Demand for Separate Statehood and The Koch Rajbanshi’s Quest for Revival of Their Past in The Indian State of Assam

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Abstract: In the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural landscape of Assam, emergence of identity movements of different ethnic groups lead to lot of serious issues ranging from terrorism, economic stagnancy, cultural threats and political instability. The issue of Koch Rajbanshi identity has already transcended the limit of a mere identity movement and turns out to be a major catalyst of the socio-political scenario of the state. Assertion of identity and aspiration of the Koch Rajbanshis, in revolt against their perceived socio-economic and politico-cultural deprivation, had begun during the post-independence period, particularly in the 1980s. Now in both the Indian states of West Bengal and Assam, the Koch Rajbanshis are fighting for a greater separate Kamatapur state. They also have a demand to include their language in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India along with ST status for those living in Assam and socio-economic development of this community. The primary focus of the paper is to understand the identity movement led by the Koch Rajbanshis for the creation of a separate Kamatapur state in Assam.

Keywords: Koch Rajbanshis, Kingdom of Kamatapur, Separate Kamatapur state, Schedule Tribe status, Insurgency.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Demand for separate statehood and formation or creation of new state is not a new phenomenon in India. In post-independent India, the dream for the formation/creation of new separate state came into reality when Andhra Pradesh was created on linguistic basis out of the Telugu speaking northern parts of Madras state in 1953. Till today, the people of Darjeeling hills are fighting for a separate state of ‘Gorkhaland’, in order to preserve and protect the identity of Nepali speaking people and to get their socio-economic and political dues to be governed by them. This paper will discuss about a community widely known as Koch Rajbanshi in Assam, simply as Koch in Meghalaya, as Rajbanshi in West Bengal. The said community wants their territorial areas to be carve out of West Bengal and Assam and demanding their separate state to be called as ‘Kamatapur’. On the contrary, the Gorkhas of Darjeeling hills raise the same issue and demanding the same territorial areas to be carve out of West Bengal as their separate state to be known as ‘Gorkhaland’. Before going into details about the Koch Rajbanshis, the present study will firstly discuss some issues of autonomy movement in North-east India in general and in Assam in particular.

North-eastern region of India is witnessing many ethnic based identity movements since the last six decades. After independence the region was reorganised due to identity assertion amongst various tribal groups leading to the creating of several new states like Nagaland (1963), Meghalaya (1971), Mizoram (1986) and Annachal Pradesh (1986). From last 1960s the situation of Northeast India is very much sensitive due to the growing assertion of identity by various ethnic groups. Since a long time many ethnic groups such as the Nagas from Nagaland; Kukis and Meiteis from Manipur; Karbi, Dimasa, and Bodos from Assam etc have been demanding for constitutional safeguards and territorial autonomy. Time and again demands are also raised by some sections from these ethnic groups for the creation of separate statehood on the basis of their distinct cultural identity, and even some others are attempting to secede from the Indian state.

Assam is the most populous state amongst all the North-eastern states. Over a long period of time many tribal and non-tribal population have been living in Assam. Society in Assam has historically been multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-caste, multi-class and multi-lingual in composition (Hussain, 2000). The genesis of ethnic conflicts and ethnic identity movements in the state lies in its colonial past and the British policy of ‘divide and rule’ (Kumar, 2007: 111-112). Inspite of being divided many times on the basis of ethnic identity the demands such as constitutional safeguard, creation of separate statehood etc are still being raised by many plain and hill tribes. For instance, the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district and the Dimasa Kacharis of Dima Hasao Autonomous District have been agitating for granting of a separate state on the basis of their ethnic identities. From the 1980s onwards the Bodos have been demanding a separate ‘Bodoland’ state on the basis of their linguistic and ethnic identities. Similarly, the Koch Rajbanshis are demanding ‘Kamatapur’ as a separate state for preserving their distinct identities and political entities etc.

2. ORIGIN OF KOCH RAJBANSHIS:

Koch Rajbanshis are one of the oldest aboriginal ethnic groups of South Asia, having predominantly Mongoloid features. Presently they are found in three South Asian countries viz. India, Bangladesh and Nepal. In India they are predominantly found in four Indian states, i.e. West Bengal particularly in North Bengal, Assam, and some parts of Bihar and Meghalaya. There are different views and controversies with regard to the use of the term ‘Koch’ and ‘Rajbanshi’ synonymously. In the writings of orientalists, the Rajbanshis were regarded as purified group of ‘Koch’. On the other hand, native writers and litterateurs have opined that Rajbanshis were different from and superior to the Koch (Basu, 2003: 27). Though this kind of controversies still continues in parts of North Bengal but in Assam ‘Koch’ and ‘Rajbanshi’ are treated as one term or one community.

Controversies also exist among historians and scholars on the racial origin of the Koch Rajbanshis. Some scholars...
have opined that Koch Rajbanshis first came downwards from North China or Siberian region and settled in the North-eastern part of India. Some have opined that they came from Tibet. Some considered them as belonging to Dravidian stock. Some considered them as non-Aryan and non-Hindu. Further, still some called them an admixture of Mongoloid blood. Considering all the arguments, to conclude the controversies on the origin of Koch Rajbanshis identity it can be said that the Koches are of Mongoloid origin having their homeland in the Himalayan region, most probably in Tibet, from where they travelled down probably along the course of the Teesta and the Dharla. They settled first in North Bengal and then spread gradually towards the east as well as towards the south and west, where they mixed with the Dravidians (Nath, 1989: 4). They are of Mongoloid origin having close affinities with other Bodo tribes like Meches, Rabhas, Dhimals, Hajongs and Garos. But in course of time and in some limited areas, they inter-married with the Dravidians and gave birth to a mixed Mongoloid-Dravidian race but having preponderant Mongoloid characters (Nath, 1989: 4).

3. KINGDOM OF KAMATAPUR:

Historical memory of Kamatapur state and Koch kingdom is important to know the historical process of Koch Rajbanshs identity formation. Kamatapur was a region where the Koch Kingdom ruled over for a long period of time. In the contemporary social and political discourse the Koch Rajbanshis feel proud to identify themselves with Kamatapur and are fighting for reconstruction of their Kamatapur state which is rooted in history. The present socio-political movement for separate Kamatapur state draws its inspiration from the historical memory of Kamatapur or Koch kingdom (Das, 2009). History says that Koch kingdom was there in the Kamatapur for a long period of time from 13th century onwards and disappeared in the process of post independent state formation in India with the Indian state of Assam, West Bengal and partly in Bangladesh. Presently it is noticed that the Koch Rajbanshis of Assam particularly in West Assam and West Bengal particularly in North Bengal identify them as Kamatapur and therefore, the present demand for separate Kamatapur state also seeks recognition of the history and culture of Kamatapur (Ibid, 2009).

It is believed that in 13th century Sandhya Rai established the kingdom of Kamata also known as Kamrup. Kamata comprised many parts of present Northeast India and continued till 15th century (Ray 2007: 13). It was in 16th century when Koches emerged as a strong and influential kingdom established by Bishwa Singha who ruled over Kamata from 1515 to 1540 (Nath 1989: 16). The region of Bishwa Singha’s Dynasty ruled was known as ‘Koch Kingdom’ but in the course of time, this kingdom went through various names and lastly named as Cooch Behar (Koch Bihar) in the colonial period. The Dynasty established by Bishwa Singha continued till middle part of 16th century with various ups and downs and many Koch kings ruled over Kamatapur kingdom. Dharmendra Narayan was the last king of Bishwa Singha’s Dynasty. During this period the attacks of the Bhutanese was increased in the politics of Kamata kingdom. Bhutanese king directly interfered with Koch affairs and kingdom at Koch Behar. To get rid of the Bhutanese attacks king Dharmendra Narayan signed one treaty with East India Company on 5th April 1773 (Das 2009: 52). As a result of this treaty the Koch-Kamata alias Cooch Behar kingdom became a native state under colonial India and continued till 1947. According to the Indian Independence Act, section VIII, Koch-Kamata kingdom alias Cooch Behar gained its independence from the British rule and the treaty of 1773 became invalid. Till 28 August 1949 Koch Behar was an Indian State ruled by Maharaja. On 28 August 1949 by an agreement Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan king of Koch Behar ceded his state with the Dominion of the Government of India. The administrative power on Koch Behar was transferred to Government of India on 12 September 1949 and from that time onwards Koch Behar was ruled as a Chief Commissioner’s Province. But on 1st January 1950 Koch Bihar was transferred and merged with the Indian state of West Bengal (Das 2009: 53-56).

4. MOVEMENT FOR A SEPARATE KAMATAPUR STATE:

The merger of Koch Behar as a district in the state of West Bengal was a starting point which gave rise to identity consciousness among the Koch Rajbanshis. Many Koch Rajbanshi civil and political organizations argued that the merger of Koch Behar was against the will of the people and was a conspiracy of the government of West Bengal and the government of India. Socio-political organizations which was born out immediately after the merger of Koch Behar, ‘Cooch Behar Congress’, and ‘Prajati Sadhini Sabha’ argued that Cooch Behar should not be merged with either Bengal, or Assam, rather it should be a union territory under the control of central government (Das 2009: 60). Students’ organisations like All Koch Rajbanshi Students’ Union (AKRSU) have argued that the merger of Koch Behar was the beginning and main factor which has disturbed the unity of the greater Koch Rajbanshi community. Even till today, this is the main argument rises by most of the Koch Rajbanshi socio-political organizations that are demanding and agitating for a separate Kamatapur state.

The autonomy movement by the Koch Rajbanshis seeks creation of a separate Kamatapur state comprising same areas of present North Bengal and Assam under the constitutional provision. The movement also looks for the recognition of Kamatapur or Koch Rajbanshi language under the Eight Scheduled of the constitution of India along with the demands of cultural and socio-economic development of their community. In case of Assam, the movement also demands Scheduled Tribe status for the Koch Rajbanshis living in Assam (Borah 2017:106).

References:


2. Sukiya Kamapur Rajya Kiyo (Why Separate Kamapur state?) a booklet published by AKRSU (All Koch Rajbanshi Students’ Union) opined that the merger of Koch Behar in West Bengal was a conspiracy of the government and against the will of the local peoples. For details see Bishwajit Rai, ‘Sukiya Kamapur Rajya Kiyo’ AKRSU (Assamese), April 25, 2002.

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Socio-cultural as well as economic crisis was a prime reason of Koch Rajbanshis present agitation. In North Bengal in the early 20th century the migration of rich Hindu Bengali gentry from other parts of West Bengal and erstwhile East Pakistan to the Koch Rajbanshi inhabited areas created a feeling of alienation and deprivation. The influx of Hindu gentry created many social as well as economic problems for the Koch Rajbanshis including displacement from land, problems of livelihood, cultural threat etc (Ray 2007). They were also victims of many land reforms acts adopted by the government of West Bengal. Though the purpose of most of the land reforms acts was distribution of land to the landless but in most of the cases the migrated rich Hindu Bengalis were beneficiaries of these acts in North Bengal at the cost of Rajbanshis. The discriminatory attitude towards the Koch Rajbanshis had also been seen in many literary works by the upper caste Hindus that created identity consciousness among the Koch Rajbanshis. There were many other socio-cultural factors where the Koch Rajbanshis were humiliated and socially excluded in their everyday life such as in maintaining the ritual hierarchy of food habit, marriage, entering into a place of worship and other kinds of socio-cultural interactions (Basu 2003: 62, 63). In the case of Assam it has been observed that due to hegemonic nature and discriminatory attitude of the caste Hindu Assamese groups towards the Koch Rajbanshis, the feeling of alienation and identity consciousness emerged among many small ethnic groups of Assam including the Koch Rajbanshis (Hussain 1995). It may be said that the Koch Rajbanshis were the victims of caste based socio-cultural exclusion as well as economic marginalization and livelihood displacement that created the genesis of identity consciousness among them and it reflects in present autonomy and identity movement.

One point needs to be underscored that though the historical reasons for claiming Kamatapur is similar in Assam as well as in North Bengal, yet there are some other factors which contributed a lot to the Kamatapur movement in Assam. Issues of poverty, economic disparities, identity crisis and relative deprivation are some important factors that have given new shape to the Kamatapur movement in Assam. Though a superior feeling existed among some caste Hindu Assamese but unlike North Bengal the caste Hindu superiority and domination was not so much intense in Assam. After becoming part of Assam, the undivided Goalpara district where the Koch Rajbanshis domination was there, they contributed a lot towards the development of a composite Assamese culture and society. Many Assamese literary works were also composed and inspired by the glorious history of Koch Kingdom. But despite this a discriminatory attitude and socio-cultural hegemony by the caste Hindu Assamese was seen towards the Koch Rajbanshis and other small ethnic groups of Assam. This had created lots of discomfort among Koch Rajbanshis.

### Table-01: Name of some major organizations which seek creation of Separate Kamatapur state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of the Organization</th>
<th>Place of origin</th>
<th>Year of existence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hit Sadhini Sabha</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uttar Khanda Dal</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kamata Rajya Dabee Parishad</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Kamatapur Gana Parishad</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kamatapur Liberation Organization</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>All Koch Rajbanshi Students Union</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kamatapur Peoples Party</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Greater Coch Behar Association</td>
<td>North Bengal</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>All Kamatapur Students’ Organization</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kamatapur Association</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Chilarai Sena</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2014</td>
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Koch Rajbanshi identity movement is a long drawn battle to preserve, protect and develop their distinct identity. The genesis of Kamatapur movement or Koch Rajbanshi nationalism was in the colonial period. Jogendranath Mondal a scholar from undivided Bengal had demanded a separate of ‘Rajar-sthan’ (abode of king) for the Rajbanshis before independence of India (Hazara 2004). The issue of development of Rajbanshi language and its consciousness also arose during the colonial period. In 1910 Panchanan Barma, a prominent leader of ‘Khatriya Movement’ had raised the issue of Rajbanshi language for its recognition and development in the third annual conference of ‘Uttar Banga Sahitya Parishad’ held at Rangpur now Bangladesh (Ray, 2007: 115). After independence of India, identity assertion emerged amongst the Koch Rajbanshis due to merger of the kingdom of Koch Bihar with the Indian state of West Bengal against the will of the local peoples. After merger many socio-political organisations was formed both in Assam as well as in North Bengal and still agitating for a separate Kamatapur state and for socio-cultural as well as economic development of their community. Their proposed state of Kamatapur consists of 14 districts of Assam and 6 districts of North Bengal.

**Figure-01: Map of Proposed Kamatapur State**


2Field study conducted during the month of July and August 2015. Interview both personal and group has been taken from the members of different socio-political organizations of Koch Rajbanshis i.e. All Koch Rajbanshi Students’ Organization, All Kamatapur Students’ Organization, All Assam Koch Rajbanshi Yovo Chatra Sanmilani, Centre for Koch Rajbanshi Studies and Development (Trust), Kamatapur Peoples Party (North Bengal based).
From the last few decades particularly from 1980s it is observed that the identity consciousness among the Koch Rajbanshis is increasing and they are trying to find a way out to maintain, preserve and protect their cultural and linguistic heritage. It is also observed that the domination on the Koch Rajbanshis culture and identity has emerged as a major factor that has made them become more conscious about their identity. They are increasingly in a state of fear of losing their culture and identity by the influence of dominant groups. At the same time the Government of Assam has also not been able to address the problems of the Koch Rajbanshis. Yet, the state Government has not taken any policy to ensure the socio-economic development and protection of language and culture of the Koch Rajbanshis. Over the years the state Government has totally failed to take appropriate development measures for the Koch Rajbanshis leading to lots of serious problems among them.

5. INSURGENCY PHASE OF KAMATAPUR MOVEMENT:

In the course of the present study it was found that there are no such changes in the nature of Kamatapur movement over time. From the very beginning most of the socio-political as well as cultural organisations that are leading the movement has been following the path of nonviolent democratic protest movement in support of their demand. Road block, hunger strike, sending memorandum to the Government, calling Assam bandh etc are some way of demonstration they have been following. The leaders of the movement have generally failed to mobilize the common masses. One of the striking facts of the matter is that the Koch Rajbanshis of Assam do not have a political party of their own. Therefore, at the time of election they either support regional parties such as Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF), Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) or national parties. At the time of election though these parties promise to fulfill the aspirations of the Koch Rajbanshis but after the election the parties turn deaf ears to the problems of Rajbanshis. In North Bengal though the ‘Kamatapur Peoples Party’ is somewhat active but due to not getting the support of the common people they are failing to get an adequate seat in elections. The state repression on this party is another matter of concern. A major change was seen in the nature of Kamatapur movement in 1995. Two militant organizations viz., ‘Kamatapur Liberation Organisation’ (KLO) in North Bengal and ‘Koch-Rajbanshi Liberation Organisation’ (KRLO) in Assam were formed in support of a separate state of Kamatapur. With five years of its formation, KLO cadres were active in terrorist activities. It is believed that this outfit was neutralised during the operation ‘flush out’ by the Bhutanese government in the month of December 2003 inside Bhutanese territory (Das 2009). The militant phase of Kamatapur movement still continues. A declaration was made in 2015 by ‘National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)’ (NSCN/K) Chairman S. S. Khaplang, ‘United Liberation Front of Assam’ (ULFA) Chairman Dr Abhizeet Asom, ‘Kamatapur Liberation Organisation’ (KLO) Chairman Jiban Singh Koch and ‘National Democratic Front of Bodoland’ (NDFB) Chairman B. Saaraigwra. By this declaration all four outfits have formed a united armed organization named ‘United National Liberation Front of West East Asia (UNLFW)’ to fight unitedly in support of their demands (Hindustan Times 2015). Subsequently the democratic protest movement is also going on by the Koch Rajbanshi socio-cultural organizations. In the year 2014, there was a huge democratic protest by the Koch Rajbanshi community of Assam after the Central Government’s decision to declare Telengana as separate state. Presently most of the North Bengal and Assam based socio-cultural organizations are trying to work together for socio-cultural development of their community.

6. MOVEMENT FOR SCHEDULE TRIBE STATUS:

Apart from the creation of a separate state of Kamatapur, the autonomy movement by the Koch Rajbanshis also demand Scheduled Tribe status for the Koch Rajbanshis living in Assam. Scheduling the Koch Rajbanshi community in the category of ST is a long-standing demand. Since long, particularly from 1966, many Koch Rajbanshi socio-cultural organizations have been demonstrating and agitating in support of their demand (Choudhury 2011). But yet this demand has not been addressed by the Government. Now in Assam the Scheduling issue of the Koch Rajbanshis is entirely politicised by the national as well as by the regional parties. It is observed that though the root of the historical origin of Kamatapur movement was in the colonial period but in case of Assam the movement got its momentum after the 1980s only. It was because of the expression of the frustration of the peoples, on the politics played by the government towards their demand for Schedule Tribe. Another reason for the sudden eruption of the Kamatapur movement in Assam after 1980s was the inclusion of Koch Rajbanshi dominated areas into the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) which was formed in 2003.

At present Koch Rajbanshis are confronted by problems ranging from ethnic identity crisis, economic underdevelopment, land alienation, illiteracy, unemployment etc. Most of the Koch Rajbanshis in Assam are living below poverty line. No policy measure has been taken by the government to uplift their economic conditions. The claim for ST status is a long drawn demand. They were in hope that if they get the ST status they will at least be able to get some opportunities for their socio-economic and cultural development. But they are deprived from that too. After 1980s the immigration into Koch Rajbanshi dominated areas of lower parts of Assam emerged as a major problem. Relative deprivation is another factor which makes them feel deprived from opportunities of socio-economic development from the government. Like Koch Rajbanshi, Bodo is also an ethnic group (plain tribal) of Assam. Through socio-political movement the Bodo community of Assam are able to avail many benefits from the state as well as central government. Their socio-political movement is stronger as compared to Koch Rajbanshis. After a long fight, Bodo language got constitutional recognition in the year 2003 and was included in Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India. Following the year 2003 they again

*Responses of the respondents collected during field study conducted during the month of July and August 2015.*
got Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under which they got some amount of autonomy for self rule and opportunities for socio-economic and cultural development. Like Bodos, though the Koch Rajbanshis’ autonomy agitation for socio-economic development is a long drawn battle but they get nothing. This feeling of deprivation is an important reason which has fuelled the Kamatapur movement in Assam in recent times.

7. CONCLUDING OBSERVATION:

It may be safely argued that the Kamatapur movement is in many ways the outcome of the socio-political and economic marginalization of Koch Rajbanshis. Koch Rajbanshis who once ruled over large parts of Northeast India suffered economic hardship and political marginalization due to the attack from Bhutias and to get rid of this they came under British India as a native state. After the merger of their princely state ‘Cooch Behar’ with the Indian state of West Bengal they systematically became victims of socio-cultural and economic marginalization that had created a feeling of alienation, deprivation and fear of losing their distinct identity. In the early part of 20th century their culture and language suffered due to the caste movement that aimed at assimilation of Rajbanshis with the upper castes. During that time in North Bengal the immigration of upper caste Hindu Bengalis to the Koch Rajbanshi dominated areas created tension among the native Koch Rajbanshis. They were victims of socio-cultural discrimination and domination by the dominant class in Assam and in North Bengal. Their social identity suffered due to colonial caste policies which led them to fight for caste solidarity. Today the Kamatapur movement is trying to create an identity on the basis of their culture and language. This will help them to justify their claim of geographically demarcated land so that they can arrange the resources of this region for their own development. Similarly, they are also trying to mobilise people’s consciousness towards their history, culture, and tradition to ensure their socio-cultural development.

As regards to the future of Kamatapur movement it may be said that the movement will continue until the basic problems of the Koch Rajbanshis are addressed. The community members who are leading the Kamatapur movement instead of mobilizing identity on the basis of their culture and language needs to search solution in development and good governance. Considering all the findings during the course of the present study it may be suggested that several steps may be taken to address the problems of Koch Rajbanshis. Firstly, it is of urgent importance to conduct a survey of the social, economic and political conditions of the Koch Rajbanshis of North-east India. Such a survey will help us to understand the socio-economic and political problems that Koch Rajbanshis have been facing. Any kind of policy aimed to address the issues related to this community is bound to fail if we do not have a clear understanding of their socio-economic and political conditions. Secondly, immediate steps should be taken to preserve and protect the peculiarities and particularities of this community. The feeling of alienation and relative deprivation can be addressed only by protecting their very distinctiveness and by improving socio-cultural and economic conditions. Thirdly, the language controversy is another important issue. To put an end to the debate on Rajbanshi language and their aspiration to develop their mother tongue should be given constitutional recognition. Fifthly, economic development of the region should be accelerated. As most Rajbanshis live in abject conditions of poverty, certain political-economic measures have to be taken urgently for the economic security of the Rajbanshis living below poverty line. Along with this, spreading of quality education and creation of employment avenues may go a long way in solving such problems. Moreover, Rajbanshis should get their socio-economic and political due to be governed by them as a true democracy in India.

To conclude it may be said that the Indian state has not been able to address the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual problems of the indigenous peoples living in India. In case of North-east India, particularly in Assam, the Central as well as the State government has failed to resolve the ongoing ethnic conflicts by the various ethnic communities in Assam including the Koch Rajbanshis. The identity movement by these ethnic groups has thrown up issues of terrorism, economic stagnancy, cultural threats, human rights violation, political instability to name a few. To maintain national integrity, political stability and socio-economic development of the state, it is an urgent need and responsibility of the Indian state to address the multi layered problems that the ethnic and tribal groups of Assam have been facing.

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