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POLITICS OF IDENTITY IN ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DIMASA

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ABSTRACT

Assam has been the meeting place of different races and consequently a large number of ethnic groups have been residing in Assam. The process of ethnic assimilation remained incomplete in Assam. Situation did not change after independence. The policy of segregating the people was continued on the one hand, and on the other, state power and the fruits of development were monopolized by the elites. Tribals and other marginalized sections were kept out of the narrow field of employment. At this juncture the movement to install Assamese as the official language of the state deeply disturbed the tribals and linguistic minorities living in the state. It was taken by the elite of those sections as a move to establish permanent monopoly of power in the state for Assamese. The rising expectations of different sections and the injustice led to militancy and fanned the flames of separatism of different types. Most ethnic groups reconstructed their past so as to constitute a national heritage resulting in what is referred to as the politics of identity. The present study is an attempt to understand the politics of identity in Assam with particular reference to that of the Dimasas.

KEY WORDS: ethnic, assimilation, monopoly, politics and identity.