

Ethnicity and Backgroud of the Ethnic Movements in North-East India

Pranami Devi
PGT, Political Science
Rangjuli Higher Secondary School, Goalpara, Assam

Abstract

This article explores the ethnicity and background of ethnic movements in Northeast India, a region characterized by rich cultural and linguistic diversity. It examines how ethnic identity, rooted in shared ancestry, culture, and language, has shaped movements for autonomy, recognition, and self-determination. Highlighting major movements such as those of the Nagas, Kukis, Koch Rajbongshis, Mishings, and Dimasas, the study reveals how socio-political marginalization, historical grievances, and identity assertion have driven continuous mobilization. The study concludes that ethnic movements in Northeast India reflect complex struggles for political, cultural, and economic autonomy within the framework of the Indian nation-state.

1. Introduction

Today across the globe, we generally find that very few states ethnically homogenous populations. Most of the population groups are composed of many ethnic communities, jostling for influence and power, or living in an uneasy harmony. Within the same state borders, at best of times, and in the worst scenario, committing world is 'plural' and the so called nation-state' is rarely a true appellation. As a result of this ethnic movement have become more intense and endemic in the twentieth century, no less than at any other time in modern history.

For a precise perception of ethnic movements, it is permitted to understand the concept of ethnicity. The word 'ethnic' derived from Greek word 'ethnikas' refers to nations not converted into christianity, races or large groups of people having common traits, and groups in an exotic primitive culture. Ethnicity indicates recognizing a group of people on the basis of common standards or characteristics, shared values, style of life. Symbol of identity and consciousness of kind. Ethnicity is denoting towards identification of a group of people on the basis of certain criteria or markers which they are supposed to share with each other. These markers include culture, race, language, religion, customs, history, economic experience, etc.

Ethnicity is often identified with the ideas of primordialism based on descent, race, kinship, territory, language, history, etc. It is also related to the memory of a golden age which is closely linked to a sense of collective density. Ethnicity entails a subjective belief in common ancestry. Ethnic membership is based on group identity and often identities would be invented constructed.

Ethnicity is also a relative term. An ethnic group differentiates itself from another groups which also shares certain attributes which are different from it. To preserve its identity and interests from the perceived or real threats of other ethnic groups and institutions, and process associated with them. Ethnic movements are concerned with the preservation and protection of the cultural identities of the ethnic groups and their other interests. This ethnic problem includes the conflict or movement between the state and district ethnic groups of the people and inter-ethnic conflicts.

The movements and conflicts revolving around the issues of ethnicity are not new phenomena. It is a worldwide phenomenon. Several multi-cultural and multiethnic assertions of varieties and magnitudes. In India, after independence almost all the major religions of the country have witnessed many kinds of

ethnic movements. These movements are for regional autonomy, for creation of separate states and the demand for secession or insurgency. Some of them are violent movements.

The North-East India consist of ethnically and culturally distinct eight adjoining states- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim. The entire North-East India is populated by variegated ethnic group of people, it is the most diverse part of a most diverse country. North-East Indian states comprises of so many ethnic groups in their own identity, culture, religion, etc. that is why, mostly the ethnic conflicts and each-every ethnic groups in that region taking pivoted role in the name of their movement to get goals and demands. The region is geographically and culturally remote from the mainland of India has been a hotspot of various ethnic movements since the time of independence of India. Almost all state of North-East India has witnessed one or the other forms of ethnic movements. It is important to note ethnic issues of North-East India are related to the geographical factors, its regional dimensions. The problem of the North-Eastern region insurgency, ethnic movements, riots etc.; have been explained by mainly two perspectives. First, the modernization/ development/ nation-state building; and second, the federation building perspective.

North-east India as a region is a land lock in which different social groups belonging to various racialist origins have migrated from time to time through the history making the region itself into a conglomerate mass of inter-ethnic group interaction and ultimately leading to formation of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi- cultural region resulting in various ethnic movements and inter-ethnic conflicts in the region, the region itself has become a boiling point of ethnic movements and interethnic conflicts polarizing in and amongst the state vs. ethnic groups, ethnic-g out s vs. ethnic groups, and inter ethnic group vs. inter-ethnic group as well.

2. Background information of ethnic movement in North-East India

North-East India is known to other parts of India and world as the hotspot of ethnic movements, extremism and insurgency. In the contemporary period, many ethnic entities in North-East have launched movements against the Government of India. These could be classified keeping in mind the Indian constitution, into three types, constitutional, non-constitutional and mixture of two. The demands of these movement fall under the following categories; (a) Sovereignty Movement; (b) Autonomy within the framework of the nation-state of India and (c) Ethnic Rights, Recognition and Promotion etc. The method they adopt to achieve these goals are violent or non-violent or both, which consequently means non-constitutional, constitutional or both

These movements can be further analyzed as: Inter-Ethnic Conflict, Intra-Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic groups vs. state.

North-East India has experienced all forms of ethnic movements dating back to the colonial period and most commonly and vigorously in the Post-independence period which led to the recognition of states right after Independence But the irony is that this recognition of states failed to establish peace and security in the region. In the last 60 plus years of India's independence North-east India have seen emergence and settlement of different Ethnic Movements and re-emergence of Ethnic Movement as well. The various movements in the North-East have all to do with identity.

Some major ethnic movements in North-East India can be outlined as (i) Naga Movement (ii) Koch Rajbongshi Movement, (iii) Garo Movement, (iv) Kuki Movement (vii) Dima-Hasao Movement (viii) Bodo Movement (viii) Mishing Movement etc.

2.1 Naga Movement

The Nagas, an Indo-Mongoloid people, are among the proudest and most distinctive communities in the North-East. Naga itself is a generic term for a cluster of 32 tribes, five of them in Burma and the remaining scattered within Nagaland (16), Manipur (7), Tirap in Arunachal (3) and the North Cachar and Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The Nagas, the know residence of present Nagaland, like other communities of the region they are also having similar problem but their issues and problems are very much different from the others. 15 In this paper/work/research an attempt is made to discuss the Naga Movement in its chronological order.

Among the ethnic movements in the North-East region, the movement laid down by the Naga National Council for an independent Nagaland deserves special mention. Nagaland had all dimensions relating to the ethnic movement demand or autonomy, secession from India and ethnic conflicts. The Nagas contended that they were never before under any political sovereignty, instead they had always enjoyed their sovereignty with distinct culture, customs and history. They do not recognize the merge of Nagaland with the Indian Union and consider it has done under coercion. Hence Naga did not recognize the Indian constitution, the VI schedule meant for the North-East India and participate in the first general election held in 1952. So, the main theme behind the Naga Movement is the question "we, the Nagas were historically never a part of Indian Union"

The historical Naga Club formed in 1918, requested the Simon commission in 1929 to keep the Naga hills out of the proposed reforms. They wanted an arrangement by which they could remain directly under the control of Britishers so that when they left they could be left alone as an independent nation. Thus, even after the "Nine Point Hydari Agreement" was signed, they declared Nagaland as an independent State unilaterally in August 14, 1947. Starting from that point several militant groups like Naga National Council, NSCN etc., fought against Indian army. The Nagas have a long history of bloodshed and insurgency in post-independent years. Even after having several agreements on separate state formation and certain kind of safeguard to the people the problem of secessionist movement is still going on. The politicization of the Nagas was influenced by Zapu Phizo.⁶⁴

Movement of the Nagas which is often referred to as Naga insurgency is called the Naga national movement by the Nagas. It is the oldest movement relating the ethnicity or believe that they form a nation which is different from other ethnic groups.

2.1.1 Nationalities/Nations in India

This finally led to creation of Nagaland as a separate state on August 1, 1960 out of Assam of which it was a part. It should be noted that there was difference among the Naga leadership over the issue of Nagaland as a separate state within the Union of India and Nagaland as a sovereign state/nation. The former founded Nagaland Nationalist Organization (NNO) and the latter formed the Democratic party of Nagaland. The MNO which was active in getting the Nagaland made a separate state were in favor of giving up the violence and accepting the constitution of India. The question assumed a new dimension following the signing of Shillong Accord in 1975. According to it the Nagas accepted the Indian Constitution, deposited their arms to the government released Naga political prisoners and promised their rehabilitation.

The signing of Shillong Accord was not welcome by a section of the Nagas. The letter denounced the Accord for compromising their sovereignty and betraying Christianity. They now sought to mix the issue of Naga sovereignty with Mao's ideology of socialism and formed National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) led by a Tangkul Naga T. Muivah and Isl a Swu. The NSCN leadership has guided the Naga movement while staying outside India. In their negotiations with the Government of India under the prime Minister ship of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Dr. Manmohan Sing they have raised two main issues the issue of sovereignty of Nagaland and creation of Nasalim. territory merging all area of the North-Eastern states where Nagas stay. Apart from Nagaland, these states are Manipur. Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, they argue that while creating the boundaries of various states, the Government of India merged the territories inhabited by the Nagas into different states. This divided them. They demand ti at the Nagas should be reunited into Naga im. This demand has provoked opposition from these states. This has repercussion on the ethnic relations within these states. The Nagaland also has witnessed the ethnic riots and conflict between two major tribes of the state- Nagas and Kukis.

In this today's context, we can say the things got a bit changed after the formation of NDA Government. in 2014 at the center. In August 3, 2015, with an aim of ending insurgency in Nagaland, Government signed accord with key outfit NSCN (IM) which Prime Minister Narendra Modi described as a "historie step to usher in peace in the state. The pact was signed the presence of the Prime Minister, Home Minister Rajnath Sing and National Security Adviser Ajit Dov al by the outfits leader T Muivah and Government's interlocutor R.N. Ravi at the PM residence. However, Khaplang group did not stop carrying out the attacks on the Indian Arm forces from their bases in Myanmar. Ultimately end come when NSCN (IM) is still on and the incidence of Namtok Tea Estate in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh where the VSCN (IM) group demanded Rs. 4 crores from the management.

2.3 Kuki Movement

The word 'Kuki' is a generic term referring to an ethnic entity spread out in a region straddling north-west Myanmar (Burma), the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh and North-East India. In Northeast India, they are mainly in the states of Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya. The Kukis are one of the most numerous tribe's numerical strength, vast territorial occupation and various armed struples-against the British, India and Myanmar their voice are still suppressed, without any positive sign in future. The reintroduce of Any Kuki Tribes in 2003 to make the Kuki identity inclusive seems to be a temporary solution and for a long-term solution. It would be constructive to consider a uniform pattern of recognition that would go a long way in restoring the Kuki identity to its logical conclusion.

The Kuki Rising of 1917-1919 was the culmination of Kuki movement against British aggression into their territory that began in the 1770s. The resolution of the Kuki as recorded by Higgins indicates the nature of the Kuki Rising of 1917-1919. It is for the preservation of their independence and for the protection of their land culture and custom. The extensive preparations and mobilization of forces and declaration of war as per the Kuki customs throughout the present Indo-Myanmar border demonstrated the Kuki's determination to defend their territory. After 1919, the ancestral settlement of the Kuki's was brought under British India and British Burma to keep suppressed. In Manipur, the hill areas affected by the Kuki Rising were brought under civil authority.

Most states in independent India are organized on ethno-linguistic lines giving due recognition to their ethnic identities, language and cultures. However, the Kuki's argue that this right to govern their own affairs within their traditional territory has been denied to them, while it has long been extended to

other major ethnic entities in Northeast India. The demands of the Kuki's for the creation of a Kuki state within the framework of Indian constitution in the 1960s nor the creation of Kukis dominated Sadar Hills into a full-fledged district in the 1970s and 1980s through peaceful means have not been acknowledged both by the Manipur and central Government. The Kukis claim that they have been subjected to political adversity and that their neighboring communities have sufferings of the Kuki people under the state and central Governments have rendered the taken advantage of their consequent vulnerability. The long years of neglect and Kukis economically, socially and politically backward. The aspiration of the Kukis for self-determination through peaceful means have been conveniently ignored. The only response they get is repression, deprivation and further discrimination. Thus, MNF and the territorial acquisitiveness and hegemonic politics of the Meiteis and Nagas have led to the emergence of Kuki armed groups in the 1980s.

The Kuki National Organization (KNO) and its armed wing Kuki National Army (KNA) were formed on February 24, 1988, to uphold the right of the Kukis to govern their own affairs within a defined territory (statehood) one part in India and another in Myanmar. During the same year, on May 18, the Kuki National Front (KNF) was formed under the leadership of Mr. Nekholum Kipgent at Molnoj village (Myanmar).

Again, on March 29, 2000, the United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) was formed to fight for a separate state of the Kukis in Northeast India.

The long desire to take revenge on the Kukis as historical record shows the subjugation of the Nagas, by the Meiteis with the help of the Kukis, to control them and to force them to pay tribute to the Manipuri King. The worst happened on 13 September 1993, when the NSCN (IM) cadres at gunpoint tied up and massacred 107 kuki men (87 died at the spot; 20 later succumbed to injuries), butchering them with matches and spears. There are also reports of innocent civilians being killed by the Security Forces; the figure put at 56 by the KNO.

It is very sad to know that the Kukis, even after all these struggles doesn't have a separate district of their own, in any of the State, not to talk of a State. Their demand for a hill district, SADAR Hills, in Manipur has been ignored, even though the demand has been there for more than 40 years. And also, that some of the areas where they are hugely populated (e.g. Kangpokpi in Manipur), falls under the General Seat, even in the State Legislative Assembly. This raises a very important question as to: Do the ruling class (Government of India) take a struggle seriously only when armed struggle, which manifests itself in the form of violence, is employed? This is a very valid question, as the centre seemed to engage in a serious dialogue with a community only when there is serious and unwanted violence, from the demanding community.

2.4 Koch Rajbongshi Movement

The Koch Rajbongshi community has been striving for safeguarding their identity for quite sometimes. It has evolved a lot over time. Their effort has taken the shape of the Kshatriya movement and the Kamatapur Movement. At present, they are trying to voice their demand through the Kamatapur Movement which is spearheaded by different associations and organizations. Every ethnic group is very enthusiastic to preserve their identity. At present, the Koch Rajbongshi in Assam and North-Bengal are jointly striving to preserve their ethnic identity. The Koch Rajbongshi are found in India at West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Bihar. They are also found in Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Kamatapur is a demand for statehood comprising areas of both Assam (specially, lower Assam) and the northern tip of West Bengal. In reality, it is far more complex than the Bodo demand for Bodoland, since the territorial contours of the proposed Kamatapur are transnational. The Koch Rajbongshi of both Assam and Bengal are enthusiastic about the demand for Kamatapur.

Kamatapur is a region, whose reconstruction in contemporary political discourse is rooted in history. The present political Movement for Kamatapur draws its inspiration largely from the history of Kamatapur. The idea is to see the historical Kamatapur kingdom in the present form of a federal unit of India. In the post-independence scenario, this historical region disappeared in the formation of modern Assam, West Bengal & Bangladesh. Like the Kamatapur region, its history also disappeared in the nationalistic history writings of Bengali and Assamese and it became partly Bengali history and partly Assamese history. In Assam, history of Kamatapur became history of Goalpara or West Assam. So, the Rajbongshi language. It became Goalparia dialect of Assam. Indeed, the recent demand for Kamatapur by the Koch Rajbongshi also seeks recognition of history and culture of Kamatapur. The historical memory of Kamatapur Kingdom or Coochbehar was so strong among the Koch Rajbongshi that instead of demand for an ethnic Koch Rajbongshi land, they opted for a regional identity contrary to the contemporary movements for ethnic homelands of Northeast India, which are using identical ethnic names in their proposed homelands. However, the Koch Rajbongshis' present attempt to disassociate themselves from the Assamese identity and challenging the same by seeking recognition of the Kamatapuri identity in Assam.

It was the Koch Rajbongshi leader, Late Sarat Chandra Singha, or whose initiative the undivided Goalpara district was merged with Assam, history of Assamese loaded with inspiring stories of Koch King Bishwa Singha, Naranarayan and General Chilarai. It is important to note that the prime and the old demand of the Koch Rajbongshis was to be included in the Schedule Tribe (ST) category. The demand for Kamatapur is comparatively new in Assam. The All Assam Koch Rajbongshi Sanmilani, which has been demanding the ST status for Koch Rajbongshis of Assam since 1966, once opposed the demand of Kamata Rajya by Kamata Rajya Sangram Parishad in and around 1969. Through the staging of this demand, which has completed fifteen years now, it remains unfulfilled. Many observers opine that if the Koch Rajbongshis had been given ST status in Assam, the Kamatapur demand from Assam would not have been raised. Moreover, the inclusion of the Koch Rajbongshi dominated areas into the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) without consulting the Koch Rajbongshi has also fueled the demand for Kamatapur in Assam.

When the protest movement turned to a territorial movement in North Bengal, in Assam Koch Rajbongshi struggle for reservation transformed to mere radical territorial demand in the 90s. Most of the organizations of Koch Rajbongshis emerged in the 1990s, such as: Kamatapur People's Party (1996), Kamatapur Liberation Organization (1995), Greater Koch Behar People's Association (1998) and All Koch Rajbongshi Student Union (1993). Despite some problems, the leaders have been trying to run the struggle. The Atul Roy's faction of AAKRASU has formed, 'Greater Kamatapur United Forum' also with several other organizations of North Bengal. But the movement was, all along, under the need of strong and unified leadership. Contrary to such need, the organizations have split into several factions posing difficulty to the struggle.

On 30th May, 2010 a National conference was held in Bongaigaon, Assam seeking the solution to the problems of Koch Rajbongshi. Following the national conference, the separate state demand committee and the AAKRASU (Biswajit faction) came down from the demand for a separate state and vowed to engage in the development of the community.

The Kamatapur Koch Rajbongshi Movement today speaks in many idioms. Cultural demands that seek recognition, moderate political demands that seeks autonomy. and also more militant political culture demands that find expression in the idiom of violence. But through these various expressions the Koch Rajbongshis are trying to say that they are a people with a glorious past seeking dignity, self-respect, justice and autonomy.

2.5 Mishing Movement

An old tribe of Assam, the Mishing is constitute of several groups like Pa-dam, Minyong, Pa-si, Tangam, Siyom etc. and others. These groups of people are mainly inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh (erstwhile NEFA). Though the Mishing inhabit Arunachal Pradesh yet a large section of Assam, namely, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Sonitpur. They are linguistically related to the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh. Against the socio-cultural backup, the activities of the Takam Mishing Porin Kebang (TMPK) or All Mishing Student's Union may be focused upon as it has embarked upon formulation of strategies to go ahead with a movement for the ethnic autonomy for the Mishing in Assam.

The Mishing Student's Organization was first formed in 1933 as was named Asom Mishing Chatra Sanmilan. In the initial years, the Mishing Chatra Sanmilan was a social organization engaged in the social reform activities. On 10th December 1944 in its sixth convention the organization became politically inclined and put forward their demand for 28 seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly for the Tribals. By 1965, the Mishing Chatra Sanmilan organised itself into four more divisions in various parts of Assam. On 16 October 1971 in its meeting the Mishing Chatra Sanmilan was renamed as Takam Mishing Porin Kebang (TMPK).

In September 1988, during the Chief Ministerial rule of Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, the first Mishing National Convention was held in Dhemaji. The main aim was to boost the agitation for the creation of Mishing Autonomous State. The convention had succeeded in bringing together attendance from different Mishing organizations like Mishing Bane Kabang (Mishing National Congress), Mishing Drbu Kebang (Mishing Cultural Association), Mishing Mime Kebang (Mishing Women's Association) etc. The Mishing political leaders also participated in the convention and decided to carry on the agitation for an autonomous state. The Mishing Mimak Kebang (MMK) or the Mishing Sangram Parisad was formed so that it could accommodate all the different Mishing organizations. Both the TMPK and MMK have taken upon themselves for organizing their demand for the Mishing Autonomous State. The Mishing youth has focused on the non-implementation or even partial implementation of the constitutional provisions including rules and regulations by the government for the deprivation of economic and educational benefits due to the members of the Mishing community. Unable to avail facilities of education, health care, and employment the feeling of deprivation amongst the Mishing gradually became more and more dominant.

For the Mishing the main question is the survival, preservation and protection of their distinctive identity which forms a sound basis for putting forward the demand for a 'federating unit with adequate autonomy' having a democratic political administrative set-up along with progressive economic structure. The Mishings also at one point of time stood for the right to self-determination, as the only way to 'concrete political and social security of their tribe

On 13 June, 1995 a memorandum of settlement was signed during the tenure of Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia and this came to be known as the Mishing Autonomous Council was constituted for

the purpose of granting autonomy under the constitution of India. The signatories of the Accord were Chief Secretary, Arunodoy Bhattacharjya, Dilip Pegu, Rajkumar Kutum, Rajni / nta Patir representing the Mishing Autonomous Demand committee and Dhaneswar Modi who represented the Mishing Bane Kebang.

On 25 October 1995, the Mishing Autonomous Council Act was passed with the objective to ensure the greatest possible autonomy for social, economic, educational, cultural and ethnic development of the Mishing within the constitutional framework. This would include the settlement a eas of the blocks of contiguous revenue villages, each having more than 50% population belonging to the Mishing Community

2.6 Dimasa Movement

The Dimasa people of Northeast India have been demanding a separate state called 'Dimaraji' or 'Dimaland' for several decades, it would comprise the Dimasa-inhabited areas, namely Dima-Hasao district parts of Cachar district part of Nagaon district and Karbi Anglong district in Assam together with part of Dimapur district in Nagaland. The word 'Dimaraji' is derived from Dimasa language and its literal meaning is 'Land of the Dimasas'

According to the Dima Halam Daogah Chief Dilip Nunisa, the proposed Dimaraji would comprise three districts: existing Dima Hasao, Garampani district and Borail. The Dima Halam Daoga (DHD) is a descendant of the Dimasa National Security force (DNSF), which ceased operations in 1995. After the peace agreement between the DHD and the central government in the year 2003, the group further broke out and DHD (J) also known as Black Widow was born which was led by Jewel Gorlosa. The Black Widow's declared objective is to create Dimaraji for the Dimasa people in Dima-Hasao district only. However, the objective of DHD (Nunisa Faction) is to include parts of Cachar, Karbi Anglong, and Nagaon district in Assam and sections of Dimapur district in Nagaland. The aim and objectives of the Dimasa people for the movement are-struggle for existence, safeguard and welfare of the Dimasa community for all round developments in education, literacy, various culture, language and socio-economy etc.; Eradicate social evils-illiteracy, untouchable and other superstitions which are detrimental to the society, Preserve rich ancient heritages -traditional cultures, historical relics, identities, claim legitimate constitutional rights and privileges for better growth, safeguard and co-existence among others. The main motto of the movement was "Glorify Dimasa"

The All Dimasa Student's Union (ADSU) apart from safeguarding the common interest of the Dimasa community as a whole launched a democratic political movement on 30th April 2003 staging a demonstration at Jantar-Mantar, New Delhi demanding Dimaraji. The major grievances of the ADSU, today the very existence of the Dimasa people may the aboriginal tribe of the Northeastern states is at stake irrespective of places of their original traditional habitats since the time immemorial in the region. Even after 60 years of Indian independence, there is no trace of least development or change of Dimasa people in any aspects, and on the other hand, numerous problems are cropped up and added to one after another every day. Till today, our people are almost backward, neglected, deprived of all legitimate constitutional benefits and compelled to remain in despair and resentment. The rapid development of other higher and more intellectual sections of the society causes our people 'surprised'. After careful observations of these grievous situations of our people the ADSU held the government and its admirative policies responsible.

Apart from the demand for Dimaraji, ADSU also raised several demands. One of the demands was to remove non-tribal outside from the Tribal Belt and Blocks of Dimasa inhabited areas. Another

demand was to preserve and developed the historical relics of ancient Dimasa Kachari state of Dimapur of Nagaland and Khaspur, Maibong and Mahamaya etc. in Assam. to strengthen the demand of Dimaraji another organization was formed as Dimaraji revival demand Committee (DRDC) in 1994. The organization adopted a policy of parliamentary and extra parliamentary struggle to achieve its goal. Parliamentary struggle, as DRDC meant, was to capture the Autonomous council, MLA and MP seats. It defined the extra-parliamentary struggle as a protest movement demanding Dimaraji separate through procession, dharna, rally etc. Both the ADSU and DRDC had submitted a memorandum before the Prime Minister of India on 1996. In this memorandum, they demanded the creation of revival of a full-fledged Dimaraji state.

The DHD from the very beginning was involved with several armed activities. The armed conflicts resulted in the death of hundreds of people. Moreover, the pressure from the Government and the operation of the para-military and military forces of Government of India disrupted the life of the people. The ADSU came forward with its agitational programmes. ASDU called a 24-hour Dimaraji Bandh with effect from 5 am of 8 July 2002, in protest against the atrocities of security forces on innocent people in proposed Dimaraji. ADSU strongly condemned the state-sponsored terrorism in Dimaraji. The Jawans, camped at Harinagar Cachar, had tortured the tea tribe, Khasi and Dimasa communities in Khaspur, Goabari area in the Cachar district. The security forces allegedly raped three Khasi girls at the Goabari near Khaspur. They also harassed the Dimasa under the pretext of searching DHD militants in the Indo-Bangladesh border villages like Hawarmah and Khorkhori. The security forces camped at Bamungaon near dali Block had beaten up the villagers of the Longmailu Dimasa village near Udali, Lanka of Nagaon district. The Black Panther's jawans were also looting jewellerys, burning the village houses at Manja-Dimasa Belt and Dhansiri area in Karbi Anglong. As a part of the peace initiative, the DHD signed the cease-fire agreement with Government of the India on 1 January 2003. Its designated camps were established in several part of Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills and Cachar districts of Assam. After signing the cease-fire agreement, the DHD had submitted its formal memorandum before the Home Ministry of Government of India, on 23 September 2004, demanding the creation of separate Dimasa state.

3. Conclusion

Ethnicity as an ongoing phenomenon does not leave any space for conclusion. From the observation, it is apparent that the present political situation of the Northeastern region has posed a challenge to social science scholars. An ethnic movement has become one of the most problematic and endemic in postcolonial Northeast India. From the above-mentioned movements and many others ethnic movement in this region, like-Karbi Movement, Bodo Movement, Hamaras, Movement, Khasis Movement, Garo Movement, Rabha Movement, Meeteis Movement has witnessed that the region is hotspot of a series of popular movements among various ethnic constituents, particularly the tribal communities around the question of political -economic and cultural autonomy after independence. Almost all the parts of the Northeast India have witnessed ethnic movements. They take the forms of movements for separate states, demand for secession or insurgency. These manifestations of ethnic movements are also called self-determination movements.

Northeast India as a single region has the largest number of the tribal population in the country. They follow different religions especially Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and indigenous religions. They can further be divided between the plain and hill tribes. Almost all states of Northeast India have witnessed one or the other forms of ethnic groups of Northeast India have been involved in ethnic mobilization for different purposes. They have taken recourse to both the violent and non-violent

means. Success or failure of ethnic movements depends on political factors. Once one set of demands in ethnic mobilization is accepted, in due course time on other demands the ethnic movements starts. Thus, ethnic mobilization is a continuous political process. Northeast India, with its diverse ethnic communities, has been witnessing struggles ranging from demands for various forms of autonomy to separation from the Indian Union. The Northeast region of India has been marked by sustained separatist insurgencies, mass agitations and ethnic conflicts. This region has been the setting for the earliest and longest lasting insurgency in the century.

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