

Ethnicity and Power Relations: The Rise of Politics of Difference in Assam

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Abstract

Participation of different groups in Assam is structured in such a way that it creates the exclusion of some groups resulting in power hierarchy. The tribal groups of Assam started protesting against the imposition of dominant identity. The highly undifferentiated and supposed construction of the image of an 'Assamese' led to the 'sub-nationalist' standing along with pan-Indian politics. The concept of the 'politics of difference' is very much an offshoot of this new politics of representation. However, the terms of participation of the marginal communities are structured in such a way that it does not result in better institutions that could be equitable for all the communities.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Power, Participation, North-east India, Assam.