

Role of Youth Organization and Governance in Assam with Special Reference to All Assam Student Union (AASU)

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Abstract: *In present time, youth and adults plays a virtual role in governance. Generally youth in governance means Youth and adults working together in positions of authority to make decisions and take action to strengthen organizations, communities and society. As youth become stakeholders and change agents in communities and organizations, they bring perspectives, knowledge and relationships that lead to better decisions and more productive action. Youth In Governance promotes positive outcomes among youth. It teaches the skills of active citizenship such as understanding how decisions are made and how to organize, plan, and communicate. Our civil society is strengthened when youth become informed and thoughtful citizens. Young people with skills, knowledge, commitment, and experience can reflect upon the common good, become full members of their communities, and take political action. In this seminar paper basically focus on the youth organization and governance in Assam. There are many youth organization in Assam and they are playing a important role in governance. But in this article discuss ASSU (All Assam Student Union) which is a strong youth organization in Assam and playing a virtual role in governance.*

Keywords: Youth Organization, Governance, All Assam Student Union (ASSU)

1. Introduction

The state politics of Assam has been a place of increasing youth activism day by day. The activities of the All Assam Students' Union, one of the largest organizations of North-East India and government reports on those as well as, other evidences show that youth activism has toppled the state government of Assam and also forced governments both negotiate on issues involving policies affecting the society of Assam. There have been determinations in the youth organizations to change the existing socio-political condition of the state. Such activism could be best well concluded as engagement of youth in organizing people for some aspects of social action. Such activism in contemporary Assam is taking place in a political reality which centers round democratic governance of the state of India. Therefore, this potentiality of political turn and the behavior of the youth organizations might have created hurdles in the democratic governance of the state affecting the process of development.

2. Objective

The objective of the article is to examine the role of youth organization and governance in Assam with special reference to AASU.

3. Methodology

The entire article has been formulated within the historical cum analytical method of study. The work has been based on historical document and data has been analyzed in the context of the present day's reality. The paper is based on secondary sources of information. This secondary information is obtained from various books, journals, newspaper, articles etc.

Role of Youth Organization and Governance in Assam:

Youth and adults are working together in position of authority to make decisions and take action to strengthen organization, communities and society. Youth in Governance promotes positive outcomes among youth. It teaches the skill of active citizenship such as understanding how decisions are made and how to organize plan, and communicate. Governance has a direct impact on youth and their ability to influence social changes.

Youth participation in politics is not a recent occurrence but has been a fact of modern history. France, Germany, Austria and Bolshevik Revolutions of Russia are witnessed of a large scale participation of youth. In Asia especially in the nation like India, examples are there of youth opposing the traditionalism, demanding revolution in the prevailing socio-economic condition. In India, after the introduction of constitutional governance and politics of modern kind, involving popular participation, the youth had initially kept away from politics. However, in 1880, there were some agitations by students for conducting the Indian civil service examination in India instead of England for better opportunity of Indian students. On the other hand, a large scale of youth also involved in Indian Freedom struggle.

Such consciousness evident of participation of Assamese students in politics can be found in 1836 when they started a movement to restore the Assamese language which was replaced by Bengali in the schools and administration of Assam. There was also a significant participation of youth in mass movements in some other occasions; in them the young people have themselves become the initiator of such struggles. In the case of Assam, it is noted that the beginning of student movement can be traced back to the period when the Assamese students consciously made up

Volume 8 Issue 8, August 2019

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their mind for the social, cultural and intellectual uplift of the Assamese. Anadaram Dhekial Phukan (1829-59) was one of such young champions Assamese who contributed to the cause of Assamese language and literature for its regeneration which was followed by Gunabhiram Baruah and Hem Chandra Baruah. Democratic movements in Assam began to take shape under the leadership of the English educated Assamese youth, who offered their liberal and radical views in the Assamese Newspaper *Arunudo* (1846). The year 1867 was of the formation of the Assamese literary society which led the students' involvement into the freedom movement in Assam. It was initiated by the Assamese students residing in Calcutta led by students like Anandaram Baruah, Madhav Chandra Bordoloi, Julnur Ali Ahmed and many others. Another such youth organization is *Asomiya Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sobha*, for the development of the Assamese language which was regarded as the landmark in the history of Assamese language.

There was significant participation of Assamese student and youth in the national struggle for freedom. There was also a growth of leftist's organization in Assam who organized the student to a united group. In November 1939, the All Assam Students' Confederation (ASF) was formed consisting of *Assam Chatra Sanmilan*, *Manipur State Chatra Sanmilan* and *Shillong Chatra Sanmilan* with the initiative of All India Student Federation, an all-India level student Federation of Communist Party of India. Soon the student organization of the *Brahmaputra Valley* came under the direct control of ASF. In post-independent period also, we see youth launching massive movements on issues involving socio-economic-cultural backwardness.

In 1940, a student union named *Asom Chatra Sanmilani* divided into the All Assam Student Federation and All Assam Students' Congress. A decade later the two recombined as the All Assam Students' Association, which was later renamed All Assam Students Union in January 1967. In August 1967, the union established itself as a formal organization and adopted its constitution. AASU is best known for its Bangladesh. The Assam movement began in 1979 under the leadership of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and officially came to an end on 15th August, 1985 with the signing of memorandum of understanding popularly known as the Assam Accord 1985 with the government of India. Though it seemed more like a political movement, but Assam movement was considered as a social movement because of its strong basis and effect in the society and its people in the *Brahmaputra Valley*.

Moreover, it had significant social implications too in addition to the political, constitutional and economic impacts. The main demands of this movement were to stop (1) the illegal immigration of foreign nationals to Assam from the neighboring countries- Bangladesh and Nepal (2) their participation in the electoral process (3) deportation of all foreigners living illegally in Assam and (4) enable the people of Assam to protect their distinct identity. The most imported part of the movement is that it got massive mass support from almost all of the society

apart from ruling government. The death of Hiralal Patowari, the sitting member of *Mongoldoi* Parliamentary Constituency prepared the ground for a bye-election where it was found that an alarming figure of 45,000 foreigners got infiltrated into the voter's list. This was considered as the immediate reason of it and accordingly a movement was started demanding detection, deletion and deportation of foreigners from the land of Assam.

The Students' Union called meetings of all organizations which were in active support of the demands. It involved the organizations like *All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad* (AAGSP), the *Asom Sahitya Sobha* (the Literary Organization of Assam), *Assam Tribal Sangh*, two regional political parties like *Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal* (AJD) and *Purbanchaliya Loko Parishad* (PLP) and few other student organizations including *Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad* and *Asom Yuvak Samaj*. Significantly, AASU led this movement in a democratic manner. It implicated the programmes like rally, Satyagraha, picketing and *Bandh* calls which asked for greater participation of people from various sections.

AASU formed the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad in August 1979 consisting of AASU, Assam Sahitya Shaba; Purbanchal Lok Sabha. After the announcement of the Lok Sobha election AASU and AAGSP demanded the amendment of the voter's list. The election was held without the proper amendment of the voter's list and accordingly, AASU opposed the election. This massive popular movement led by youth which became successful in postponing the poll in twelve out of the fourteen parliamentary constituencies can be considered as a strong consequence of youth activism on democratic governance in Assam.

Day by day, this non-political organization grew in strength as the authentic voice of Assam which became a safeguard the aspirations of the people of Assam. To bring support from the tribal people of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills who stood aloof in the early phase of agitation, AASU set up its unit at Diphu of Karbi Anglong District and an understanding was built between AASU and tribal students union. The movement attracted the attention of the common people because of varied reasons. Assam movement was the result of the genuine fears of the Assamese people of losing their national identity. It was a mass movement which gained support from all indigenous people of the state including legal Indian migrants. The Assam Movement led by students was the biggest movement in Assam so far and the young people were able to gain large scale popular strength at different levels. The students also became successful in bringing people to participate in electoral process of Assam during this particular period. On the other hand, even in the present time AASU has been raising its voice against the every injustice towards Assam. They are ever ready to protest against the discrimination made by the central government to Assam. AASU was also seen to protest the central project of building big river dam in Assam and also any corruption that prevailed in society.

Apart from it, AASU has been pursuing lots of inspiring tasks. Felicitations of the students who passed HSLC and HS with flying colours is one of such programmes. Each year, almost in all over Assam the organization arranges such kind of programme to inspire the students.

4. Conclusion

After this discussion we can say that, in the present time Youth are playing a vital role in Governance in Assam and organizing many youth organizations. Among these organizations ASSU is an important organization in Assam and has been playing a very important role in Assam. Although the contribution of AASU to Assam cannot be measurable, they are not free from demerits. As every coin has two aspects, AASU is also not an exception. Ideological conflicts among the workers, chaotic nature of some of the members, lack of proper knowledge regarding the motto and principles of the workers, are some of the faults associated to AASU.

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