Indian society is highly stratified. It’s multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious country. Unless diverse elements are integrated into one unified whole, there is no nation according to Benedict Anderson in his book Imagined Community, nation is nothing but an imagined community. Ethnicity posits a common bond to unite people as a group by retaining one’s custom, tradition, language. However, it is necessary to be proud of one’s own identity without being hostile to other’s. In recent times, India has been facing conflict situations arising out of various ethnic issues related with the assertion of ethnic identity. Because of the feeling that their interests are being threatened by others or feeling of negligence or ethnocentrism or political conspiracy that’s why various ethnic groups try to assert themselves and often take recourse either in a way of democratic movements or armed insurgency. Such tendencies pose threat to nationalism and federalism and interfere in the development of the country.

North-east region, a homeland of different culture and ethnic group of people has been in the news for the conflict and insurgency problems which have defined solutions in the last three decades. The North-eastern states are augmented with problems which are mainly political, linguistic and ethnic in character. The demand of identity has become a form of struggle in the politics of the North-east. In my article I want to present one of the major forms of struggle in the politics of the North-east. In the contemporary context and i have used reference books for this purpose.

Abstract: The Koch rajbongshis have been residing in assam and west bengal since a long time back. The aim of this paper is to highlight how their culture, language and rituals face a threat from the bigger political and linguistic communities. They find that their very existence is threatened and they are gradually losing ground in their own land. This paper seeks to explore how they have reached a regressive stage in the context and i have used reference books for this purpose.

Keywords: Koch, Rajbongshi, Regressive Stage

A glance at the richness of the Koch’s language:
The homeland of this ancient tribe includes from korotuwa river emerging from Himalayas towards Jalpaiguri to Rangpur (present Bangladesh), Dinasishpur, Bogura, Malda, Koch bihar, kirat, Bhutan and Assam. Koch Rajbonshi had their own history, own kingdom. The assamese nation is highly indebted to the Koch kings for its language, literature, culture and arts. The Koch-rajbongshi language is a rich language inheriting nothing from outside sources. The language was being practiced in their own territory mainly in king’s court. The language was neither the part of Sanskrit language nor forming the pre-vedic age. It was totally a locally appropriated language evolving among its native Rajbongshi people. It is an indication of a rich heritage that truly advances and full of intellectuality. Modern Assamese literature inherited many traits from Koch language and we can say it proved to be a guide for the Assamese language as well as Bengali language. Grierson says “when we cross the river Brahmaputra coming from Decca, we meet a well marked form of speech in Rangpur and the districts to its north and east. It is called Rajbongshi to the eastern branch, has still points of difference which lead us to class it as a separate dialect. The dialect of the western and south-eastern Goalpara in Assam is purely “rajbongshi”. But many a time this language due to its close affiliation with Bengali language has faced threat and there are still evidences that writings of Koch’s has been taken by many Bengali writers such as ‘morishmoti’ or ‘moinamoti’ song which was originally written in Rajbongshi language by a Bengali writer Gopichandra who also translated it. In case of equality and status neither two of these language...
can be judged. It cannot be questioned regarding their adaptation. But this type of adaptation from different other groups rajbongshi language is being in threat. Historians as well as central and state government didn’t pay any attention towards the diminishing state of rajbongshi language due to which its equality, status, value goes towards downfall. Not giving the certificate of its authenticity and prominence in the history of North-east, Koch people are given the category of minorities a kind of betrayal provided to them but the fact lies that this group existed much before than any other ethnic group and had a large heritage. “Koches amalgamated to form more than seventy lakh but they had been put into deep slumber of ignorance”.

The present degraded condition of the once civilized and powerful koches of Eastern India are ascribed to the unholy exploitations by the privileged classes, mostly hailing from the vested interest of upper class Hindus. As a result great and historic koches are now divided into scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, or backward amongst OBC by the Indian government during the post independence period. ‘ the downfall of the koches in general can be well summarized in the language of great research scholar of late Nagendra Nath Basu, Sridanta Varidhhi and many more. According to J.D.Anderson “the language of the koches, the dominant and ruling tribe in the great koch kingdom, which survived, with something of its ancient prestige and power……. It would seem then that the language spoken in the ancient Koch kingdom which extended from the Himalayan to the Bay of Bengal. A careful measurement …..ought to show how far the Koch element still persisted…..”

No knowledge is worthy unless reinforced by history, which is a reservoir of information, events, consequences, individuals, society, nation. It is really surprising that koches don’t have any history though there are plenty of raw materials lying scattered in Vedas, Purans, tantras, Bhagawat, Ramayana, Mahabharata. It is worth to mention that during the reign of king Vishwasingha(1553. AD) translated Mahabharata into Koch-rajbongshi language. Translated 10th stanza of Bhagawat in Koch language “ukha porinoyor kaiboy”. Other includes “giti Ramayana”, “monosha mangal”, Tantras of great kamakhya temple in Assam was written in Koch language. These were some notable works which one can site, many lost, some thrived.

Not giving prominence to this language caused a great harm to its culture. In the coming generation which lacks the leadership quality all fighting for their own beings would leads to a chaos type situation. But where leadership calls there always comes a great man and such name is late Sri Ambikachoron Choudhury who is referred as the father of Koch-rajbongshi group. This man went though many detailed works and came up with new evidence and bringing a systematic study of the language. The notable work of King Chilarai’s “ Saravati Tika” was brought into literary canon by him which was on the verge of its extinction due to lack of appropriate literary projection. Composed more than 32 books on the history and culture of his land. Sri choudhury’s book can be referred as the guide towards the koches. Being awarded with ‘Chilarai award’ ‘Mehendra Koron award’, titled with ‘Kamata Ratna’ he fought for the language and rethinking in reconstructing the history of Koch-rajbongshi.

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