



RESEARCH ARTICLE

REFERENCES TO THE BODO MOVEMENT IN ETHNIC SELF-ESTABLISHMENT IN ASSAM

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Abstract

Assam one of the North-Eastern state of India, is inhabited by people of different ethnic groups. Most of the ethnic groups of Assam have in its own language, literature and cultural elements. They have been taking various steps to preserve national existence at different times. In this case, as different ethnic groups descend into the struggle for existence, there have been situation like ethnic conflict in Assam at different times. Different ethnic groups in Assam have also developed a movement demanding separate states at different times in the interest of self-establishment and as a result Assam has also seen terror at different times. The discussion 'References to the Bodo Movement in Ethnic Self-Establishment in Assam' discusses the historical context of the Bodo movement built by the Bodo people of Assam in the interest of existence, the relevance of the movement, its impact on the national life of Assam.

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Introduction:-

Almost all the communities of Assam are rich in their own language, literature, socio-cultural elements. But sometimes they do not seem to have received real respect from the Assamese upper Assam middle class or upper caste Hindu class; rather they are facing harassment, deprivation etc. They have also faced negligence from the government side in terms of language, literature or national development. So the different community seems to have taken various steps to preserve national existence. Many times the different ethnic groups have created a situation of agitation demanding a separate state for self-establishment and as a result Assam has also witnessed terror like situation at different times. In Assam, on various times the Karbi people demand separate Karbi Anglong, the Rajbongshi's have been against the demand for a separate Kamtapur, the Bodo's have been protesting against Bodoland. The peoples of Bodo ethnic group have been making various demands for a long time since before independence in the interest of their national progress and that demand seems to have taken a terrible turn in the movement at the end of the 20th century.

Objective of this study:-

This study attempt to discuss various aspects related to the Bodo movement, judging the positive and negative impact of the Bodo movement etc.

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Scope and Method of This Study

Just as the Assam movement, which has a long history of national interest in Assam; the Bodo movement has taken an important place in the history of Assam with a huge form in the context of ethnic self-establishment. In this regard, the discussion deals with the historical context, relevance, influence, positive and negative aspects of the Bodo movement. The discussion basically applies descriptive and analytical methods.

Main Discussion:-

The Bodo ethnic group is considered to be one of the primitive communities of Assam. The Bodo's under the Mongolian group lived in the 'Bod' country on the western side of China and on the northern side of the Himalayas. This ethnic group is spread to northeast India in the 1500 B.C.¹ Later, the Bodo's migrated to Assam in the 3rd century and moved to Assam.² In this case they are mainly living in Kokrajhar, Baksha, Udalguri, Chirang District and also some of living in Kamrup, Sonitpur, Goalpara, Darrang, Nagaon, Karbi Anglong, Sivasagar, Lakhimpur etc. district in Assam. In the linguistic field they are under the Tibetan group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. In ancient times according to the ethnic direction in Mongolian group and according to linguistic field in the Sino-Tibetan group, these Bodo people were known as 'Kirat' in books like Mahabharat, Ramayan etc. Again earlier the term 'Bodo' or 'Bodo Kachari' was used to refer to the Bodo's as well as Kachari, Mess, Garu, rabha, Lalung, Koch etc. But today the name 'Bodo' refers only the Bodo ethnic groups of people. The Bodo's is spread over Assam as well as West Bengal, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, Nepal etc. The Bodo's is said to be most spread ethnic group among the plains of Assam.

Historical Background of the Bodo Movement

The Bodo's were primitive residents of Assam. Since ancient times, the Bodo's ruled different states of the North-East but they lost political power as the British ruled at Assam. Of course, some persons have continued their efforts for social, cultural and national development of Bodo's. In this regard Kalicharan Brahma has an important contribution in the reconstruction of Bodo community religiously and socially. Kalicharan Brahma alias Kalicharan Mess formed a religious movement with the reference of Brahmanism. This movement can be said to have established the foundation of the next big Bodo movement. Another person, Rupnath Brahma was the main pioneer of the renaissance of the modern Bodo language, society, culture and was an unopposed political leader of Bodo's. He joined Satish Chandra Basumatari, Madaram Brahma etc. in the first half of the 20th century by taking out the 1st magazine of the Bodo language 'Bibar' and discussed various problems including the glorious history of the Bodo nation there. Subsequently, the 'Tribal League', a common political organization was formed in 1933 to bring the development of Bodo's as well as all the backward community of Assam to equal other developed communities in socio economic and educational field. The congress led by Gopinath Bordoloi with the help of four members of the 'Tribal League' after the collapse of Sadullah Government in 1938. The 'Tribal League' leaders formed the government in the interest of fulfilling the basic demands of the tribal's. It should be noted that the Bodo's came out in the movement in the interest of survival in a political and democratic manner. Kalicharan Brahma had given memorandum to Simon Commission with several important demands keeping in view the financial, social and spiritual aspects of the Bodo's. Later after winning the election as congress party 1952, Rupnath Brahma and Sitanath Brahma created a great renaissance and started moving forward by awakening a big nationalist idea. In 1952, the 'Bodo Sahitya Sabha' was formed by the Bodo's in the field of language, literature and cultural development without getting much response from the 'Assam Sahitya Sabha'. Later from the Bodo's demanded that the Bodo language be introduced as a medium of education in different classes in a phased manner. Again in parallel with the movement to recognize Assamese as the state language, the 'Bodo Sahitya Sabha' also took up various movements. Subsequently a movement on script also started after the government recognized the Bodo language as a medium of education in the education system of some districts of Boro community. Again at different times the Bodo's are also seen being ignored by the government. Later on the basis of the Assam Accord, various nationalist organizations expressed displeasure over the various rules of the state government. On 28 February, 1986, the board of secondary education in Assam issued an order to force Assamese language for Assamese medium students brought to all educational institutions in the state making the feel secondary to Assamese national heritage and intensifying the movement. It may be noted that the Bodo movement under the leadership of Upen Brahma took a new shape from around 1987. He submitted a 92 section demand letter to contemporary chief minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. Their demands were as follows – the north of Brahmaputra is to form a centrally administered area for the tribals, to give government allied recognition to the Bodo language in Kokrajhar and Udalguri, introduction of Roman script for Bodo language, inclusion of the Bodo language in the eighth schedule, the demand for the abrogation of clauses 6 and 10 of the Assam Accord etc. It may be noted that the leadership of 'ABSU' (All Bodo student Union) led by Upen Brahma met the Prime Minister in Delhi in 1987 and returned there they organized a

huge mass gathering. Gradually, the movement gained a sharp shape with rallies, protest, bandha etc. Subsequently, on 20th February, 1993, the movement came to an end with the Bodo's getting the right to autonomy, but against the movement has been going on from time to time focusing on various aspects. However, at present the government is trying to bring peace by signing various agreements.

Determining the Factors of the Bodo Movement

In ancient Kamrup, the large Bodo ethnic group ruled different castes. Later after the Ahom came to Assam, the process of formation of the state of the Bodo-Kachari began to change. Again, the arrival of the Missionaries in Assam also made an impact on their social life. During the British rule, the Bodo's seems to have completely lost political power. There is also religious disorder in the Bodo society gradually. Some people influenced by Ek Saran Naam Dharma away from the religious ideals of the Bodo's. Someone turn to Christian religion influenced by missionaries. Again, due to the coordination of different castes and communities as well as the Bodo's were seen lagging behind in all aspects of education, economy, society, culture etc. from the Assamese middle class. Moreover the British government did not take any special action for them. As a result, such neglect factors encourage them to come together and move towards asserting their rights with political awareness. Similarly, in 1960 the state government policy of identifying Assamese as the state language, making it mandatory for government jobs to know Assamese language also intensified the Bodo movement in linguistic field. Again on the basis of the Assam Accord, the situation like eviction of tribal's in the name of foreign encroachers also created the Bodo's in the interest of national survival and the movement became a violent movement. In this regard, some country to the Assam movement, which is in the interest of survival of Assam can be said to have played a role in creating an ethnic conflict by creating division among the castes and communities of Assam. In the end, Assamese dreaming the independent Assam, as well as the country all come down to the demand for autonomy.

Positive and Negative Aspect of Bodo Movement

The tribal movements in Assam can be mainly called for the anger and judgment of the small communities who are deprived of the prostitute Assamese. That is where such movements have honest, positive and strong, progressive harmony; but the small community led by those movements has not taken the movement directly to solve the problems of the said people by its own class political interest and goals. Rather such political goals and programs have given rise to radical nationalist arrogance, anti-separatist sentiments and brotherhood clashes. In this case, judging by the Bodo movement it is seen that the movement has been able to draw the attention of the government to the country. The 'Bodo Agreement' was signed between the government and the agitators in 1993 at the end of a long-standing movement. Again in 2003, BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council) was formed in Bodoland by signing an agreement between the 'Bodo Liberation Tigers' and the central government and was included in the Sixth Schedule of the constitution. As a result of this agreement in 2003, BTAD (Bodoland territorial Area District) joined Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang district of Assam. At present, the community is living in the area with its own society, culture, linguistic status. In addition, under 'Bodo Santi Sukti' (Bodo agreement) signed for the third time in 2020, the government has taken steps to develop various fields like education, culture, economic establishment, activities, health departments etc. in the Bodoland. On the other hand, as a result of Bodo movement, there has also been a situation of terror by forming parties like NDFB (National Democratic Front of Bodoland) demanding sovereign Bodoland. Attacks on non-stop people and police, weapons beatings, killings, bombings, sabotage, kidnappings etc. can be said to have turned the movement in a negative direction on many reasons. Moreover such a situation seems to have increased the mutual divide between the communities. Again the conflict in the Bodo's and non Bodo's threatens the unity, solidarity and existence of Assam.

Conclusion:-

A long history of Bodo movement has been engraved in the history of the movement of in the interest of preserving the existence of the ethnic groups of Assam. The movement is mainly based on the national status of the Bodo community as well as in the interest of development. However the movement can be said to have finally become a political movement not only confined to raising the demand for fundamental rights of the people's constituency. On many occasions it has disrupted unity by creating ethnic divide among other ethnic groups in Assam by misleading them.

End notes

1 Bodo Joanagosthi, <https://as.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>, 24Nov 2020

2 Subhash Talukdar, Problem of Bodo People in BTC, International Journal of Scientific Research and Education, Volume5, Issue-11, November 2017, www.ijrsae.in

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