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**"A STUDY ON STUDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS BELONGING TO TEA
TRIBE COMMUNITY OF ASSAM: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
ATTSA"**

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ABSTRACT

In every society, various organizations play significant role for the development of the masses. Students' organizations are one of those organizations which always raise their voices in different issues. It is also apparent among the tea garden community of Assam. There are some Students' Organizations that are active in the tea garden areas of Assam. Students' Organizations have been successful in placing the demands of the tea garden laborers before the central as well as the state Government. There are also some community based Students' Organizations which always raise their voices on behalf of their respective communities. Like other communities i.e. Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, Tiwa etc, the tea tribe community also has few Students' Organizations. Some of the most significant students' organizations are AATTSA, AASAA, AANSA etc. Here we will focus on the role and activities of only one student's organization i.e. ATTSA. These organizations are active in the study area i.e. Nonoi tea estate which is situated in Nagaon district of Assam. In this paper we will discuss how these Students' Organizations in general and ATTSA in particular; are living upto the expectations of the tea tribe community of Assam. We will also examine their role in the development of the tea tribe community of the state.

Introduction:

The Students' Organizations are becoming a platform for raising people's voice in various issues. It is also a training ground of the future political leaders. In case of tea tribe community the Students' Organizations always raise their voices for the causes of the tea garden laborers of Assam. Though these organizations are usually known as non-political organizations or apolitical organizations but these are making the common masses politically conscious and aware about different issues. The tea tribe community of Assam in general and Nagaon district in particular has

been facing plethora of problems from the very beginning. This developmental dilemma leads to create many different organizations including Students' Organizations among the tea tribe community of Assam. The names of such organizations includes All Assam Tea Tribe Student Association (AATTSA), Assam Chah Janajatiyo Yuva Chhatra Parishad (ACJYCP), All Adivashi Student Association of Assam(AASAA), All Adivashi National Students' Association(AANSA), Assam Labour Student Union (ALSU) etc. In this paper, we basically examine the activities and the role of Students' Organizations i.e. ATTSA and AASAA in the life of tea tribe community of Assam. At recent period ATTSA (All Assam Tea Tribes Students Association) is very active regarding raising their voices at different issues. Besides, it also works on developmental and identity issues of the people belonging to tea tribe community of Assam.

ATTSA or the 'Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association' was formed at Tangakhat of Dibrugarh district of Assam. It was formed during the conference organized by the 'Chotanagpuri Chatra Sanmilon'. This is a very significant Students' organization of the tea tribe community of Assam. It has been evolved through various stages of development since its inception. Besides their community related issues ATTSA always shows its concern over the recent burning issues happening in various areas of Assam. For example, this organization raises its voice in the issue of border dispute, illegal migration, flood, corruption and other burning issues of the state. Very recently it shows its protest against Citizenship Amendment Bill or the CAB. Regarding the Scheduled Tribe status, ATTSA takes up the issues and communicates them to the State as well as the Central Government. Further, these Students' Organizations are demanding for the amendment of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, to include appropriate actions for the welfare of the community. The Tea Plantation Laborers are recognized as Schedule Caste almost all the parts of India, but not in case of Northeast India. The organizations belonging to the tea laborers of Assam also wanted the constitutional protection of their linguistic interest. This demand has been led by ATTSA, ACMS (Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha), and the Adivasi Council of Assam. ATTSA has turned out to be a very important students' organization of Assam at present. This organization has been working for the cause of the tea tribe community in Assam.

The youth of this community have been immensely inspired by this Students' Organization in fulfilling the demands and needs of the tea tribe community. Therefore, the students' organizations of the tea tribe community of Assam play a significant role regarding the welfare of the community. They have highlighted the need for granting of tribal status to the tea garden community as well as disbursement of yearly bonus, their health and social issues, drinking water and housing facility, electricity, communication and education facility and many more. The struggle of the tea laborer community for the utmost development is vast and there is a long battle ahead. The Students' Organizations have brought into focus the needs and aspirations as well as the problems and prospects of the community to the forefront.

Objectives:

1. To examine the role played by ATTSA in the development of tea tribe community.

2. To analyze the activities of ATTSA in the tea garden areas in Assam in general and Kondoli tea estate in particular.

Methodology:

Considering the nature of the topic the study is largely based on field survey which is conducted in Nonoi tea garden in Nagaon district of Assam. The information is collected from both primary and secondary sources of data. Personal interviews are conducted through interview schedule to know their problems, awareness, access to information and communication etc. Secondary data have been collected from articles, books, newspapers, journals, leaflets, pamphlets and other literature.

Scope of the study:

For the study we have taken Nonoi tea estate as the study area which is situated in Nagaon district of Assam. This tea estate occupies 959.17 hectares. Nonoi tea estate has three divisions which are Old Salna (239.82hectres), Rungamutte(156.32hectres) and Nonoi(136.76hectres). Earlier this Tea Estate was belonging to Chabua Tea Company. But later it was acquiesced by the Tata Finlay group. At present it becomes a part of Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd. Total population of this tea estate is 5684. The number of permanent workers is 976 and temporary workers are 1310.

Result and discussion:

The role of ATTSA in the developing the tea tribe community is discussed with the help of the responses of the respondents of the study area. In order to assess the role of this organizations, few questions are asked to the people from the tea tribe community of the sample garden. It is discussed with the help of the following tables. For the study we have taken 60 respondents (30 male and 30 female) from the Nonoi tea estate. An interview schedule has been used for the interview with the respondents.

1. Are you a member of any student organization?

| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------|-------|-----|--------|-----|-------|------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes | 12 | 20% | 6 | 10% | 18 | 30% |
| No | 18 | 30% | 24 | 40% | 42 | 70% |
| Total | 30 | 50 | 30 | 50% | 60 | 100% |

Table: 1 , Source: Personal Interview

So, in the table 1 we can see that there are total 30% people are the members of such organization. Membership in any organization reflects the respondent’s ideas and attitudes towards the society. Regular meetings, discussion of the social and political issues are becoming essential parts of these organizations. Some of them are the members of these organizations. The members of this organization use to make effort to take this community forward.

2. Are the students’ organizations successful in fulfilling your demands?

| | Male | Female | Total |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| | | | |

| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
|-------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|------|
| Yes | 21 | 35% | 24 | 40% | 45 | 75% |
| No | 9 | 15% | 6 | 10% | 15 | 25% |
| Total | 30 | 50% | 30 | 50% | 60 | 100% |

Table: 2, Source:

Personal Interview

In Kondoli Tea Estates there are some students' organizations which are active in the area. Some of them are partly active and some of them are fully active. In Nonoi tea estate student's organizations like AATTSA, AASAA and AANSA are present and they are quite active. It is found in the study that there is lot of expectations from these organizations in responding the demands of the tea garden laborers of that area. These organizations always raise their voices on behalf of the community. However 75 % has replied positively and said that these student organizations are very helpful for them.

3. Do you think that AATSA, AASAA should contest election?

| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes | 25 | 41.7% | 26 | 43.4% | 51 | 85.1% |
| No | 5 | 8.3% | 4 | 6.6% | 9 | 14.9% |
| Total | 30 | 50% | 30 | 50% | 60 | 100% |

Table: 3 , Source: Personal Interview

This students' organization of the tea tribe community is functioning actively in the study area and this fact was revealed in the interview with the respondents. They have said that the AATTSA tries their best to place their demands before the management in the study area and infact very popular among the community. However 85.1% of the total respondents have given this kind of reply of which 41.7% were male and 43.4% were female.

4.Are you satisfied with the activities of the students' organizations?

| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|-------|-------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes | 22 | 36.7% | 24 | 40% | 46 | 76.7% |
| No | 8 | 13.4% | 6 | 10% | 14 | 23.4% |
| Total | 30 | 50% | 30 | 50% | 60 | 100% |

Table: 4, Source: Personal Interview

The respondents have pointed out that the Students' Organizations of the study area help them to meet their demands.76.7 % of the respondents has expressed their satisfaction with the Students' Organizations, out of which 36.7% are male and 40%

are female. They have said that these organizations help them to place their demands regarding various issues.

5. Do you think that the students' organizations help in promoting political awareness among your community?

| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Yes | 21 | 35% | 23 | 38.4% | 44 | 73.4% |
| No | 9 | 15% | 7 | 11.6% | 16 | 26.6% |
| Total | 30 | 50% | 30 | 50% | 60 | 100% |

Table: 5, Source: Personal Interview

This organization hosts lot of awareness camp regarding education, political participation, voting, right to information etc. From the above table it is found that majority of the respondents have expressed their views that ATTSA has helped them to promote political awareness of the people belonging to this community and it also leads to the increase of their political participation. They organize awareness camps in the study area which according to the respondents is making them aware of their rights.

Conclusion:

The Students' Organizations belonging to this community has been playing a positive role in enhancing participation in the study area. These students' organizations have been making the tea garden laborers community socially and politically aware. The study reveals that respondents are very positive about such Students' Organizations. The tea garden laborers of the study area are leading a laborious life and they are expecting lot more from such Students' organization with the hope to end their miseries. Besides, being the members of these student organizations, the tea garden laborers take interest in political activities which finally enhances their participation in politics. This is a good sign of their participation in the democratic process. We have seen the history of political participation of the tea garden laborers in the politics of Assam and we can say that this community plays a massive role the electoral politics of Assam. It is because of this interesting background we have taken up the study to analyze the students' organizations of the tea garden laborers towards their participation in the socio-political activities.

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