

Ethnicity, Religion and Nation Building Process in India: Colonial and Post Colonial Northeast Indian Profile

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The task of nation building was one of the foremost concerns of the newly independent post-colonial countries of the third world. The problem of building a nation through formation of national identity became a priority agenda for them as they have only recently emerged as a state and often comprised of some multi-social and multi-national colonies of one or many European power.

It is more acute among the newly independent states as they contain within their boundaries a number of culturally distinct and ethnically different nationalities most of whom have a tendency to maintain their socio-cultural identity in India the formation of nation state was considered central to its anti-imperialist programme during the freedom movement. It was considered imperative for national freedom and equality. But this desire goal has remained greatly unfulfilled during the post independent period.

As a result a number of identity movements have sprung up among the various ethnic groups mainly in the Northeast India where a large number of tribal group of people live. In this paper an attempt is made to discuss these movements perceived as a threat to or a reversal of the process of nation building being pursued in the country.

In this paper an attempt is made to understand this process and its inherent conflicts in the light of the various ethnic movements in the Northeast India. It is mainly reflective, but analyses the on-going political process of the region. The aim of this paper is to take northeast India as a test case to find out the interrelation between ethnicity, religion and the identity question in the region.