

## EMERGENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF TRIBAL VS IMMIGRANT CONFLICT AMONG YOUTH IN ASSAM

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**Abstract:** Ethnic conflict between Tribal and immigrants in several districts of Assam in 2012 was rather outstanding to be mentioned while the psychological issues i.e., stress anxiety, depression and aggression were overwhelmed among the youth of affected areas. Nevertheless, the conflict has been taking place since more than forty years past for Bodo tribal peoples in Assam, where directly or remotely large number of tribal youth involve into it, is called social movements by themselves and community cleansing by others. The latest conflict was studied by the author to know the prevalence and levels of the psychological issues among the youth of Assam. Major findings demonstrate that certain situation of some facts during and after the clash among the youth were seen i.e., 24.25 per cent youth were impacted by severe level of anxiety and 22.25 per cent of them were suffered from major level of depression. Moreover, there were a few youth suffered from major level of aggression. Interestingly, some hypotheses framed were tested scientifically and found that there is an association between Caste and Anxiety, there is a significance relationship between caste and depression, Seniority the age group higher the depression affected, there is no relationship between educational level and aggression of the respondents etc. Such psychological related issues whether severe or major levels faced by youth are much concerned to discuss in the present world in favor of healthy emotional environment furnishing to youth group. The method of quantitative approach was practiced using non-probability purposeful sampling method where the researcher purposefully selected 400 respondents. Author expects this article will throw light into the psychological related issues of conflict affected areas, could contribute to community leaders, students and psychologists which will be a piece of helping instrument.

**Key Words:** Conflict, Youth, Bodo, Immigrant, BTAD, Psychological issues and impact, etc.

**Introduction:** The conflict occurred in ancient times; it is taking place and will continue to occur across the globe in future. Various factors such as social, political and economic issues contribute to conflict, either directly or remotely. According to Coser (1950) rightly observes that conflict is a struggle between opponents over values and scarce resources, power and status. It can also emerge from disputes between an oppressor and the oppressed, or if there is imbalance relationship between different social groups where one tries to dominate the other. Deutsch (1973) views that conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur, where one party attempts to interfere, disrupt and obstruct in some way or the other making another party's actions less effective or powerful. It can impact equally or differently depending on the nature of conflict. A common characteristic in any situation is suffering - physical and psychological. We can't ignore its impact and adverse consequences. In the words of Njomo (2006), wherever violence occurs, it is the youths who experience and developed a range of psychological problems or what we called psychological trauma. Specifically, they suffer from depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, phobias, or may experience feeling of isolation. In most cases, these experiences translated into hatred, frustration and fear. Moreover, conflicts (mostly inter personal conflicts) inflict immeasurable physical harm to inhabitants of the community. Mwhreteab, (2007)

rightly observed that a psychologically impacted person feels shattered, broken, wounded or disillusioned. They will never be the same person or they won't be able to put together their self. They feel bruised to the soul, devastated, drifted apart or crushed; isolated, hopeless, and holds no future in life. For example, they may be happy before the occurrence of a particular situation, but post conflict, their life may be in a miserable situation or they may be confronted with some new problems which will take away their happiness and hope, or they may feel they are dead within, totally different from their immediate surroundings as a result of conflict.

This study was an attempt to critically look into the psychological impacts of conflicts on youths in Assam with special reference to Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD). Since his early childhood, the author of this article has seen and experienced such conflicts even in Bodoland. From ethnic dispute to armed insurgency to fratricides to military violence - all types of violence, unrests and confrontation occurred in Bodoland for several years. The author of this article has seen how people are affected by series of conflicts and confrontations. Thousands of people were displaced from their villages and compelled to take shelter in makeshift relief camps. Many died in the course of conflict, wounded and hundreds of thousands of people were left to be haunted by bitter experiences of conflicts. Women and children, young and old, they experienced severe violence and post

conflict anxieties. The author of this article learnt to feel about their pains. The author has also seen, post violence, how people are forced to face series of psychological problems. Some of these problems call for serious and timely attention and interventions – especially the youth groups. The author of this article was constantly confronted by questions such as – why should it happen to innocent people? How can people's sufferings be prevented and healed. And, what needs to be done to address their grievances both physical and psychological. The author had no answers to these questions, but definitive these simple provoked him undertake this study. In this study titled - Psychological impact of conflict on youth in Assam with special reference to Kokrajhar and Udalguri districts, BTAD (Assam), the author of this article wants to find out; to what extent youths in the conflict zones of Bodoland, have been impacted over the years. Among many objectives, this study also examines, whether an extreme psychological impact, i.e., severe anxiety, stress, depression, impulsiveness etc cause or develop physical and emotional problems later in their life. And, whether these post conflict psychological impacts lead to further violence among the youths. Another important concern of the study is to examine whether exposure to conflicts contribute to mental illness and disorder. The author of this article believes that this study will help understand the gravity of the situation and benefit the community, the nation and people who are particularly affected by conflicts.

**Background of Conflict:** Conflict can be classified as manmade disaster, is one of the major problems of human being; it may be happened within the individual, between two individuals or communities, man versus society, man versus destiny/fate, between the government and the militant, between two nations, among the militant groups etc. *Wall* (1985) says that conflict is the processes in which two or more parties attempt to frustrate the other's goal attainment, the factors underlying conflict are threefold: interdependence, differences in goals, and differences in perceptions. 'Conflicts that are strategic are essentially bargaining situations in which the ability of one participant to gain his ends is dependent on the choices or decisions that the other participant will make.'(Schelling 1960).

Today, there are conflict and fighting between the government and the militant groups in many countries and there are many groups of Militias-guerrillas and separatist groups around the World. India is a country having a number of conflicts. We can allude to several instances of conflict within the country; such conflicts which are going on and others which have come to an end. Conflict is quite evident in North-east India states, such as in insurgency problems and ethnic conflicts. Ethnicity as an

ideological instrument has become central to the political mobilization initiated by the contesting elites to realize their political space defined in terms of Nagalim, Zougam, Kangleipak in Manipur. Such diametrically opposing pattern of political mobilizations has produced a conflict situation, or to be more precise, an "Ethnic Triangle" amongst the Nagas, the Kukis and the Meiteis. Militants' issues like ULFA, NDFB in Assam cannot be ignored.

**Conflict in Bodoland Territorial Area District:** Youth of Bodo Tribal community in Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) have been facing many conflicts since forty years past. The conflicts were related to political, historical and geographical factors. So far, youth of these districts of Assam have faced more than five conflicts. Recently, the conflict occurred between two communities in the name of Tribal vs. immigrant in May, 2012, in certain districts of Assam. It continued for days resulting into burning of villages and destruction of public and private properties. Close to five lakh people were dislodged from villages (Sentinel, July 2012). About 92 people were killed (Assomiya Pratidin, August 2012). As per the government report, there were 270 relief camps, after being displaced from almost 400 villages (Joshi, Balchand, and Talukdar, 25 July 2012). Further, eleven people were reported missing (Press Trust of India. 26 July 2012). The conflict, however, didn't remain confined to Bodoland. It also spread to outside Northeast. Between August and September 2012, people from Northeast region were attacked in cities like Mumbai (Indian Express, 12 August 2012, IANS, November, 2013), Lucknow (MSN News. 18 August 2012), Allahabad (Khan, Atiq, 2012), Pune (Times of India. 12 August 2012), Bangalore and Hyderabad (Times of India. 12 August 2012).

**Methodology:** The objectives of the study were to know the level and prevalence of Anxiety, Depression and Aggression among the youth of Bodo and Muslim immigrant ethnic conflict affected areas. The mixed methods research was used in this study, which involved qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. 400 respondents of both male and female (divided into two 14-21 and 22-30 age group) youth from tribal and general community were selected using Non-probability purposive sampling method since the study projected to the specific group. To find out the levels according to the objective three different scales prepared by experts and organizations called Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 item scale, the Major Depression Inventory (MDI) a self-report mood questionnaire developed by the World Health Organization and 5 point scale of Buss and Perry Aggression questionnaire were administered by the author.

**Psychological Impact of Tribal vs. Immigrant Conflict on Youth in BTAD, Assam:** ‘Psychological impact’ denotes ‘influencing the minds or emotions’. The psychological impact is called reaction or action velocity of the influencing thoughts, emotion or feelings that arises in youths due to the tortures and sufferings during conflicts. Some specific aspects of issues of psychological impact of Tribal and Immigrant conflict on youth in Kokrajhar and Udalguri districts of Assam, during and after the conflicts were mentioned below in briefly. Findings show that 24.25 per cent Schedule Tribe youth were impacted by severe anxiety and 29.25 per cent youths (28.75 per cent of ST and .50 per cent of general) were impacted by moderate anxiety (11-15). For the depression, 22.25 per cent youth belong to schedule tribe were impacted by major level of depression and 28.75 per cent youth belong to ST suffered from Severe level of depression and 25.25 per cent youth (18.25 per cent ST and 7 per cent general) were impacted by moderate level of depression. On the other hand, for the aggression, there are four portions. For physical violence, .50 per cent ST youth were impacted by *major* level and 17.25 per cent youth (16.75 per cent ST and .50 per cent of general) were impacted by *severe* level of physical violence. For verbal violence, .5 per cent of ST youth were impacted by major level, and 25 per cent of youth (24 per cent) ST and 1 per cent general) were impacted by severe level of verbal violence. For hostility, 2per cent of youth comprising 1.25per cent of ST and .75per cent of General were impacted by *Major* level, and 32.25per cent youth of 31per cent ST and 1.25per cent General were impacted by *Severe* level hostility. And for anger part of the aggression, 1.25per cent youth comprising of .75per cent ST and .50per cent General youth were impacted by *Major*, and 20per cent youth comprised of 19per cent ST and 1per cent General were impacted by *Severe* level of anger.

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**Conclusion:** The words ‘conflict’ and ‘youth’ are interwoven each other that youth may involve conflict directly or indirectly. “Conflicts have far more negative than positive impacts on all aspects of life in the community. Very seldom does the threat of conflict lead to positive effects.” (Louis Mosake Njomo,2006).The atrocious activities of physical torture, killing, fighting, abusing, and demanding occurred during the conflicts and it may emerge the physiological and mental related issues comparatively more among youth group rather than the other group of people as the findings of this present study support.

**Acknowledgment:** First of all, with immense pleasure, I thank the almighty God for giving me such strength to complete this project work in spite of my weaknesses.

With heart filled gratitude, I sincerely thank to my guide or supervisor Dr. Jerry Thomash Director, Bosco Institute of Social Work, Jorhat, for his constructive suggestions, valuable guidance, and efficient supervision and especially for his extreme patience throughout my study from the formulation to its completion with perfection.

I would like to express my sincere thank to Assam Don Bosco University for making this work a reality. A heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Basil koikara, Registrar, for his suggestion, inspiration and giving opportunity, especially his supporting and helping to carrying out this dissertation. Special Thank goes to Dr. Visawkarma, Research Consultant, for his encouragement words during my journey.

I am deeply indebted to my parents, their prayers, good will; endurance was what sustained me so far. I also would like to convey my special thank to the villages’ Chairmen/Secreary, teachers and students of those four high schools for their warm co-operation and help in the time of data collection for this project.

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