahom community were specially suppressed compelling them to become a totally suppressed tribes. The Tai Ahoms of Assam continued to be proud of their great ancestors. They always wanted to be treat as a martial race for which All assam association demanded the central Government to safeguard their interest as racial minority. When the Ahoms increasingly felt that they remained much more backward than other reactions of the state then they were organizing a sound footing body for their development like, All assam ahom student federation, Assam Moran Deodhai Bailong sanmillan. All Tai Ahom student union, Tai ahom Council. All Assam tai Yava Chatra Parisad etc. in order to fulfill their demands. Thus this group counting their movement for getting the tribal status.

Importantly the ahom organization urged that the Ahom community belongs to the Mongolia stock who have been traditionally backward, their traditional religious. Customs and the practices have been similar with other Schedule tribes. So they believed, the constitutional safeguard like the Scheduled Tribes Status would be rightly impressive. They have raised their demands for reservation of seats in legislature for the

candidates of their own community autonomous region, and a separate state etc. thus strictly speaking; they were directly and indirectly getting involved into the politics of the state. Indeed, its organizations categorically demonstrated consciously, they have got involved into the politics of the state to revive maximum possible benefits for the cause of overall development of their community which they might believe that it was a part of their unavoidable accountability towards the society when they belongs to. On the Other hand, the leaders were also induced, as noted above, to get overtly or covertly involved into politics by the Tai Ahom organizations and their political ambitious leaders for the sake of greater community interests.

Perhaps, for such reasons from the very beginning the Tai Ahom organization had raised series of demands before the Government of the State as well as the center which were both political and non-political in nature. Some of such demands were to reserve state for Tai Ahom students in higher educational institutions, to include Tai Ahom in the list of Schedule Tribes, to census Tai Ahom population separately and to give reservation in the Government jobs according to the population of the total numerical strength, to reserved the seats in Assam Legislative Assembly where there are 25% or more than voters belongs to the Tai Ahom community, to create an autonomous region comprising the District of upper Assam an so on.

By and large, the Ahom organization have come under the influence of a section of Tai Ahom leaders who were politically ambitious and intellectually guided by them to serve the Ahom community as a whole. For Example, a number of prominent political leaders of the state belonging to this community like Promod Gogoi, Hirayn Konwar (in the capacity of the being the them ministers) actively backed the organizations demands for inclusion them in the list of Scheduled Tribes by accompanying the agitationists while they were on a strike on 28th August 1997 at Delhi. Other political leaders like Keshab Gogoi, Devananda Konwar, Hemaprova Saikia, Chandra Arandhara, Pranab Gogoi, Sarat Kr. Saikia, Probin Gogoi, Pronoti Phukan and other so on who were actively backed for the organizations.

Therefore, these organizations have submitted several memorandums to the Central and state Government respectively with full of vigour demands for getting tribal status to the Ahos. The movement in this regards several commissions such as Kaka Kalekar Commission,1955, Lukur Commission 1965 and parliamentary Select commission 1996 have been setup. Sometimes effort some delegated negotiations have been occurred between the Government and the Ahom Community.

Conclusion

From of the above discussion it is reveal that the Tai Ahom movements for Scheduled Tribes Status have not organized in the same sprit like other organization in Assam. In this regards, only memorandum had been submitted to state Government as well as Central Government. But Government had a lack of sympathy on the demand, but this community does not lead the issue more emotively and sensitively. This only takes a series of agitation programmes like agitation, strict, procession etc. had been carried out during the course of their movement. They have never adopted undemocratic programmes such as arson, stabbing, burning and violent confrontation with the police and so on like other groups. Moreover, they could not proceed on their movement in a continuous process. Thus their movement was not active like other ethnic groups and therefore, they are deprived for which they may not be able to fulfil their significant demand for getting in the Sixth Scheduled as Schedule Tribes Status of Ahom Movement is a genuine one which is not different nature in the plain groups of Assam. The leaders of the Tai Ahoms also failed to fulfil the aspirations of the Ahom people though they get some privileges through their movement but they mayn not reach their main destination, because of the different community based on organizations of Ahom had greatly been influenced by the Tai Ahom elic including the politically ambitious segments of their community allegedly to serve the “parochial political interest” for which the Ahom movement for Tribal Status is still in speculative.

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