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Political participation And Cultural marginalization: A study on Gorkha Community of Assam

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ABSTRACT

International migration is a complex phenomenon that touches on a multiplicity of economic, social and security aspects affecting our daily lives in an increasingly interconnected world. Migration is a term that encompasses a wide variety of movements and situations involving people of all walks of life and backgrounds. The United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration defines an international migrant as any person who has changed his or her country of usual residence, distinguishing between "short-term migrants" (those who have changed their country of usual residence for at least three months, but less than one year) and "long-term migrants" (those who have done so for at least one year). However, not all countries use this definition in practice. Some countries use different criteria to identify international migrants by, for example, applying different minimum durations of residence. Differences in concepts and definitions, as well as data collection methodologies between countries, hinder full comparability of national statistics on international migrants. Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past four-and-a-half decades.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is intertwined with geopolitics, trade and cultural exchange, and provides opportunities for States, businesses and communities to benefit enormously. Migration has helped improve people's lives in both origin and destination countries and has offered opportunities for millions of people worldwide to forge_safe and meaningful lives abroad. Not all migration occurs in positive circumstances, however. We have in recent years seen an increase in migration. and displacement occurring due to conflict, persecution, environmental degradation and change, and a profound lack of human security and opportunity. While most international migration occurs legally, some of the greatest insecurities for migrants, and much of the public concern about immigration, is associated with irregular migration.

The Gorkha community is the product of Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid assimilation from ages past.

As a linguistic group they can trace their origin back to Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman beginnings. In fact the Gorkhas consist of both Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid racial groups. In the Mahabharata and Manusmriti names of Khasa are mentioned. They are in fact the Gorkhas. The Gorkhas spoke the language then known as Khaskura Khasas as a community existed in Nepal

which it later changed to another ethnic name. The Lichchhavis, one of the aboriginal tribes of India originally lived in the plains of present Nepal. During the early centuries, the Gorkhas, the aboriginal tribe in India, migrated to Nepal and established themselves there. Other groups from India also migrated to Nepal which comprised high caste Hindus. During the Muslim invasion of India in which they occupied part of North India from the eleventh century to the sixteenth century, many Indian tribes from the plains of India migrated to Nepal for the security and safety of their religion and culture. These migrants to Nepal were mainly of high castes and powerful groups, and they themselves established their kingdoms and principalities.

The Nepalese had relations with the people of India's Northeast from ancient times. And after the Sugauli Sandhi of 1815, Gorkhas were recruited for the Assam Light Infantry which was formed in 1817 in Cuttack. The Gorkhas were brought to Assam and north-east regions to man the security forces, and after retirement the soldiers preferred to settle down there. In this way Gorkhas made the Northeast their home centuries ago. Migration for trade and employment also brought more Gorkhas to the region. At present, it is estimated that there are 52 lakh Gorkhas in the whole of the Northeast. The British gave the Gorkhas many amenities in these areas. The Gorkhas cultivated lands, tended cows for milk supply, cleared forest for agriculture and road making, established towns and bazaars. Besides, tea gardens developed in the Assam area and for these labourers were required in large number to run the factories going. The British did everything to lure the Gorkhas to new and pioneering areas of development.

In this way, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya were populated by the Gorkhas and played substantive part of developing the area with selfless service. Shillong became an army cantonment in the 1860s and the Gorkhas were stationed there. The presence of the Gorkhas there is evidenced by the establishment of the Gorkha Association in 1886.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter include secondary source of data, researcher collecting secondary data from books, articles and journals. For this secondary data make the researcher to understand more about the topic and identity the gap between the topics from any studies.

The Study on "Gorkhas of Assam and their movement for constitutional status"(Surya Newar 2013) shows that Gorkhalese settled permanently in Assam ever since the British occupation has become a Part and parcel of the greater Assam and Assamese society. Surya (2013) says that" The Gorkhalese of Assam face a lot of problem after independence. To fulfil their demands the Gorkhas of Assam under the banner of organisations such as Assam Gorkha Sanmilan (AGS), All Assam Gorkha student union have placed various demands to the government of India, such demands are to include Nepalese into the minority class, scheduled caste, scheduled Tribe, protect them in tribal belt and block, introduce Nepali subject in the UG and PG level, satellite council to the Nepalese.

Study on "Nepali's in Assam: A historical perspective (1816-1985)" (Sanjib Kumar Chetry 2016) shows that the migration and settlement of Nepalese in Assam have playeda vital role in the formation in to the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society of theregion (Assam). The political status of Gorkha community continued to remain c Study on "Identity movement of the Gorkhas of Assam"(surya Newar, 2016) shows that the Gorkhas fighted since before independence for their unique identity in Assam. After independence the Gorkhas demand for "minority status". But, no positive tesults they found on their demand, at last the gorkha development council formed to develop the community in social, cultural and political aspects in Assam.

Study on "The Nepali's in Assam: migration, identity and political mobilization" (Abhijit Dihidar, 2017) shows that The community almost lived peacefully with the local inhabitants until 1979 when the Assam movement began. Along with so called "Bangladeshis", many Nepalis were also expelled during the movement. Ever since, the Nepalis have lived in constant fear. There were no instances of anti-Nepali feeling before the Assam Movement (1979-1985). After independence, the slow pace of development and neglect of the region led to a feeling of disappointment and alienation among the local inhabitants, who began to see the migrants as the cause of their situation and a threat to their identity and opportunity.

Many Nepalis of Assam have accepted Assamese not only as a medium of communication but also as a medium of instruction in the schools in the primary level. Many of them have earned reputation in Assamese literary circles for their contribution to Assamese language at different levels of education. So, the expulsion came as a shock. After the attacks, many Nepalis felt rootless with an uncertain future. The centuries-old cordial relation between the Nepalis and local people came under severe strain after the movement confusing even after the Assam accord (1985).

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Study on " cattle culture of Gorkhas and Dairy Development of Assam" (Bisnu Prasad Upadhaya,2017) stated that cattle farming are known to be the primary and culturally inherited business of the Gorkhas in Assam. Therefore, it is obvious that this community contributed a lot in Development of the Diary sector in the state. In Assam, the Gorkhas, are the primary Dairy farmers, prior to the British Regime.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology is the scientific way to find out the results of a given problems on specific matter or problems that is also referred as research problems. Each research is unique in its own way with a system of inter-related activities. Through using proper methodologies one can do research systematically and scientifically. This chapter contains details with the respect to the title, scope of the study, objectives of the study, definitions of the concepts, details regarding research design, sampling design, universe of the study, inclusion and exclusion criteria, tools and methods of the data collection, cautezation and ethical consideration are made by the researcher.

Title of the Study

Political participation and cultural marginalisation: A study of GORKHA
community in ASSAM.

Problem Statement

The constitution of India ensure that equality, dignity, freedom and justice for very one including the marginalized sections of the society. Researcher noticed that there are many marginalized and unnoticed communities in India. Generally, Gorkh community is also one of the most isolated and marginalized community in known as 'NEPALI'.

Objectives of The Study

General Objectives

- To study the nature of marginalisation and extent of political participation of Gorkha community (in Tezpur block of sonitpur district) of Assam.

Specific Objectives

- To study the socio, political and cultural situation of Gorkha community.
- To study the nature of political participation and cultural marginalisation of Gorkha community
- To study the challenges faced by gorkhas in political participation in Assam.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Researcher adopted qualitative approach for this study. Because it is an in-depth study and descriptive study about political participation and cultural marginalisation of Gorkha of Assam. Researcher took six individual in-depth interview, focus group discussion with men and women of Gorkha community and three in-depth interview with local Gorkha leaders ofTezpur block of sonitpur district, Assam. From total 25 respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Every community is unique on their life style, culture and traditions. The gorkha community mostly live an agriculture oriented life whereas with the time now they transfer to teachers, dairy seller. The culture of the gorkhas are similar to Hindus because most of them are Hindu in Assam. The traditions of gorkhas includes the practice of bull sacrifice for bringing the peace and happiness in the community. The cultures of the The food habit of the Assamese Nepalis is very simple. Boiled rice is their staple food. They take pulses, green vegetables, curd and milk with rice regularly. Some of them eat all kinds of meat except beef, pork and chicken. The Brabmios do not take chicken. They serve mutton in any feast. But they like fish most. Dried fish is a delicacy for them. It forms an important item of diet. In preparing curry, they use chillies and spices. They cultivate pulses, potatoes, sweet potatoes, mustard seed and various kinds of seasonal vegetables for their own consumption. They like to entertain guest with meat of chicken or pigeon and different kinds of fishes.

The identity of gorkhas are in confusing because although they recognized as Indian citizens but they are still fighting for fundamental rights. The Gorkhas living in Assam known as Assamese Gorkhas. And they are assimilated with the culture of Assamese ethnic group. The identity of the gorkhas are very confusing because most of the people are not aware about the indo-Nepal treaty of peace and friendship(l950). In assam also after the 1985(Assam movement) various atrocities andviolence, community clash happened from 1985 to 1999. the Gorkhas also killed as foreigners in some district of Assam state. The gorkhas are fighted for theirbasic fundamental rights in the region. The Gorkhas are the son of the soil of the region like Bodo's. The gorkhas stand with Assamese society at the division of India and Pakistan and ultimately Assam saved to enter in to the Pakistan geographv.

Discussions

After the end of independence the Gorkha elite in Assam started demanding the inclusion of Gorkhas into the list of Other Backward Classes (OBC). In this connection the lone Gorkha MLA of Assam Legislative Assembly Dalbir Singh Lobarmoveda resolution in the assembly which maintained that: In view of appalling illiteracy and poverty of the bulk of people of Gorkha community in Assam, this assembly is of the opinion that the Government of Assam do move to the Government of India if necessary to recognise the said community as a backward Ultimately, a few castes of Gorkhali were recognised as other backward classes (OBC) in 1964 by the government of Assam. However a section of Gorkha elites were not happy with the government and as such a memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister of Assam by another articulated organisation of Gorkhas on 21st July 1985 which says:The Nepalese being one of the backward communities in the state may in the country do not receive as much facilities,as they should have been afforded to.The Nepalese figure in the category of the "Other Backward Classes" but that remains a naked paper policy and opportunities and benefits do not percolate to the general members of the Nepali community. The AANSU urges upon you to revise the OBC list of the Nepalese which has left many Nepalese similar to OBC, It appeared to them that the Gorkhas in Assam were more backward than other backward communities of the state.

Government of Assam unilaterally excluded Gorkha Community from the list of Protected Class" particularly those Who entered the Tribal Belts and Blocks in the post colonial period. During the foreign National Movement the Gorkha in many places were allegedly harassed and tortured in the name of the Gorkha in many places were allegedly harassed and torture in the same foreigners. In fact, it created a sense of apprehension and insecurity in the minds of the Gorkhas. A militant section of Gorkha elite not only demanded a separate state, they even went to the extent of demanding a sovereign independent state incorporating Nepali-inhabiting areas of Assam and its neighboring states. In fact, it appeared to a section of Gorkha elite that like most of the ethnic communities in the state, unless they develop a militant leadership their demand would remain unheeded and unrealized.It seems that a section of the Gorkha youths were so considerabl inspired by the growing militant organizations in the regions which culminated in th fonnation of the Nepali Liberation Front of Assam (NELFA) in 1992. However. thisorganization could not be effective and popular due to its lostofmass-based amongtheGorkhas in Assam.

CONCLUSION

The demands made by the Gorkhali to the government continued one after another whatsoever it has been full filled by the later. By and large similar demands of earlier were made once again by the AGS to newly elected dynamic leader and honorable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 8th June 2015 which maintained that to recognize the mongloid origin Gorkhas like Rai, Limboo, Tamang, Magar, Sherpa, Gurung, Thakali and Newar as the Schedule Tribes, the socially and economically more backward caste of Gorkhas like Kami, Damai, Sarki, Gaine and Bhujel as Schedule Caste and remaining Gorkhas as Other Backward Classes Community in Assam, the Government of India specially Ministry of

Home and Defence should pass necessary instructions to the concerned authorities of defence forces, SSB, ITBP, and other Para-Military forces to honour the Gorkha community Certificate issued by AGS in the matter of youths hailing from Assam, 50% vacancies of Gorkha Regiment and Assam Rifles (originally it was Gorkha Rifles) be filled up with Gorkha youth of Assam with relaxation in heights and chest to set up a special recruitment centre of the Gorkha Regiment at Tezpur at the earliest, provide land settlement to the indigenous Gorkhas living since time immemorial in the forest villages of Kokrajhar and Chirang district of BTAD and other parts of Assam as other traditional forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 to form a full-fledged, Gorkha Development Board" in the Bodoland Territorial Council in Assam with amendment of provisions of Para 4 of BTC Act, 2003 for the safeguard and distinct identity with language, culture, education, and all round development of indigenous Gorkhas.

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