

MIGRATION AND IDENTITY: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC, EDUCATION AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY GROUP IN THE BORDER STATES OF ASSAM AND MEGHALAYA

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Abstract: The term community is one of the most elusive and vague concepts in Social Science and is now largely used without a specific meaning. At the minimum it refers to a collection of people in a geographical area. Community is formed when people have a reasonably clear idea about those who have something common with them and those who have not. Communities are essentially mental constructs formed by imagined boundaries between groups [Engineer, 2006: 71-72]. Any community with a shared cultural history and tradition tends to create a 'we feeling' among its members [Banu, 2006: 312]. Here, the concept is used to mean a group of people who share a common set of spiritual beliefs, ways of life, religious rituals and practices. Migration of the Muslim minority group to the border area of Assam and Meghalaya in the Amtola village it have bring up to a newly migrants community consisting of people who belong from different native places. After migrated into the same destination it has brought a positive impact to the downtrodden Muslim migrant's community to improve their socio-economic, Political and education life among them. Presently this area has become one of the dominant Muslim migrant's communities. The village Amtola it have one Muslim Madras a School have been recently set up for which young Muslims children they are send to this schools to get education on their Muslim religion. The bonding, among the Muslims migrants has created the community a sense of unity, brotherhood, identity and cooperation.

Key Words: Muslims Migrants; Community; Identity; Religion; Assam, Meghalaya.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Migration is an important human action and a sharp demographic device among three major factors bringing changes in growth and distribution of population. Migration from one community or region to another not only affects to the size of population but it exerts a great influence on the composition of population both at the place of origin and destination, if this in-migration or out-migration is selective of the people with particular socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Thus, the movement of people from one place to another is an important phenomenon bringing changes in the distributional pattern of population growth and composition by modifying existing spatial patterns of human organization and by creating new ones. This redistribution of population may create a number of socio-economic, cultural and political problems for both the sending and receiving areas, if migration brings disequilibrium in the existing man-resource relationship and population composition. It may also solve these problems by regulating and minimizing disequilibrium between population and resource distribution as well as maintaining a demographic, socio-economic, cultural and political balance among diverse communities in a country.

By nature, man is regarded as a social and political being. In an organized society, though individuals come together on the basis of language, race, religion, caste, class, occupation, region and culture, certain other factors determined on the basis of birth or even choice like race, caste and religion, provide, more or less, a primary and in most cases a permanent identity which help in community building. Of these, religion has various manifestations as a social institution, as a cultural practice and as a pattern of beliefs [Badi and Badi, 2003:109]. It is also a set of ideas and values. In this role, religion is a source of inspiration and moral discipline for many of its followers. Indeed, it is inconceivable without a community [Puri., 2007: 116].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Belonging to a minority depends upon where one lives, how much power and status one has and one's sense of community threat. A people who do not share what they regard as the central symbols of the society invariably view themselves a minority. It is not simply that a community lacks power but rather that the symbols of authority, the values that are propagated from the center, and the culture that emanates from the centre are viewed as not theirs. To members of a minority community sharing may be no less important than power sharing (Weiner 1997:242 – 243).

The 'minority' is a very complex and complicated concept in social science literature. It is very difficult to reach in a general theory of minority which is applicable to the whole world. Because of this in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, 1948, no special article dealing with the protection of minorities could be included. After much deliberations, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities prepared a draft article on the rights of a person's belonging to minorities which was adopted as Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (Chandra 2004:265-266).

In India, Muslims are an integral part of its democratic system. Indian constitution has recognized only two kinds of minorities - religious and linguistic. At present, Muslims are the largest religious minority group in India comprising 1; 5 per cent of total population (Census of India, 2001). One third of world's Muslim population lives in India.

In contemporary India, Muslim Indians constitute a backward class by the national accepted parameters. Within the Muslim community there are wide socio-economic diversities (Shahabuddin 2002:21). During last six decades after independence, no special policies have been taken to uplift this backward community. On the other hand, the government has been distinguishing between the political principles ;minority relevant for protecting cultural identities and the social principle backwardness to deal with issues of justice and equity (Hasan 2005 :47)

It is only when a particular minority grows into a sizeable group that it becomes aware of identity issues. The numerical strength of Muslims in Assam is continuous increased. The Muslim population of Assam has already increased from 5 per cent in 1911 to 30.92 per cent in 2001 (Census of India Reports). This increasing numeric strength of the Muslims in Assam has made the community more conscious of its socio-religious and political identity. The perennial controversies regarding the Muslims in the state like unnatural growth of population, Muslim immigration from Bangladesh, the Islamic militancy etc. have also made the community alert and conscious of becoming united and to establish its community identity strong in politics of the state.

There are many evidences (e.g. Rogaly et. al. 2001, Janarth 2004) where children of school going age migrate with their parents or relatives missing their school at the place of origin. They neither have access to school at the destination nor at the place of origin. When they return to school at their source locality there may be too little possibility that they could catch what was going on in the class. The concern of the above discussion is unlike this type of migration. Here the children hardly migrate and even if they migrate it is for very short period compared to the other kind of migration discussed before in this section and they migrate for earning a wage unlike many other studies (such as Rogaly et. al. 2001, Srivastava and Sasikumar 2005) where children accompany their parents primarily to take care of the younger siblings or help their parents to gain the more volume of work or do nothing. Therefore, although there is very little possibility of children to miss school yet there may be various kinds of impact of temporary migration on child education and this is often very complex.

Muslims of India since Partition by Balraj Puri (2007) identifies two divergent trends among the Muslims in pre-independent India represented by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, respectively. The second stream supported by leading religious institutions like Darul Uloom, Deoband, and Jama-et- Ulama Hind was part of the Indian Freedom Movement , though it did not enjoy the popularity of the other stream led by Jinnah. The author also rightly observes that even though partition created an imminent lack of elites among the Muslims, gradually a new middle class - professionals, academics, writers, technicians and managers – emerged within the community, spurred partly by the Gulf boom. With this newly acquired prestige and modern outlook, it gave an impetus to social reforms and spread of education, particularly technical education within the community.

3. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA:

This particular newly migrated Muslim Migrants community they resides in the Amtola Village which is in the border area of two States Assam and Meghalaya which falls in the Kampur District of Assam and Ri- Bhoi District of Meghalaya which is known as Byrnihat area. The migrated group they reside to the opposite side of the river Umtrew which is very well known River in Meghalaya and this Umtrew River it flows to Brahmaputra River and to the Bay of Bengal. This Muslims migrant's community has just recently resided into this new settlement. Presently they had a total number of 900 Population and 32 households they are settling only among themselves i.e. Muslim Community. It had been observed that this area prior to their migration into this place it was a waste land since only industries, factories and go down were there. But now it have been found that this area have become one of the populated area in this place. They had their own village community hall and recently constructed Madrasa School.

This group of newly migrant's community they belong from different historical background. Their native place is mostly coming from different district of Assam like Morigoan, Barpeta, Nalbari and Boragaon. This group of migrants

have shifted to a newly place almost a years and regular migration taken place. They are migrated to different place but with a small duration prior to their migrated into the present place they are working mostly as laborer or seasonal migrants in an around different district in Assam mostly in town and Cities. During in search of work they have come across the place which they were residing for a year presently to come and work in the factories they had found that this place had given them the chance to improve their life and start to live and settle in the same place since the work which they are working is permanent even though working as a laborer or daily wagers. Presently this group of migrant they no longer shifted their residents or migrated to differ places since the place in which they are residing presently are more comfortable, availability of multiple of job and they can earn their living and support their family without taking a decision of migrated to different places. Even the socio-economic, political and education have been improved to them they have their own village association and the village leader along with the villagers they are co-operated towards one another for building up the unity and development of the new formerly village which happen to be at first stranger to one another when they first migrated into this place now they have build up social relationships and solidarity to strengthened their identity and have tried to participate in all field for the welfare of the village and for the community as well.

4. NATURE OF WORK:

The Muslim migrated community they mostly work as laborers and daily wagers since the place in which they are residing it is near to the industrial and commercial areas. Job for them is multiples they work in the factories and go down as a daily wagers. Both the male and females they work in the same place. Their children are sending to school mostly in Meghalaya side but most of the youth after completing their schooling they continue their higher studies in Guwahati city few they are being found to start earning by working along with their parents because of financial problem. Rawther (1978) in his study examined the socio- educational problems and the level of aspirations of Muslim students in Kerala. The study was based on the data collected from the coastal areas of Ponnani, Taluk of Malappuram district. He found economic backwardness as the most important reason behind the educational backwardness of Muslim students. Poor economic condition forced the children to assist their parents in work which compelled the students to discontinue their studies even in the initial stages of their studies.

The market which they are dependent is Byrnihat market and 14th Mile market which is residing in the Assam side. The migrant are working they are having multiple kind of job opportunities and in this way they can improve their family Background in which every one of the family can support the family financial and they have able to raise the standard if the family living condition. Most of the migrant's laborer works are not permanent since they keep changing their job from one factory to the factory.

5. ECONOMIC STATUS:

The economic status of the migrant's community has improved. They earn in an around 5000 to 7000 per month from each family. As compared to their previous income the present payment which they are getting was much better than the past income. They have improved their livelihood and can effort to buy medicines, food, clothes and celebrate festivals, to take part in social activities etc also they have able to save money for future emergency used as reported by one of the respondents.

6. CAUSES AND PATTERN OF MIGRATION IN THE STUDY AREA:

According to Najma Khan (1986: 82) the causes of high rate of migration in villages are extreme backwardness and poverty. The overall economic conditions are such that migration is the only way of survival for a large section of poor villagers. It had been reported from the migrants that they have to take migration decision the reason is that they are living in poverty and deprivation they cannot earn and lead their livelihood in their native place. M. Koteswara Rao (1996: 25) considers that people migrate to urban centre for a variety of reasons, such as availability of better job opportunities, higher wage rates and better educational facilities. They shifted to the present place to acquire all the basic need in their life. According to A.S. Oberai (1983: 30) the low agricultural incomes and agricultural unemployment are the major factors pushing migrants towards areas with greater job opportunities. This has leaded the migrants to move to the present place because there is availability of job and employment by working in the factories as daily wagers.

In this community we have witnessed the patterns of migration as regular migration taking places sine job is favorable for them in which they don't have to move from one place to another in search of job and livelihood they can stay peacefully with their family members. In this way many new migrants coming from the same background they come and reside into this place in which presently the Muslim dominant community has been taken place.

7. EDUCATIONAL STATUS AMONG THE MIGRANTS:

Education is one of the most important characteristics of the migrants. Education in itself stimulates out migration as it raises the level of aspiration and of unsatisfied needs in the population of rural area. Individuals having attained a high level of education in rural areas or smaller centres may have difficulty in finding position corresponding to their skill and are thus more prone to migrate. Besides, one may also expect that better educated are better informed

about opportunities as they make greater use of formal and informal channels of information thus they are more prone to out migrate (Khan, 1986: 84-95)

In 'The state of the world's children', UNICEF stated that education is considering the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, controlling population growth as well as safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation. Reviews the historical context in which the right to education has been repeatedly affirmed and identifies the elements necessary to the success of educational policies. It demonstrates that education is a multilinked variable in a country's statistical profile, and presents basic indicators for 193 countries, including nutritional status, health status, educational levels, demographic, economic indicators, and the status of women and the rate of progress on major indicators since 1960. It includes example of initiatives that meet the children's right to education at the international, regional, national and local levels (UNICEF 1999: 131).

The high level of poverty and unemployment among Muslims is ascribed to their backwardness in education. For which the community is as much to blame as the government. This has been as true in the past as it is now (Zakaria 1995: 143). Most of the children are dropping out from schools young children they are presently working as labour with their parents. It was the children of the lowest level of workers, the underemployed or the unemployed, who did not attend school and constituted the bulk of the child labour force. By and large, such children belonged to the scheduled castes, lower castes, or the Muslim community. These groups represented a combination of economic and social disadvantages. In addition, she examines the strategy of different groups who have successfully worked against child labour. She argues that child labour can only be reduced when civil society and the state work together to get children out of work and into school (Burra 1995). Educationally Muslims are much worse off than the rest of population, however, next only to the SCs and the STs (Shariff 1998: 25). While the census reports remain silent-revealing nothing regarding the status of Muslims education, a few studies that are available are pointers to the backward position Muslim occupy in the field of education. Based on inferences drawn on the basis of data collected by selected sample surveys, Massey (1998) concludes that the literacy level among Muslims is on an average 10% less than the National Commission for Minorities (Cited in Shariff & Azam 2004: 53).

8. POLITICAL RIGHT:

The Marxian concept of class played a central role in the development sociology. The Marxian concept of class is linked not only to a particular social theory but also to a particular political process; the theory and the practice are designed to move in step with one another. The theory brings together structure, contradiction and change within a single framework of enquiry and analysis. According to it even society has a structure, and its division into classes is the basic feature. But, classes, whether proletariat and bourgeoisie or as working class and middle class, have failed to develop the kind of identity that some expected them to develop. On the other hand, communities of birth based on language, religion, sect, caste and tribe have maintained their identities in the face of rapid social change. This is a worldwide phenomenon although we witness it in a particularly marked form in contemporary India where even the ideological proponents of class politics have yielded increasing h to the politics of caste and community (Beteille 2007:947-950).

Politics is an integral part of the society and it arises from the facts of divers it) (we are not all alike) and scarcity (there is never enough to go round). Politics ah, arises from disagreements and conflicting interests, and those differences arise I run, a number of sources. Language, race or religion, continuing immigration, economy it underdevelopment etc. can be very common source of conflict in developing countries Differences between individual and groups provide reasons for disagreements in- is not to say that all differences are a source of potential conflict at public level some difference^ are more important than others and there will be variations between different countnes (Ball and Peters 2000 : 30-31).

9. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:

In a democratic country, political participation is defined as the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn by the people to the ruling class. It denotes a series of voluntary activities such as voting at the polls, participating in group politics, contacting and communicating with leaders and legislators and participation in party activities, both at organizational and electioneering levels. The voluntary activities and participation have direct relation in shaping and molding voting preference. In certain situations the decision for voting for a party or not-voting for it is taken as a collective decision by groups of people. The joint decision to vote for a particular candidate or party is generally based on group identity in the line of caste, religion. etc. and also on the performances and plus points of a particular candidate. In developing societies like India besides political factors, caste, religion, sex and language are the determinants of political participation [Tripathi, op.cit., 228].

Political behavior is concerned with the way in which people structure their attitude to things which could be considered as political. It is related to voting behavior, political participation, leadership recruitment, elite behavior, mass politics, populism, etc. [Tripathi, 2008: 8]. According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, the term political behavior 'refers to any [individual/collective] involvement in the political process or any activity which has political

consequences in relation to government and policy'. It includes both legitimate forms of political participation such as voting in election, activism in interest groups, or social movements and illegitimate political activities, including coup, terrorism and revolutions [Scott and Marshall, 1998: 501]. The Muslims migrants presently they are striving to get enroll themselves as the political voter, by trying to work together for the development of the village and to get identified by the Government. Since the migrated group they have decided to stay permanently in the present place.

10. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION:

Gosal, (1961), pointed out that migration is not merely the shift of people from one place to another, but it is a fundamental factor helping to understand the ever changing „space content“ and „space-relations“ of a region or country. In the in-migration or out-migration is selective of the people having particular demographic, social and economic characteristics, it will not only change the size, but will also exert a pervasive effect on, the composition of population of both the sending and receiving areas. Thus the movement of the people from one place to another is an important phenomenon bringing changes in the distributional pattern of population growth and composition by modifying existing spatial patterns of human organization and by creating new ones.

Migration is a specific type of arrangement for making the maximum use of individuals having special qualification. The special abilities of a particular person are beneficial to the nation only at certain sites, and the persons who posses or acquire special abilities are not necessarily born or educated at the site or area where their particular talent are needed. The migration vehicle carries these specialized and brilliant persons to the communities or areas where their services can be used more effectively (Bogue, 1969).

However, migration is an important human action and a sharp demographic instrument for regulating and minimizing disequilibrium between population and resources distribution as well as maintaining a demographic, socio-economic cultural and political balance among diverse communities in a country. In fact, if man had not migrated then some of the new flourishing regions would have remained un-inhabited, un-touched and un-known while some others would have become over-populated or would have become unsuitable for human population, and the present day multi-sided socio- economic, scientific and cultural development of the world would not have become possible.

11. SOCIAL CHANGE:

Social change refers to fundamental changes in the social structure, patterns of culture and social behavior [Wal, 2009 : S9]. Society is never static since it is subject to constant changes in social, economic, political and cultural aspects. It enables individuals to modify their conduct in many normatively guided ways that leads to social change [Bert and Sydie, 2002: 387]. It is assumed that change is basically the result of the operation of forces within the society or cultures [Kuppuswamy, 1990: 23-24]. Social change, a consequence of human action, is conditioned by the challenges faced by a society from time to time. Change can be initiated by Governments, through legislative and executive actions; by citizens organized in social movements, by diffusion from one culture to another or by the intended or unintended consequences of technology [Scott and Marshall, op.cit., 64-65]. Gidden suggests that change can be brought about through human agency. It is not evolutionary, in the sense of natural selection or adaptation or stages, but it is ubiquitous - the modern world can be defined as a world of changes [Bert and Sydie, 2002: 387]. Dahrendorf (1957) refers to suddenness and violent nature of radical change in term of their variability. Suddenness of change depends upon the intensity of conflict in the society [Judge and Sharma, 1997: 17]. The spread of education also exercises a fruitful influence in stimulating the process of social change.

12. CONCLUSION:

Migration is a universal phenomenon and it exists in all countries of the world. It is a movement of people from one place to another mainly for better employment opportunities and income. It has been found that as compared to the previous life condition the present life is much better after migrated into the present destination. Both socio-economic, political the literacy rate and the standard of living of migrated Muslims are much better than that of the previous native place which is considered as a beneficial effect of emigration on Muslim community. Mass movement of people across political frontiers is increasingly becoming an important factor besides births and deaths, effecting demographical composition of a region. According to the United Nations statistics reports, international migration numbered 191 million in 2005, more than twice the amount recorded in 1970 (Simmons, 2006).

According Gorden Marshall (1998: 415) migration involves the permanent movement of individual or group across symbolic or political boundaries into new residential areas and communities. Sociological studies of migration are diverse and usually form part of large problems in research into kinship, social networks or economic development. The Muslims migration has brought significant socio-economic changes among the Muslim community and to their identity. It has significantly improved the economic status of the migrant Muslims and brought positive changes in the attitude and perception of the Muslim households, socio-economic, political and also towards the education of their children. The positive attitude of the migrated Muslims has contributed to the educational development of the Muslim

community at the present place. The improvements in the economic condition of the migrant's parents also enabled them to spend liberally on the education of their children.

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