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The Itinerary of Genocide on Adivasi in Assam

Depriving the Tea Tribe of Assam from their legitimate rights along with frequent attack by the insurgent within their adivasi areas – show a spark of genocide

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Abstract

Depriving the Tea Tribe of Assam from their legitimate rights along with frequent attack by the insurgent within their adivasi areas – show a spark of genocide. But the government has failed to protect their rights and security from the process of genocide. Since several decades, the frequency of attack is increased over adivasi on the Bodoland areas. In this articles focus gone to the recent attack on adivasi in 2014 by the Bodo militant groups. Again, tried to find out what is the leading cause behind such frequent attack. This article argued that it is a process of genocide of Adivasi by depriving them from their ST status along with frequent attack in the BTAD areas. Also, this article explore how the civil society and state response toward such violence. Finally discuss about the threat of emerging new insurgence group from young adivasi against such deprivation.

Key Word: Adivasi, BTAD, Genocide, Civil Society, State, Insurgence groups.

What happened on the dangerous day of December 23,2014 bloodshed on adivasi community in Kokrajhar and Sonitpur district shows the attempt of genocide on adivasi community only for the aspiration of separate state . The state government was failed to give safeguard of Non-Bodo within the BTAD areas. The hardhearted tactic in which ill-fated adivasi villagers living in isolated bordering areas of India-Bhutan border and Assam-Arunachal Pradesh boundary areas of Kokrajhar and Sonitpur districts of Assam stood vulnerable to prowling heavily armed National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Songbijit radicals who were anxious to show off their forte to state, strengthened operation against them by the Assam police and the army of late. While it is true that the violence which show brutality of insurgent in intension to genocide of adivasi from the BTAD areas by killing least 81 persons, including 26 women 18 innocent infants in December 23,2014. Over 2.10 lakh people are sheltering in 140 relief camps in the four districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Sonitpur and Udalguri. Around 50,000 of the inmates are infants, (The Assam Tribune, December 30, 2014). In Assam history, this frequent attack on adivasi community is being seen the cause of genocide of Tea Tribe from Assam by taking the advantage of innocent and isolation from mainstream society .For once, civil society condemned this

bloodshed and criticizes the state for its failed of control the insurgency activity along with depriving them from their cheap ration in adivasi areas. Again, the Army staged a flag march in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar district, while more forces were deployed in other districts of BTAD areas to prevent growth of violence into a communal riot. Yet again, Union Minister, Rajnath Singh took stock of the situation in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar district in presence of Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. He asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to investigate the carnage. On the other hand, NDFB-S throughout an e-mail to the media repudiating its connection in the killings. But, NDFB(s) has blamed the "third party" for carrying out the attack.

Trigger of Violence on Adivasi: The current attack of the BTAD areas and crime of state against adivasi warrants an attempt of genocide of avivasi in Assam. For the meantime, in the central list, the “tea garden labourers and Ex-tea garden tribes” are classified as other backward classes (OBCs) and they are divided into 96 ethnic groups. Through the frequent killing of Non-Bodo in BTAD areas by the militant and politicization of this killing by the leader of different political party show the spark of Genocide of Non Bodo from the BTAD areas only for the aspiration of separate state. Because some areas of the BTAD are inhabited by a significantly large number of Non-Bodo who constitutes over 73 per cent of the BTAD’s population. Secondly, within the territorial separation of the BTAD, the areas of kamatapur are overlap. Again, adivasi of Assam demanding the ST status in Assam who’s number is 2.5 to 3 million and if they add with the total ST population 3.3 million, then the latter would come to constitute around 50 per cent of the total ST population, thereby making it the largest single group in Assam. This would bring about a major change in the existing power equations of the state and is bound to be resisted by those communities which are now listed as STs. At present out of the 126 assembly seats, 22 are reserved for STs and scheduled castes. But if the adivasis secure scheduled status, then there is the possibility that an additional 26 constituencies will become reserved. Meanwhile, the supporter of BTAD fears the fact that if the Adivasis are given ST status then their site would divide from out of thirty of the 40 seats in the Bodoland Territorial Council and it will become hinders for Bodo to demand of separate Bodoland state. Subsequently, the majoritarian Non Bodo inhabitants become an obstacle for the aspiration of separate state for pro-autonomy group. Hence by means of frequent attack on Non-Bodos in their parental land, the militant groups try to compel for escape from BTAD areas. Over again, All Assam Student Union has already articulated its support along with the AAASA and the AATSA for the adivasi demand of ST status. In the meantime, there were severe clashes between adivasis and Bodos emerge up which killed and injured thousands of people while over a lakh of people were displaced from their households by demanding the Bodo leadership the adivasis is not inhabitant of Assam and cannot entitlement to be ST status to this region. (Misra, 2007)

The Process of Genocide of Tea Tribe: Among the influential sections of Assamese society the inbuilt prejudices and perceptions about the tea labour community are still very much extant along with the management actively averting tea workers from mixing with the

local population. The tea estates are positioned in the geographically insulated areas from the main stream society. Meanwhile, most of the villages set up on the border of the Naga Hills are populated by marginalized sections of society consisting mainly of adivasis or tea tribes as well as some local Assamese and Nepalese settlers. They become homeless attacks on the villagers, kidnappings and extortions of money from the Naga militant and it became the feature of areas without support of proper security. Nearby 150 years ago after they were forcefully taken from the states of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, West Bengal and Orissa, have been abutting state subsidized crimes since independence of India and at the same time they had been relishing their rights and freedoms before there were states called 'India' or 'Assam'. But after formation of state the adivasis instigated with the execution of the Indian constitution, which deprived of them their status as "Scheduled Tribe" however they had been enjoying the same right throughout British rule. Consequently, inhuman behavior was executed on them by the state as well as local people and them whichever narrowed to the tea-leaf, which they plucked, or as migrated workers.

Nevertheless, offenses were meted out to the adivasis on a large scale since 1996 in forms of ethnic cleansing with Bodo, wherever 10,000 adivasis had been killed, thousands of them were injured and more than 200,000 were made homeless and bound to live in the relief camps for more than 15 years. The adivasi lands were captured by the Bodos and they didn't get it back which put them in livelihood crisis. Consequently, the adivasis started migrating to the metro cities and other states in search of livelihood. The youth who migrate to the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kerala, work as home servants and labourers. Similarly, on November 24, 2007, about 5000 adivasis together with of men, women and children were attacked in Beltola of Guwahati while they were joining a peaceful march in petition of Schedule Tribe 'Status'. They were attacked by the local people of Beltola including shopkeepers. So, 300 Adivasis were cruelly injured, hit by bamboos, iron rods and bricks. More than one dead, women were raped and a teenage girl Laxmi Oraong was exposed, chased and kicked. The police either persisted voiceless spectators or joined the troop in cruelty. However, instead of protecting the Adivasis, the government justified the brutalities and laid the blame on the adivasi organizations. It has also been increasing offenses against them by carrying on eviction moves, (Dungdung, 2011).

There are also cases of trafficking of huge numbers of women and children. In the same way, rendering to the Forest Rights Act 2006, the Adivasis are enabled to entitlement their rights on the forest land which they enjoy before December 13, 2005. However, the adivasis of Assam are denied their rights under the FRA as well. Notwithstanding that, the forest department hurled a removal move and had deployed the forest security force for removing the adivasis situated in the Lungsung forest areas. In this process, the forest protection force burnt 59 villages on October 30-31, 2010 and 8 villages were burnt again on November 22, 2010. Houses, clothes, and stored food grains were burnt down to ashes. In the move not a single house was safe. Therefore, 7013 adivasis together with 3869 adults and 3144 minors belonging to 1267 families were affected and out of them 3330 are males and 3683 are

females. The most recent attack on adivasi killed more than 82 persons and once more displays the brutality of insurgent in BTAD areas on Non-Bodos.

As Subhash Gatade, (2014)) emphasized that

“At the heart of these riots lies the unresolved question of Bodoland: how to grant rights to the historically marginalised and dispossessed Bodos in Assam, so that the rights of other communities like the adivasis and the Muslims of immigrant origins, who are even more marginalized, are not compromised? The problem is that political deals initiated by state are never substantial and end up satisfying none. On the one hand, since other communities are not taken into confidence and are kept outside of the whole process breeding further discontent, and on the other, even the ‘deal making organisations’ realize the futility of the arrangement and thus, the cycle of demand-making and arms-taking begin again. There should be a revision and reworking of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Accord under which BTAD came into existence and is governed; so that democratic aspirations of all communities in the BTAD are upheld and get realized.”

Now the question is when the state wake up against this and is it become a discourse of livelihood for some section of politician through the political blame game and how much government expressed a total indifference to the sufferings of these marginalized communities in the hand of militants? .

Role of Civil Society and State: There is no evidence that the state and civil society nurse any strong fondness with the adivasi community. By giving some eatables, utensils, clothes, medicines and tarpaulins, the government left them alone .The majority of Assamese do not know much about the adivasi community and their origin. Despite the fact of underprivileged and depriving situation, demand for ST status has continuously opposed by state and several group of Assam only because of their personal benefited. There after violence, along with government, the civil society has been condemned and derives out for proper care of the injured and punishment of the guilty demanded with one voice. This protest, Marches, demonstrations and vigils have spontaneously articulated the sense of outrage of the conscious sections of society. But after few days the situation becomes normal without any result. The recent withdrawal of free ration from adivasi areas reflects the same negligence attitude of Government. By immediate effect, they give assurance to help everything from deploying additional Armed Police Force to release of fund like this time as the Health and Family Welfare Department has released an amount of Rs 5, 00,000 to meet any emergent situation. Nineteen additional 108/102 ambulances (seven in Sonitpur, three in Kokrajhar, five in Udalguri and four in Chirang) have been deployed and two additional Sanjivani vehicles each have been sent to Kokrajhar and Sonitpur. In the meantime, the Government of India is planning to request Myanmar Government to allow Indian Army personnel to operate in their territory of the neighboring country against NDFB(S) and other militant groups of India. Temporarily, the government Sanctioned ex-gratia relief of Rs two lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased of death and Rs 50,000 to each of the seriously injured. Regardless of the Bonded Labour Abolition Act of 1976,

adivasis still form a significant percentage of bonded labour in different parts of country. Notwithstanding the positive political, institutional and financial pledge to tribal growth, there is at the moment a large scale displacement and biological weakening of adivasi communities, a rising loss of hereditary and cultural assortment and obliteration of a funny resource base foremost to rising trends of decrease forests, disintegrating fisheries, increasing joblessness, starvation and conflicts.

In an interview on Doomne Tea garden of Baksa district in 27 December, 2014, the ground reality of Tea Estate came out. In my study, I realized that the present wretched condition of the tea worker can be gauged from the fact that the cent percent respondent denies any implementation of the provisions of legislations such as the Assam Tea Plantation Act of 1951 and the Assam Plantation Rules of 1956. People saw their death of relative in front of their eyes due to lack of decent treatment. Meanwhile, C.R. Bijoy (2003) words that

“The adivasis have preserved 90% of the country's bio-cultural diversity protecting the polyvalent, pre-colonial, biodiversity friendly Indian identity from bio-cultural pathogens. Unnecessary and indiscriminate demands of the urban market have abridged Adivasis to raw material collectors and breadwinners. Now, state compelled the Adivasi to seepage through development induced migration from one to other adivasi areas and sometime has to ferocious conflicts as between the adivasi and the Bodo in Assam”.

Is Another Insurgent Group Emerging?

Nonetheless shoddier condition is the fate of the ex-tea garden workers who have established mostly in and around the tea gardens. The movement of adivasi for their ST present rise seems like to be the start of an extensive brawl for fortifying the rights and self-esteem of a people who have grieved some of the worst forms of squalor and who still continue to work in an atmosphere of modern slavery. Now the question is that to what extend the adivasi tolerate the attack of militancy and the depriving situation created by state and are it cause to become the strong base of Maoist in Assam? Meanwhile, the adivasis also come close to the Maoists only because they fingered there was social affinity—they belonged to the same stock somewhere that Maoism in India is primarily a 'tribal insurgency'. Rendering of the Security sources conversant that Maoists have already set up a grid in five districts of Assam; namely: Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Golaghat. Several Maoists cadres were killed in encounter with security armed forces in Sadiya area of eastern Assam's Tinsukia district last year when surveillance against Maoists activities was mounted in Assam following intelligence inputs. Again, The NIA also filed the first chargesheet in the special court in Guwahati on May 21, 2012 and an additional chargesheet was filed on December 19, taking to light many evidences about Maoist actions in the region. In the meantime, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has in fact gone to the extent of suing that Pakistan's exterior intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, was helping Maoists in the Assam. (Chauhan, February 23, 2012).

Conclusion: It shows depress by continuous erosion of any form of civil justice in Assam. This process of genocide on adivasi is known in the history of Assam as “State create genocide of Adivasi” by showing lack of intension to save them through violating their legitimate rights from their Forest Rights Act 2006, Scheduled Tribe (ST), providing free ration, the minimum wages along with basic facilities including drinking water, sanitation, health facilities, road, electricity, etc. In fact, state should be enforced to discrimination them by treating as outsiders and called by using derogatory names i.e. coolie-Bengali. This derogatory attitude of State is sufficient for insurgent to make pliable target on adivasi for demonstration their supremacy on deploying Armed forces.

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