

ABSTRACT

MODERN STATE AND GOVERNMENTAL SURVILLIENCE THE PROCESS OF ENUMERATION AND CLASSIFICATION IN ASSAM

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The account about the colonies of the erstwhile imperial states has been given a lot more prominence in the oriental literature which was not necessarily alike to its earlier status- quo. The structural change in most of the colonies from its previous setting involved multiple advantages like economic progress, territorial gain, and various other fulfillments for the colonial states in taking-over their colonies. Colonial occupation and reform in the colonies included a complex interaction between the colonial states and the alien subjects. This intervention in many ways could be observed as engagement with the body politic of its colonies. The gigantic task of colonial project also meant maneuvering the existing system of governance, norms, custom, etc., and reinscribing its own rules and policies. In doing so, the human landscape of the colonies witnessed a dramatic transition pertaining to their resources, subsistence, societal structure, among other changes. In countries like India which was born out of years of territorial; political; or economic annexation; colonial intervention came across a diverse set-up which needed some degree of standardization. The coming of the British in India can be critically viewed as the starting point to discuss the practice of classifying the Indian society. Many scholars interestingly identifies the colonial roots in the volatile politics of community and classification.

The effort to create a standardization of the identified and enumerated castes was never withdrawn. Caste groups were enumerated only when they were sizeable in numbers, nevertheless the pursuit for huge data collection rendered unmanageable information exchange and thus groups which had fair numeric representation -Numeric Majority were given prominence in Census. Numeric Majority emerged as a crucial criterion for managing census information, and this particular bureaucratic principle is one of the most rational groundings for the Politics of Majority and Minority. The idea of majority and minority of the colonial rule in the later years continued to influence Hindu-Muslim politics and caste politics till today.

The pattern and tendency of the colonial state in enumerating the Indian population brought several categorizations in representing its communities which in turn was a gradual evolution and thus cannot be stated as a uniform process. In a society whereby deviance and marginality in its population have been inherent phenomena, territorial expansion of British State beheld categorization which goes beyond the oriental notion of caste and religious division. In the colonial project of numeric representation orientalist knowledge faces challenges to materialize standardization in multi-racial and multi-ethnic societies. Colonial Assam represents a scenario of deviance and marginality amongst its various identity groups where by bringing a degree of standardization to represent its various groups remains an exhausting exercise. In the context of Assam, the attempt to bring standardization by introducing newer classification was never really withdrawn by its later political regime too, and therefore one observes a tendency of enumerating the population with even greater categories like Doubtful Voters; Foreigners; Rejected category in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), Assam; to name a few, in the subsequent years.