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Understanding Identity Politics - In Special Context With Assam

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Abstract : *Voluntary associations, social movements and struggles for recognition constitute a significant domain of civil society and the contemporary revival of the idea of civil society owes much to these movements and struggles. Identity politics, as an aspect of movements and struggles for recognition, is an important part of our contemporary world. The identity politics is the product of modernisation and modernity. The homogenization of Indian national identity during the last fifty-seven years has resulted into the identity politics. The nationality question or in a wider sense the ethnic question is very complex in North-east India in general and Assam in particular. Seeing development in the hills, some tribes became conscious to develop their sub-regions. Some tribes who had earlier launched movements rushed to renew their claims.*

Keywords: *Identity, Politics, Movements, Society.*

Introduction :

Voluntary associations, social movements and struggles for recognition constitute a significant domain of civil society and the contemporary revival of the idea of civil society owes much to these movements and struggles. In the last four decades, social movements have fought for the recognition of suppressed groups—race, caste, ethnicity and gender—and this struggle has a historical as well as continued contemporary significance. As Piven (1995:106), who is otherwise critical of some of the dangerous implications of identity politics tell us, ‘...identity politics is especially necessary to lower status peoples, to those who are more insecure and who are more likely to be deprived of recognition and respect by wider currents of culture and social interaction’. For the subordinate groups, identity politics was a vehicle of ‘psychic emancipation’ as well as ‘political empowerment’ (Ibid.). Identity politics, as an aspect of movements and struggles for recognition, is an important part of our contemporary world. As Hetherington (1998:22) argues, ‘Identity politics is now celebrated as the arena of cultural and political resistance within society and is often viewed as indicative of a move to a new type of postmodern or late-modern society’. There is now a need to rethink identity and identity politics as part of a struggle to reconstruct civil society as a space of non-identitarian politics and