

CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The study of Identity politics and Ethnic minorities: A case study of Dima Hasao District understands the major factors that lead to identity movement and how does ethnicity constitute an important factor of identity movement in the district. The answer to these questions necessitates a conceptual understanding of the meaning of identity politics, ethnicity and ethnic minorities. The historical background of identity politics will be studied which is an important aspect to deal with in context of the study.

The question of self representation has become relevant in social research. As mainstream development process tended to create social spaces of inequality, tribal communities experience marginalisation virtually in all spheres of social life. An economically unequal world has also resulted in increasingly unequal political worlds which have its impact on the life of the marginalised groups. To remediate the situation it opens several possibilities of articulating interest. This is represented in a host of movements, group cultural communities that are committed to the practice of identity – based political articulation and mobilisation.

Identity politics is one major factor. However the term identity politics is widely used in social science to describe phenomena as diverse as women movements, civil rights movements, lesbian and gay movement, separatist movements, nationalist conflicts and ethnic conflict in different parts of the world. Identity politics is observed at the level of politics of domination where identity is involved as the means of mobilisation through the quest for power. Secondly it is observed as the politics of resistance which is the politics of rights where identity serves as cohesive force for achieving internal solidarity. Scheduled caste and scheduled tribes has historically epitomised the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy of the Indian society.

Since mid -1970s, a number of tribal groups try to become effective instruments for political articulation and mobilisation and created political consciousness among the tribal which can be referred to as identity politics. It is generally understood as phenomenon which leads to counter movement to protest against oppression and injustice that is met out to various communities on cultural, religious, racial, gender and ethnic identity.

1.1 What is Identity Politics?

Identities are constructing and shifting entities which can be negotiated, contested and reformulated as categories of representation like caste, tribe and gender. Identities are created, maintained and changed as a self-conscious process of a group and its member, but identities may also be forced and imposed as a result of wider inequalities of power. Politics on the other hand embraces the study of behaviour of individual within a group context.

Identity politics may be defined as a phenomenon that arises out of shared experiences of injustice and marginalization of certain sections of the society. It refers to a process of self-presentation and self-reconstruction of groups like gender, race, culture, religion, ethnicity in order to secure social recognition and legal concessions. Identity politics occurs when some social minorities or any group feel that their uniqueness and distinctiveness are under threat from the majority group. It occurs when these groups of ethnic minorities feel themselves oppressed and marginalised. In order to secure their distinct identity collective mobilisation takes place within the group. This is also identified as politics of recognition and politics of differences. Identity politics can be interpreted as a challenge to establish norms of secular modernity and democracy. It is closely connected to the idea of oppression and marginalisation of some social groups. Identity politics implies new forms of multiculturalism, minority rights, cultural dimension of human rights etc.

Identity politics is a kind of new social movement where focus is basically on culture, social pattern, ideas and imagination of people. It wanted a change in the status of the society. It is about politics of ideology. As a political activity it signifies a body of political projects that attempts a recovery from exclusion and denigration of groups hitherto marginalized on the basis of differences based on their selfhood determining characteristic. It is thus the attainment of empowerment, representation and recognition of certain social groups, asserting their problems which distinguish them from others and utilise it as assertion of selfhood and identity based on difference rather than on equality. The concept on identity politics evolved during the 20th century when certain concepts like racial identity, cultural identity and gender identity started to emerge. The term identity politics was first used by Anspach in the late 1970s and since then the concept has gained popularity. It is a kind of new social movement where focus is based on cultural injustices, rooted in social pattern of

representation and communication. The language, tribe, religion, caste position, culture, regionalism etc are used by propagators of identity politics which help them to mould feeling of shared community and subsequently politicize these aspects to claim recognition of their particular identities.

1.2 Concept of Ethnicity

The term Ethnicity has come into popular parlance in the recent years. The term has been derived from the Greek word 'ethnos' which means 'heathen' or 'pagan' and was first used by David Reisma in the year 1953. The concept of ethnicity has been differently used by social scientists and the term ethnic group has been defined in many ways. Ethnic group as defined by Theodorson and Theodorson is a group with common cultural traditions, a sense of identity which exists as a sub group of a larger society. The member of an ethnic group differs with regard to certain cultural characteristics from the other members of the society. The cultural feature of the ethnic group may change overtime but the sense of separateness and distinctive ethnicity often continues to persist. The Primordialists argue that ethnicity is formed and shaped by deep historic, cultural, social, and psychological and, some would say, biological realities, and has an irrational and ineffable quality. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, emphasize the flexibility of ethnic ties. Ethnicity is largely seen as a social construct, a political resource for competing interest groups or as the consequence of the rational choice of individuals to pursue goals of wealth, prestige and power in a collective manner (Ernest, 1995).

According to J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith there are several features of an ethnic group. These are:

- A common proper name to identify and express the essence of the community,
- A myth of common ancestry,
- Shared historical memories,
- One or more elements of common culture,
- A link with a homeland, which will create attachment to the ancestral land, and
- A sense of solidarity among the people of the community.

Urmilla Phadnis has defined an ethnic group as a historically formed aggregate of people having an imaginary or real association with a specified territory a shared cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups and recognised as such by others. The different components of this definition are: (i) a subjective belief in real or assumed historical antecedents (ii) a symbolic or real geographical centre (iii) shared cultural emblems such as race, language, religion, dress and diet, (iv) self ascribed awareness of distinctiveness and belonging (v) recognition by others of group differentiation (Phadnis, 1990,p. 14).

Ethnicity comprises of two types – homelands society and Diasporas communities. The long occupations of a particular place are ethnic groups belonging to homeland societies. They claimed for a moral right to rule themselves on the basis of historical and archaeological evidences. On the other hand Diasporas communities are people who have migrated and made their settlement in search of better livelihood or after undergoing oppression in their homeland. According to Burgess, ethnicity is the character, quality of condition of ethnic group membership, based on an identity or a consciousness of group belonging i.e. including cultural, biological or territorial and is rooted in bonds of assured past and perceived ethnic interest (Burgess,1978). In contemporary usage, the word “ethnic” also retains this basic meaning because it describes a group of people who share some level of unity and consistency and who are aware of having a common plight and historical experience. Shared historical experiences are often founded on the feelings of relative deprivation. Once these similarities are realised, the group can then construct boundaries, where beliefs, customs and cultures are developed (Cahmere,2004). The most dominant explanation for identity politics is primordialism as it argues that the people’s ethnic and religious identities have motivated them to come into conflict. Primordialist argues that the desire for self independence arises out of the systematic denial of minority’s aspiration, goals, values and needs.

In the present study the term ethnic group is used to mean any social group who are long time occupant of a particular place and claim for a moral right to rule themselves.

1.3 Describing Ethnic Minorities

Multiple ethnic groups co-exist and the Ethnic groups are often minority groups. Ethnic group may be either dominant or subordinate. Most theorist (Morris, 1968; Tajfel, 1978) underline the fact that they believe to share not only common faith, and common experiences of discrimination and social disadvantage- all of which serve to strengthen in-group cohesiveness and solidarity and to enhance self consciousness of their minority group membership but minority people also feel themselves bound together by race, nationality, culture and common history.

Wagely and Harris (1958) suggested five criteria which describe the essence of minority group membership.

- Minorities are subordinate segments of complex state societies.
- Minorities have special physical or cultural traits which are held in low esteem by the dominant segment of society.
- Minorities are self-conscious unit bound together by special traits which their members share and by the special disabilities these traits bring.
- Membership in a minority is transmitted by rule of descent which is capable of affiliating succeeding generations even in the absence of readily apparent special cultural and physical traits.
- Minority people by choice or necessity tend to marry within the group.

The essential difference between definitions of ethnic groups and minority groups lies in the implication of a serious imbalance in power and prestige: minorities are subordinate segments of complex state societies; they are bound together by common experiences of discrimination and social disadvantage; they have special physical and cultural traits which are held in low esteem by the dominant segment of society. By definition, membership in a minority group entails the many social consequences of being unlike the majority (Tajfel, 1978, p.312). Ethnic Minority Identity mean to encompass the whole gamut of social psychological relations involved in being a member of a group that is subordinate or relatively disadvantage in the society. In the present study, the term ethnic minorities is used to mean some social groups who are long time occupant of a particular place and they unanimously claim for a moral right to rule themselves.

Identity politics is a new kind of politics that have emerged in the democratic life of the present day world which represents a host of new social movements (NSMs) for identity building vis-a-vis the political institution. It unravelled those issues that have been excluded by and from political decision. Identity politics is Politics of recognition. It is apolitical movement based on cultural particularity and focus on cultural injustice, rooted in social patterns of representation and communication. New social movements are viewed as the efforts to fight and to expand freedom. For understanding the phenomenon of marginalisation and the rise of identity politics among the ethnic minorities in Dima Hasao district the emerging new social movements (NSM) provides a suitable framework.

The phenomena can be viewed from two broad perspectives Primordial and Instrumental. Ethnicity is a natural and given phenomena from the primordial point of view. Every individual carries with him such attachments derived from his or her place of birth, religion, kingship, language and social practises which are natural to him, spiritual in nature and provide a basis for an easy affinity with other people from the same background (Brass, 1999). The core of such attachment does not evolve as social interactions but are rooted on descent.

Instrumentalist, on the other hand believed that ethnic identity is socially constructed phenomenon and the product of human choices and action. It is the creation of elites who draw upon, distort and sometimes fabricate materials from the culture of the groups; they wish to represent in order to protect their well being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their group as well as for themselves (1999: 8). The process of identity formation according to instrumentalist always involves competition and conflicts among the elites for political power and economic benefits and social status both within and among different ethnic groups. According to Paul R Brass ethnic consciousness can occur only when there is some conflict either between indigenous and external elites or between authorities and indigenous elites. Thus, the two approaches emphasis different factor responsible for ethnic identity movement and persistence of ethnicity. The primordial approached emphasis on mobilization of the groups in defence of their established beliefs and faith based on their customs and tradition, while instrumentalist approach considers ethnicity as creations of elites to reap and perpetuate their socio-political interest. In

case of the ethnic minorities in the district of Dima Hasao the instrumentalists approached bear more relevance.

1.4 Identifying Identity's History

Identity before politics by Linda Nicholson advances this discussion by providing a pre history of the contemporary concept of identity. Identification has always been politically salient, but the term identity politics is typically used to designate the political mobilisation in the late 1960s of marginal groups who fought against oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and disability. Beyond continuing the struggle for inclusion in conventional forms of the political process, identity politics reconfigured the basic of political affiliations and transformed the scope of politics itself. Nicholson's account of the pre history of identity politics begins with intellectual history. She charts the ideological mechanism that naturalise motion of character logical difference between men and women, and between black and whites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nicholson does historicize and explicates the identity obstacles members of these groups needed to overcome in order to achieve equality. Renewed challenges to the status quo by women and Africans Americans created new recruits to this social movements and the growing diversity of membership expose the emptiness of the promise of inclusion, the limits of legal prohibitions, and the futility of simply seeking incorporation formally marginalised groups. However in the mid 1960 political context also became important. After the passage of 1964 Civil Right Act and 1965 Voting Right Act, it was clear that African American of all classes needed more than pluralism and policy, in black power they found self-definition. Analysis of women's identity politics constructs a similar trajectory for feminist consciousness and activism.

Historical background of Identity politics

1.5 Civil rights movements

Civil rights movements, a worldwide series of political movements for equality started in the 1960s before the law. In many situations, they have taken the form of campaigns of civil resistance aimed at achieving change through non-violent forms of resistance. They have been characterized by non-violent protests but in some situations, they have been followed, by civil unrest and armed rebellion. The efforts of these movements have led to improvements in the legal rights of some previously

oppressed groups of people, in some places though these movements did not fully achieve their goals. The process proved to be long and tenuous in many countries. The main aim of the successful African American Civil Rights Movement and other movements for civil rights included ensuring that the rights of all people were and are equally protected by the law. These are not limited to the rights of minorities, women's rights, and LGBT rights.

1.5.1 Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has witnessed violence over many decades because of tensions arising between the British (Unionist, Protestant) majority and the Irish (Nationalist, Catholic) minority following the Partition of Ireland in 1920. The civil rights struggle in Northern Ireland can be traced to activists in Dungannon, led by Austin Currie, who were fighting for equal access to public housing for the members of the Catholic community. The Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) was launched in Belfast in the year 1964. This organisation joined the struggle for better housing and committed itself to ending discrimination in employment. They challenged the government and promised that they would take their case to the Commission for Human Rights in Strasbourg and to the United Nations.

Starting with basic domestic issues, the civil rights struggle in Northern Ireland escalated to a full scale movement that found its embodiment in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. NICRA campaigned in the late sixties and early seventies and used similar methods of civil resistance. In order to end discrimination NICRA organised marches and protests to demand equal rights. NICRA started with five main demands which include the right of one man, one vote, to put an end to discrimination in housing and an end to discrimination prevalent in local government. All of these specific demands were aimed at an ultimate goal that had been for women from the very beginning to the end discrimination. Civil rights activists all over Northern Ireland soon launched a campaign of civil resistance. Violence escalated and resulted in the rise of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) from the Catholic Community and further launched a campaign of violence to end British rule in Northern Ireland.

This was responded by the British Government with a policy of internment without trial of suspected IRA members. The approval of the European Court of

Human Rights ruled that the interrogation techniques for use by the British army on internees in 1971 amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment.

One of the most important events in the era of civil rights in Northern Ireland took place in Derry, which escalated the conflict from peaceful civil disobedience to armed conflict. A turning point in the movement for civil rights was seen on 30 January, 1972, in Derry. Fourteen unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers protesting against internment were shot dead by the British army and many were left wounded on the streets.

The peace process has made significant gains in recent years. Laws and policies protecting their rights, and forms of affirmative action, have been implemented for all government offices and many private businesses and Civil rights issues have become less of a concern for many in Northern Ireland over the past 20 years. Tensions still exist, but the vast majority of citizens are no longer affected by violence.

1.5.2 Canada's Quiet Revolution

Canada's Quiet Revolution in 1960 has brought intense political and social change to the Canadian province of Quebec. The government of Liberal Premier Jean Lesage was widely viewed as corrupt. Policies of the Liberal movement also sought to give Quebec more economic autonomy along with changes in secularisation of education and health care systems. It also sought to give the nationalization of Hydro Quebec and the creation of public companies for the mining, forestry, iron/steel and petroleum industries of the province. Quebecois saw themselves as a distinctly culturally different from the rest of Canada and the social and economic changes of the Quiet Revolution gave life to the Quebec sovereignty movement. The Segregationist Party Quebecois created in 1968 won the 1976 Quebec general election. They enacted legislation meant to enshrine French as the language of business in the province. They restricted the usage of English on signs and restricted the eligibility of students to be taught in English. Since 1963 Front liberation du Quebec (FLQ), has been using terrorism to make Quebec a sovereign nation. In October 1970, in response to the arrest of some of its members earlier in the year, the FLQ kidnapped British diplomat James Cross and Quebec's Minister of Labour Pierre Laporte, whom they later killed. The then Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott

Trudeau, himself a French Canadian, invoked the War Measures Act, declared martial law in Quebec, and arrested the kidnapers by the end of the year. Movements for civil rights in the United States made an organized effort to abolish public and private acts of racial discrimination against African Americans and other disadvantaged groups during 1954 to 1968, particularly in the southern United States.

1.5.3 Ethnicity Equity issues

The system of Jim Crow, disenfranchisement, and second class citizenship degraded the citizenship rights of African Americans, after 1890 especially in the South. However, by 1955, blacks became frustrated by gradual approaches to implement desegregation by federal and state governments and the massive resistance by whites.

Some of the acts of non-violence and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between practitioners and government authorities. The authorities of federal, state, and local governments often acted with an immediate response to end the crisis situations – sometimes in the practitioners' favour. Some of the different forms of protests or civil disobedience employed included boycotts, as successfully practiced by the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956) in Alabama which gave the movement one of its more famous icons in Rosa Parks and Sitins. Selma to Montgomery marches (1965) in Alabama was at first resisted and attacked by the state and local authorities but it finally resulted in the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Besides the Children's Crusade and the Selma to Montgomery march, another illustrious event of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August, 1963.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom emphasized the combined purposes of the march and the goals that each of the leaders aimed at. The 1963 March on Washington organizers and organizational leaders, informally named the Big Six, were A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young, James Farmer and John Lewis. Although they came from different backgrounds and political interests, these organizers and leaders were intent on the peacefulness of the march, which had its own marshal to ensure that the event would be peaceful and respectful of the law. Misrepresentation of women has been raised and a lot of feminine civil rights groups had participated in the organization, but

women were denied the right to speak and were relegated to figurative roles in the back of the stage. It was a new awakening for some female activist forcing black women not only to fight for civil rights but also to engage in the Feminist movement.

1.5.4 Black Power Movement

The emergence of the Black Power movement by 1967 and began to gradually eclipse the original integrated power aims of the successful Civil Rights Movement that had been espoused by Martin Luther King, Jr. and others. They argued for black self determination. Advocates of Black Power asserted that the assimilation inherent in integration robs Africans of their common heritage and dignity. The integration into the society which had stolen their people and wealth was treated as an act of treason by the Africans. They have historically fought to protect their lands, cultures and freedoms from European colonialists. Today, most Black Power advocates have not changed their self sufficiency argument. The black Africans arguably became even more oppressed by their own people also in a new black stratum of the middle class and the ruling class. Racism still exists worldwide and it is believed by some that blacks in the United States, on the whole, many Africans did not assimilate into U.S. mainstream culture. Black Power's advocates generally argue that the reason for this stalemate and further oppression of the vast majority of U.S. blacks is because Black Power's objectives have not had the opportunity to be fully carried through.

One of the most public manifestations of the Black Power movement took place in the 1968 Olympics, when two African Americans, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, stood on the podium doing a Black Power salute. This act is still remembered today as the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute.

1.5.5 Chicano Movement

The Chicano Movement, was part of the American Civil Rights Movement that sought political empowerment and social inclusion for Mexican Americans. It was also known as the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, and *El Movimiento*. The Chicano movement started in the 1960s and became active through the late 1970s in various regions of the U.S. The movement had roots in the civil rights struggles that had preceded it, adding to it the cultural and generational politics of the era. It did not take into account the history of those Mexicans who have immigrated into the United States and have paid little

attention to the rights of undocumented immigrants in the United States. The movement focused on the most immediate issues confronting Mexican Americans; unequal educational and employment opportunities, political disfranchisement, and police brutality. Mass walkouts by high school students were observed during the movement in Denver and East Los Angeles in 1968 and the Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles in 1970.

The movement was particularly strong at the college level, where activists formed MEChA, *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan*, and it promoted Chicano Studies programmes and a generalized ethno nationalist agenda.

1.5.6 American Indian Movement

The American Indian Movement (AIM) is an American Indian advocacy group in the United States. It was founded in July 1968 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was initially formed to address American Indian Sovereignty, treaty issues, spirituality and leadership. It also addressed incidents of police harassment and racism against Native Americans. The various specific issues include unusually high unemployment level, covert racism, police harassment, poverty, domestic violence etc. AIM in their early days was noticeably violent. Some appeared to be spontaneous outcomes of protest gatherings, but others included armed seizure of public facilities, such as in the Wounded Knee incident. In 1970, AIM occupied abandoned property at the Naval Air Station near Minneapolis. In July 1971, it assisted in a takeover of the Winter Dam, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Wisconsin. When activists took over the Bureau of Indian Affairs Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in November 1972, they sacked the building and 24 people were arrested. Activists occupied the Custer County Courthouse in 1973, though police routed the occupation after a riot took place. In 1973 activists and military forces confronted each other in the Wounded Knee incident. The standoff lasted 71 days, and two men died in the violence.

1.5.7 The Prague Spring

The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia starting on January 5, 1968, and running until August 20 of that year, when the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies (except for Romania) invaded the country. During World War II, Czechoslovakia fell into the Soviet sphere of influence, the Eastern Bloc. Since 1948 there were no parties other than the Communist Party in the country

and it was indirectly managed by the Soviet Union. Unlike other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948 was, although as brutal as elsewhere, a genuine popular movement. Reform in the country did not lead to the convulsions seen in Hungary. Towards the end of World War II Joseph Stalin wanted Czechoslovakia, and signed an agreement with Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt that Prague would be liberated by the Red Army, despite the fact that the United States Army under General George S. Patton could have liberated the city earlier. This was important for the spread of pro-Russian (and procommunist) propaganda that came right after the war. People still remembered what they felt as Czechoslovakia's betrayal by the West at the Munich Agreement. For these reasons, in the last democratic poll the people voted for communists in the 1948 elections.

Czechs and Slovaks showed increasing signs of rejection of the existing regime. This change was reflected by reformist elements within the communist party by installing Alexander Dubcek as party leader. Reforms were seen in the political process by Dubcek inside Czechoslovakia. The society, including the working class supported his changes, but this was seen by the Soviet leadership as a threat to their hegemony over other states of the Eastern Bloc and was a threat to Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia was in the middle of the defensive line of the Warsaw Pact and its possible defection to the enemy was unacceptable during the Cold War.

However, a sizeable minority in the ruling party, especially at higher leadership levels, was opposed to any lessening of the party's grip on society and actively plotted with the leadership of the Soviet Union to overthrow the reformers. This group watched in horror as calls for multiparty elections and other reforms began echoing throughout the country. Between the nights of August 20 and August 21, 1968, Eastern Bloc armies from five Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia. During the attack of the Warsaw Pact armies, 72 Czechs and Slovaks were killed (19 of those in Slovakia) and hundreds were wounded (up to September 3, 1968). Alexander Dubcek called upon his people not to resist. He was arrested and taken to Moscow, along with several of his colleagues. On 27 May 1967, Australians voted to amend their constitution, particularly removing Section 127, which had previously excluded indigenous Australians from the census.

1.6 Gender Equity Issues

With growing consciousness during the Civil Disobedience Movement, women fought for their rights. The Feminist Movement began in the western world in the 19th century and has gone through three waves. The first wave feminism focussed on middle-or upper-class white woman and involved suffrage and political equality. The period associated with first wave feminism focused upon absolute rights such as suffrage and overturning legal obstacles to gender equality. This led to women attaining the right to vote in the early part of the 20th century. The period of the second wave feminism was concerned with the issues such as changing social attitudes and economic, reproductive, and educational equality which includes the ability to have careers in addition to motherhood, or the right to choose not to have children and equality between the genders and addressed the rights of female minorities. The third wave feminism continued to address the financial, social and cultural inequalities and also includes renewed campaigning for greater influence of women in politics and media.

1.6.1 Second wave feminism

Second wave feminism began in the early 1960s in the United States and eventually spread through the western world and beyond. Second wave feminism attempted to further combat social and cultural inequalities. The movement lasted in United States through the early 1980s and it later began a worldwide movement that was strong in Europe and parts of Asia such as Turkey and Israel during 1980s but began in other countries at other time. It is widely accepted that the movement lasted from 1960s into the early 1980s. The movement is usually believed to have began in 1963. The report release by President John F Kennedy Presidential Commission on the Status of Women revealed great discrimination against women in American life. The movement grew with legal victories such as Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Griswold vs Connecticut Supreme Court ruling of 1965. Second wave feminism also affected several other movements like Civil Rights movement and Student's Rights Movement as women showed equality within them. Women's Liberation group emerged during the time. In the year 1963 the Equal Pay Act became law in the US after twenty years of its proposal. It established equality of pay for men and women performing equal work. Equal employment opportunity commission was established in 1964. Several books were published

which laid the ground work for the second-wave feminist movement. Issues of women were raised in democratic society conference and various Women Liberation group sprang all over America and other places. Women have been treated as a second class citizen and have not been entitled the full rights and privileges. Second wave feminism also drew attention to domestic violence and marital rape issues. Its major effort was the attempted passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the United States. Third wave feminism continued to address the financial, social and cultural inequalities and included renewed campaigning for greater influence of women in politics and media. The new feminist movement, which spanned from 1963 to 1982, explored economic equality, political power at all levels, professional equality, reproductive freedoms, sexuality, issues with the family, educational equality, sexuality, and many other issues.

The second wave feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s in western countries offer points to universalising claims made on behalf of women. According to radical feminist oppression of women was the core of identity politics. The black women started the feminist movement along with its fight for racism focus on challenging patriarchy and all oppression faced by them. Many women confined themselves to housekeeping and child rearing. Many women at the same time had worked outside their home and some lesbians had a history of working in traditionally male occupations or living alternative domestic life without a contribution of male in the family. Feminist claim made about the oppression of women founded in an ocean shared experience and identity were greeted with philosophical suspicions.

1.6.2 Social Changes and cultural dynamics

The Women's movement effected many changes in western societies including Women's suffrage, the right to initiate divorce proceedings, the right to make individual decisions regarding pregnancy and the right to own property. This had led access for women to University education, an employment for women at more equitable religious front. The first efforts towards women suffrage benefited many white women in the middle and upper classes. Women were able to dedicate time and energy into making change as they were enlightened with the writings of feminist thinkers who championed women's education. The movement sought to challenge the political structures, power holders and cultural beliefs or practices. The feminist movement also affected religion and theology in profound ways.

1.6.3 Equal pay for equal job

Political movements were also started by women to ensure their rights and promote equality. The feminist original focus was to own dismantling work place inequality such as denial of access to better jobs and salary inequity. However more radical women's liberation movement was determined to completely overthrow the patriarchy that they believed was oppressing every facet of Women's lives including their private life. The different wings of feminist movement sought equality on both a political and personal level. Feminist leaders were inspired by the Civil Rights movement through which they gain civic organizing experience. Black women also played a key role in Civil Rights movement. A new generation of radical young women also joined the anti war movement by protesting the Vietnam war. Domestic changes for women were also accomplished during 1960s. Rise of feminist consciousness among American women was witness with the publication of a report by the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women in 1963. The commission reassess womens place in the economy, the family and the legal system. The report commented discrimination against women in employment, unequal pay, lack of social service and legal inequality for women. It raised awareness for women's equality. In the same year Equal Pay Act was passed by the Congress and for the first time it restricted discrimination against women by private employers. Women challenge their deprivation in various work places through court cases and petitions to the congress and in the year 1968 the Congress extended Civil Right legislation which prohibited discrimination in the work place on the basis of race.

1.6.4 The Feminine Mystiques

The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedans which was published in 1973 inspired the women rights movement. Feminine Mystique was define as the idea that women's happiness and identity indeed made her complete. Women like man needed to have an identity that is uniquely their own. Women would regain a sense of self word, individuality, and individual accomplishment through education and employment. By the 1970s the women's movement was influenced by different organizations and voices. African – American families realize and argue that black women were oppressed not only because of their gender but because of their race. They believed that they have common goals but required separate organization to deal dual discrimination face by them. By the early 1980s, most of the legal battles

Women's Rights movement had been achieved but families also argued that there are social and cultural limitations that must be overcome before women achieved full equality.

1.7 Integrationism

In the 18th and 19th Centuries, many modern nations like France, Italy, Germany etc. emerged out of national aspiration of nation composed, basically of culturally and linguistically homogenous people. The west provides us with examples of nation formed out of assimilation and integration of many nationalities. The Great Britain, classical examples of modern nation is formed out of combination of Anglo-Saxon, Scottish and Irish nationalities. In Switzerland the German, Italian and French speaking nationalities co-exist as single nation. United States of America today formed by integration of Anglo-Saxon nationality with substantial groups of German, Scottish, Irish, French, Dutch, Swedish, Swiss, Polish etc accepted the languages and socio-political institution of Anglo-Saxon community, which had by then developed its own identity.

1.8 Secession Movements

Secession movement have surfaced several times in various parts of the world. Several movements work towards political secession for better autonomy, self governance, independence, sovereignty for maintaining their specific identities for achieving their goals and maintaining their specific identities. Austria successfully seceded from Nazi Germany on April 27, 1945. Finland successfully and peacefully seceded from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1917. After a decade of Tumultuous federalism Ecuador and Venezuela seceded from Gran Colombia in 1830. Several countries like New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Italy, and Finland etc called for movements for an independent country. Usually secession takes place when the minority culture is threaten within a state that has a majority culture, the minority fights to form a state to protect its own culture and distinct national identity through seceding into an independent state. Communitarian secessionism occurs when any group with a particular participation enhancing identity is concentrated in a particular territory with a desire to improve its member's political participation.

1.9 LGBT Social Movements

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and Trans gender (LGBT) Social Movements advocated for the equalize acceptance of LGBT people in society. The political goals of the movement include changing laws and policy in order to gain new rights, benefits, and protections from harm. LGBT Movements often adopted a kind identity politics that seize bisexual, gay or Tran's gender people as a fixed class of people i.e. minority groups or groups. The approached aspire to liberal political goal of freedom and equal opportunity, and aim to join the political mainstream on the same level as other groups in the society. Social attitudes of homosexuality became more hostile during the late Victorian era. From 1870s a social reformer began to defend homosexuality, but due to the controversial nature, they kept their identities secret. Following the World War II, a number of homosexual rights groups came into being or were revived across the western world like Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian Countries and the United States. The Homophile movement (1945-1969) lobbied to establish a prominent influence in political systems of social acceptability. Any demonstrations were orderly and polite. By 1969 there were dozens of homophile organisations and publications in the U.S. and they formed a national organisation. They were largely ignored by the media. But the gay march held in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, according to some historians marked the new beginning of the modern gay rights movement. Bisexual became more visible in the LGBT rights movement in the 1970s. Bisexual liberation group were also formed in several countries. In 1974, Maureen Colquhoun came out as the first lesbian MP for the labour party in the UK. Harvey Milk was the first gay man in United States who was elected to the San Francisco Board of supervisors in 1977.

LGBT movements have characterized gender variant and homosexually oriented people as a minority group. With the rise of secularism in the West, an increasing sexual openness, women's liberation, the 1960s counterculture, the AIDS epidemic, and a range of new social movements, the homophile movement underwent a rapid growth and transformation, with a focus on building community and unapologetic activism which came to be known as the Gay Liberation. Gay Liberation echoed Women's Liberation. LGBT movements adopted a kind of identity politics that sees gay people as a fixed bisexual and or transgender class of people, a minority,

group or groups. They reject society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of their nature.

Gay Liberationists aimed at transforming fundamental concepts and institutions of society, such as gender and the family. Direct action was employed in order to achieve such liberation and consciousness rising. Lesbians and gays were urged to come out and publicly reveal their sexuality to family, friends and colleagues as a form of activism, and to counter shame with gay pride. Gay Liberation groups were formed in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, the UK, the US, Italy and elsewhere. The lesbian group Lavender Menace was also formed in the U.S. By the late 1970s, the radicalism of Gay Liberation was eclipsed by a return to a more formal movement that became known as the Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement.

1.10 Ethnic Identity Movement

The problem of identity crisis is a reality throughout the world. Almost all the country of the world has witnessed some forms of unrest relating to identity issue. Such trouble seems to have originated from ethnic identity consciousness which is true not only in the case of North East India but also in various country of the world. The pervasive character of the wave of ethnicity and ethnic political mobilization were felt in developed and developing states. Some of the countries which have faced and are still facing the problem of ethnicity and ethnic identity conflict are Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, Turkey, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Former Yugoslavia, Canada, Germany, Former USSR, Philippines, Sudan, Australia, Rwanda and Somalia. Most of these conflicts involves clash of identities based on ethnicity. Conflicts and movement based on ethnic identity are increasing throughout the world and the crisis is felt more in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like India where troubles based on language religion, ethnic and caste identity are experience in the land. Violent and secessionist movement were fought for socio-economic deprivation while some mobilize themselves to fight political marginalization and exclusion.

The phenomenon of marginalisation and the rise of identity politics have been witnessed in many countries of the world. The west provides us with examples of nations formed out of assimilation and integration of many nationalities. Assertions in the form of various movements were launched creating identity consciousness amongst the groups of people. So the adherents of identity politics utilise the power of

myths, cultural symbols, shared experiences and kinship relations to mould the feeling of shared community and subsequently politicise these aspects to claim recognition of their particular identities. Thus the present study 'Identity Politics and Ethnic Minorities: A case study of Dima Hasao district' is significant as it is likely to reflect the nature of identity movement in many regions of the world and the North east India in particular.