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# Tea Tribes Community Contribution To The Formation Of Grater Assamese Society; An Overview

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## Abstract:-

Tea tribe's community is one of integral part of grater Assamese society. They lived in this land more than a century and they contributed the development of socio-economic and cultural landscape of Assam state. When British colonial ruler starts cultivating the tea plantation in southern part of Brahmaputra valley the local people refuse to work in tea gardens. Tea garden owner and colonial administration brought groups of people from the central India during the mid of nineteen century. Those migrated people mainly work in tea gardens in all over Assam and commonly known as the 'tea tribe' community. These 'tea tribes' community belong to different part of central India also they belong to different tribes but they shared common society as tea garden workers in Assam. Tea tribes' community played major role in formation of grater Assamese society. Tea tribes' community has significantly contributed towards the growth of economic condition of the state; also they accepted the socio-cultural norms and tradition for signify as part of this land. Currently in Assam state tea tribes' population approximately 7 million of the total population of Assam. These huge numbers of population help to growth historically as the Assamese society.

**Key Words:** - Tea tribes, Society, Community, Populations, Migrated.

## Introduction:-

Assam state has huge number of tea tribe community population. In Assam demography almost its 20 percent of its total population belong to the tea tribe's community. They mainly inhabited in the districts of Darrang, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj, Tinsukia, and other districts of Assam. Tea tribes' communities are the labour worker in tea garden who came to the Assam state during British colonial era. When British colonial ruler start tea plantation in Assam local indigenous people refuse to work in tea garden. Then British colonial ruler brought them from the central India during the mid of nineteen century. Majority of them belong to various Adivasi communities of central India, also non-Adivasi communities too came along with Adivasi to work in tea garden.

Adivasi and Non-Adivasi community who migrated to this land they had their own cultural and social identity; also they had their own ethnic languages. But when they lived permanently they sacrificed their own language and they identify them as part of Assamese society; also they accepted Assamese as their mother language without any hesitation. Tea tribe's community also identifies them as son of great Assamese mother land. Their contribution is very significant because tea tribes communities accepted instead of the art-mekhela they taken the mekhela sheets woven into the loom, they accepted Assamese 'Biya-Naam' instead of 'Sadi-Geet', also in festivals tea tribes communities use the 'Teel Pitha', 'Ghela Pitha' instead of 'Monda'. In that way tea tribe community became one of the major parts of the great Assamese society.

### **Objective:-**

- a. To give an overview about the contribution of tea tribes towards Assamese society.
- b. To highlight about the relation of tea tribes community with other ethnic community.
- c. To analysis about the demand of tea tribes for socio-economic development.

### **Methodology:-**

While preparing the paper various data's have been collected from various sources and the writing is mainly on the basis of literature survey and secondary information. The secondary data are collected from various published sources such as magazines, newspaper, journals, book, government reports and various other publications. Moreover some important information's are also collected from relevant websites. The present paper is descriptive in nature.

### **Analysis-**

Tea tribes' communities significantly contribution to the socio-economic growth as well as the cultural growth since they came, also they politically significant in contemporary Assam. Tea tribes' communities belong to the various adivasi and non adivasi among them are Bania, Bhumij, Barik, Dhanwar, Gour, Karmakar, Koiri, Kharia, Munda, Mank, Pradhan, Rajwar, Rajbonshi, Rautia, Santhal, Sonar, Savar, Saora, Tanti, Tantubai, Turi, Tassa, Telenga, Teli and many other. Also among those adivasi and non adivasi tea garden workers they speaks various languages such as Sadri, Odia, Saora, Kurmali, Kurukh, Gondi, Kui, Kharia, Santhali, and Mundari etc. After all these diversity and indigenous identity they recognized themselves as Assamese and son of soil of this land.

When British colonial ruler starts to tea plantation in Brahmaputra valley it contributed great impact on economic growth in the Assam state. Tea garden workers have great contribution towards building strong economic since late nineteen century. Assam

land different indigenous communities and every ethnic community came here from the ancient times. Every community has their own ethnic identity and cultural believes, social and religious norms and traditional livelihood procedure, but during ahom regime the every community sacrifice their identity and established them as Assamese community. Tea garden workers also sacrifice their adivasi cultural and traditional identity and established them as parts of great Assamese society.

In Assam state 803 total number of Tea Estate according to the Directorate for welfare of Assam across 27 district of Assam. Tea Tribes communities lives near the Tea Estate and they very close to the Assamese society, Assamese society other ethics communities accepted them and mutual understanding growth into day to day life. In Tea Tribes society the concern people discuss about the Mahapukh Sankardev's 'Borgeet', 'Nagara Naam' and other Assamese society religious and cultural tradition follow by the tea tribes communities. Among the tea tribes communities they have their own ethnic languages, but in conservation they follow Assamese languages to communicate with other groups in society. Tea tribes communities speaks adivasi languages like Sadri, Odia, Saora, Kharia, Santhali, and Mundari etc all those languages influences Assamese language. In Assamese literature tea tribes communities adivasi languages found in numbers of writing.

Tea tribes' communities always contributed towards the growth economic conditions of Assam state. Assam famous for their tea not only India as well as all over world, it help to collected foreign currency and globally Assam tea has significant in international tea market. It helps not only Assam state economic but also help the union government. Since the colonial era tea garden workers not get properly daily wages according to their works till now. Tea Garden workers never take any violence movement to increases daily wages or other facilities for them like other community. They always support the government and they silently demand for the minimum needs to survive like drinking water, house, and medical facilities in every tea garden.

Tea tribes communities inhabited near the tea estate and tea factory from where they easily available to work. The tea tribes' communities' contribution towards the Assamese society very significant and key for the growth as great Assamese society, so no one can deny their contribution. But in tea estate areas the facility for primary and secondary education is very poor, the colonial government always recognized as workers and they never think about to educate the tea tribes communities. In independent era the union government and state government together works for increase the education in those areas. Till now tea tribes communities more than 6 million population within Assam state but their percentage of literacy rate is very less. Other ethnic community and middle class Assamese people not worry about the tea tribes community education or other things, numbers of times seen that Assamese middle class people ignore them as 'Koli Bongali' or 'Baganor Bongali'. But tea

tribe community always accepted the Assamese people as their brother they feel proud to being as son of soil of this land.

Tea tribes' community learns from the Assamese society and they established themselves as one of indigenous part of Assamese society. Tea tribes community belongs to Adivasi and Non-Adivasi, During the British colonial era in their society follow numbers of untouchability social and religious norms. It creates obstacles among the tea tribes community towards growth as modern society. Tea tribes' communities day by day follow and learn from other society it help them to became significant part of Assamese society.

Tea tribes always played significant role in politics of Assam state they have 20 percent of the state total population. In every election from the panchyat election to parliament election they played one of the major roles in Brahmaputra valley after ahom community. Tea tribe's community always takes important part of towards the bulling the Assamese society as like in Language movement, medium movement, Assam movement and other key movement which linked with Assamese identity they always stand for the mother land as son of soil. But till now the tea tribes community till now not get any reservation in government job, educational institution like communities such as bodo, karbi, mishing, rabha, karbi, sonwal kochari etc. Tea tribes' community never takes serious violence movement to get government benefit likes other do. They always work for socio-economic growth very silently as one of major part of this land.

Currently in Assam, Six major tribes demand for the constitution status as Scheduled Tribes (ST), those tribes are accordingly Tai Ahom, Moran, Motok, Chutia, Koch Rajbongshi and Tea Tribes. In Tea Tribe population literacy rate only 23 percent and more than 70 percent are landless and they lives on encroached forestland according to the Kalita report 2015. Tea Tribe has significantly contributed since the British colonial era so they demand special status lie other five tribes because tea tribes also faced crisis in their daily socio-economic life. Also they contributed towards development of Assam and Assamese society too. Also tea tribes community has indigenous tribal languages, culture, and food and dress it help them for demand the special status.

During India-China war in 1962 tea tribes communities came forwards to fight against the enemy, also tea tribes youth loss their lives during the Assam movement. They always contribute towards the Assamese societies but Assamese people failed to delivered their needs. In that reasons trade unions and socio-political organizations are working for the rights of tea tribes communities from the very beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Assam Cha Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS), Akhil Bharatiya Cha Mazdoor Sangh (ABCMS), and Assam Sangrami Cha Shramik Sangha (ASCSS) are major trade unions they work for the tea garden workers.

Also student groups like All Assam Tea Tribes Students Association (AATTSA) and All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam (AASAA) working for the protection and rights of plantation workers, rehabilitation of the displaced members of its community. Also Adivasi Council of Assam (ACS), Adivasi Sewa Samity (ASS), Adivasi Sahitya Sabha (ASS), All Adivasi Women's Association of Assam (AAWAA), All Assam Santali Students' Union (AASSU) demand for the ST status under the constitution of India

### **Conclusion:**

For the greater Assamese society every community should equally get the opportunity, rights and freedom from the government. Also Assamese middle class people should play significant role for greater Assamese society. Assam land for various indigenous communities, currently 14 recognized plain tribe communities, 15 Hills tribes communities and 16 recognized Scheduled Cast communities inhabited according to the report submitted in legislative assembly. All those communities should equally contribute towards the greater Assamese society that's the reasons government should give them equal priority for the development. For development of tea tribes government takes step like establishment of Directorate for Welfare of Tea and Ex-tea Garden Tribes in 1983 and the Assam Tea Labour Welfare Board in 2004, also time to time government takes different schemes to uplift the tea tribe community as one of major part of greater Assamese society.

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