

The ‘Old’ Kuki Tribes of Tripura: Decoding the Ethnic Identity Crisis

Antiarbum Ranglong*

&

Merry Halam**

&

Gracy Ranglong***

Abstract

The social fabric of the tribals in India, Northeast India in particular, is so distinctive that it is arduous to comprehend the ground realities by using the references of only the secondary sources of data and information. There are numerous sub-tribes, tribes, communities, ethnicities, and groups having distinct traditional and customary practices, including languages, but are not necessarily identified and recognized by the government. On the other hand, certain microscopic minority tribes have a mere population of less than 500 (five hundred), like the Karbong and Chaimal tribes in Tripura, but are recognized and enlisted by the government. These complexities have continued since India’s independence. The present paper attempts to understand the fundamental realities of the identity crisis being faced by the minority tribes and communities in Tripura, with a focus on the ‘Old Kuki’ tribes.

Keywords: Tribes, Identity, Community, Ethnicity.