

The History Of Gorkha And Their Present Political Life In Assam

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Abstract: Nepalese migration into India is not new; there had been Nepalese migration into Assam and other Northeast regions before Colonial rule in India. The migration of Nepalese became more intensive after The first Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 which ended up with the treaty of Sagauli as the impact of the war was deep and the British admired the courage and skills of Nepalese so much that they decided to recruit them into the British army in the name of "Gorkha regiment" who were settled in Assam by the British during the 19th century for military purposes and after Indian independence, the Gorkhas were settled down in around India but soon the elite group of Gorkhas realized that they must be organized to remove their backwardness based on socio-cultural identity As a result different socio-cultural organizations formed in Assam.

Keywords: Gorkhas, martial race, Migration, Regiment, labors, ethnicity

I. INTRODUCTION

Assam has been an example of cultural pluralism and diversity with the existence of different customs, traditions, cultures, languages. Social scientists have long attributed the Nepalese settled in Northeast India since the early 19th century with a migratory nature, either in search of economic opportunities or grazing lands for cattle crucial for their primary business of milk production, etc. The British East India Company practice of settling ethnic outsiders in the various industries as cheap labor or as farmers in Assam added the migrant-native dimension to ethnic indigenous in Northeast India but major settlements were of military soldiers like Nepalese from Nepal.

II. METHODOLOGY

Secondary sources data have been used like journals, articles, books annual reports, and newspaper based on qualitative and descriptive in nature

III. DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

This study has been focused on Gorkhas of Nepal who is settled in and around Assam. This study will be helpful to understand the history of Gorkhas in Assam and their political organization. Due to continuous contact, political and Social dominance of Assamese and, various kinds of social changes have resulted among Nepalese. It will be useful for other interested persons, researchers, and development workers for further study and it will help to conduct social planning in the future. Likewise, this research will also be helpful to understand the changing patterns of social and Political status of Nepalese in general.

IV. GORKHAS OF NEPAL

Scholars give different views on the origin of the name "Gorkha" but recently many historians believe that Gorkha was the name of a principality located in Nepal. Some contemporary scholars also agree with this explanation as they give reference to the unification of Nepal under king Prithvi Narayan shah who was regarded as Gorkha king and his soldiers were known as Gorkhas through the origin of the Gorkha kingdom in Nepal is still a debatable topic among

historians. According to royal chronicles of Nepal (Gorkha vamsavali) people from Rajasthan settled down in the hills of Nepal after the Muslim invasion and in the Magars country which was based in Nepal. Some modern writers relate it with the story of two brothers "kancha and mincha" of Magars communities. Kancha and mincha extended their realm to the east and west of Nepal separately but it was under king Prithvi Narayan Shah that Nepal was unified under a particular king while Magars became a war machine for king Prithvi Narayan Shah. During the 19th century, Pithhvinarayan Shah of this lineage conceived the idea of extending his realm to the Kathmandu valley. When he came to power in 1743 However, their plan to expand westward into the Kangra region was stalled due to the dispute they entered with the British East India Company. Following such events war was imminent, and it was formally declared on 1 November 1814. The Anglo – Nepalese war (1814 – 1816) ended up with the Treaty of Sugauli which was aimed at putting a definite limit to this expansion and restraining the Gorkha military power of Nepal. During this war, the British who were very much impressed by the bravery and brilliant fighting qualities of Gurkha desired to augment their military power by enlisting them in their service. They also wanted to weaken the military power of Nepal by enlisting her brave fighting men into their ranks. The signatory for Nepal was Raj Guru Gajaraj Mishra aided by Chandra Shekher Upadhyaya and the signatory for the Company was Lt. Col. Paris Bradshaw. The treaty called for territorial concessions in which parts of Nepal will be given to British India, the establishment of a British representative in Kathmandu, and allowed Britain to recruit Gurkhas for military service.

V. FORMATION OF BRITISH GORKHA REGIMENT

Gorkhas under British India was significant but During the thirty years between 1816 and 1846, no definite arrangement was made for the Gurkha recruitment in the British Indian army. No more Gurkha battalions could be raised. In 1885 Bir Shamsheer after being a prime minister of Nepal abandoned the traditional Nepalese policy of adopting a stiff attitude towards the British. From 1885 to 1901 is termed as the period of friendly co-operation where he permitted to open Gurkha recruiting depots in India. In the year 1886, two more Gurkha regiments were added to the British army. Later *Maharaja* Juddha Shamsheer readily granted permission to raise ten more Gurkha battalions by April 1941. During the recruiting season of 1940, altogether more than 14,000 Gurkhas were recruited in the British army. In 1943, special battalions were formed for training purposes and two more garrison units were added. The British government was planning to make more than 55 battalions of the Gorkha regiment by the end of World War 2 as a result more than 10,000 Gorkha soldiers were dead during World War 2.

VI. GORKHA AFTER INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

After world war 2, all the Gorkha battalions of war were disbanded and after Indian independence, there was a need for

a new agreement. The Nepalese government signed a tripartite agreement with the British and Indian governments in 1947. According to this agreement, four of the Gorkha regiment would stay in the British army and the other six will join the Indian army. Both British and Indian governments also agreed that the Gorkha regiments should not be used against Nepal, other Gorkhas, and Hindus, or unarmed mobs. Nepal and India share an 'open' border as per the agreements of a bilateral treaty signed in 1950. According to the treaty, Nepalis and Indians can travel and work across the border and are to be treated at par with the native citizens But later Indian government imposed a ban on recruiting the British Gorkha army from Indian soil. A new agreement was signed in 1953 which permitted the British government to recruit Gorkhas from Dharan and pakihawa areas. This agreement was renewal every five years and in 1958 it was extended to another ten years.

VII. GORKHAS IN ASSAM

Nepal has been supplying labor to India since 1960 and many laborers were settled in India especially in northeast regions for tea cultivation, dairy, construction proposes, and military purposes. From 1997 to 2000, there were more than 2000 Gorkha soldiers in Assam rifles (battalion 1 to 5) and their numbers are increasing year by year but every Gorkha living in Assam is not a soldier. According to a recent survey, more than 80% population of Gorkhas living in Assam are not in any Indian army due to which Gorkha community in Assam was divided into martial race and grazers but both were important for the development of Assam in which Upper caste of Gorkha community like Brahmins introduced new techniques of cattle and dairy farming in northeast India especially in Assam were others like Magars and Gurung of Assam who are considered as martial race joined the Indian army.

VIII. POLITICAL LIVES OF GORKHAS IN ASSAM

'Gorkha League' was the mother organization of the Nepalese amongst various social organizations. The 'Gorkha Sewak' and 'Pravat' – periodicals of Gorkhas played a significant role in the unification of the people for freedom movement. The British Cabinet Mission drafted a great conspiracy in 1946 to separate Assam from India and to include in the East Bengal categorizing Assam in-group 'C'. Millions of Gorkha opposed this proposal of the British mission in the great conference of the Gorkha League on 1st January 1947. All Assam Nepali Student Union played a significant role in the language movement during of decade of the sixties. The Union thought that the Assamese language should be recognized as an official language and medium of the institution. The Student Union submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India on 24th July of 1980 citing some burning problems of Assam such as the crisis of identity, threat of existence, problems of migration, etc. The main objective of the Assam movement was the socio-economic development of Assam. Many patriots sacrificed their valuable

lives for the motherland amongst them was Dhan Bahadur Chetry of Bako(Kamrup), Khirod Bahadur Tamang of Goalpara, Kul Bahadur Chetry and Padma Bahadur of Lakhimpur, Boijayanti Devi of Tezpur, Bhim Bahadur Tamang of Gohpur, etc. Being a native of the land, the Nepali-speaking Gorkhali community had contributed a lot to the public administration by becoming politically conscious and by active participation in politics. The sign of political consciousness had been reflected before independence when Dal Bir Singh Lohar became MLA of Tinsukia LAC in 1946. He was the pioneer of the Tea Tribe Labour Union. Chabilal Upadhyaya was nominated as a member of the Tezpur local Body in 1948. And in 1950, Bishnual Upadhyaya was nominated for the same portfolio. In 1952, Dal Bir Singh Lohar was elected from Shoikhowa LAC. In the second general election, Bishnual Upadhyaya was elected from Gohpur LAC in 1957. Again in 1962 and 1967, Bishnual Upadhyaya was elected from Gohpur LAC Chandra Bahadur Chetry was elected from Digboi LAC in 1972. In 1978, Tanka Bahadur is the first Nepali speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly.

IX. RESULT

Extensive literature survey has shown that Nepalese were migrated to India after Anglo- Nepalese war of 1814-1816 and after the treaty of Saguali (1816) they were recruited in British Indian army. The British Indian army is also known as Gurkha or Gorkha regiment were consist of Nepalese of Nepal who was settled by the British in Assam for military purposes. After Indian independence, Nepalese organized unions and associations in Assam for political rights, and they were influenced by the social characteristics of Assamese society which was similar to their culture and traditions.

X. DISCUSSION

As observed Traditionally, Nepalese have worked for Assam, both as part of its famed Gorkha regiments and the civil service; in the private sector as security guards, as domestic workers, and as manual laborers in mines, tea estates, dairy farms, and in Assam the Nepalese slowly got the assimilation with Assamese. At present, the Nepalese socio-political lives are mixed up with the people of Assam and the process of assimilating Nepali into the indigenous society was much quicker in Assam. Hence, if we do more historical investigation on the social and political life of the Nepali community of Assam then we may come up with some useful information and new historical approaches.

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