

**ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION INTO ASSAM, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
BTAD**

**THESIS SUBMITTED TO
TILAK MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, "Illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam, with special reference to BTAD", submitted by me is based on actual work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. M. C. Pawar. And to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for award of any other Degree or Diploma of the University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Place.....

Date.....

Research Scholar

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ABBREVIATION:

AGP- Asom Gana Parishad.

AASU - All Assam Student Union.

BTAD – Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts.

AIML- All India Muslim League.

ULFA- United Liberation of Assam.

CADAGAS- Char Area Development Authority, Government of Assam State.

ISI- Inter Service Intelligence.

BMET- Bangladesh Manpower Employment and Training.

UNO- United Nations Organization.

CRB – Census Report of Bangladesh.

BSF- Border Security Force.

IMDT- Illegal Migrants Determination Tribunals.

NRC- National Register of Citizens.

VIC- Voter Identity Card.

NIC- National Integration Council.

UMF- United Minority Front.

CEC- Chief Election Commissioner.

AAMSU- All Assam Minority Student Union.

CRPC- Citizens Rights Preservation Committee.

JUH- Jamait Ulema Hind.

AUDF- Assam United Democratic Front.

PTCA- Plain Tribal Council of Assam.

NRHM- National Rural Health Mission.

BPL- Below Poverty Line.

ACGU- Academic Council of Gauhati University.

IIF- Image India Formation.

CCYM- Chiring Chapori Yuva Mancha.

KLO- Kamatapur Liberation Organization.

NDFB- National Democratic Front of Bodoland.

URPI- United Revolution Protection of India.

MLTA- Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam.

ILAA- Independent Liberation Army of India.

IRF- Islamic Religious Fundamentalism.

AAGSP- All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad.

ASS- Assam Sahitya Sabha.

PLP- Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad.

AJD- Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER-1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 AIMS AND SCOPES:

1.3 SOURCES:

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1.5 HYPOTHESES:

1.6 METHODOLOGY:

1.1: INTRODUCTION:

Needless to mention that the history of human migration is as old as the emergence of Homo sapiens on this planet. Right from the dawn of history people have been migrating from inconvenient abodes, say, like caves and jungles to more convenient places, say, like the river-side, fertile valleys etc. in search of better avenues for better survival and in the process people have moved from continent to continent if not from pole to pole.¹

Even after the conceptualization of land-ownership and materialization thereof, migration did take place entirely for economic reasons and not with any political motive or expansionist design. But human migration prompted by political motives emanating from fundamentalist expansionism, has emerged as a new phenomenon in the twentieth century, particularly in the case of Assam.²

The most of the present countries are sovereign. They are externally and internally free from any interference from another country. They have certain rules for the citizens who lives in that country, rules to allow his citizens to migrate to other country and also rules for in migrants. A person who moves unlawfully, illegally or without a proper permission in a country is known as Illegal Migration or Immigration. Illegal migration is more visible in developed countries. Universally maximum migration happened to be from poorer country to richer country, a few migrations visible from rich to poor country and because of this developed country with economic development always face migration problem severely. That is why migration is labeled as economic in nature. It affects the host country negatively, as it creates various problems relating to social, political and economy of that country. It may leads to population explosion, shortage of food, shortage of land, unemployment and political chaos etc.

The Indian state of Assam has been suffering from the illegal migration from her neighboring countries since the independence of India, especially from Bangladesh. The unabated influx of illegal migrant from Bangladesh into Assam and the consequent perceptible change in the demographic pattern of the state has been a matter of grave concern. It threatens to reduce the Assamese people to minority in their own state. Assamese culture and civilization has been the invasion of a vast horde of land hungry Bengali migrants; mostly Muslims. Illegal migration into Assam was the core issue behind the Assam student movement. It was the prime contributory factor behind the outbreak of insurgency in the state. Muslims constitute about thirty one (31%) percent of the state population. They are historically concentrated in the south and west Assam in large numbers. Yet we have not made much tangible progress in dealing with this all important issues.

In the large context of the globalized free economy, some revolutionary conceptual changes are taking place including the change in outlook about immigratory labour forces; but it is inconceivable that such immigratory labour forces should be allowed to turn the native people into refugees in their own homeland. It is pertinent to point out that the economies of a number of countries cannot do without an immigrant labour force.³

1.2: AIMS AND SCOPE:

Each country aspires to control migration to suit their domestic requirements; unfortunately not all countries are successful. Hence illegal (unauthorized/unregulated) immigration has been a cause of concern to many countries. In recent years, the fight against illegal immigration has become a problem of growing scale for many countries. The situation is much more complex in the Indian context; and the country is yet to fully realize its long-term implications. So much so

that measures to control illegal migration in India are also highly inadequate. Illegal migration (both emigration and immigration) refers to inter-country movement of people not in accordance with national laws and regulations. At the same time, accurate statistics on illegal migration are rarely available.

The unabated influx of illegal migrant from Bangladesh into Assam and the consequent perceptible change in the demographic pattern of the state has been a matter of grave concern. It threatens to reduce the Assamese people to minority in their own state. Assamese culture and civilization has been suffered by the invasion of a vast horde of land hungry Bengali migrants; mostly Muslims.

As already stated the illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state was the core issue behind the Assam Student Movement. It was also the prime contributory factor behind the outbreak of insurgency, regional political parties and regional sentiment in the state. There is a tendency to view illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam as a regional matter, affecting only the people of Assam. It's more dangerous dimension of our national security is ignored. According to the 2001 census 31% of the Assam's population is Muslims. The population of Muslims in Assam is about 82, 00,000, including about 35, 00,000, indigenous Muslims who firstly identify themselves as Asomiyas. It means Illegal Bangladeshi migrant's number is around 47, 00,000, more than the indigenous Muslims. But they are made Indian citizens by ruling government for creating vote bank. Now, Assamese people are becoming minority in their homeland just because of the political game played by the government at the expense of the local people of Assam. Though the Muslim leaders of Assam doesn't bother to label themselves as minority, but in real sense they are no longer minority in Assam because they form the single largest community in Assam. They are now playing important role in the state politics and they have a decisive role in every government. In fact Assam is the second largest Muslim populated state in India (in term of percentage) only after Jammu and Kashmir.⁴

The secular parties and so called minorities don't see any danger from illegal migration. They believe that most of the so called illegal migrants are Bengali speaking Indian Muslims and this issue has been unnecessarily blown out the proportion. They fear that in the grab of deporting foreigners, Indian Muslims will be harassed. Even after measures taken by native and Government, Assam is still suffering the same problem without any break in this regard. Both state and Central Government are responsible for this grave situation of Assam. But the state Government is busy in making policy to appease the so called Muslims minority to create vote bank in the guise of Indian citizens and the centre is ignoring or don't want to pay proper attention because it is not happening in the capital of India. It doesn't bother the central Government because they are not facing this problem; they think that it's only a problem of Assam and Assamese people. By doing so, the centre is ignoring the national security which may be damaged by these illegal Bangladeshi migrants. If the centre and state doesn't understand the problem within time, after few decades migrants will become the majority and rule Assam.

At present many districts of Assam like Dhubri, Barpeta, Goalpara, Nagaon has become Bangladeshi majority (immigrant Hindus and Muslims from Bangladesh). As a result of lack of willingness of different ruling parties at different times, the problem of Bangladeshi infiltration is still a great challenge for the indigenous people of Assam and North East India. Both the major political parties of Assam - Congress (I) and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) are not willing to solve the problem as they heavily depend on the 'Bangladeshi Vote Bank' to win election and form Government.⁵

As there is no hope that some corrupt politicians (or a combination of corrupt and good politician) from the state level would be able to do something, All Assam Student Union (AASU) should give pressure to the present central Government in Delhi led by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take some real steps - instead of just extending the fencing on the Indo-

Bangladesh border to stop Bangladeshi infiltrators from entering into Assam and any part of North East India.⁶

It has post a grave problem for the people of Assam. Even though it is an old issue it has not been tackled effectively yet. It is a high time that this issue be put special attention and find out the means to tackle it or try to eliminate this problem altogether. The problem seems to be never ending in nature, every day there is new chapter in the topic, but there is no single solution of full proof in the hands of Government. It is very important to find solution of the illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state before it is too late to tackle. For this purpose, it is necessary to find and evaluate the root cause and accordingly deal with. In order to bring some insight in this topic, especially four districts of B.T.A.D., (Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts) namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri has been chosen for the research work.

1.3: REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A literature review is a critical and in depth evaluation of previous research relevant to a particular field or topic. Its ultimate goal is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on a topic and forms the basis for other goals, such as future research that may be needed in the area. It may be purely descriptive stating where the weakness and gaps are, contrasting the views of particular authors or raising questions.

As my topic includes several vast themes such as social, economical, political and national security aspects of illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state, it is not quite easy to comprehensive review of literature. Even though there have been visible academic contributions to this area which indicate both research gaps and directions of future research that may be cited here.

The problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration in the early periods can be found in the political and historical literature of Assam. For early phase of Muslim immigration the books “Early History of Kamrupa” (1933) by K. L. Barua, and “A Political History of Assam”, by Publication Board Assam, (1999) are quite appreciable. Till the independence of India the work by M. Kar, “Muslims in Assam Politics” can be considered as best influential, but it has got some limitations too. The writing is restricted to the early independence of India. It has got only the Political view point of the Muslim immigrants. The important fact e.g. economic, social and national security seems to be missing. Some later publications by P. K, Mahanta, (1986), Gait Edward, (1983) Amiyo Kumar Das, (1982) tried to cover this gap, but all of them adopted single point of views, e. g. some of them adopted political point of view, some historical view and some social point of views.

The specialized books on the issue of illegal migration such as P. K. Mahanta, “The Tussle Between The Citizens And Foreigners In Assam”, and “The Assam Movement”, by Monirul Hussain have ignored economic and security concern of the country. Another work by K.M.L. Chhabra in the respect is also considered as one of the significant, but it is also restricted to historical examination and ignored the point’s e. g. social, economical and security.

Therefore a combined study of political, social, economical and security aspects of this topic are quite necessary. And the works by H. K. Bhattacharyya is just one of the closest of the combined study in this respect. He almost touched every aspects of the illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state, e.g. political, social, economic, and security. But it could not cover all the aspects equally and carefully to the expectation. Another work by Bijan Kumar Kunda, “Politics in the Brahmaputra Valley since the Assam Accord” (2007) contributed a lot in this field. It deals with economic and political aspects of the topic after the Assam movement against the illegal migrants. But it ignored the security aspects of the infiltration into the state. So the

political, social, economical and security aspects have to be given equal focus to understand the problem called illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam and supplemented by suggestions to live peacefully and bring social harmony in the state.

1.4: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. The basic objective is to study the strength of the illegal migrants in Assam.
2. To find out Social, Political and Economical affect of migration in Assam.
3. To evaluate the problem thoroughly and find out necessary solutions or suggestions to overcome it.

1.5: HYPOTHESES:

1. Illegal migration of Bangladeshi people into Assam is affecting the demographic pattern of the state.
2. It is greatly undermining our National Security.
3. Vote bank politics is accelerating strongly.
4. Illegal migrants are becoming majority in some district of Assam.

1.6: METHODOLOGY:

The work tries to focus the reason of illegal immigration of Bangladeshi into the state, its affect on social, political and economic field of the state and finding out necessary solutions to eradicate the same. The infiltration from the Bangladesh is very much affecting the demographics of Assam; it is affecting the social, political and economic atmosphere of the state severely.

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the better understanding of the topic. The primary data are mainly Questionnaire and informal discussion with general people and political leaders from the BTAD areas. Questionnaire distributed to different background of the people in the state, particularly in the Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts (BTAD) can be counted in primary sources. For collecting up to date or contemporary data internet was used as a source of data collection, as the books were not sufficiently updated. Thus a combination of documentary, observation and questionnaire methods is adopted for the study with a view to have clear understanding of the problem.

To carry out the research especially Descriptive and Analytical method of research are applied. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as if exists at present. In Social Science and business research we quite often use the term Ex post facto research for descriptive research studies. The main character of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. So descriptive methodology was applied to describe the situation in the Assam due to the illegal Bangladeshi migration and analytical method of research was applied to analyze the fact and information already available to make a critical evaluation of the material.

1.7: SOURCES:

Source plays most important role in the writing of history of a place or community etc. The richness in sources means writing is easier, more details and perfect. Though incase of my study, source materials are not ample, but did found almost all sorts of materials primary and secondary. Both primary and secondary sources are used in this study. However, the less

numbers of primary sources made me more depend upon secondary sources. Secondary sources are large numbers of books published in different languages by modern writers, Magazines, News papers, Television and Articles. Languages of this books, magazine, news papers and articles are mainly English, Assamese and Bodo. Most of these books just describes the situation which the state is facing due to the problem called illegal Bangladeshi migration and give any solution to the problem. There is less suggestion from the writers on this topic, which is indeed very important to solve the problem permanently for the sake of the future of the Assamese people of the state.

1.8: CHAPTER SCHEME:

1. INTRODUCTION.
2. HISTORY OF MIGRATION INTO ASSAM.
3. ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION INTO ASSAM.
4. FACTORS BEHIND ILLEGAL MIGRATION INTO ASSAM.
5. MIGRATION: IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIETY.
6. ASSAM MOVEMENT & ITS CONSEQUENCES.
7. MIGRATION IN Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts.
8. STEPS & MEASURES.
9. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS.
10. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS.

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CHAPTER-2

HISTORY OF MIGRATION INTO **ASSAM**

CHAPTER-2

HISTORY OF MIGRATION INTO ASSAM:

2.1 MIGRATION: MEANING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.2 DURING PRE-COLONIAL PERIODS:

2.2.1 THE BODOS:

2.2.2 THE ARYANS:

2.2.3 THE MUSLIMS:

2.2.4 THE AHOMS:

2.2.5 The SIKHS:

2.2.6 The BUDDHIST:

2.3 COLONIAL PERIODS:

2.3.1 HINDU BENGALIS FROM BENGAL:

2.3.2 MUSLIM PEASANT FROM EAST BENGAL:

2.3.3 BLACK TRIBALS:

2.3.4 MARWARIS:

2.3.5 NEPALESE:

2.3.6 THE BEHARIS

2.4 POST COLONIAL:

HISTORY OF MIGRATION INTO ASSAM:

The study of history of migration in Assam and defining the indigenous or aboriginals in Assam is must to understand the problem of an illegal migration into Assam. In addition it is also necessary to mention the movement of various races, tribes to Assam. As M. Kar observes, "Assam became a museum of races in the ancient past as it is situated on one of the great migration routes of mankind. For geographical reasons, one of the channels of her communication with the rest of India has been through the Brahmaputra, the Ganges and the land routes".¹The process of racial migration of the earlier stages was necessarily slow. But with the dawn of the medieval ages, this type of migration was somewhat replaced by planned military invasions.

2.1 MIGRATION: MEANING AND DEVELOPMENT

Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another, sometime over long distance or in large groups for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi permanent residence, usually across a political boundary. Migration has occurred throughout human history, beginning with the movement of first human groups (Homo erectus) from origins in East Africa to their current location in the world. Homo sapiens appear to have occupied all of Africa about 150,000 years ago, moved out of Africa 70,000 years ago, and spread across Australia, Asia, and Europe by 40,000 years BCE.

Human migration takes place due to many factors such as changing climate, landscape, earthquake, epidemics, inadequate food supply etc. The main reason behind the early migration

were natural or voluntary in character e.g. for earthquake, landscape, flood, food, etc. But with the advent of modern time these factor for migration has gone through several changes and added some new reasons in it. The movement of population in modern times has continued under the form of both the voluntary migration from someone's region, country, or beyond and involuntary, which include the slave trade, human traffic in human beings & ethnic cleaning etc. The modern migration may be of various types e.g. population transfer or involuntary or forced migration, impelled migration or reluctant or imposed migration, chain migration etc.² All through human history it has been a significant factor influencing population change. Migration involves the permanent movement of individuals or groups across symbolic or political boundaries into new residential areas and communities. There are two forms of migration: a. internal migration (movement of people from one area of country to another for purpose or with the aim of establishing a new residence); and b. international migration (movement, either permanently or temporarily, of people from their country of origin or of habitual residence to another country. International migration can be: a. emigration (people moving out of the country) b. immigration (people coming into the country)³ Population transfer is one when government forces a large group of people of a region, usually based on ethnicity or religion. Impelled migration means individuals are forced out of their country, but leave because of unfavorable situations such as warfare, political problems, or religious persecution. Chain migration is a series of migration within a family or defined groups of people. A chain migration often begins with one family member who sends money to bring other family members to the new location.⁴

Assam is located in the North East corner of India between the latitudes 28-18 and 24-N, and the longitudes 89-46-97E and it covered an area of 78,523 square kilometer. It is in the centre of North East India and surrounded on the North by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, on the west lays Tripura, Bangladesh, Meghalaya and West Bengal.⁵

The push and pull factor are the main perpetual reasons behind any form of migration in this world. Push factors are the things that are bad about the country that one lives in which indirectly compel a person & pull factors are things that attract one to another area, region or country.⁶

Push factors:

1. Not enough jobs.
2. Few opportunities.
3. Famine or draught.
4. Political fear or persecution.
5. Death threat.
6. Bullying.
7. Discrimination.
8. Lack of political & religious freedom.

Pull factors:

1. Job opportunities.
2. Better living conditions.
3. Attractive climate.
4. Security.
5. Political & religious freedom.

The pressure of human migrations, whether as outright conquest or by slow cultural infiltration & resettlement have affected the grand epochs in history and in land under the form of colonization, migration has transformed the world.⁷ The migration always influence or affect the country. Migration affects population patterns and character, social & cultural patterns &

processes, economic, political, physical environment. As people move their cultural traits & ideas diffuse along with them, creating and modifying cultural landscape.

The concept of illegal migration is the product of modern times. In ancient times migration was unrestricted; people moved from one place to another without any restriction and settled in a place which suited them best. With the attainment of sovereignty most of the modern state or countries adopt specific law, order, rules and regulations according to their needs. So through this rules and regulations or constitutional laws they judge the actions of the people of that country. Hence an illegal migration is the movement of people across national borders in a way that violates the constitutions or laws, particularly immigration laws of the destination country.

2.2 DURING PRE-COLONIAL PERIODS:

The people who migrated to Brahmaputra Valley in the pre-history of Assam are Bodos, Aryans, Muslims, and Ahoms respectively. A brief history of migration of these people is very important to comprehend the present scenario of the illegal migration into Assam. Without which the study on this subject or topic will be one sided or incomplete.

The histories of migration of these people are as follows:

2.2.1 THE BODOS:

It's now widely accepted that the Bodos were the aboriginal or earliest inhabitants of Assam. There were no indigenous people or human being living in Assam before the migration of the Bodo people. They are Mongoloid race migrated from China and Tibet at least 1000 B.C. and

they are certainly not a tall or handsome race, they have square set faces, projecting cheekbones, with almond-shaped eyes, & scanty beard & moustache.⁸

According to scholars that the original home of the Mongoloid Bodo was in the North of China in between the head waters of Huang Ho & the Yang-Tzse Kiang rivers from which they moved out & dispersed in different directions. One of the groups moved to Tibet & settled there for centuries. Thus the Tibet became their home before coming to India. As is known, the original name of Tibet was Ti-bod. It is conjectured by some of the scholars that the Mongoloid who lived in the Tibod were identified as the Bod which later changed to Bodo.⁹

According to Ajoy Roy, the author of "The Bodo Imbrogio", the Bodo a plain tribe community now inhabiting Brahmaputra Valley of Assam, along with their closely allied other tribes now known by different names & inhabiting South East Nepal, North Bengal, Garo Hills of Meghalaya, North Cachar Hills & the Cachar plains in South Assam, Tripura & some adjacent areas of Bangladesh are the descendants of those early settlers migrated in successive waves from South East Tibet.¹⁰ At present day Bodos are known to different ancient people with different names. In the time of Mahabharata they were known as "Kirtas" in Hindu Epics Mahabharata, Purans, and sometimes they were mentioned as Danabas, Asurab, Mlechha, in Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda. Ptolemy's geographical work in Greek (circa 150 A.D.) mentions a tribe by the name 'Barrhai' who were resident of the Assam region, then known to the Greeks as 'Thina' or 'Seres'. These 'Barrhais' were none other than Boros, because in history of Assam we notice a powerful kingdom of one of the Bodo community called "Barahi". They were addicted to the meat of pig.¹¹

The communities belonging to the Bodo race were the earliest inhabitant of Assam. Almost all the present day tribes living in Assam and some of those in Hill state belonged to the Bodo

stock.¹² There was no strong national spirit or other cohesive element amongst the Bodo tribes of Assam & their natural condition was probably that of a number of small communities each under its own chief or headman & independent of its neighbours which ultimately contributed to the rise of different communities amongst them.¹³ The fragmentation of this Tibet-Burman Mongoloid settler in North East plain must have taken place at different periods under different circumstances, and hence the distancing and alienation of those various groups from the original stock made them distinct from each other. But still there are some unmistakable similarities that can be readily traced in their anthropometric and linguistic features. There are at least eighteen groups or communities have been listed as belonging to the Bodo race. They are Dimasas, Rabhas, Deoris, Lalungs, Tiwas, Madanis, Mechs, Saraniyas, Hojais, Garos, Rajbangshis or Kochs, Chitiyas, Sonowals, Morans, Hajongs, Tipperas, Mahalias, etc.¹⁴

With the passing of time many other communities entered the land. There was pressure from newcomers to the land and also their own growing numbers, which made them spread out to other areas. From Brahmaputra Valley many of them moved on to settle in North Bengal, Garo Hills, North Cachar Hills, Cachar plains and the Tripura hills and plains. Some of the Bodos also spilled over to the foothill regions of present day Bangladesh adjoining Tripura.¹⁵ In course of time these scattered groups lost touch with their original kinsmen and also acquired variation in their language, customs and culture. That is how we find Mechs in lower Assam, North Bengal and South Nepal, Lalungs, Rabhas, Koches, Chutiyas, Morans and Sonowals in the Brahmaputra Valley, Dimasas in North Cachar Hills, Barmans in Cachar or Barak valley, Tripuris or Tipperas, Garos in Meghalaya and Hajongs in Bangladesh adjoining Tripura.

The fragmented Bodo groups had established their own kingdoms. The kingdoms of Koch, Kacharis, Chutiyas and Dimasas are the best example of the mighty rule of the branches of the main Bodo stock in Assam. They enjoyed freedom till the advent of Ahoms into Assam in the year 1228 A.D.¹⁶ The first mention of a Bodo royal kingdom of Assam was found in the famous

Allahabad Rock inscription of King Samudra Gupta who reigned from 325-376 A.D. In this inscription Kamrupa is stated to be a frontier kingdom paying tribute to Samudra Gupta. Pushya Varman, who was a contemporary of Samudra Gupta, founded the Kamrup kingdom with his capital at Kamrupnagar, somewhere near present North Guwahati. Pushya Varman claimed his lineage from Bhagadatta, the famous Bodo king of ancient Assam.

Nobody should begin to think that the titles of Varman, Rai, Pala etc. adopted by the kings of kamrupa point towards non-Bodo kings. As already emphasized earlier, the Bodo Royals houses had come under the influence of Hinduism and the language of Aryans. The Brahmans, who were settled in the royal houses of Bodo kings looked after the religious ceremonies, also conferred various Hindu titles to the kings. The case of Pushya Varman is also a case of an original king adopting a Hindu title. The dynasty founded by Pushya Varman reigned for 300 years and the last king was the famous Bhaskar Varman. Bhaskar Varman became a very powerful king with his kingdom comprising of lower Assam territory and a substantial part of Northern and Eastern Bengal. He had a friendly relation with his contemporary Harsha Vardhana, a great North-Indian king who ruled 606-648 A.D.¹⁷

The mention of Bodo kingdom is also found through the writings of Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese traveler and Buddhist scholar who have visited kamrupa around 640 A.D. during the reign of Bhaskar Varman and left behind a detail account of the kingdom of kamrupa. He described the people living in kingdom of Kamrupa a short stature, dark yellow complexion and as having affinities which are the tribes of South- West China. The description fits the Bodo people and also clearly points to their Mongoloid origin.

Until the advent of Ahoms the different Bodo groups had different powerful kingdoms in different regions of Assam. The Chutiyas, the Dimasas, the Kochs kingdom were among the powerful

kingdom in Assam before the invasion of Ahoms from Burma. The Chutiya kingdom was founded at Sadiya by Bir Pal. The kingdom of Dimasa was founded at Dansiri Valley with its capital at Dimapur (at present Nagaland). The most powerful and shortest ruling monarchy of the Bodo was however, the Koch kingdom, founded by Bisu alias Biswa Singha, who rose from humble origin through the dint of his courage and abilities.

Because of the Ahom invasion many Bodo kingdoms collapsed, most of the eastern Assam was captured by the Ahoms and the Bodo groups like Chutiya, Moran, Dimasas, and Koch were captured by Ahoms. The last Bodo monarchy was Govindra Chandra (Iragdao) who died in 1830 living no legal heir as a result of which British annexed his territory, namely the Cachar.

2.2.2 THE ARYANS:

The human race has been classified by Professor Flower under the three main types- the Negroid, the Mongolian and the Caucasian. The Caucasian is further sub-divided into the dark group, which include the Dravidian, and the fair, which includes the Aryans. The philologists made use of the term Aryan and Dravidian to designate linguistic families at a time when it was thought that race and language were co- relative terms.¹⁸

This so called Aryan had migrated to India three or four thousand years ago from North- West. These Aryan groups of people fall under the category of Caucasian of Europe. They were tall and well formed, with fine and prominent but not so long noses and comparatively fair complexion. They spoke languages of Aryan or Indo- European linguistic family.¹⁹ They migrated to Assam through the Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley routes from the mainland India. Actually all migration and invasions, from Gangetic Valley or North- India had occurred through those two routes, including that of Turkish, Afghans and Mughals during medieval period. The Brahmins of "Srihatta" are the first Aryan settlers in Assam. The "Kalitas" of Brahmaputra Valley claim themselves to be the decedent of the first Brahmins settlers of Assam.²⁰ They are the second group of people settled around 6th and 7th century AD. As the valley of Barak is extension of Meghna Valley, Aryans moved to this place from East Bengal.²¹ It was the fertility of this place which, attracted large numbers of Aryans, most of these were Brahmins. This is the way, the influence of the language of Aryan spread to the great Sylhet and Cachar.²²

These migrated Aryan Brahmins used Sanskrit as their language for communication, which is directly connected with proper Magadhi Apabramsha. Cultural fusion of various tribes and race among themselves has ultimately shaped the development of the Assamese language during the period 700 AD. The Arabic and Persian influence is also remarkable in the growth of this language of Aryan people.²³

The newly migrated Brahmins enjoyed a great position in the Royal Kingdoms of tribal people because of their high Sanskrit civilization. This Brahmins are the orthodox castes who cultivated various science and arts, as custodians of the sacred scriptures and acted as religious teachers. Next to the Brahmins is Kayastha caste, they are numerically predominant caste of the province.

Right after the migration of the Aryan people into Assam, Aryanization of the tribal people took place. Because of their high Sanskrit civilization and written language, Aryan people could able to attract the tribal people and convince them to accept Hindu religion. The royal tribal families were the first victim of this Aryanization. The Aryan Brahmins were mainly rooted in the royal houses of the non-Aryan or tribal kings and all the religious functions were vested to them. And due to this Aryan influence the names of royal families were changed; places and rivers were given Sanskrit names. The Aryanization was at first limited to the royal houses until 14th century. The mass Aryanization or Hindunisation of general people started during 15th to 16th century by a religious reformer called Sankardev, who was born in 1449 A.D. and died in 1569 A.D. He influenced a very great number of non-Aryan people to convert into Hinduism. During the initial days of conversion, they were known as Sarania and after going through Hindu ritual purification they were honored with the status of using sacred thread and were made into a caste within the status of Varna system. It was the Bodo people who were mostly affected by Aryanization.²⁴ Any Bodo or groups of the Bodo or tribe which accepted Hinduism was given the rank of Koch or Saraniyas. The Aryan people also conferred titles to the non-Aryan who accepted Hinduism like Barman, Pal, Mandal, Narayan, Roy, Sarkar etc. The title Barman implies Kshatriyas or warriors and the titles Pal, Mandal and Narayan were only given to the royal families of non-Aryan tribes.

The Aryan, although were small in numbers was influential social groups of pre-colonial Assam. Unlike the Aryan Brahmins of the other parts of India, the Brahmins of Assam were very much connected to the politics and administration during the Ahoms rule. As they mainly settled in the royal houses, their position was right after the king. They played an important role in Hindunizing the aboriginal tribal people. Due to this Aryan influence Ahom abandoned their tribal dialect in favour of the Aryan language of Assamese. The reason in this case is partly that Assamese is the language of the priest, who are gradually bringing these rude tribes within the fold of Hinduism and partly that is the language of a high civilization.²⁵ Now Assamese is spoken by most of the communities and tribes in Assam. But there is no such community called

Assamese. The people who reside in Assam, who speak Assamese language for communication are known as Assamese people. They may be Aryans, non-Aryans or tribal.

2.2.3 THE MUSLIMS:

The Muslims were another religious community of pre- history Assam. A history of Assam is also incomplete without the reference of Muslims history. It is a fact that neither at single point of time Muslims had entered Assam, nor the locals belonging to Hinduism and tribal faith embraced Islam at a time. The Muslims came to Assam in various manners and phases. Different parts of Assam were explored by them at different times through different stages of history.²⁶The coming of Muslims in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam was series of invasion rather than a simple human migration.

The earliest Muslims attempt to enter Assam forcibly was their invasion in 1205, as depicted in the Kanai Barakhi- Bowa Rock inscription of North Gauhati. Through this invasion the formal history of the Muslim socio-political life in Brahmaputra Valley begins in 1205 A.D. It was in this year, as per the records of history Assam first witnessed the arrival of Muslims.²⁷It was when Turkish military commandant Ikhtiyaruddin Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji (1201-1206), the first Muslim ruler of Bengal entered Kamrup- was on his way to Tibet expedition. Thus the beginning of 13th century is a landmark in history of Assam in general and Muslims in particular. The Muslim Socio- Political life actually started taking off from that time. Bakhtiyar Khili's Tibet campaign through Kamrup and his disastrous retreat left many of his soldier's prisoners in the hands of hostile Kamrup forces. When local king freed these soldiers, they adopted the land of Assam as their home. Ali Mech, a tribal chief of Mech tribe embraced Islam and became a trusted guide of Bakhtiyar Khilji during this campaign. Many of his fellow tribes might accept Islam at that time. We found Koch and Mech came forward to rescue Khilji and his soldiers.²⁸

Since after Khilji's Tibet expedition, the Turkish and Afghan rulers of Bengal led a series of invasion in Assam to further territorial limits and to repel the revolts against the authority of Lakhnawati in West Assam. It is on record that before the first Ahom appearance in 1228, several Muslim invasions had already taken place and affected the district of Kamrup and adjoining territories. During this political interference in Brahmaputra Valley Sufis and new group of Muslim ruling class entered Assam and established Muslim settlement in different places. During those successive wars of medieval period, many Muslim soldiers of Turk, Afghan and Muslims of other origins settled in Brahmaputra Valley. Some of them were prisoner, while rest might voluntarily settle down in valley. It was obvious that with the expansion of Turkish rule in lower Brahmaputra Valley, Muslim officials were appointed in different parts of newly controlled areas. Many of them might choose to remain in Assam. There were Muslim artisans, traders, etc. settled across Ahom territories at the invitation of Ahom kings. Ahom kings allowed the Muslims to follow their own faith. Some of the Muslim religious known as Dewans were granted revenue free lands generally called Pirapal lands, to settle on. Thus the long before the beginning of the modern history of Assam Muslims had formed a permanent part of Assam society.

A formal history of the Muslim in Barak valley begins after the conquest of Sylhet by Sikandar Kham Ghazi in 1303 A.D. However, the evidence of Muslim settlement is testified by the presence of Burhanuddin in Sylhet. But the process of Muslim settlements got intensified, just after the political conquest of Sylhet by Sikandar Khan Ghazi, nephew of Sultan Shamsuddin Ferozshah (1301-22), the sultan of Bengal. With this conquest a large number of Muslims belong to different origins like Turkish, Afghan, and Arabic settled in the valley, besides Muslims form other parts of Bengal and Northern India also settled down in the undivided Barak Valley. Kanak Lal Barua mentions a colony of Muslims established round about Hajo in Kamrup after the unsuccessful invasion of Allauddin Hussein Shah in 1498. This was perhaps the earliest recoded Muslim settlement in Assam.²⁹

In 1662 Mir Julma, of Bengal ordered an invasion in Assam. In that invasion Ahom King had to surrender vast territories to the Mughals. Thus the Mughals were to get more than half of the province of Darrang. It may not be wrong to surmise that a large number of Muslims settled permanently in Kamrup and Darrang by the right of conquest. The present day district of Goalpara was also a part of Mir Julma's territory. This district formed part of the Muslim dominion till with the rest of Bengal it was ceded to the British in 1765.³⁰

It is obvious that some Sufis also came to Brahmaputra Valley along with the different Muslim generals, administrator and commoners. They had preached the message of Islam among the masses through humanitarian and other services. So it is assumed that Ghiyashuddin Awliya was one of them, and along with many others, who's preaching, helped to emerge a large Muslim society in lower Assam. It can be concluded that the old Muslim society of Hajo is the result of Ghiyashuddin Awliya's influence.

This process of settlement from the outside of valley continued while at the same time many locals belong to Hinduism and tribal faiths embraced Islam. So the political conquest of Sylhet led the expansion the Muslim rule in South Assam. Even during 18th century, the Raja of Dimasa- Kachari Kingdom encouraged Muslim peasant, soldiers and traders from lower Barak valley and Bengal to migrate to his territory, i.e. Cachar.

2.2.4 THE AHOMS:

The beginning of the thirteenth century was a turning point in the history of the Assam. In the first quarter of that century a band of hardy hill men wandered into the eastern parts of Brahmaputra Valley, led by chance rather than by any deep seated design. These were the

progenitors of the Ahoms. They were an offshoot of the great Tai or Shan race.³¹ According to some writers they are the outcome of an intermingling of Mons, Negritos and Chinese. They came down from Upper Burma and Western Yunnan, where they formed groups of states. There was no collective name for those states, they were called with different names, like, the Paramount Kingdom, the home of the Mau branch of the tribe, was known to themselves as Mungmau and as Pong to Manipuri's; and the later term has been taken by some to denote the entire country of collection of states.³²

Sukapha was the leader of the body of Shans who laid the foundation of Ahom Kingdom in Assam. Sukapha is said to have left Maulung in A.D. 1215 with a following of eight nobles, and 9000 men, women and children. He had with him two elephants, and 300 horses. He moved his way across the Patkai, with a small body of colonists, rather than of military invaders. For thirteen years he wandered about the hilly country of Patkai, making occasional raid on Naga villages. In the year 1228 ultimately he reached the great Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. During his entry in Assam there was a powerful Kingdoms of Bodo group of people, i.e. Chutiyas, Morans and Borahis in eastern part of Assam. But later on they were conquered by Sukapha and had to pay a tribute to him. In his early time in Assam he did not halted more than five or six years in one place. He often used to shift his base from one to another place after some intervals for searching a better place to stay on. Simaluguri was the last place where he stayed for some years before choosing over to Charaideo to build his capital city.³³

They were worshiper of their tutelary God, Somdeo. But after their settlement in Assam they came in contact to Aryan Brahmins and with the passing of time they were influenced by the Hindu religion and that is why they used to take two names, one is from their religious belief and other is given by Aryan Brahmins from Hindu belief.³⁴ For example, Rudra Singh as known as Sukhrungpha, Sib Singh as known as Sutanpha, Gaurinath Singh as known as Suhitpangpha etc. The first Ahom Royal King to convert to Hinduism was Rudra Singh. He was regarded as

the greatest of all Ahom Kings because of his possession of a retentive memory, exceptional intelligence and power of initiative. After his death his eldest son Sib Singh followed Hinduism and erected numerous temples and gave away land for support of Brahmans and temples with all the generosity of a new converts, and because to him Hinduism became predominant religion in Assam.

The present day Ahoms are all Hindus, they also thrown out their own tribal language to accept Assamese as their mother tongue and there physique has also changed to some extent to Aryan people from their original Tribal looks. These Ahoms ruled Assam for more than six hundred years from 1228- 1828. Their rule came to an end when British annexed Assam with Ahoms territories under the “Yandaboo Pact” in 1828. Some of the great Kingdoms of Ahoms were as follows:³⁵

2.1: Chronicle of Ahom Kings

KINGS	COMMENCED	ENDED
Sukapha	1228	1268
Sutenpha	1268	1281
Subinpha	1281	1293
Sukhangpha	1293	1332
Shkhrangpha	1332	1364
Sutupha	1364	1376

Source: Sir Edward Gait, “A history of Assam”, page 417

Apart from the above mentioned major communities who migrated in the early pre-colonial period, Sikhs and Buddhists communities are also worth mentioning.

2.2.5 The SIKHS:

The Sikhs were tiny migrated group of pre colonial Assam. As regard the migration of Sikhs, there is a strong belief among the Sikhs that Guru Nanak had visited Kamrupa in 1505 and during his visit Guru Nanak had converted many people to Sikhism. It was also believed that, Guru Tegh Bahadur came to Dhubri in 1666 and constructed a Guruduwara. Guru Tegh Bahadur also visited Kamakhya temple and left behind many of his disciple in Assam.³⁶ It is also said that Sikh commander Chaitanaya Singh along with 500 soldiers came from Punjab to fight against the Burmese in favour of king Chandrakanta. This Sikh people settled in different parts of Assam particularly, in Barkola, Chaparmukh, Hathipara and Langka of Nagaon district.³⁷

2.2.6 The BUDDHIST:

The presence of Buddhist people are also noticed in pre colonial Assam. The Khamtis, the Singphos, the Phakiyals or Tai-phakes, the Naras, the Turung and the Aitaniyas were the some groups who belonged to the Buddhist. Out of them the Khamtis were the influential Buddhist.³⁸ According to Gait, they migrated to Assam about the middle of 18th century.³⁹ Naras and Phakiyals are also other Shan tribes from Burma.⁴⁰

2.3 COLONIAL PERIODS:

The Burmese in the first quarter of 19th century caused severe destruction to Assam. Burmese brutally killed many Asamiya people and ruined all Ahom kingdoms. Ahom kings had to run for their life to jungles. At last the Ahoms sought help from British Empire and British defeated Burmese in the year 1826. Thus British colonized Assam after the conclusion of the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826 and saved the Asamiyas from the brutalities of the invading soldiers when the Burmese were forced to surrender their claim over Assam.⁴¹

So Assam came under the British rule after the Treaty of Yandaboo in the year 1826. During the British rule in Assam, it witnessed migration of different community in bulks. The British encouraged migration in Assam for economic purpose by creating revenues. The visible migration in Assam were as follows-Hindu Bengalis from West Bengal, Muslim peasant from East Bengal, Black tribal's (Santhals,Oran, Munda, Sadri) Marwaris, Nepalis, Biharis etc.⁴²

A brief note of this migration is as below-

2.3.1 HINDU BENGALIS FROM BENGAL:

After the annexation of Assam the British colonialist overtook all administrative functions from Ahoms. The British colonizers found out that Assamese people were not capable of administrative jobs as they lacked English knowledge which was very essential as a pre-condition for entry in the jobs in the new colonial administration, but they had no intention of educating the Asamiyas immediately in order to ensure their continuity in the new colonial set up. So as the new system of colonial administration required educated people on western education, so the colonizers decided to import the 'Baboos' from neighboring Bengal for running the administration of Assam.⁴³ These imported "Baboos" from Bengal were engaged in the

lower level position of administration.⁴⁴ The “Baboos” were mostly Hindus, mainly from high caste Brahmins, Kayasthas & the Vaidyas. Hence almost all the British administrative jobs were taken away by those Bengali Hindu Baboos from Bengal in the initial year of the British administration. So British hired many Bengali Hindu Baboos to run their administration. The number of imported Bengali Hindus was such that by the early part of 20th century, they were, “preponderant in medical, legal and teaching profession as well as many other middle class positions in railways and in the post office”.⁴⁵ And this job migrated Bengali Hindu Baboos formed a huge number of their presents in the colonial periods of Assam. These Baboos had come down to Assam for sole reason of job seeking but almost all of them did not return after their retirement from various post and eventually settled down in Assam permanently.

2.3.2 MUSLIM PEASANT FROM EAST BENGAL:

The Muslim peasants are another social community which emerged in colonial Assam. There has been a massive flow of Muslims peasants from the Mymensingh district of East Bengal. The main motive behind the British policy of Migration of Muslim peasants was basically to “Grow More Food” which ultimately intended to generate revenue in colonial Assam by allowing to cultivate waste virgin lands of Assam. Settlement of Muslim peasants in such char areas fulfilled the economic interest of the colonial ruler. Because once uncultivated lands are cultivated then, provided revenue to the colonial ruler.⁴⁶ According to Kar the former migration was slow and even almost imperceptible till the first decade of the twentieth century. It then became a rapid and steady process, the first notice of which is traceable in the Census Report of 1911. The Muslim migrants from East Bengal spread in different directions and by 1931 had gone to every nook and corner of the Brahmaputra Valley wherever there was cultivable waste land.⁴⁷ The flow of migration of Muslim peasant from East Bengal mostly from Mymensingh district wasn't limited to planned migration hired by British, many of these land hungry peasant of overpopulated district migrated to Brahmaputra Valley in search of land and better livelihood

with their own willingness. The newly migrated Muslim peasant slowly and steadily encroached into the land of native people and year after year their number increased comparatively. After the government of India Act, 1935 with constitutional reforms, the country started advancing towards democracy which is a game of numbers. The economic nature of migration thus turned political in nature during this period. As the Muslim League now came up with its demand of partition on the basis of religion, the population movement into Assam took a new twist. During Sir Mohammad Sadulla's Muslim League ministry, a concrete effort was made to encourage the migration of Bengali Muslims into Assam for political reason. They desired to increase this immigration into the uncultivated government lands under the slogan of Grow More Food but what they are really after is

Grow more Muslims.⁴⁸ Infact, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan, claimed Assam in his country during the partition in 1947.⁴⁹

2.3.3 BLACK TRIBALS:

In 1883, the British first established tea garden in Assam. Within short period Assam was recognized as the most important tea producing part of the world⁵⁰ and with relating to this tea plantation the next to the Hindu Bengali and Muslims, comes plantation labourers. They were mostly from Bihar and Orissa and they were tribal (black tribals) like Santhals, orans, Mundas & Sadris. A bulk of labourers were also hired from Chota Nagpur.⁵¹ They were specially brought by the Britishers as a cheap tea garden labourers, because the Asamiyas were not interested to work as plantation workers as they had to depend upon cultivation for their survival.⁵² In the initial period, the migration of tea garden labourer were carried out under the effort of individual planters or companies. However since 1854 a Tea Planters Association coordinated the recruitment of tea garden labour.⁵³ but of course the source of laboures remains the same viz. Bihar, Orissa, Chata Nagpur.

2.2 Annual migration of Labour including their children into Assam plantations*

Year	Number	Year	Number
1902-03	26,644	1919-20	1,02,089
1903-04	22,162	1920-21	25,472
1904-05	24,209	1924-25	33,727
1905-06	31,830	1925-26	33,009
1906-07	25,617	1926-27	45,694
1907-08	84,824	1927-28	42,845
1908-09	60,773	1928-29	68,900
1909-10	39,332	1929-30	59,796
1910-11	43,657	1930-31	53,519
1911-12	58,646	1931-32	50,997
1912-13	59,873	1932-33	39,901
1913-14	58,646	1933-34	47,960
1914-15	63,638	1934-35	19,968
1915-16	1,10,376	1935-36	23,876
1916-17	48,130	1936-37	27,842
1917-18	19,407	1937-38	32,335
1918-19	2,22,171		

Source: Kunda, Bijan Kumar, "Politics in the Brahmaputra Valley since the Assam Accord", page 52.

The above table no.1 shows the annual migration of labour specially the black tribal's along with their children into Assam in order to work in plantation. The table gives us a vivid picture of the number of migration took place from among the black tribals starting from the year 1902- 1938 which means before independence of India. According to the table the number of migration

between the years 1902-1903 was 26,644. The figure went up a step in increase between the years 1915-1916 up to 1, 10,376. Later it decreased but again roused back between the year 1919-1920 to 1, 02,089. After that year the figure went up and down between years. Ultimately in between the year 1937-1938 the figure of migration was 32,335.

Thus these tea planter migrant labourers formed a visible community in Assam. Up to 1921 it was estimated that the amount of tea garden laborers was 1.3 million which was almost one sixth (1/6) of the total population of the province. The tea garden labours not only remained as tea garden labour forever, most of them left the work or even before the contract was over and settled themselves on agricultural lands nearby the tea gardens.⁵⁴

2.3.4 MARWARIS:

Another migrant community in the colonial period was Marwari's, also known as Kaiah to Assamese people.⁵⁵ The trade that resumed under the aegis of British attracted these people to Assam. Among the outsiders, the Marwari's are the conspicuous and economically dominant community in Assam.⁵⁶ Most of them are rich money lenders, money changers, bankers and financiers. These Marwari's were never short of capital and they were in a position to bring various commodities from Guwahati and Calcutta at cheaper rates and sell them at much higher prices to the hill traders and also the locals of the area. Therefore, it was not surprising that within a very short time they had monopolized the wholesale trading business.⁵⁷ Marwari's were small in number in comparison to other migrated communities in Assam. In 1961 their number was 22,000.⁵⁸

2.3.5 NEPALESE:

The Nepalese were another small labouring community who has migrated to Assam during the period of colonization of Assam. During the colonial period the inflow of Nepali migration took place which was initiated by the colonial rulers. The colonial rulers as an integral part of the British colonial expansion and consolidation encouraged the Nepali laborers and loyal people for their army and other establishment.⁵⁹ The migration of the Nepalese was pursued by the British as because the Nepalese served as British army which was known as Gurkha Regiment

and also as because the Nepalese indulged themselves in the business of milk supply by rearing cattle in the grazing areas.⁶⁰ The colonial rulers also encouraged the Nepali immigrants for raising the Government's exchequer. Apart from these Nepalese were also used in some other hardworking such as construction. According to Thapa, Nepal is economically a backward country for which the poor hilly Nepalese have been migrating to India in general and Assam in particular seeking means of livelihood. Many of these Nepalese in course of time settled permanently in the forest lands as the grazers and cultivators.⁶¹ They were also employed in non-military services as watchman, body guards and peons.⁶² With the passes of time most of the Nepalese integrated themselves with the Assamese culture and perhaps because of this when Assam Movement took place the Nepalese were excluded from the list of foreigners.

2.3.6 THE BEHARIS

The Biharis were migrated from undivided Bihar. Numerically, the Biharis were a small group and economically a poor class. The Biharis were wed in some of the arduous activities such as construction of roads, houses and buildings. Besides some of the Biharis engaged themselves as rickshaw puller, thela puller, barber, washman etc.⁶³

2.4 POST COLONIAL:

On 15th August, 1947, India attained independence from British colonial rule. But before decolonizing India British colonizer succeeded in dividing India into two nations. Thus India and Pakistan came into existence. Pakistan was divided into East Pakistan and West Pakistan due to geographical discontinuity.

Though British left after India's independence the migration into Assam didn't stop there. The illegal migration of Muslim labourers from East Pakistan is still continuing in Assam in bulk. The illegal migration of Nepali people is also not ignorable in nature. Apart from that, the migration of tea garden laborers (black tribal's) from Bihar, Jharkhand are also mentionable during the two decades after independence. But the most of the illegal migrants are coming from East Pakistan

(Bangladesh). The continuing illegal migration of labour is causing population explosion in Assam and is changing the demography of Assam exceptionally.

Demographer Dass has observed that Assam's rate of population growth during 1901-51 has been the second highest (137.80%) in the world, exceeded only by Brazil (204.00%).⁶⁴ During the post colonial phase this trend did not stop, rather a similar trend continued. According to him the heavy migration is one of the main reasons behind their remarkable population growth.⁶⁵ After Independence, persecution of the Hindu minorities in the then East Pakistan between 1950-1971 led to large scale migration of the Hindu population crossing over into Assam as refugees. Immigration of Bengali Muslims was also encouraged by the politicians of Assam to serve as a 'Vote Bank' for them in the elections. The import of cheap and hardy Muslim farm labour by the Assamese land owners to work on their fields of jute and paddy, also contributed to this process. As a result, around eight million Bengalis are estimated to be present in the total population of about 20 million in Assam. Intermittent illegal immigration over a long and largely unmanned border with Bangladesh has reportedly been going on since long. The Bengali Hindus and Muslims put together constitute the largest single linguistic segment of migrants. By 1961, out of 89, 13,000 urban dwellers in Assam, the Bengalis accounted for 35, 00,000 and the number of Assamese were only 30, 40,000. The rest were 'others' like Biharis, Punjabis, Marwaris and people from Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India.

Their number kept on increasing year after year. In 1961, the Muslims accounted for 43.3 percent in Goalpara district, 41.2 percent in Nowgong district, 39.2 percent in Kokrajhar district and 29.3 percent in Kamrupa district. About 1, 50, 80,000 acres of agricultural land was under their occupation. Most of them came from Mymensingh (Bangladesh). The Government passed the Influx from Pakistan (Control) Act, 1949 and the Immigrants (Expulsion) from Assam Act 1950, to check the illegal in flow of Bengali Muslims but these Acts were allowed to rust over by The Nehru- Liaquat Ali pact of 1950, which further encouraged illegal immigration into Assam. One of the provisions of the pact was that the minorities who landed in East Pakistan in the wake of the 1950 communal riot could return to Assam if they so desired. This enabled Muslims

in large numbers to return to Assam. Between 1951-60, 2, 20,690 Muslims entered Assam. Between 1961 and 1971, 1, 92,339 Pakistani infiltrators were detected.

Muhammad Hasibor Rahman estimated that at least 1.5 million - 2 million foreigners out of the total Hindu refugees who took shelter in Assam during the Bangladesh liberation war stayed back and settled down in the state.⁶⁶ He also stated that during the period 1951-1961 total 2, 20,000 and during 1961-71, 27,000 East Bengal Muslims immigrated into Assam. With this illegal migration of Bangladeshi Muslims, Assam became the second highest Muslim populated State in the country right after Jammu & Kashmir. The 2001 census put Assam's populations at 26,655,528, of this 17,296,455 were recorded as Hindu and 8,240,611 Muslims.⁶⁷

There are no official estimates for the number of migrants in Assam, but ex- state Governor Ajay Singh has said that up to 6,000 illegally enter the region every day.⁶⁸ In November 1998, the then Governor of Assam Lt. Gen. (Rtd.) S.K. Sinha in a report to present of India mentioned the problem of large number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants into Assam.

In the year 2001, Indian Home Ministry estimate prepared says, "Approximately 150 lakhs to 170 lakhs of Bangladeshi infiltrators have crossed into India illegally since 1971". However, on 14th July, 2004, in a written reply to an unstarred question in the Rajya Sabha/ Lok Sabha of India, the former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Sriprakash Jaiswal has stated that out of 1,20,53,950 numbers of illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators in the entire India, 50, 00,000 Bangladeshi nationals are present in the Eastern Indian State of Assam as on December 31st, 2001.⁶⁹

On 15th January, 2009, the Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi stated that, "The illegal Bangladeshi migration is a matter of serious concern and in this context the Indian Assam State Government is taking all possible measures to check the menace. Even, it is also fact that there are many Indian states which have more illegal Bangladeshi population than the state of Assam."⁷⁰

According to the census 2001 report released in 2005, the number of Bangladeshi migrants during the decade 1991-2001 was about 2,80,000, which was a decrease of 53% from almost 6,00,000 migration between 1981-1991.⁷¹

According to Hussain after independence over the years, Assam has been transformed from land abundant and thinly populated state to a land scare and thickly populated state.⁷² Most interesting fact is that in Assam there are 49 tribal belts and all are under the illegal occupation of Bangladeshi infiltrators and important fact is that there is not a single hamlet or town in the above state where there are no Bangladeshi nationals living and earning.⁷³

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CHAPTER-3

ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION INTO ASSAM

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ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION INTO ASSAM:

3.1 PRE-INDEPENDENCE-

3.1.1 HISTORY OF MUSLIM IMMIGRATION

The migration of Bengali people (Bengal/ East Bengal/Bangladesh) into Assam can be traced back in the beginning of 17th century. Cachar's fertile Barak Valley always attracted Hindu and Muslim migrants from Sylhet.¹ The main reason behind this influx is the pressure of population in Sylhet. East Bengal is seen to have always been witnessing high population growth and overpopulation. The Barak Valley lying between the Assam Range Hills on the north and the chain of Manipur Hills and Lushai Hills on the East and south, was open only on the western side and this provided an outlet for the Sylhet farmers a very large number of who belonged to Muslim community.² The population of Cachar was very scanty and there was vast expanse of very fertile land, only the best portions of the soil being under cultivation and occupation.³ But the actual migration of East Bengal into Assam started in huge number just after the advent of British colonist.

There are several factors responsible for the mass migration of the Bengali Muslims from East Pakistan or Bengal in the Pre-independence period, which was soon to change the demographic and settlement pattern of the region as well as the composition of the population. Some of them are:

1. The emergence of the jute industry in the 19th century.
2. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 and creation of a new province including East Bengal and Assam with Dhaka as the Capital.

3. The easy access of the Railway service under the Assam-Bengal Railway Company (established in 1892) from Chittagong in Bengal to various places of Assam also contributed to the flow of these poor Muslim immigrants.
4. The feudal system of land settlement in Bengal left the farmers high and dry, there was shortage of land for the large population of poor farmers and they found the easily accessible land of Assam the right place to migrate.
5. There was abundance of waste land in Assam with no strict prohibition in the holding of land.
6. The agrarian society of Assam was not keen to utilize the waste land and char areas.
7. The land owners of Bengal wanted to get rid of the headache of ever-demanding farmers, so they themselves instigated their exodus.
8. The British Government was interested in bringing in more and more immigrants to the province for revenue generation.
9. The local land owners too were not averse to their migration and settlement. Many Assamese sold off their land to the outsiders at good price; some took advantage of the situation and cleared new plots of waste land and sold them again.
10. The Land Development Scheme, Colonization Scheme or Grow More Food Scheme of the Muslim League Government expedited the land settlement process of the landless poor Muslim cultivators of the East Bengal origin and encouraged more to immigrate.⁴

By the 19th and 20th century though many people from different community migrated to Assam, yet the migrated people from East Bengal were greatest in number than the number of other community collectively.

3.1.2 LAND ALIENATION:

The Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Charles Elliot (1881-1885) for the first time alluded to the existence of large area of waste land waiting the sickle and the plough to produce large crops in the Brahmaputra Valley. Thus the commissioner and the Government of India

considered various plans for the settlement of these vast tracts of agriculturist from Bengal and Bihar, which however, had to be abandoned due to difference in opinion.⁵

3.1 Transfer of land.

Districts	No. Of pattas	Area
Goalpara	367	10,266 Bighas
Kamrup	65	834 Bighas
Darrang	209	1,403 Bighas
Nowgong	688	4,507 Bighas
Total	1,329	17,010 Bighas

Source: Kar, M., "Muslim in Assam politics", page 20

Table 3.1 shows the amount of areas transferred to the immigrants in the various districts of Assam especially in the Muslim majority inhabited districts. It is seen that 10,266 bighas of land were transferred in Goalpara district of Assam which seems to be the highest. Similarly, 834 bighas in Kamrup, 1,403 bighas in Darrang, 4,507 bighas in Nowgong were transferred respectively. A total of 17,010 bighas of land was seen transferred in the various districts of Assam.

Although, the migration took place since 1891 August from Eastern Part of Bengal in a very small scale, it was the census report of 1911 which for the first time mentioned the movement of immigrants from East Bengal to Assam's waste lands. The Census Report of 1911 was the first document on the extra ordinary influx of farmers to the 'Chars' of Goalpara from Bengal districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur.⁶

After the annexation of Assam and taking over its administration the one big question which troubled the British administration was how to ensure maximum utilization of the rich cultivable waste lands lying fallow for want of sufficient number of cultivators. In fact it was not only the British administration but some well-meaning Assamese officials like Babu Anandaram Dhekial Phukan who urged the government to allow settling of land hungry peasants from bordering districts of Bengal to waste lands of Assam.⁷

Thus, the migration of East Bengal people to the Brahmaputra Valley was to some extent indirectly encouraged by some Asamiya society. Many Asamiya money lenders/ Mahajans together with local Marwari tenders even financed the migrants so that the migrants could reclaim land and expand the cultivation of jute, ah rice, pulses and vegetables.⁸ Many Assamese had turned into land speculators. They sold off their lands to immigrants at a lower price; then they cleared new plots on waste lands and sold them again. Moreover, the immigrants were financed by their own headman (Matabbar) as well as Assamese (Barpeta) money-lenders. Even the hati (indigenous co-operative bank) funds of Barpeta were involving in this financing, to a small extent.⁹

The British government after taking due consideration of the voluminous report submitted by A.J. Moffatt Mills, the then officiating District judge of Mymensingh district on “the study of Assam administrative structure with particular reference to the land settlement problem and recommendation for improvement” took up for implementation of a definite policy of waste-land settlement on liberal terms with all those who were willing to undertake development and cultivation of wastelands. At the same time, it also encouraged officially immigration of landless peasants from the densely populated districts of Bengal to the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. This scheme often termed as a colonization scheme opened a flood gate for immigration of landless peasants from East Bengal to Assam. And at least 90% of these immigrants were Muslims. This pre-ponderous of Muslims in the immigrant community was due to the peculiar

socio-economic structure of the East Bengal population as well as the excessively high density of population in most of the bordering districts of East Bengal as compared with the Assam districts adjacent to them.¹⁰

3.2 Density as per decadal census report

Districts	1901	1911	1921	1931
Goalpara	117	152	193	222
Kamrup	153	173	197	254
Darrang	99	132	164	206
Nowgong	68	79	104	144
Lakhimpur	86	108	148	181

Source: Roy, Ajoy, "The Bodo Imbroglio", page, 31.

Table 3.2 shows the density per square mile in the various districts of Assam from the year 1901- 1931. Goalpara recorded 117square mile in the year 1901 which roused gradually to 222 in the year 1931. Kamrup recorded 153square mile in the year 1901 which roused to 254 square mile in the year 1931. Darrang recorded a density of 99 square mile in the year 1901 which went up to 206 square mile in the year 1931. Nowgoan recorded a rise from 68 square mile in the year 1901 to 144 square mile in 1931. Last but not the least Lakhimpur recorded a rise from 86 square mile in the year 1901 to 181 square mile in the year 1931. Hence the table clearly depicts the rising figure in the density of population which generally is the result of migration by Illegal Bangladeshi migrants.

3.1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC INVASION OF ASSAM BY BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS:

The formation of Assam into a Chief Commissioner Province had brought a large numbers of Bengal's area under the newly formed province. The newly added districts-Cachar and Sylhet were mostly Muslim populated and which increased the percentage of the Muslim population in the Province. The Muslim population of the newly formed Province is as follows:

3.3: Muslim population of Assam 1874, after reorganization of Assam into a, chief commissioner's province.

Districts	Population in 1874*	Total Muslim population	% of Muslim to total population
Cachar	2,05,027	74,361	36.3
Sylhet	17,19,539	8,54,131	49.7
Total	19,24,566	9,28,492	48.2
Darrang	2,35,300	13,859	5.9
Goalpara	4,44,761	89,916	20.1
Kamrup	5,61,681	45,823	8.2
Lakhimpur	1,21,267	3,826	3.1
Nowgong	2,56,390	10,066	3.9
Sibsagar	2,96,589	12,619	4.3
Total	19,15,988	1,76,109	9.2
Total province	38,40,554	11,04,601	28.8

Source: Kar, M., "Muslim in Assam politics", page 6.

The above table shows that the Muslim population of Assam suddenly increased after re-arranging the province in the year 1874. The Cachar and Sylhet district were included in Assam, which were mostly inhabitant of Muslim. The district of Cachar had 36% and Sylhet had 49% of

Muslim population, according to the Census of 1871, Cachar had 74,361 and Sylhet had 8,54,131 Muslim population. So the sudden re-arrangement of the province added 9,28,492 Muslim population to Assam, which ultimately increased the percentage of Muslim population of Assam to 28.8% from 9.2% with total Muslim population 11,04,601.

As the century advanced migration took the form of large scale influx into Assam which ultimately became a matter of extremely complicated controversy with ramification into social, political, cultural and linguistic aspects of Assam's life. It is relevant to observe that the Bengal immigrants and their descendants furnish about seventy seven percent of Assam Muslim population. As eighty five percent of them came from Mymensingh, it was not surprising the term "Mymensinghias" became synonymous with immigrants.¹¹

The Administrative re-organization of Assam into a Chief Commissionership in 1874 added about twenty four lakhs of people to the existing total of about fifteen lakhs of this, the Muslims numbered 11,04,601 or 28.8 percent. But in the Brahmaputra Valley there were only 1,76,109 Muslims out of a total population of 19,15,988 and they constituted 9.2% of that total.¹²

Mymensingh was the most populous of all the Bengal districts nearest to Assam next to Goalpara. The western part of the district of Goalpara including South Salmara, Lakhimpur and Bilasipara was the earliest and most affected. In 1874, the total population of the district was 23,51,700 which was 4,35,707 more than the total population of all the Brahmaputra Valley districts. The number of migrations till 1881 was 49,059.¹³ Between 1901 onwards, the men from Mymensingh advanced to Goalpara in large scale. The decade witnessed a natural population growth of 15.6%. The number of immigration rose from 49,059 to 1,18,233 forming 19.7% of the actual population of Goalpara.¹⁴

By 1905, the flow of migrants was substantially augmented by the territorial reorganization of the Eastern provinces including Assam by the British Government of India- an arrangement now popularly known as 'Banga-Bhanga' or breaking up of Bengal. This step was initiated by the then Government of Bengal and Governor General of India Lord Curzon.¹⁵ Under this reorganization scheme, a new province titled "East Bengal & Assam" came into existence. It contained 15 districts of East Bengal region and entire province of Assam, and Dacca was made new capital of this province. This new province which came into existence on August 8th, 1905, comprised a population of 12,036,352 Hindus and 18,036,688 Muslims. On linguistic composition, this new province had 27,272,895 persons speaking Bengali, and only 4,255,538 persons speaking Assamese.¹⁶

However, this reorganization came to an end after just 6 years and 8 months due to severe agitation by the Bengali Hindu population of both the Bengals, to annul the partition of Bengal. Assam regained its separate province status on April 1st, 1912, while Eastern Bengal was taken back to Bengal by a royal proclamation.¹⁷ During this reorganization bounds between Eastern Bengal and Assam provided a total free unrestricted movement of land hungry Muslims peasants from East Bengal to Assam under the active patronage of Government. In 1911, the total Muslim migrants numbered to 258000 in the Brahmaputra Valley and 6000 in hills. In Goalpara, they formed nearly 20% of the total population. The next favorable district was Nagoan where they constituted about 14%. In Kamrup, they rapidly took up lands especially in the Barpeta sub-division. During this decade the settlers had not explored much of Darrang district and were quietly situated near the Brahmaputra Valley. By the next decade, the settlers numbered 3, 48,000 in the Valley.¹⁸

The number of Muslims in Assam except Sylhet had risen from 5,03,670 in 1901 to 12,79,388 in 1931; thus within 30 years, the increase was more than one hundred and fifty percent which of course included natural growth of population. The total number of Muslims in Brahmaputra

valley was 16, 96,978 against the total Hindu population of 32, 22,377. The bulk of them constituted more than 50% of the number of Hindus were clearly immigrant Muslims. Their number on the eve of partition was 18, 46,457 which include indigenous Muslims as they were never enumerated separately.¹⁹

The percentage of Muslims to total population of the Brahmaputra valley rose from just 9% in 1881 to 23% in 1941. In Barpeta sub-division which hardly had any Assamese Muslim population, the percentage of Muslims to total population was just 0.1% in 1911 and the same rose to as high as 49% in 1941, a 490- fold increase in just 30 years.²⁰ Thus, the advent of thousands of farmer migrants though was slow in pace but steadily they almost covered the whole of Brahmaputra Valley where there was no end of waste lands awaiting the cultivators plough.

3.1.4 LINE SYSTEM AND COLONIZATION SCHEME:

a. LINE SYSTEM:

During the second decade of the 20th century the flow of immigration assumed serious problem and both the public opinion as well as Hindu and other nationalist legislators raised a strong voice against the Government policy of waste land settlement and immigration of Muslim peasants from East Bengal. Conflict between the immigrant settlers and the local people became the order of the day because of the possession of land. Resentment of Asamiya Hindus against the Muslim farmers popularized, thus compelling the colonial rulers to introduce a device known as “Line System” in 1920 to appease the Asamiya Hindus.

Under this scheme, the government drew imaginary lines in the districts under immigration pressure to segregate the settlements of the indigenous population and that of the immigrant population and the new arrivals of immigrants were thereafter allowed to be settled only outside this line. However, due to many corrupt revenue officials and other interested parties like some Assamese land owners, the new arrivals got access even inside the line.²¹

Although the Line System was introduced to protect the indigenous Assamese and to prevent the frictions between the settlers and the local tribal people, the arrangement of Line System did not work well most particularly in the Mixed Line Areas. In these particular areas, the immigrant farmers could get lands either by purchase from local people or by encroachment on lands belonging to the Government or the indigenous people.²²

By the thirties the problem of land alienation of the Assamese population in general and the tribal people in particular became so acute and the 'line system' became so ineffective that the Government had to appoint a high powered Committee under the Chairmanship of F.W. Hockenull, leader of the European Party in the Assam Legislative council, in order to conduct a study on the working of the 'Line System' and to recommend of its improvement. Thus, the Committee after conducting the study submitted its report in February, 1938. The report stated that without the aid of the immigrants, proper development of Assam's agriculture would not be possible, thus conferring that settlement of immigrants would have to be continued however, with further tightening of the line system, in order to protect the interest of the tribal's. But, much improvement was not seen or witnessed.²³

Nehru also observed that even though the line system was undesirable as it creates sharply divided areas hostile to each other, complete abolition of the system and leaving the door open to the unrestricted migration without any safeguard would also be undesirable.²⁴

b. COLONIZATION SCHEME:

With the failure of the line system to stop the process of migration, the colonial rulers introduced another device in 1928 known as “Colonization Scheme.” Under the Scheme, a small family was to be provided with about 20 bighas of land on payment of premium. The colonial rulers implemented a definite policy of waste- land settlement on liberal terms with all those who were willing to undertake development and cultivation of wastelands. Thus, the colonization scheme helped in raising the agricultural productivity which ultimately led to the utilization of wasteland resources of the Brahmaputra Valley along with increasing the land revenue of the colonial rulers.²⁵

However, on the other hand the Colonization Scheme officially encouraged immigration of landless peasants from the densely populated bordering districts of Bengal to the sparsely populated districts of the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. Thus, this scheme opened a flood gate for immigration of landless peasants from East Bengal to Assam, and at least 90% of these immigrants were Muslims.²⁶

The Colonization Scheme was first introduced in Nowgong district in 1928 and thereafter followed by one each in Barpeta Sub- Division of Kamrup district and the Mongoldoi Sub- Division of Darrang district.²⁷

3.1.5 HOW BANGLADESHI MUSLIMS WIPED THE ASSAMESE OUT IN THEIR OWN LAND?

Slowly and steadily with the passes of time, the infiltration assumed an alarming proportion as compared to the natives of Assam. With the partition of Bengal in 1905, a flood gate was opened which increased the flow of Bengali speaking population particularly the Muslim peasantry from the over populated East Bengal to sparsely populated fertile lands of Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys of this isolated Northeastern corner of India.

Another planned conspiracy to initiate migration of Muslims from East Bengal was hatched with the formation of All India Muslim League (AIML) in 1906 at Dhaka. They prepared to increase the numerical strength of the Muslims in Assam. This conspiracy was announced publicly by Nawab Salim Ullah Khan, founder member of AIML as “exhorted the Muslims to migrate to Assam and settle there”.

Census Superintendent C.S. Mullah also in his Census Report of 1931 validated the political conspiracy of AIML in Assam. According to him, ‘Probably the most important event in the province during the last 25 years- an event moreover, which seems likely to alter permanently the whole feature of Assam and to destroy the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization has been the invasion of a vast horde of land hungry immigrants mostly Muslims from the districts of East Bengal.’

The AIML encouraged the Muslim migrants to settle in Assam which became a chronic problem for the state. Though the influx of Muslim peasantry in Assam converted its wastelands into cultivable fields, but the exposure of this otherwise closed society to new socio-political environment adversely affected its socio-cultural scenario.

Although steps were being taken by Gopi Nath Bordoloi headed Congress led coalition Government in Assam after 1939 election to stop the unhindered flow of immigrant Muslims, the same could not be pursued further due to its resignation in November 1939.

Lord Wavell rightly said in the Viceroy's Journey, London Publication, December 22nd, 1943, "The chief political problem is the desire of Muslim Ministers of Assam to increase the immigration into uncultivated Government lands in Assam under the slogan of 'Grow More Food' but what really is to 'Grow More Muslims'."

Mahatma Gandhi also expressed his concern over the problem of unrestricted immigrations but could not do anything to check the exodus for the reason best known to him. The first blunder committed in regard to this issue was the resignation of Congress led government. Even Subhas Chandra Bose and the Congress leaders of Assam had argued for exemption of Assam from the decision of the party on the plea that it would help the AIML in settling the Muslim immigrants in the state, which however did not convince the Congress High Command.

Thus, with the large-scale settlement of alien immigrants following the installation of Sadullah Government, AIML established a tremendous influence on the Muslim population of Assam who later aggressively supported the demand for Pakistan.²⁸

The first notice about the rapid and steady process of the farmer migration is traceable in the Census Report of 1911. However, for the first time it was in 1931 when the problem of agricultural immigrations and the need of preventing interference with the Assamese had begun attracting attention. To tackle this problem the British Government on September 1915

proposed a consolidated set of rules of land settlements. According to this rule all the settlements were to be made on an annual patta basis which conferred on the settlers only the right of users and no right to inheritance and transfer. After a reasonable time during which the cultivation took on a permanent nature, an annual patta was to be converted into a periodic one either by the D.C. or the A.D.C. depending on the area applied for. But the Assamese public strongly protested against the rule thereby forgetting the important fact that to prevent transfer of lands to immigrants a curtailment of the Assamese' right to sell and transfer was an unavoidable and essential necessity as immigration could not be stopped by the Provincial Government.²⁹

The Assamese people began to complain as the number of immigrants and their settlements increased in the Valley. They complained that more & more lands was passing to the Mymensinghians through settlements obtained directly from the Government, by purchases from Assamese periodic patta holders and by authorized and forcible occupation without any grant of lease from Government or sale from holders of periodic pattas. Thus in this way the immigrants started to penetrate into areas where there were only Assamese settlers before. Another fact is that whenever the immigrants entered Assamese areas, the latter were compelled to sell their periodic pattas to the former thereby making the former refugees in their own land.

Also, the immigrants urge for more land for immediate cultivation and their willingness to pay the land revenue which was an income to Government convinced the Government to settle large areas of land with the immigrants. Further, the Assamese got the highest possible prices for their lands from the immigrants. Thus, the farmer immigrants through freedom of transaction could enter any area in the Valley by rightful acquisition.³⁰As a result during the period of 1917-27, a total of 161,160 acres of land were settled with immigrants whereas the Assamese got 504,000 acres in Kamrup, Nowgong and Darrang which were mostly affected.³¹

D.K. Mukherjee, Assistant Director of Land Records, wrote on 30th April 1924 that the Assamese people could not resist the temptation of high prices offered by the immigrants. Thus, when some of them sell their possession of their land, the rest were compelled to do the same. Thus according to Mukherjee if some measures were not taken by Government to protect the interest of the indigenous people, they would be compelled sooner or later to leave their own place and migrate somewhere else.³²

3.1.6 GROW MORE MUSLIMS POLICY/ SADULLAH GOVERNMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF IMMIGRATION:

The migration became so widespread that the Census Report of 1921 observed that people from East Bengal virtually came in “every train and steamer”. However, this was only the beginning. Some years later in 1939 when Syed Saadullah became the Chief Minister of Assam, he outdid everything that had gone before. The ‘Grow More Food’ motive of the British was cleverly subverted into ‘Grow More Muslims’ in practice as he coerced and welcomed the Muslim migrants from East Bengal into Assam. Fortunately he was in office for only a short period. However, the damage was already done as never before.³³

Mr. Saadullah took up the office in 1939 after the resignation of Bordoloi and had changed the demography of Assam phenomenally. Soon after his Government came into power he made many new policies in respect of immigration. The Government decision was then published in Revenue Department Resolution No. 3252 dated 21st June 1940. Some of the main features of this policy were-

1. New definition of immigrants: any one, Hindu or Muslim from Bengal, people from upper India and Nepal, but excluding immigrants from Surma Valley- coming to Assam before the first of January 1938.
2. Development Schemes: after reserving thirty percent of available cultivable wastelands, large blocks of land would be constituted into development areas and settled on payment of premium, smaller blocks to be given to all communities according to needs; squatting prohibited, other areas to be settled under existing settlement rules. The schemes were to be started as soon as possible and till fifty percent of the lands in any development block were allotted, the existing restrictions to settlement were operated. In case of Tribal Areas, the restrictions would remain until further orders of Government.
3. Government decided to deal with the recommendation of the Line System enquiry Committee separately at a later date after a fuller consideration and for the present they only outlined the broad lines of policy on the basis of unanimity in the Conference. The question of abolition of the Line System and its legality was dropped by common consent though all agreed to provide for special protection of the tribal population.³⁴

The Saadullah cabinet also claimed to have improved upon the existing policy by:

- i. Discouraging immigrants since 1st January 1938.
- ii. Limiting settlement of land to thirty bighas per family.
- iii. Reserving thirty percent of available land for future generations.
- iv. Providing for development of areas concerned.
- v. Removing vagueness of provisions which might go against the “indigenous people”.

However, it was needless to say that the policy satisfied neither the Muslims nor the Hindus. Most particularly the immigrant legislators were critical. Abdur Rouf of Barpeta and representative of Barpeta immigrants in the Assam Legislative assembly criticized the immigrant policy of the Government and remarked in the Budget Session 1940-41, “They are very particular about providing land to tigers, rhinos and buffaloes and other wild animals to roam about but they won’t give a single bigha of land to a landless immigrant to live upon.” He also

complained that while immigrants were not getting land to cultivate, the Government had reserved twenty lakh bighas of grazing grounds for half a lakh of buffaloes.³⁵

In December 1941, Education Minister, Rohini Kumar Chowdhury resigned suddenly without any reason which was followed by Saadullah's resignation. Hence, Governor's rule was proclaimed in Assam. However, influx of immigrants continued, the affected districts being Nowgong, Kamrup, Darrang and Lakhimpur.³⁶

However, Saadullah came into power once again in August, 1942. In his second innings Saadullah adopted a new portfolio/ a special portfolio namely 'Grow More Food'. Government decided to accelerate land settlement in Kamrup, Nowgong and Darrang, to extend areas of immigrant colonies and to settle more lands with immigrants owing to the imperative need of growing more food. Saadullah Government gave preference to immigrants by opening grazing reserves and allowing immigrants to settle in previously closed areas. Due to being witness to the continued influx of immigrants, it appeared to the Hindus that on the plea of Grow more Food Campaign, Saadullah Government was encouraging Grow More Muslims Campaign, hence opening large areas to Muslims to increase their number.³⁷

It is also seen that though Saadullah Government prohibited settlement of lands with those who came after first of January, 1938, the prohibited was automatically removed by giving settlement to those who encroached even till first of January 1942 on tribal areas and first of January 1943 in other areas. However, the Bengal Muslim leaders were not satisfied with that and ultimately the Bengal Government wrote to the Assam Government on March 6th, 1944 on the waste lands of Assam.³⁸

Hence, in reply the Assam Government on 5th May, 1944 wrote that, settlement of lands with immigrants were increasing continuously and efforts were being made to accelerate it; also Professional Grazing Reserves which were being thrown open was likely increase the settlement of immigrants. In regard to protecting the Tribal people of Assam from immigrants, they held that the Line System could not be wholly removed, but the process of gradual abolition would be continued in areas where Caste Hindus were in the majority.³⁹

There were many charges made against Saadullah's successive Cabinets which were summarized by the Indian National Congress.

Firstly, planned colonization scheme was being promoted under which people were permitted to "make unauthorized occupation" of grazing and pasture lands in the province and incidentally upset the ratio of population.

Secondly, it is charged that Saadullah Government had manipulated the 1941 census deflating the number of the Hindus and inflating that of the Muslims.⁴⁰

Sir Robert Neid Reid, once Governor of Assam also stated that Saadullah Government was settling large number of immigrants in Assam for converting the province into a Muslim majority. Also in 1946 Bishnu Ram Medhi, Finance Minister as well as the Government Commission complained that in the name of Grow More Food Campaign, Saadullah Government had settled 1, 60,000 bighas of land with the immigrants alone to the exclusion of the indigenous people.⁴¹ One of the most prominent Muslim League leaders Syed Abdul Rouf of Barpeta challenged the accuracy of Medhi's statement and demanded an enquiry to prove its hollowness.

However, according to the Progress Report of land Settlement, during Saadullah's premiership, 1,74,548 bighas of land were directly settled with new immigrants, 26,753 bighas were settled after regularization of old encroachment, 2,56,131 bighas were proposed to be included in Colonization Area for immigrants and 164,995 bighas opened in Grazing Reserves for settlement. Thus, the total of land allotted to immigrants was 622,427 bighas. Taking the average statutory five bighas per family of an average of five members each, the total number of immigrant families came to 124,485 and the number added to the existing Muslim population would be 622,427.⁴²

Thus, during the period of Saadullah Government (1939-41), a massive migration of Muslim peasants from East Bengal to Assam occurred. The real motive of the Muslim League became so obvious that Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy of India could not help making the caustic comment that Saadullah Government "Grow More Food" campaign was really a "Grow more Muslims" campaigning. It is seen that, between the years 1939-41, Saadullah Government allotted one lakh bighas of land in Assam Valley for the settlement of East Bengal immigrants.⁴³ Much damage was done by Saadullah during the second innings of his coming to power in August, 1942 and during his third innings on 25th March, 1945.

3.1.7 DEMAND OF LEAGUE TO INCLUDE ASSAM IN PAKISTAN:

The election of 1946 witnessed the emergence of the first Congress Cabinet in Assam. The new Government headed by Gopinath Bordoloi and consisting of five Hindus, one Muslim and one Indian Christian quickly implemented the eviction policy/ programme of illegal encroachers. The Muslim League raised a hue and cry over the issue. The main accusation of the provincial Muslim League was that it carried out indiscriminately without even sparing the legitimate holders of land and it was ruthless in operation. According to League all restriction under the

line system were oppressive, inhuman and illegal and must be abolished. Thus, according to the League, the remedy of “all the evils” is the creation of Pakistan.⁴⁴

During Jinnah’s visit to Assam in 1946, he threatened the Government that if it did not cease to implement the policy of “mass eviction” of Muslim people or settlers and abandon this prosecution, a situation will be created which will not be conducive to the peoples of Assam.⁴⁵

The Muslim League considered the issue as a life and death problem. In a convention held at Delhi in April 1946, the All India Muslim League (AIML) demanded inclusion of Assam in Pakistan and strongly protested against the eviction policy of Bardaloi Government of Assam and urged for immediate resettlement of the evictees.⁴⁶

Dr. M.A. Malik of League labeled this eviction policy a conspiracy against Muslims and termed it as inhuman and unlawful. He declared that if all lawful attempts at stopping this atrocity failed, they (the Muslims) must adapt jihad.⁴⁷ The seriousness of the situation did not escape the Governors notice and as such in November 1946 he informed the Viceroy regarding the situation. However, since the Viceroy was away on tour, his private secretary G.E. Abel, thought it proper to inform Patel about the happenings. In reply to Abel, Patel asserted that even Viceroy had admitted the illegal nature of the immigrant’s occupation of land and they support Governments lawful action.⁴⁸

Although the Muslim League openly demanded inclusion of Assam vigorously in the year 1946, yet it’s almost a decade year old plan. However, it was Chowdhury Rahmat Ali, a Cambridge student and founder of the Pakistan National Movement who for the first time through his four page pamphlet entitled “Now or never” put forward the proposal for creation of Pakistan on 28th

January 1933. Later on in the year 1937 he mentioned Assam within Pakistan's region and announced the name of Bang-I-Islam for Bengal and Assam.⁴⁹

Initially Mr. Jinnah hesitated to accept this proposal, later on he supported it. And the annual session held at Lucknow from 15th to 18th October 1937 under the president ship of Jinnah took a great step forward towards inclusion of Assam. In order to increase the Muslim population in Assam Jinnah on his first visit to Assam on 8th March, 1946 urged the immigrants to spread out to all available lands.⁵⁰

Saadullah was considered as the main architect of the League's demand on Assam.⁵¹ As a support of Assam's merger to Pakistan; Saadullah encouraged migration of Muslim people into Assam during his fragmented premiership of the province. Saadullah during his reign of Government allotted lakhs of bighas of waste land to the immigrants and also reserved forest lands for the Muslim immigrants in the name of different schemes and he is the one who in the year 1942 introduced the portfolio of "Grow More Food" for the first time, but in actual he turned this policy of "Grow More Food" to "Grow More Muslims" by providing lakhs of bighas of land to the new immigrant only.⁵² By 1944, he associated publicly with the League's claim on Assam. And by 1945, when he was the Premier, he openly advocated the cause of Pakistan.⁵³

The main reason behind the allotment of land by Muslim League Government to the Bengali Muslims was solely to increase the number of Muslims in Assam and overpower the number of Assamese people and ultimately demand Assam to include in Pakistan from the viewpoint of Muslim majority. The one basic reason of Muslim League for demanding Assam within Pakistan was to strengthen their economic and financial condition as Assam was full of natural resources and abundant of waste lands to absorb the surplus population of Eastern Pakistan.⁵⁴

According to the baseless argument put forward by the Provincial Muslim League, Assam had a population of one crore nine lakhs of whom only forty five lakhs or 41.5 percent were Hindus and formed a minority of the total population; twenty nine lakhs or 26.7 percent of the total population were tribal people “unfit to live a civilized state of life and in all constitutional discussion they have been omitted”. Hence, the civilized section of the population was Hindus and Muslims numbering eighty lakhs in view of the League. Thus, political rights are restricted to 65 lakhs of people only; hence the Muslims numbering 34.75 lakhs constitute the majority in the province. Henceforth, based on this calculation the Provincial Muslim League argued that Assam should be included to Eastern Pakistan. However, this calculation exhibits a strange formulation depicting as if Assam belonged only to these two communities of Hindus and Muslims respectively leaving apart the rest of the communities of Assam.⁵⁵

Unfortunately, the Indian National Congress did not take the matter seriously and never challenged the issue. Hence, ended up in accepting the Cabinet Mission’s proposal that Assam and Bengal should be in Group ‘C’ of states with a Muslim majority of population.⁵⁶ The Congress had virtually made up its mind to give up Assam for Pakistan. But fortunately some Assam leaders, some leaders of Bengal came forward to save Assam from going to Pakistan. Bordoloi was one of the leaders of Assam who after much struggle convinced Gandhiji that Assam does not belong to Pakistan as it has a potential Hindu population and urged him to save Assam from conceding to Pakistan except Sylhet district. Thus, due to the endeavor of all those leaders and the intervention of Mahatma Gandhi, finally Assam was settled to be included in India.⁵⁷

3.2 POST INDEPENDENCE:

3.2.1 ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION AFTER INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE:

India attained Independence in the mid-night of August 15th, 1947. But the colonial ruler became successful in dividing the people and the country. Hence, India was divided into two parts-India and Pakistan. Again, Pakistan was separated into two parts- East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) & West Pakistan.⁵⁸ Though it was expected that the migration problem would be solved after getting independence, on the other hand contrary to it, it became worst than the British colonial periods.⁵⁹ It is well known that the issue of illegal migration especially from Bengal's Muslim peasants was pre-independence phenomenon, yet after independence and partition of the country the problem of migration remained unsolved.⁶⁰

After independence, the flow of illegal migration from East Pakistan again increased aggressively as in the absence of any population planning by its government or due to absence of any social movement for creating awareness regarding control of population, its people remained facing the problem of living space for survival. On the other hand, the leaders of Pakistan continued their plan for Islamic expansionism in Assam through infiltration of Muslims as the country was unable to shoulder the burden of its multiplying population, thereby carrying forward the political legacy of AIML of needing more lebensraum or living space. The legacy was pursued by their successive Government in Pakistan whereby they pursued twin policy of squeezing out of the Hindus and infiltrating the Muslims to settle down in Assam and other bordering states in India.⁶¹

3.4: Decadal percentage of variation in population since 1941

Districts	1941-51	1951- 61	1961 – 71	1971 – 91	1991- 01
1	2	3	4	5	6
Dhubri	9.25	27.62	40.51	56.57	23.68
Kokrajhar	9.25	46.18	54.30	76.78	12.00
Bongaigaon	9.31	60.81	40.29	64.64	12.00
Goalpara	9.25	37.10	45.88	54.12	23.03
Barpeta	18.71	32.62	35.81	43.02	18.87
Nalbari	17.89	49.62	42.02	49.27	13.03
Kamrup	17.17	37.73	38.80	65.72	26.11
Darrang	24.13	44.75	43.24	55.63	15.82
Sanitpur	24.26	35.82	27.62	57.14	18.06
Lakhimpur	17.94	50.46	43.39	56.29	18.30
Dhemaji	17.94	75.21	103.42	107.50	19.45
Marigaon	36.63	37.89	37.51	50.90	21.35
Nagaon	36.65	35.91	38.99	51.26	22.26
Golaghat	19.76	26.04	30.85	58.12	14.27
Jorhat	14.87	24.17	17.47	33.10	14.69
Sibsagar	15.98	23.36	19.47	38.76	15.83
Dibrugarh	17.94	30.64	22.93	37.78	13.68
Tinsukia	17.94	35.92	31.02	47.03	19.51
Karbi Anglong	30.96	79.21	68.28	74.72	22.72
N.C. Hills	6.16	36.95	40.00	98.30	24.72
Karimganj	29.87	22.96	25.13	42.08	21.87
Hailakandi	17.48	27.23	23.61	45.94	20.89
Cachar	23.92	22.60	23.96	47.59	18.89
Assam	19.93	34.98	34.95	53.26	18.92

Source: "Statistical hand book Assam" 2005, page 14.

The table above shows the decadal growth of population in different district in Assam. It is very much visible that the bordering districts with the Bangladesh are high in the growth rate in the state. The growth rates of the bordering district are high because of the immigration of Muslim people from the Bangladesh. If we notice the district of Dhubri, Goalpar, Hailakandi and Karimganj which are near the Bangladesh border and mostly populated by Muslim are always high in growth rate in the state.

The Bangladeshis use all the three available routes viz. the surface routes including the railways and the river routes. After crossing over at various border points, many of them entrain at Karimganj of Assam and a number of railway stations of west Bengal. The river routes are almost exclusively used by the Muslim infiltrators. The River Police Organization, for all practical purposes, exists on paper only.⁶²

3.2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL PHENOMENON:

Migration is a geographical phenomenon that seems to be a human necessity in every age. Since man has a tendency to leave the areas in which life is difficult, he migrates to the areas where life may be easy and better.⁶³

The border at the initial period of independence was very much porous due to lack of proper boundary demarcation and fencing between India and Pakistan. Hence, due to this porous boundary and geographical attachment many illegal migrants from East Pakistan entered India after the Independence also.⁶⁴ The state of Assam shares more than 400 km international border with East Pakistan, (now Bangladesh)⁶⁵ most of which is river and hence difficult to fence. The lush paddy fields and the sandy shifting plains of the mighty Brahmaputra River that

divides the country are natural transit routes. Hundreds of people come from Bangladesh by crossing the river with the help of rickety boats.⁶⁶ In terms of area Assam ranks 14th among the states of India and about 2.4% of the country's total land. However, after independence due to the creation of some new states out of Assam, its size shrank to 78,438 Sq.km from 2, 55,000 Sq.km.⁶⁷

Thus, the migration of Bengali Muslims which started during colonial period did not stop after independence and still continues today in bulk number from Bangladesh. Hence, Assam has been transformed from a land abundant and thinly populated state to a land scarce and thickly populated state.⁶⁸

3.2.3 MIGRATION AND LAND ALIENATION:

In the year 1947, Gopinath Bordoloi Ministry made an amendment of the Assam land and Revenue Regulation, 1886. The main reason behind such a step was to provide protection against Illegal Bangladeshi migration. This provision was created mainly to protect the tribal people's land from the land hungry Bangladeshi migrants. According to this provision the Government of Assam were authorized to constitute compact areas of tribal Belts & Blocks in localities predominantly inhabited by the tribal's and backwards classes notified to be entitled to protection from land alienation.⁶⁹ The tribal belt and blocks were created to safeguard the tribal's from various ways of coercion from other advance communities under the provision of VI Schedule & Article 19(5) of Indian Constitution. It ensures that within these belts and blocks non-tribal's or no- notified class of people cannot have immovable property and those non-notified persons who had by then encroached on any unsettled land within these belt and blocks would be forthwith be ejected there from. It was also provided that no transfer of land in these

Belts and Blocks to any non-notified person by way of sale, lease, mortgage etc. would be registered by the Government.⁷⁰

The lists of notified classes are as follows-

1. Plain tribal's
2. Hills tribal's
3. Tea Garden tribal's
4. Santhals
5. Scheduled castes.⁷¹

But today in most of this belts and blocks, non tribals have occupied plenty of land and have legal documents of the same, for which today tribals are becoming minority in their own tribal belts and blocks.⁷²

The Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 was another blow of centre in the attempt of State Government to restrict immigrants from East Pakistan. However, the Nehru- Liaquat Pact (April, 1950) with "special provision for restoration of rights of immigrants over their properties if they would choose to return not later than the 31st December, 1950" rather facilitated the Pakistan Government to accelerate infiltration. The Pact which validated the entry of immigrants up to 31/12/50, was against the spirit of immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950 enacted by parliament on 31/02/50.⁷³ One of the provisions of the pact was that the minorities who landed in East Pakistan in the wake of the 1950 communal riot could return to Assam if they so desired. This enabled Muslims in large number to return to Assam. During 1951-60, 220690 Muslims entered Assam. Between the years 1961-71, 1, 92,339 Pakistan infiltrators were detected. The Government also passed the Influx from Pakistan (Control) Act, 1949 and Immigrants Expulsion, from Assam Act 1950, to check the illegal inflow of Bengali Muslims but these Acts were allowed to rust over.⁷⁴

3.2.4. SOCIO-CULTURAL THREAT:

Though the mass migration during the British era in the 19th century had a historical need for it, migration, especially the mass migration of Bengali Muslim people of East Bengal origin, that took place in early 20th century, has created many socio-cultural problems besides disturbing the original ethnic structure of the state.⁷⁵The Assamese Hindu who happened to be dominant group in the Brahmaputra Valley felt that continuous influx of people from Bangladesh has been posing a threat to their district socio-cultural identity.⁷⁶

The complex ethnic situation began to unleash ethnic unrest in Assam from 1970s onwards due to the continuous population inflow from neighboring nations especially from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).⁷⁷If Bengali Hindus & Muslims were put together, they constituted the largest single linguistic segments of migrants.⁷⁸By 1961 out of 89, 13,000 urban population dwellers in Assam, the Bengalis accounted for 35, 00,000 and the number of Assamese was only 30, 40,000. The rest were others' like Biharis, Punjabis, Marwaris and the people from Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India.⁷⁹

The problem was highlighted by Lt. Gen. (Retd.) SK Sinha, the then governor of Assam, in November 1998, in a report to the President. He said, "As a result of population movement from Bangladesh, the specter looms large of the indigenous people of Assam being reduced to a minority in their home state. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined. This silent and invidious demographic invasion of Assam may result in the loss of the geo-strategically vital districts of lower Assam. The influx of these illegal migrants is turning these districts into a Muslim majority

region. It will then only be a matter of time when a demand for their merger with Bangladesh may be made.”⁸⁰

3.2.5 LIBERATION WAR:

In 1971 Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign nation after liberation war against Pakistan with the help of Indian Army. But instead of being grateful, the new nation maintained the same policy of Pakistan on Muslim infiltration in Assam.⁸¹

The first President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his book “Eastern Pakistan; its population & economics” observed, “Because East Pakistan/Bangladesh must have sufficient land for its expansion and because Assam has abundant forests and mineral resources, coal, petroleum etc., Eastern Pakistan must include Assam to be financially and economically strong.”⁸² He argued that, “Without the inclusion of Assam the East Bengal/Bangladesh economy could not be balanced.”⁸³

After independence, persecution of Hindu minorities in the then East Pakistan between 1950 to 1971 led to large scale migration of Hindu population crossing over into Assam as refugees.⁸⁴ According to Rahman at least 15,00,000 to 20,00,000 foreigners out of the total Hindu refugees who took shelter in Assam during the Bangladesh liberation war stayed back and settled down in the state and 2,47,000 Muslims had entered Assam since 1951-71.⁸⁵ During the period between 1951 up to liberation of Bangladesh, large scale migration took place. At least 3,7,57,000 illegal migrants have entered Assam from east Pakistan/Bangladesh alone.⁸⁶

The Hindu population in East Bengal/ east Pakistan/Bangladesh had declined from 33% in 1901 to 28% in 1941. It fell to 22% by 1951 due to partition and post partition exodus, and to 18.5% in 1961. By 1971, it had fallen to 13.5% partly due to 1971 massacre by the Pakistan Army. In

1981, 12.1% fell due to large scale of destruction, desecration and damage inflicted on Hindu temples and religious institutions.⁸⁷

3.5: Decrease of Hindu population in East Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh*

Year	Percentage of Hindu population to total population
1901	33.00 %
1941	28.00 %
1951	22.00 %
1961	18.5 %
1971	13.5 %
1981	12.1
1991	10 %

Source: Bhattacharyya, H.K. "The silent invasion" page 80.

The table no. 6 explains how the Hindu population came down in the East Bengal / East Pakistan/ Bangladesh. According to the table in 1901 East Bengal / East Pakistan/ now Bangladesh had 33% Hindu population, in 1941 it came down to 28%, in 1951 after the creation of East Pakistan it reduced to 22% and till 1991 it gradually came down to 10%. So the constant falling of the Hindu population in Bangladesh directly indicates the emigration of the Hindu population in the Indian state especially in north east and west Bengal.

3.2.6 PROBLEM OF SECURITY DUE TO MIGRATION:

The large scale infiltration of Bangladeshi migrants from across the border has been posing a threatening site to the national security of the country and more particularly to Assam. Assam has been facing the problem of illegal immigration for a long time. There are no official figures of actual numbers of Bangladeshis in Assam. However, according to a group of Ministers on National security, there were 12 million Bangladeshi immigrants in the country in 2001 with 5

million in Assam alone. The increasing number of Bangladeshi is also leading to law and order problem in many areas of Assam.

In a report submitted on November 1998 to the President of India by Lt. Gen. (Retd.) SK Sinha, the then Governor of Assam said, "It will only be a matter of time when Assam may be demanded for merger with Bangladesh due to its Muslim majority". He feared that this may ultimately result in loss of entire Northeast in India.

The issue of illegal immigration figured prominently during the Chief Minister's Conference on Internal Security and Law and Order, held in New Delhi on April 15th. Serious differences emerged among the northeastern states on this issue and some states even openly accused Assam of contributing to the illegal immigration problem in northeast. In this conference, the northeastern Chief Ministers in order to deal with the alarming situation asked the Centre to increase security along the international borders and help them strengthen their police forces. The states argued that illegal migration has increased manifold and was posing a security threat to the nation.⁸⁸

It is also worth mentioning that not only the Northeastern states complaint about the issue of illegal migration but also a western state like Maharashtra. These states are feeling demographically threatened by the avalanche of infiltration from Bangladesh.⁸⁹ In fact, in lower Assam, one could walk miles thinking it is Bangladesh, without meeting a single Indian. Concern was also expressed regarding the Pakistani ISI's links with the infiltrators. Pakistani ISI also encouraged by the findings of census 2001, has launched Operation "PIN CODE", to bring the northeast under Islamic umbrella through demographic invasion.⁹⁰

In May, 1999 the Indian Government received sensational information clearly indicating direct contact between a group of Kashmiri Muslim Terrorists and two extremist Muslim terrorist outfits of Assam-Muslim Tiger Force and Revolutionary Muslim Commandos. These Muslim groups which operate in the northeast states owe their allegiance to the Harkal-ul-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba, two of the world's most murderous Islamic terrorist groups.⁹¹ In an interview in 2007, BSF Chief A.K. Mitra said that eleven terrorist belonging to Laskar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Jamaateel Mujahideen Bangladesh were captured with possession of arms while crossing the border into Assam.⁹²

3.2.7 MUSLIM MAJORITY DISTRICTS:

According to Indian Home Ministry Statistics, Muslim made up a (1/3) one third of the population of the state of Assam and out of 27 districts of Assam, 9 districts at present have Muslim majority and largest part of these nine districts are hub of illegal migrants, who are origin of former East Bengal now Bangladesh.⁹³ The 1991 census shows that the Muslim population of the country increased by 402 million, 65.47 percent over that of 1971, in Assam the increase has been by 77.42%. Muslim now forms a majority in the district of Dhubri (74%), Goalpara (53.71%), Barpeta (59%), Hailakandi (57.6%), Nagoan (51%), and Karimganj (52.3%).⁹⁴

According to the National Census of 2001, the Muslim population in the North Eastern Indian State of Assam is 31% out of a total 26.6 million. The report was made public on September 6, 2004 only, though it was conducted three years before. The latest figure shows that the proportionate growth of the Muslim population in Assam. According to this census the rate of growth of Muslim population are the highest precisely in the districts that shares a border with or live close to the border with Bangladesh, particularly, Dhubri, Barpeta, Karimganj, Hailakandi. Also, according to the census Assam has 26,655,528 populations, of this 17,296,455 were

Hindus & 8,240,611 Muslims.⁹⁵ The Muslim population in Assam registered a steep increase from 11.7% in 1871 to 31% in 2001 census report.

3.6: Growth rate comparison of Hindu & Muslim population in Muslim majority districts in 1991 –

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Districts	1991		2001	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
Goalpara	2,66,499	3,35,275	3,14,154	4,41,516
Dhubri	3,82,817	9,38,789	4,05,065	12,16,455
Barpeta	5,79,201	7,76,978	6,62,066	9,77,943
Nagaon	9,79,395	8,93,322	11,06,354	11,80,267
Karimganj	4,14,731	4,06,706	4,70,708	5,27,214
Hailakandi	1,96,269	2,46,016	2,23,191	3,12,846

Source: Assam Muslims and IMDT, by, Muhammad Hasibor Rahman.

The above table shows the difference between the growth rate of Hindu and Muslim population in the Muslim majority districts of Assam. It shows the high growth of Muslim population in comparison to the Hindu population. For example according to the census report 1991, Goalpara district had 2, 66,499 Hindus as against 3, 35,275 Muslims, however in 2001 Hindu population was 3, 14,154, whereas the Muslim population increased to 4, 41,516. Similarly, in the districts of Dhubri, Barpeta, Nagaon, Karimganj, and Hailakandi respectively, the same trend of increase is seen in Muslim population compared to Hindu population.

Influential Assamese intellectuals like Dhiren Bezboruah, who is also the editor of the Sentinel warns that Assam could become a part of “Greater Bangladesh” with districts like Dhubri (74% Muslim) and Goalpara (57% Muslims) witnessing a change in their demographic profile by

becoming migrants dominated while other districts like Barpeta, Nalbari, Nagoan and Darrang are also heading in that direction.⁹⁶

3.7: Muslim majority district of Assam in 1971 & 2001

Districts	1971 in %	2001 in %
Dhubri	70.42 %	74.29 %
Goalpara	50.18 %	53.71 %
Barpeta	56.07 %	59.37 %
Hailakandi	55.18 %	57.63 %
Marigaon	45.31 %	47.58 %
Nagaon	47.19 %	51.00 %
Karimganj	49.17 %	52.30

Source: "Statistical hand book Assam" 2005 page; 25

The table no. 8 shows the Muslim majority district of Assam in 1971 & 2001 in percentage. It shows that in 1971 Dhubri district has 70.42% of Muslims but it increased to 74.29% in 2001. Similarly in the other districts of Assam viz. Goalpara had 50.18% in 1971 which became 53.71% in 2001; Barpeta had 56.07% in 1971 which increased to 59.37% in 2001; Hailakandi had 55.18% in 1971 which increased to 57.63% in 2001; Marigaon had 45.31% in 1971 which increased to 47.58% in 2001; Nagaon had 47.19% in 1971 which increased to 51.00% in 2001 and Karimganj had 49.17% which increased to 52% in 2001 respectively.

3.2.8 VOTE BANK POLICY/POLITICS:

The illegal migrants issue in Assam was raised on the eve of the independence of India and has been since then, made to dominate the politics of the state till today.⁹⁷ The politics of “vote bank” is what makes it very difficult to detect the illegal Bangladeshis. There are some political parties that raise hue & cry when police initiate action to detect and deport illegal migrants. The police is accused of communalism and targeting innocent Muslims. The action is lost in the debate on “Secularism Vs Communalism”.⁹⁸

Immigration of Bengali Muslims was also encouraged by the politicians of Assam to serve as “Vote Bank” for them in the elections.⁹⁹ Local politicians in Assam is mostly blamed by Assamese society for not doing enough about illegal migration as they are influenced by “vote bank politics”. Consequently, the first voter list discrepancy in Assam was noticed way back in 1979 when 45,000 illegal immigrants name were found in the Mangaldoi Assembly election voter list.¹⁰⁰

On 10th April, 1992, Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam stated that there are three million Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam but two days later he committed a vote face and declared that there were no illegal migrants in Assam.¹⁰¹

On 17th February 2003 President A.P.J. Kalam voicing his concern over the problem at the joint sitting of parliament said, “The problem of illegal migration from Bangladesh has assumed serious proportions and affects many states. The Government is determined to take all necessary steps to check this problem.” However, the Government is determined to claims that “there is not a single Bangladeshi migrant in India”.¹⁰² In an interview during November 2007, the BSF Chief A.K. Mitra accepted the Government’s inability to control the infiltration from Bangladesh fully.¹⁰³

On 15th January 2009, the Chief Minister admitted, “The Illegal Bangladeshi Migration is a matter of serious concern and in this context the Indian Assam State Government is taking all possible measures to check the menace. Even it is also fact that there are many Indian states, which have more illegal Bangladeshi Muslim population than the state of Assam.” The said information became true, when on 24th January 2009, yet another official agency, Administrative Reform Commission (ARC) had ultimately raised alarm over the threat possessed by illegal influx.¹⁰⁴

The report of the IIA (Military Wing) under the Indian Home Ministry, in the year 2008, had claimed, “it is very surprising and true fact that apart from the Indian old National party, Congress and presently the Communist Party of India (M) have persuaded and provided various citizenship document (like ration card, voter identity card (VIC), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Permanent Register of Citizens (PRC), Passport etc. to the Bangladeshi immigrants, especially Bangladeshi Muslim Migrants, who are traditional vote banks.”¹⁰⁵

It has become a private good that political parties are providing security selectively in exchange for political support. Security is a major reason why Muslims of East Bengal decent have traditionally voted for Congress in Assam.¹⁰⁶ Hence, since the Government failed to tackle the crisis, a violent section of AASU established an armed militant organization namely United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) on April 7, 1979 with a purpose of liberating Assam from illegal occupation of India.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the Assamese people, who had gradually developed an emotional distance from the centre under Congress Government for overlooking the illegal migration for its short term political game found ULFA as their savior.¹⁰⁸

Also, the states freedom fighters bodies have sought President Pratibha Devisingh Patils intervention in resolving the problem of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. According to their grievances, the foreigners have stood as a great danger to the nation. States like Assam are real victim of this problem- socially, economically and politically. Foreigners enrolled their names in the voter list and have become decisive in the election. It has also been alleged by them that they have been used as the vote bank of some political parties.¹⁰⁹

3.2.9 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE:

The partition of India did not stop the inflow of Bengali Muslims into Assam. Their number kept on increasing year after year. In 1961, the Muslims accounted 43 percent in Goalpara, which rose to almost 54 percent in 2001 census. In 1961 they were 41.2 percent in Nagoan, which rose to 51 percent in 2001census. According to 1991 census figure, Muslim population of the state was 63, 73,204 comprising 28.48% of the total population.¹¹⁰

According to the demographer Dass, the heavy immigration is the one of the pivoted cause behind the high rate of population growth of Assam. Also according to Economic Survey: Government of Assam, the high growth of population in Assam during the decade 1961-71 is attributable to the migration, high birth rate and declining death rates.¹¹¹The outgoing judge of IMDT Tribunal, which is supposed to detect and deport infiltrators, has also admitted that infiltration is continuing on large scale.¹¹²

According to a study conducted by a few scholars of Toronto University and the American Academy of Arts and Science, 15 million Bangladeshi nationals have infiltrated in India.

According to another study done by another American Organization; namely, the Advancement of Science, 20 million Bangladeshi Nationals are presently staying in India.¹¹³

According to S. Gurumurthy, a widely known economist, Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh into India is somewhere between 10 to 20 million.¹¹⁴ According to a Group of Ministers on National Security, there were 12 million Bangladeshi immigrants in the country in 2001 with 5 million in Assam alone.¹¹⁵

On July 14, 2004, India's Minister of State for Home, SriprakashJaiswal, had told the Rajya Sabha that there are 5 million Illegal Bangladeshis in Assam.¹¹⁶ Bengali Muslim migrants and their descendants now make up a significant portion of the Assam population (31%).¹¹⁷ In interview to the media, Home Minister P. Chidambaram expressed his dissatisfaction over issuing large number of visas to Bangladeshi people very month. To him there is no reason to issue so many visas to Bangladeshi people and there is very ineffective monitoring system whether the guy has gone back to Bangladesh or remained here. He also said that he feel sympathy with that contribution that demographics are changing.¹¹⁸

According to the census 2001 Report released in 2005, the number of Bangladeshi migrants during the decade 1981- 1991, 6, 00,000.¹¹⁹ Most interesting is that even the indigenous Muslims feels that Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims populates often blur the line of social, political, economic and cultural demarcation between the ethnic Muslims, who speaks Assamese language and have been living in the region for generations as bona fide citizen.¹²⁰

Further in a meeting at Sivasagar Press Club on 21st November, 2008, Nekibur Zaman, senior advocate, Gauhati High Court; Mohammad Tabiul Hussain, retired District Commissioner,

Morigaon; Imtiaz Hussain Hazarika, President, Sodou Asom Khilonjia Muslim Suraksha Samity; Samsul Haque, Asomiya Muslim Unnayan Samity (AMUS), Sivsagar unit, enjoying all the socio-economic and political privileges accorded to the minorities stated, “ The unabated influx from neighboring Bangladesh has significantly altered the demographic pattern of the state, Assam and the indigenous Muslim population is fast outnumbered by their Bangladeshi counterparts illegally settling mainly in the districts of Western part of the State, Assam has become a serious cause of concern for the conscious indigenous Muslim community of Assam.”¹²¹

3.2.10 ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MUSLIM AND THEIR OCCUPATION:

According to the Indian Census Report, most of the Bangladeshi Illegal immigrants are the people of very poor section of Bangladesh.¹²² They cut open border fence to sneak into Assam.¹²³ They often enter into India and settle themselves either temporarily or permanently in the Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Marigaon, Nagoan, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Cachar districts of Northeastern Indian State Assam.¹²⁴

These poor Bangladesh immigrants end up settling themselves on River Island or sandy shores of the river Brahmaputra and tributaries, as these kind of land are always abundant by native people. These chars (riverines) are existed from Sadia of Upper Assam's Dibrugarh district to South- Salmara of lower Assam's Dhubri district of the state, Assam in North East India. According to the estimate of Char Area Development Authority, Government of Assam State (India) - CADAGAS (I), there are 1,256 numbers of char on the river Brahmaputra (1985). And according to the Indian Military Intelligence Report, “of total number of this chars lie under 14 numbers of districts, 23 numbers of sub-divisions and 59 numbers of Development Blocks with 2,251 number of village in 299 number of Gaon-Panchayat in the whole state. Over 24.90 lakhs

people of comprising 4.35 lakhs families resides in the chars of river Brahmaputra and its tributaries. While 3,068 sq. km. area belongs to char areas in the state, most of the people are of "Muslim Community", 22.90 lakhs are Muslims of the total population 24.90. Apart from this more than 70%-75% of Char Village population is immigrant Muslims. The illegal Bangladeshi Muslims choose the places because they can escape unsurveyed, unaccounted without being noticed by police forces.¹²⁵

Bangladesh is the fourth largest peasant society in the world. The migrants mostly engage themselves as laborer in agricultural fields, construction sites, daily laborers, including pulling rickshaws, hand- barrows and as vegetable sellers, egg-sellers, fish-seller, fruit seller, rag pickers etc. Immigrants know that these kinds of jobs or works are especially available in India. So, the illegal Bangladeshis always think that they may easily obtain these kinds of employments to pass their life effortlessly.¹²⁶

Apart from the economic reason behind the illegal migration from Bangladesh, it has also been reflected in different context. The chief motto of this incessant illegal migration from Bangladesh is to trigger the rise activities of the "Islamic Religious Fundamentalism" in the Eastern Indian as well as entire country. As a result it has not only threatening the Eastern Indian states but also the entire country. Besides this demographic invasion, the intelligence agencies of Bangladesh and Pakistan namely- Director General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) are pushing extremist as well as fundamentalist into India, particularly Assam to destabilize the whole Indian province. The above mentioned report also got strong support by an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official during 2004-06 who sent reports to Indian Home Department citing that, "The Major militant group of Assam as well as the region- ULFA is making room for the illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators at the behest of Bangladesh intelligence agency- DGFI and Pakistan intelligence agency- ISI through the killing of Hindi speaking people.¹²⁷

The migrants to make easy and quick money, major portions of these illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators are choosing the path either anti- social works (like illegally cutting and selling fuel-woods, poaching, killings, bomb blasts etc.) or religious fundamental activities.¹²⁸ In the Lok Sabha, Bijoya Chakravarty made a Zero Hour statement mentioning the encroachment of Indian Territory by Bangladesh in the eastern sector. Since it came into being, Bangladesh has been encroaching upon acres of land belonging to Assam in the bordering districts of Karimganj, Silchar and Dhubri. In fact in the bordering areas, a lot of smuggling has been done without any hindrance, she said. The same was even admitted by Assam Revenue Minister, Ramen Deka.¹²⁹

3.2.11 BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS INTO ASSAM, INDIA:

East Bengal/ Pakistan/Bangladesh have always followed the policy of settling its inhabitants into Assam through infiltration. On the eve of partition Maniul Haq Choudhary, the private Secretary of Jinnah and also a prominent leader of the youth wing of AIML was shaky whether to opt for Pakistan or stay back in India but on the advice of Jinnah he stayed back in India. Jinnah during his advice to him said, "Wait for ten years, shall present Assam on a silver plate to you". Jinnah died in 1948 but the Congress fulfilled his promise by including Choudhary in the Cabinet of Congress Government led by Gopi Nath Bordoloi. It is also alleged that Choudhary stayed back on the advice of Jinnah and other Pakistani leaders to help the immigrants from Pakistan for their settlement in Assam.¹³⁰

Once an AGP leader, Chandra Mohan Patowary pointed out, "According to news reports and we have specific information about Bangladeshi Government that the Bangladesh Government

has been spending huge sum of Taka (Bangladeshi currency) to teach 'Assamese language' in schools for the student in a bid to encourage fresh infiltration to the state, Assam."¹³¹ From 1951 onwards the immigrants Muslim managed to win the hearts of the Assamese Hindu public by falsely declaring themselves in 1951 census as Assamese speaking.¹³²

Towards migration, the immigration law ordinance of 1982 is the basic migration law of Bangladesh specifying rules and regulations for migrant workers and setting a recruiting fee. The migration process of Bangladesh started after its independence from Pakistan. The Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower Employment and training (BMET) was established in 1976 to monitor the flow of overseas migration. The recruitment fee to be paid to BMET is very high and not payable by the poor, who end up selling their land and houses for payment of the fees.¹³³

3.2.12 ESTIMATES OF PRESENCE OF ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS IN ASSAM:

The population of Assam is about 30 million (projected for 2009). The annual average rate of growth during 1991-2001 is 1.85%. The natural rate of growth is 1.63% in 1999 (and 1.59 in 2000). So, there has been (inflow) rate of immigration is 0.22% per annum approximately. The population of Assam in 2001 is 26 million. So, the net immigration is 57,200 in 2001, if we apply the rate of 0.22%. If we assume, and it is a drastic assumption, that the same rate continues for 40 years from 1969 to 2009, then we have a figure of 2.29 million. There is no doubt that, in the 1970s and 1980s, the rate of immigration was far higher.

On the other hand if we look at Bangladesh the population in Bangladesh is 150 million (estimated) in 2008. The actual rate of growth of population is 2.0% and the natural rate of growth of population is 2.2% in 1995. So there is (outflow) net emigration from Bangladesh at

the annual rate of 0.2%. The population of Bangladesh in 1995 is 124 million. Therefore, we can estimate that 2, 48,000 Bangladeshi emigrated in 1995. If we make the drastic assumption that emigration took place at that rate for 40 years (1969 to 2009), then we find that 9.9 million Bangladeshis left their country during this period of 40 years. And most of these poor land-hungry Bangladeshis entered North East region due to geographical integrity.¹³⁴

The records of The Election Commission of Bangladesh further confirm the state of affairs as mentioned above. On the eve of the parliamentary election held in Bangladesh in June 1996, the Commission had removed the names of 12 lakhs of Bangladeshi citizens from the country's electoral rolls because they were absent from Bangladesh.¹³⁵ As per 1991 Census Report of Bangladesh (CRB) her population was 10, 79, 92,140. The thing to be noted is that while in 1991 she had 6,21,81,745 voters but in 1995 according to the "Electoral Roll" published on 7th October the figure shows that it has only 5,60,16,178 voters, which is 61,65,567 less than that of 1991 roll. It is also true that Bangladesh is the world's mostly densely populated country with a density of 969 per square kilometer.¹³⁶ Where these 61.65,567 Bangladeshi have disappeared, is now anybody's guess.

Also, former Indian Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. T.N. Sheshan was quoted in the New York Times (12th February, 1995) as saying that "there are still more than 1 million migrants on the electoral rolls of Assam". Again in a study conducted by American Academy of Arts and Science, Harvard and Toronto university shows that of the total inhabitants counted in the Eastern Indian state, Assam, one third are Bangladeshi immigrants. It is quite strange that in a country like Bangladesh where population growth is too high, more than 6 million voters were found decreasing within a span of 4 years or so.¹³⁷

Also, in a review made by the United Nations Organization (UNO), Bangladesh should have had 118 million populations in 1991 but Census Report of Bangladesh (CRB) shows about 108 million populations in that year. Moreover, in 1951, Bangladesh had 22% minority population, which by 1995 came down to 10%. This report clearly indicates that these 6 million and the decreased number of voters plus the de-franchised 20 lakh have infiltrated to India most particularly Assam and abroad. ¹³⁸

Government of India has not given any explanation regarding infiltration. Hence, when it is 70,00,000 according to Indian Foreign office, it is 1 crore, according to Jyoti basu, the former Chief Minister of West Bengal.¹³⁹ Till now, no authoritative assessment has been made about the exact size of illegal migrants from Bangladesh to state like Assam, West Bengal, and Tripura etc. For example in Assam, the estimated number of such illegal migrants from Bangladesh who have entered the state after March 25, 1971 varies from 6 lakhs to 80 lakhs. In Assam there are entry points in three border districts, viz. Karimganj, Cachar and Dhubri which are utilized by the infiltrators to sneak into Assam.¹⁴⁰

The issue of illegal migration created tension in the state of Assam as a result of which the state came under five brief spells of Presidents Rule: in December 1979, June 1980, June 1981, March 1982 and September 1982. It was only then that the decision to dissolve the House and go in for fresh Assembly elections. These were held in February 1983, along with bye elections to the 12th Lok sabha seats that had remained vacant over the previous three years.¹⁴¹

During a talk between the Prime Minister of India and Bangladesh in February 1972, the prime Minister of Bangladesh had assured the return of all Bangladeshi nationals who had taken shelter in India since march 25, 1971.¹⁴² However, from 1993 to September 1998 the Border Security Force (BSF) tried to hand over 39, 745 illegal migrants to the Bangladesh Rifles. But

the later accepted only 9,253.¹⁴³ Again, in 2007, about 25,712 out of five lakh Bangladeshis who came to India did not return after the expiry of their visas, while in 2006 more than 24,000 went missing from 4, 84 lakh Bangladeshis who had entered India with valid travel documents. About 12 lakh Bangladeshis who had entered India between the years 1972-2005 with valid documents have not returned home. India has managed to push back only 15,000 of them in 2005, 12000 in 2006 and 11,500 in 2007.¹⁴⁴

3.2.13 IMMIGRATION POLICY:

India's Immigration policy is framed by a Pan-India formulation of the problem and embroiled in an extra layer of two highly sensitive issues: the treatment of India's minority Muslim population and India's de-facts obligation to allow Hindu refugees from East Bengal/Pakistan to settle in the country. Due to this North East states of India were forced to accept majority of Post-colonial immigration from the east Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh region in spite of vehement protests. However, these grievances have been lost in the Pan- India noise and consequently, triggered a series of dangerous insurgency.

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CHAPTER-4

FACTORS BEHIND ILLEGAL MIGRATION INTO ASSAM

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- 4.1 POOR BORDER:
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4. FACTORS BEHIND ILLEGAL MIGRATION INTO ASSAM

Migration is universal in nature. It is the movement of people from one place in the world to another place for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary¹ and those people who migrate illegally or unlawfully are called illegal migrants. A person migrates/move for variety of reasons. These reasons can be divided into two categories-

1. Pull Factors
2. Push Factors

According to theorist Lee, Push factors are things that are bad about the country that one lives in and Pull factors are things that attract one to another area. According to him push factors are as below-

1. Not enough job
2. Few opportunities
3. Primitive condition
4. Desertification
5. Famine or drought
6. Political fear or persecution
7. Poor medical care
8. Loss of wealth
9. National disaster
10. Death threat
11. Lack of political and religious freedom
12. Poor housing
13. Bullying
14. Discrimination
15. Pollution etc.

Pull factors-

1. Job opportunities

2. Better living condition
3. Political &/or religious freedom
4. Enjoyment
5. Education
6. Better medical care
7. Attractive climate
8. Security
9. Family links
10. Industry etc.

Apart from the above mentioned universal reasons of migration, there are some specific reasons of Illegal migration of Bangladeshi people to Assam. They are discussed below:-

4.1 POOR BORDER:

The poor border system between India and Bangladesh is the major reason behind illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam. Assam shares a 262 kilometers border with Bangladesh of which 92 kilometers is riverine.²The border is yet to be fenced completely. More than 50 percent of the border remains porous and even in areas where barbed wire fencing has been erected it does not necessarily mean a full stop to infiltration.³ Also, the 92 km of border is riverine, so it is very difficult to fence it. Even, the presence of the Border Security Force (BSF) in the border areas is far from adequate. Basically, the mighty river Brahmaputra which divides the countries is natural transit route to Bangladeshi people. Hundreds of people come to India and more particularly Assam from Bangladesh by crossing the river with the help of boats. This river is at some places about 15 kilometers (9.5miles) wide. As a result Assam has been acting as a gateway for Bangladeshis to entire India.⁴

Only 66% of the border has been fenced so far. Of total 4095 km Indo-Bangladesh border which is 2979 kilometers along land and 1116 kilometers rivers, only 227 kilometers have search lights fitted. Most of the time those lights cannot work due to power cut. Hence during night time people easily cross the border and enter India in large number with luggage.⁵ Most regretfully, the Government of Assam as well as the Central Government is least concerned about the issue which is age-old problem. Even after the completion of 25 years of the famous Assam Accord (1985), the fencing in Assam is not complete. On the other hand, fencing in Punjab started in 1988 and was completed in 3 years by 1991. However, the seriousness of infiltration into Assam was much more important than Punjab.⁶

According to the then Chief Minister was not supportive in the process of sealing the Indo-Bangladesh border.⁷ Ex. Governor Lt. General S. K. Sinha of Assam also cited his concern over the porous border system. It is known that right up to 1989 the Indo-Bangladesh border was quite open.⁸ Also, according to Assam Government 10 kilometers stretch rigged by water would continue to remain unfenced.⁹

Again, there are as many as 212 controversial patches on the 4097km long Indo- Bangladesh border and 6.5 km. Undemarcated border which act as an irritant in relations between the two bordering countries.¹⁰ There is always tendency to view illegal migration into Assam a matter affecting only the people of Assam which otherwise is very sensitive issue for the country as a whole.¹¹ It is worth mentioning that Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh has been elected to Rajya Sabha for the past eighteen years from Assam, however he has never spoken a word about the illegal infiltration of Bangladesh which challenges the population structure in 7 districts of the state regretfully.¹²

According to the then Governor Ajay Singh 6000 Bangladeshis are daily infiltrating into Assam across the world's most porous border.¹³ Though there is no documented data on the number of illegal migration, it is assumed that out of 26 million people residing in Assam, around 6 million are Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims, which is due to poor boundary system.¹⁴

4.2 VOTE BANK POLITICS:

Vote bank politics is also one of the vital -reasons behind illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam.¹⁵The vote bank politics considering illegal Bangladeshi migration is not new in Assam's politics; rather the germs of vote bank politics already existed in pre-independence Assam also. It is worth mentioning that during Saadullah's reign in 1945 Congress Government did not blame the Muslim Government for failure to implement the policy of eviction.¹⁶ Saadullah during his tenure had offered 1, 74,548 bighas of land to new Bangladeshi immigrants and even during his term manipulated in 1941 census deflating the number of Hindus and inflating that of the Muslims for political purpose. However, the Congress Government remained silent spectator because they were the coalition partner during Saadullah's term and also neither the Congress nor the league could afford to antagonize and alienate the immigrant Muslims voters.¹⁷

After the independence also the attitude of the Congress Government at Center towards the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam remained the same. They were always concerned with the vote bank politics and how remain in power. Post independence though some of the leaders of Assam tried to evict the illegal Bangladeshi migrants, the Centre always pressured the state Government to stay away of this issue.

During the Chief Minister ship of Bimala Prasad, the Congress Government of Assam in the early 60's adopted an aggressive campaign to flush out the immigrants, who settled in Assam

since January, 1951. But the Congress Government at the center headed by Prime Minister Nehru pleaded Chaliha to go slow on deportation and even stop them. Subsequently at the end Chaliha had to oblige with him.¹⁸

It is irony of fate that even AGP and its splinter group AGP (progressive) leaders had led a high voltage agitation against immigrants, especially against Bangladeshi but now they are also speaking the same language to appease the Muslim leaders for their support in election as Congress has been doing since Independence.¹⁹

Late B.K. Nehru, the Governor of Assam between 1968 and 1973, condemned the infiltration as vote bank politics by the Congress. On September 1, 1999 Government of Assam filed affidavit for the first time in Supreme Court supporting repeal of IMDT.²⁰ However, in 2001 when Congress Government came to power withdrew and changed the affidavit in Supreme Court just to get Muslim votes and stay in power.²¹ But, ultimately on July 12, 2005 Supreme Court repeal IMDT Act Supreme Court viewed that IMDT encourages infiltration and due to it infiltration is continuing.²²

Again in 1978 around 7500 foreigners were detected only in Mangaldoi Parliamentary Constituency.²³ The inclusion of 45,000 illegal Bangladeshi migrants in the Mangaldoi Assembly election voter list is the best example of vote bank politics in Assam.²⁴ Thus, it can be said that the higher growth of Muslim population in Assam is the consequences of vote bank politics by political parties. Today it is seen that, no one can come in power in Assam unless supported by the Bangladeshis.²⁵

4.3 BANGLADESH LIBERATION & WAR REFUGEES:

The Bangladesh Liberation war has also played a significant role in illegal migration of Bangladeshi people into Assam. The war broke out on 26th March, 1971 as army unit directed by West Pakistan launched a military operation in East Pakistan against Bengali civilians, students, intelligence who were demanding separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan. The West Pakistan forces were very brutal towards East Pakistan and killed many civilians. According to the International media and reference books in English, the casualty was 5000 to 35,000 in Dhaka and 2,00,000- 3,00,000 for Bangladesh as a whole. The West Pakistan forces even raped as many as 2, 00,000 east Pakistan women during the course of their military action.²⁶

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, a pact was signed between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman known as Indira-Mujib Pact 1974. According to the pact Bangladesh was supposed to take back all the war refugees who had left Bangladesh erstwhile East Pakistan after 25th March, 1971 and entered India especially Assam.²⁷ However, Bangladesh is now in a denial mood and says that there are no illegal Bangladeshi migrants in India (Assam). On the contrary of being grateful to India for helping those during their Liberation War Bangladesh on the other hand had adopted Pakistan's policy of infiltration.

During the period 1951-71 till the Bangladesh Liberation War broke out at least 37, 57,000 illegal migrants had entered Assam from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh.²⁸

According to Hussain, at least 15,00,000 to 20,00,000 Bangladeshi Hindu Bengali came to Assam for shelter during Bangladesh Liberation war who never returned to Bangladesh even

after they won independence and completely settled down in Assam.²⁹ In 1947 Bangladesh had 27% Bengali Hindu population but by 1971, during the Bangladesh Liberation War it got reduced to 14%. It is also obvious that the deducted Bengali Hindu population had come down to West Bengal and other North East states, especially Assam.³⁰

4.4 SIMILARITY IN APPEARANCE & LANGUAGE:

The similarity in appearance and the language has been playing a crucial role in illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state of Assam. The ethnic similarity of the immigrants with the indigenous population has made it difficult to collect reliable data about the numbers involved in the annual migrations.³¹

It is open secret that after crossing over the infiltrators do not find it difficult to receive ready shelter with the help of some of their co-religionists. It was reported during the sixties of the last century that arrangements were made in East Pakistan near the Assam border for imparting working knowledge of the Assamese language to those intending to infiltrate into Assam so that they did not find it difficult to merge with the local population without raising any suspicion. Such type of pre planned illegal infiltration actually plays pivotal role in the demographic change of the state.³²

Both the Indian and Bangladeshi Muslims speak Bengali. In fact, about 80%-90% of the India-Bangladeshi International Border population in the State and in Bangladesh is not only of the same language speaker but also look similar and shares the same dreams, eat the equal foods and wear the same dress respectively. Even on the other hand cultivation is traditional occupation on both sides. So, it's practically very much difficult for defense personnel's to

differentiate between an Indian and a Bangladeshi citizen without proper identification by showing a document like election card or National Register of Citizens (NRC) or passport or whatever.³³ Hence, Bangladeshi migrants could be able to slip from detection as illegal migrants.

The border districts of Assam which are full of Bangladeshi Muslim settlers are viz. Dhubri, Silchar and Karimganj. Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims prefer to live in the above mentioned particular International border areas only because most of the above districts of Assam are dominated by the illegal Bangladeshi Muslims, who had migrated from former East Pakistan.³⁴ According to the census report of Assam, 74.29% of Dhubri are Muslims, 53.3% in Karimganj and 36.13% in (Silchar) Cachar districts are Muslims.³⁵

4.5 IGNORANCE BY CENTRE:

Ignorance by the centre is also one of the influential reasons behind illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam. Considered as “Outer India” Assam was not in the radar of Congress’s national development.³⁶ The same attitude of Congress Government towards Assam or the North Eastern States was also visible during the day of partition of India also. During partition Congress almost gave away Assam to Pakistan.³⁷ Even Nehru accepted that idea in spite of knowing that in Assam Hindu forms 42% of total population against Muslim’s 31% of the total population.³⁸

The Centre which is mostly reined by Congress Government has always turned a deaf ear to the Assamese people’s cry of illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state. Instead of trying to solve the problem, the Centre has always made one or the other Act to worsen the issue further. For e.g. when Assam was trying their level best to detect and deport Illegal Bangladeshi Muslim,

the Nehru Government at the Centre came up with a new pact called “Nehru- Liaquat” Pact which allowed immigrant Muslims to return to Assam who had left Assam during 1950 riots between Hindu and Muslims.³⁹ The pact resulted fresh influx of immigrants to Assam numbering several lakhs from Pakistan.⁴⁰

Again when Chief Minister, Bimala Prasad Chaliha of Assam was busy in evicting illegal migrants during 1960's the then Prime Minister, Nehru asked him to stop the eviction for more vote bank politics.⁴¹ Thus, when the state and the Central Government failed to solve the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration in Assam, it led to the popular Assam movement in 1979. The agitation came to an end after the signing of Assam Accord in 1985. In that accord though Assamese people insisted January 1951 as cut-off year, the Central Congress Government did not accept that year instead they made 25th March, 1971 as the cut-off year. However, the cut-off year for the rest of India is July, 1948 which clearly shows the partiality. Hence, this cut-off year for Assam provided an ample opportunity to large Bangladeshi migrants to become Indian citizens who came before 25th march, 1971. All this action taken by the Centre is done solely for vote bank politics and to remain in power in Assam.⁴²

Although the Centre took decision to fully fence the Indo- Bangladesh border in Assam Accord, still after 25 years of time the border is not fully fenced, ⁴³ thus playing a crucial role towards illegal Bangladesh migration into the state.

Another most surprising fact is that after being elected for continuously more than 18 years from Assam the present Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, has not uttered a single word about the illegal Bangladeshi migration taking place in Assam on behalf of the Assamese people.⁴⁴

4.6 POVERTY & WORK OPPORTUNITIES:

Economy is one of the main reasons behind illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam. The migrants due to socio-economic reasons such as better-food, clothing, shelter and jobs migrates into India especially the bordering districts of Assam. In fact, the Bangladeshi Muslims wanted to shift their base from their country Bangladesh only because, to escape poverty, starvation, diseases, and frequent economical unrest in their native land- Bangladesh.⁴⁵

According to the Indian census Report, most of the Bangladeshi illegal migrants are the people of very poor section of Bangladesh. Therefore, they often enter into India and settle themselves either temporarily or permanently in the Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Marigaon, Nagoan, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Cachar, Sonitpur etc. districts of Assam as they are already dominated by Muslim settler from Bangladesh.⁴⁶

The illegal migrants engage themselves in agricultural field, construction sites, daily laborer including pulling rickshaw vans, vegetable sellers, egg-sellers, fish- sellers, fruit- sellers, rag pickers etc. as they know that this kind of jobs are neglected by the Assamese people. So, it's clear that the poverty in Bangladesh and work opportunities in Assam has been playing an important role behind illegal Bangladeshi Muslims into Assam.⁴⁷

4.7 PERSECUTION OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH:

The persecution of Hindu people in Bangladesh/East Bengal/East Pakistan has been a contributory factor behind illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam. After the partition of India

into India and Pakistan in 1947, people belonging to the Hindu Community migrated to India for fear of conversion, oppression, communal riots and the more general sense of being second-class citizens under the Islamic dispensation.⁴⁸ That is why we can see a sharp fall in minority (Hindu) population of East Bengal/East Pakistan after the independence of India. In 1951 Hindu population contributed 22% to total population of East Bengal/East Pakistan/ Bangladesh which came down to 18.5% in 1961 and 13.5% in 1971.⁴⁹

Again the Bangladesh liberation War of 1971 also caused illegal migration of Bangladesh people to Assam. During the War many Bangladeshi people came to Assam in fear of life, most of them were Bengali people. According to Rahman at least 15, 00,000- 20, 00,000 Bengali Hindu came to Assam as refugees, but most of them did not return and stayed back even after Bangladesh gained independence.⁵⁰

During the decade between 1971-81, the Bengali Hindu population came down to 12.5% and to 10% till 1995.⁵¹ It is also worth mentioning that between 1971-81 Bangladesh census record showed a reduction of 39 lakhs in the minority community and between 1981-89, 36 lakhs religious minorities were reported missing from Bangladesh.⁵² These missing Hindu populations are also to a great extent responsible for the rise of illegal Bangladeshi migration in Assam.

4.8 ILLEGAL MIGRATION DETERMINATION BY TRIBUNAL:

The illegal migration determination by tribunal (IMDT) Act had also played an indirect but pivotal role in influx of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam. The IMDT Act, popularly known as “Black Act” was an Indian law enacted in 1983 by Indira Gandhi Government for detection and deportation of illegal migrants.⁵³ The IMDT Act was imposed or bullied to accept in Assam on October 15th, 1983 on which day it was deemed to have come into force in the State of Assam.⁵⁴

However, during the process of taking decision on this particular Act, there was not even a single M.P. from Assam because parliamentary election was boycotted due to Assam agitation.

The IMDT described the procedures to detect illegal migrants from Bangladesh and expel them from Assam. The Act was pushed through mainly on the ground that it provided special protections against undue harassment to the 'minorities' that were affected by the Assam agitation. The Act was applicable only in the state of Assam, whereas in other states, detection is done under the Foreigners Act, 1946. However, on the contrary the Act basically made it difficult to deport illegal immigrants from Assam as under the Act, the burden of providing the citizenship or otherwise rested on the accuser and the police, not the accused; whereas under the Foreigners Act the onus is on the accused. Thus, the Act has been alleged to be one of the main reasons of rapid rise of Muslim population and demographic change in Assam.⁵⁵

The IMDT Act through its operation virtually made sure that no illegal immigrants would ever be thrown out from the state. In its over two decades (22 years) of existence it could identify only few hundred illegal migrants. But it is not even definite whether they deported.⁵⁶ Hence, the presence of illegal migrants has changed the demographic character of Assam thereby reducing the local people of Assam to a status of minority in certain districts.⁵⁷ Against this, in West Bengal where the Foreigners Act, 1946 was applicable, 4, 89,046 people were deported between 1983- 1998.

Finally, the Supreme Court of India scrapped the controversial IMDT Act, 1983 on July 12th, 2005, holding responsible for delaying detection of foreigners in the state. In their unanimous verdict chief justice R.C. Lahoti, Justice G.P. Mathur and P.K. Balasubramanyan ruled that IMDT Act was unconstitutional and directed the immediate closure of all tribunals under the act.⁵⁸ The Supreme Court was of the view that IMDT Act "has created the biggest hurdle and it

is the main impediment or barrier in the identification and deportation of illegal migrants”.⁵⁹ The bench also said that the influx of Bangladeshi nationals into Assam posed a threat to the integrity and security of North Eastern region.⁶⁰ Thus, the IMDT Act came to an end but the damage was already done to a great extent.

4.9 OVER- POPULATION:

Over population in Bangladesh is another push factor behind the illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam and other North Eastern states of India. Population growth which exceeds the carrying capacity of an area or environment results in over population.⁶¹ The Bengali Muslims are practicing polygamy marriage system and were by and large illiterate. As result they were less conscious towards birth control and about checking population growth. It had a “spilling over” affect into its adjoining regions like Assam.⁶²

The high growth rate of population in East Bengal/ East Pakistan/ Bangladesh is an old trend. For e.g. as early as in 1874 only, one of its districts namely Mymensingh had 23, 51,700 number of population as against the whole Brahmaputra valley of Assam which had only 19, 15,988 people, which played as push factor for migration of people from Mymensingh of Bengal.⁶³ In 1991, the density of Bangladesh was 969 sq. km. whereas in Assam it was 340 per sq. km. in 2001. ⁶⁴

4.1: Density per square mile*

Census year	East Bengal Districts				Assam districts					
	Mymensingh	Pabna	Bogra	Rangpur	Goalpara	Kamrup	Darrang	Nowgong	Sibsagar	Lakhimpur
1881	483	713	504	600	113	167	80	82	79	43
1891	548	740	562	591	114	164	90	90	69	62
1901	618	772	629	617	117	153	99	68	120	86

Source: Roy, Ajoy, "The Bodo Imbroglio", page, 29.

The above table explains the comparison between the districts of East Bengal and Assam during the period 1881-1901. From the table it is quite clear that the districts of East Bengal were very densely populated, whereas the densities of districts of Assam were quite low in the comparison of East Bengal districts. In the year 1901 the Goalpar district of Assam was most densely populated district with 120 per square mile, whereas the district of Pabna with 772 per square mile was the most densely populated district of East Bengal. So there was a huge gap between the density of Assam and the East Bengal, which ultimately led to the immigration of Bengali Muslim into the Assam.

The population explosion in Bangladesh with 2.8 million added every year is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world, creates the push factor for silent demographic invasion into Assam.⁶⁵

Bangladesh is the fourth largest peasant society in the world, but its landlessness is growing day by day because of over population, which is forcing migration that will spill over India, specially, Eastern Indian states like Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram including Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim and Bihar.⁶⁶

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CHAPTER-5

MIGRATION: IT'S IMPACT ON **SOCIETY**

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MIGRATION: IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIETY

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MIGRATION: IT'S IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Some of the most acute social problems of the world are associated with migration. The migration of 20th century has created many socio- economical problems besides disturbing the original ethnic structure of the state.¹ There has been a great impact of illegal Muslim infiltration from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh confined not only to demographic imbalance but which extends to political, economic and socio-cultural areas posing a serious security problem to this frontier state.²

The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh into Assam and the consequent perceptible change in the demographic pattern of the state has been a matter of grave concern.³The present imbalanced demographic character of Assam is due to migration from East Bengal, later Pakistan and now Bangladesh.⁴ It threatens to reduce the Assamese people to a minority in their own state as happened Tripura and Sikkim.⁵ The issue of Bangladeshi illegal migration has troubled the state of Assam for decade now. Assamese political and social discourses fear that this unchecked migration from across the border will subvert their way of life and change the demographic profile of the state in the near future. The lack of authentic data on illegal migrant flows only adds to the discomfort.⁶

Illegal migration from Bangladesh into Assam has been a major political, economical, social and security issue for Assamese society, so much that it evoked the non- violent, highly visible, Assam Agitation (1979-1985) spearheaded by the All Assam Students Union (AASU). The agitation resulted in the Assam Accord of 1985 which stated that anybody settled in Assam from Bangladesh after March 25th, 1971 is not a citizen but an illegal migrant. This provision of the Accord has not been implemented and has therefore failed to change the nature of Bangladeshi immigration into Assam.⁷ This silent invasion from Bangladesh is affecting severely the political,

economical, and social and security of Assam. The affect of illegal Bangladeshi migration are as follows-

5.1 POLITICAL

The large number of Illegal Bangladeshi migration after the independence of India is affecting the political scenario of Assam remarkably. The large number of Illegal Bangladeshi migration is encouraging vote bank politics since independence. It is the sole contributory factor behind the rise of regionalism sentiment amongst Assamese people and equally is responsible for the growth of many regional political parties in Assam. It is also leading to frequent autonomous movement; causing political unrest and domination of Bangladeshi people in politics of Assam. The impacts are as follows:-

5.1.1 VOTE BANK POLITICS:

The illegal migrants issue in Assam was raised on the eve of the Independence of India and has been since then made to dominate the politics of the state till today. The effect of illegal Bangladeshi migration is most visible in the politics of Assam. The illegal Bangladeshi migrants in Assam are now the centre of politics; today no one party can come to power in the state unless and until supported by the foreigners from Bangladesh.⁸

Various intelligent agencies have been warning of serious consequences if immediate attention is not paid. Unfortunately these migrants have been given legal protection with resident certificates, pattas etc. for narrow political mileage.⁹

In early 60's when the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha tried to launch an aggressive campaign to finish out the Bangladeshi immigrants who settled in Assam since 1951, Prime Minister Nehru stopped him from doing so for the fear of dissatisfaction of Muslim Community.¹⁰

When the Assam movement picked up momentum the Congress Government at the Centre led by Indira Gandhi pushed legislation in Parliament in 1983 called Illegal Migration Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act.¹¹ The Central Government bullied agitators to accept 1971, March 25th as the cut off year to attain Indian citizenship, whereas rest of the Indian states follows July 1948 as the cut off year.¹² In 2001, when all Assamese people of Assam were trying to get rid of the called Illegal Migration Determination Tribunal (IMDT) Act also known as "black Act" considering that it hamper only the detection of Illegal migrants, the congress Government just after coming in power withdrew the affidavit submitted by earlier Government (AGP) and insisted to carry on with Illegal Migration Determination Tribunal (IMDT) Act for the sake of appeasing Muslim people.¹³

During the first five year tenure of Assam Gana Parishad (AGP, 1985-90) rule in Assam, the same leadership who had led the violent Assamese agitation during 1979-85, did not exhibit any seriousness to check the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh from across the porous borders, nor did they raise any hue & cry about the inadequacy, short coming and defects in the IMDT Act, 1983 for the purpose of identification, detection and deportation of illegal migrants from Bangladesh nor had they exerted pressure on the Government of India to seal the international Assam- Bangladesh border by erecting suitable fencing and adopting other necessary measures.¹⁴ The impact of the vote bank politics is so severe that even the AGP now-a –days cannot escape it, who happened to be the leader of Assam movement against Bangladeshi infiltrators.

And when the Supreme Court of India struck down the Act on 12th July, 2005 saying it is unconstitutional;¹⁵ the then Chief Minister of Assam- Tarun Gogoi on 5th October, 2007, finding no other alternative and to bypass the above matter and to get “support” from the Muslim Community; had made plans to issue Identity Card (IC)’s to these illegal infiltrators, who are living as daily wage earners, rickshaw pullers, handbarrow pullers, daily laborers and belong to the Muslim minority community and enter India illegally and ultimately disappear at the dust. However, the states’ one of the major and influential student groups- AASU lodged a vehement protest against this type of activity.¹⁶

It had been found true, when the report of the IIA (Military Wing) under the Indian Home Ministry, in the year 2008, had claimed, “It is very surprising and true fact that apart from the Indian Old national Political party, Congress and presently, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have persuaded and provided various citizenship documents (like Ration Card, Voter Identity Card (VIC), National Register of Citizens (NRC), Passport etc.)” to the Bangladeshi immigrants (specially Muslim immigrants) who are usually traditional “vote bank.”¹⁷

On 10th April, 1992, Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam stated that there were three million Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam but two days later he committed a volte face and declared that there were no illegal migrants in Assam.¹⁸

On December 13th, 2008 in New Delhi in the meeting of National Integration Council (NIC) announced that there is no illegal Bangladeshi Nationals staying in Assam.¹⁹ But again on 15th January, 2009, the Chief Minister admitted, “The Illegal Bangladeshi Migration is a matter of serious concern and in this context the Indian Assam State Government is taking all possible measures to check the menace. Even it is also fact that there are many Indian states, which have more illegal Bangladeshi population than the state of Assam.”²⁰

The people of Assam has been electing Prime Minister Manmohan since last two decade now as an Member of Parliament or Prime Minister, but most regretfully in these two decade, the whole India did not hear a single word from him against the Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants, thereby not favoring the Assamese people, just for the sake of vote bank politics.²¹

Instead he tries to hush up the matter whenever the issue came out. For e.g. on 15th July 2004, Union Minister Sri Prakash Jaiswal made an answer to question in the Rajya Sabha, "As per data in 17th states as on 31st December, 2001, the number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh is 1,20,53,950, of this 50 lakh people live in Assam alone." However, next day, when Prime Minister went to Assam the Congress Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi complained that the Union Minister's statement in Rajya Sabha could harm the prospects of Congress in the subsequent Assembly election in 2006. Thus, the Prime Minister stated that the statement of Sri Prakash Jaiswal in parliament was doubtful in specifics. Later Minister concerned also stated in the parliament that his earlier statement was not based on proper statistical accuracy.²²

From the above example it is clear that the Minister is certainly pressurized by Prime Minister and had changed the statement just for the vote bank politics in Assam and this also shows that the Prime Minister is not interested to check infiltration from Bangladesh, rather want to play vote bank politics games on the cost of the security, demography and social problem of Assam.

Ex-Chief minister of Assam Dr. P.K. Mahanta (1985-1990, 1996-2000) on 12th August, 2010 complained that during his reign of Government though he tried to solve the problem across the border, the Union Government was not helpful to them. Again he said that for updating of the national Register of Citizens (NRC) the Central Government did not give its approval to them

and adequate money was also not provided to them for implementing the Assam Accord by Central Government.²³

There was a case in Gauhati High Court a Pakistani infiltrated into Assam via Bangladesh and got included in the voter list after obtaining a ration card after paying bribe to the local officials. And then he contested and won the Assembly election in 1996. The Gauhati High Court in its judgment expressed deep anguish and said that only in Assam a foreigner could come to power and even make the native people minorities.²⁴

The political parties determine to make the best use of its electoral assets i.e. illegal Bangladeshis which do not concern them. What actually matters to them is an electoral victory on the strength of the illegal votes and shameless assertion later on that the victory is due to the party's performance and faith reposed on it by the Asomiyas. It is the same Asomiyas who are being reduced to a minority in their own homeland.²⁵

Sri Homen Borgohain (Sahitya Academy Award winner) a most leading intellectual, journalist, and novelist, renowned for his human, secular outlook as well as his vociferous opposition to the Assam movement noticed that, since the number plays most vital role in a democracy, some Muslim leaders are trying to increase, by hook or crook, the number of Muslims in Assam. Many leaders are trying to increase the Muslim population illegally or unnaturally. Without scrutinizing the electoral rolls in details they have already satisfied themselves by passing a judgment that there is not a single name of foreigners in the electoral rolls. These days they do not react like the past, in a humble manner. In their each utterance, they now bully everybody and threaten that they can pull down the Government within five minutes, if their demands are not conceded.²⁶ Paradoxically, even as all the parties swear by secularism, competition for

minority vote bank has consistently communalized the issue. Most of the parties have recklessly imported them to inflate their vote banks.²⁷

5.1.2 REGIONALISM & REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES:

The growth of regionalism in Assam is not due to single reason; diverse factors have contributed towards the emergence of regionalism in Assam. Factors like- low economic development, identity question, historical factors etc. plays their role for the emergence of regionalism and political parties. The rise of regionalism and consequently the regional political party is basically the impact of illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state. The ignorance of Congress Government (Central) and disinterest in solving the Bangladeshi influx problem are the reason behind the growth of regional political party of the state.

The Government of India is paying more attention to keep strict vigil or guard international border round-the-clock with Pakistan in the Western part of the country. The states of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat; while at the same time surprisingly same kind of importance is never revealed to protect the international boundary with Bangladesh in the Eastern part of the country; that is the states of Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya and West Bengal. In spite of the ethnic peoples' (plains & tribal's) of Assam have been anxious for long over the vexed issue of illegal infiltration of foreigners from Bangladesh.²⁸

There is a tendency to view illegal migration into Assam as a regional matter, affecting only the people of Assam. So the people of Assam feels as being cheated and ignored because of the Central and State Government's attitude shown towards the Bangladeshi infiltrators and compels them to accept regionalism as weapon.²⁹

In 1950 also, Prime Minister Nehru compelled the state, to take as many as several lakhs of foreigners as citizens of India through infamous Nehru-Liaquat Pact, against the cry of the people of the state Assam. And most important fact to be noted is that most of them were Muslims from erstwhile east Bengal/East Pakistan/now Bangladesh.³⁰

The migration caused regionalism in Assam and regionalism consequently led to the anti-foreigner (especially Bangladeshi) movement also known as Assam movement of 1979-85.³¹ The ignorance by Government (State & Central) to solve the problem forced the people of Assam to launch the violent agitation to drive away Bangladeshi infiltrators. But the Government instead of solving the problem worsened the situation by legislating IMDT act of 1983, also known as Black Act which is criticized by the native for supporting or providing chance to Bangladeshi to stay in Assam.³²

And when the Assam agitation came to an end after signing Assam Accord, the Central Congress Government forced the agitation to accept 25th March, 1971 as cut off year of citizenship whereas for the rest of India, the cut-off date for the purpose is July 19th, 1948.³³ In the Assam Accord (1985), the Central Government had promised for fencing of the Indo-Bangladesh border, but still after the completion of 25th years, the border fencing is incomplete.³⁴

As against this, the fencing in Punjab had started in 1988 and was completed in 3 years by 1991. This sort of unequal treatment from the Central towards the severe issue encourages taking up regionalism and thereby growth of regional political parties. That is why, when the Assam movement came to an end in 1985, a regional party could be formed. AGP came up as an influential regional political party in that year. Though the state has produced small political parties before 1985, yet the formation of AGP in 1985 was a landmark development in the

history of regional political parties of Assam. The AGP not only emerged as an alternative of the Congress at state government but also could able to participate in national level politics.³⁵

Hence, the vote bank politics of Congress and ignorance to solve the illegal Bangladeshi migration issue shaped the strong regional party (AGP) which ultimately could capture power in the state for two full terms from 1985-1990 and again in 1996-2000.

The formation of United Minorities Front (UMF) as a counter party to AGP was also a tangible impact of Illegal Bangladeshi migration and anti-foreigner movement by Assamese people. The UMF came up on 9-10 November, 1985 as counter political party of AGP just right after its creation.³⁶

Recently, in a function organized by “Sarhad” a Pune based organization, Saturday 2/10/10, Ex-Chief Minister of Assam Prafulla Kumar Mahanta said that there is influx of a large number of foreigners into the state, mostly from Bangladesh, but infiltration of illegal migrants into Assam was never taken up as a national issue.³⁷ Hence, it is clear that till date the influx of Bangladeshi infiltrators is an ongoing serious issue which still needs to be addressed at the national level.

5.1.3 POLITICAL DOMINATION BY ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MUDLIMS:

History of politics of Assam since the early independence is mostly dominated by the issue of illegal migration from erstwhile East Bengal/East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. But the situation in the present century in the state is quite different. Today unlike earlier the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration does not rule the political scenario; on the contrary the illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migrants themselves dominate the politics in the state.³⁸

With the increasing number of Muslim population due to illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state much Muslim political party and non-political party has been growing since the independence. The abnormal rise of the Muslim population helps in the formation of political power and pressure on the Government in the state. The rapid growth of indigenous Muslim population and the illegal Bangladeshi Muslims respectively plays a huge force to the political domination of Muslim people in Assam.³⁹ The more Muslim population the more Muslim political domination in politics of Assam. So, the general Muslim people of Assam always favor the illegal Bangladeshi Muslims instead of checking them from infiltration.

Bengali Muslim migrants and their descendants now make up a significant portion of Assam population (31%) and have become one of the important sources for un-recognized laborers in the region.⁴⁰ The minority community in Assam with nearly 31% of the total population and with their tendency to vote as a bloc, they can hardly be considered as minority in real sense of the term. Instead they can be regarded as single largest community in Assam and they have come to acquire a decisive role in Assam's democratic politics.⁴¹

In six districts of the state they are absolute majority and in the rest of the district they form minimum 2% to 49%. According to census figures, in the ten year period from 1991-2001 there has been an abnormal rise of 18, 69,407 in Muslim population in the state.⁴² Among the districts Dhubri district of Assam has the highest Muslim population in the state, which stood for 74.29%, which was 70% in 1991 census.⁴³

The political domination of Muslim people can be witnessed since the dawn of independence. There are many example of political dominance of Muslim people directly and illegal Bangladeshi Muslims indirectly in the state. For example in 1950 the Muslim could influence

Prime Minister Nehru and made Nehru-Liaquat Pact which allowed several lakhs of Muslim Pakistani people to return who left the state in 1950 due to some communal disturbance.⁴⁴ Again, in 1960, the then Chief Minister of Assam when tried to drive away Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants, Nehru stopped him from doing so, which was due to the pressure of Muslim people or political leaders of Assam.⁴⁵

In 1979, during Lok Sabha election around 50,000 foreigners were detected only in Mangaldoi Assembly alone.⁴⁶ Even though the people of Mangaldoi and Assam represented to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to revise the electoral rolls of Mangaldoi constituency, yet due to the pressure given by the Congress who in turn was pressurized by Muslim politicians, the Chief Election Commissioner had to conduct the poll in Mangaldoi without revising the electoral rolls.⁴⁷

On 10th April, 1992, Hiteswar Saikia, the then Chief Minister of Assam stated in the state Legislative Assembly that there were 3 million Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam. However on 24th May, 1992, Abdul Aziz, one of the Conveners of Muslim Forum reminded Saikia that the party depended on 'Muslim Voters' & it would take just 5 minutes for the Muslims to overthrow Hiteswar Saikia out.⁴⁸ Hence two days later he declared that there were no illegal migrants in Assam.⁴⁹

The present Chief Minister of Assam also sometime accepts that there is problem of Illegal Bangladeshi Migration and sometime denies the same. Also, in 15th July, 2004, Union Minister Sri Prakash Jaiswal made an statement that 50 lakh Bangladeshi people live in Assam alone, however, he was compelled by prime Minister to change his statement because of political pressure from Muslims in Assam and of course due to vote bank politics on Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims. Thus, the concerned Minister denied his statement later.⁵⁰

The cut-off year to acquire Indian citizenship in Assam is another proof of political dominance by Muslim depending on the mass power of Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims. The Central Government made March 25th, 1971 as the cut-off year in Assam, whereas the rest of the country enjoys 19th July, 1948 as the cut-off year for Indian citizenship.⁵¹

The best example of the political dominance by Muslims i.e. Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants could be traced to Md. Kamaluddin's case. Md. Kamaludin, a Pakistani infiltrator, infiltrated into Assam via Bangladesh and got included in the voter list after obtaining a ration card after paying bribe to local officials where he even filed a nomination from Congress party during 1996 Assembly election and even won the Assembly Election.⁵²

It was mainly during the Assam Agitation (1979-85) which witnessed the aspiration of the Minority group to assert themselves in the political map of Assam.⁵³ The All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) was formed in 1980 as a countermovement or protest against All Assam Student Union (AASU) who were launching or leading a foreigner movement against Bangladeshis.⁵⁴

The Citizens Right Preservation Committee (CRPC) and Assam State Jamait Ulema Hind (JUH) were very much active from the beginning of Assam Agitation in building pressure on the Government.⁵⁵ Hence, the CRPC, JUH & AAMSU were important organizations and platforms which played key role in bringing the UMF into being.⁵⁶

The United Minorities Front (UMF) came into political map of Assam on 9-10 November, 1985. The UMF is one of the influential smaller political parties of Assam. The UMF was the product of protest against the formation of Assam Gana Parishad.⁵⁷ The UMF could able to play a

significant role in the electoral poll of Assam. The party's credit basically lies in the fact that it could able to unite the minorities. For e.g. in 1985 election, the party could able to secure 17 seats to the Assam Legislative Assembly and 1 seat to parliamentary constituency. Apart from the Congress party, AGP had to suffer because of the emergence of UMF. They infect stood as a parallel contender of Congress and AGP among the minority voters and could able to dominate politics of Assam partially.⁵⁸

In the recent times the Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) has been playing as an important Muslim political party in Assam. The party came up as a result of Congress Government's failure to protect the infamous IMDT Act which was termed as unconstitutional by Supreme Court as encouraging Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims into Assam. The party was launched by Badruddin Ajmal.⁵⁹

The organization like Jamial-Ulema-Hind, CRPC, AAMSU, UMF, AUDF are playing a great role of representation of Illegal Bangladeshi Migrated Muslims in the state. These organizations are mainly headed by Muslim, though some ethnic, religious, language minority joint them initially, but later on it wholly became Muslim organization.

Recent enumeration of election list in Assam by the Election Commission shows more than 30% increase in 17 Assembly constituencies and more than 20% in 40 constituencies between the years 1994-97. Whereas the all India average growth for a three year period between the two intensive revisions in 1994-97 is 7%, the growth in Assam for the period is 16.4%.⁶⁰ The Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims are a factor in 20 parliamentary and 120 Assembly seats in India, mostly in West Bengal, Assam and Bihar.⁶¹ At least five parliamentary constituencies in the state of Assam have now become minority dominated and the other five are on the verge of becoming

so. Religious and linguistic minorities in Assam hold the key to winning elections in at least 56 of the states' 126 Assembly Constituencies.⁶²

Because of the emergence of the new parties, the Congress (I) had lost its traditional vote bank politics in the minorities belt resulting in their deprived of political power in the state. That is why; the Congress (I) which had stronghold in the Minorities belt did not take the emergence of UMF lightly. Thus, it is also alleged that it started hatching conspiracy to break the UMF. Even Hiteswar Saikia was defeated in the Rajya Sabha poll of 1989, in which 6 Legislators of UMF (O) also made some contribution to cause defeat to Mr. Saikia.⁶³

Thus, it can be said that illegal Bangladeshi are not just beginning to emerge as a strong economic force, but are also gaining political muscle through their growing population and ultimately dominance of the politics of Assam. They have got their names included in the electoral rolls of the state.⁶⁴ The development is causing social tension in Assamese society as the political power is shifting to the hands of migrants and deterioration is taking place in the law and order situation.⁶⁵

5.1.4 Autonomous & Liberation movements:

Another severe impact of illegal Bangladeshi migrants into the state is the rise of autonomous movement amongst the indigenous people & particularly Tribal people of the state. The indigenous tribal people of the state barely shares 12.41% of the total population of the state, whereas the immigrant Bangladeshi Muslim community alone stands for 31% of the total population according to the 2001 census report of Assam.⁶⁶

The over flood of the immigrant Muslim population from the Bangladesh made the indigenous tribal people feel politically weak and dominated by Muslims because of the higher representative from immigrants & lower number of representative from the native people or indigenous tribes. As the Democracy is the game of number of people, the immigrant Muslims which constitute more than twice of the indigenous population has better attention from ruling party and can influence decision making process. And due to the increasing share of political power of Muslim people in the state politics the political power of indigenous people of Assam has been shrinking day by day.

Land alienation within the tribal beets and blocks is one of the pressing problems within the entire sub-plan areas of Assam particularly because of influx from Bangladesh.⁶⁷ The corrupt revenue offices, most of whom were Assamese also gave settlement to the immigrant peasants.⁶⁸ They instead of (Govt. Official) implementing & safeguarding tribal belts encouraged non-tribal's, particularly illegal Bangladeshi migrants for the sake of money.⁶⁹

The Governments unwillingness to solve the encroachment of tribal land and by illegal immigrant Muslims led to the demand of autonomy or statehood by tribals of the state and particularly by Bodo, who constitute largest among plan tribals in North East.⁷⁰ The Government's failure to check influx of Bangladeshi immigrant and subsequently failure to protect the land of tribal people in Darrang district led to a high voltage autonomous movement among the Bodo people in Udalguri sub-division.⁷¹

Also according to demographer Pradip Kumar Narzary the influx and land alienation of tribal people was the main pushing factor behind the demand of statehood, autonomy within Indian Territory by Bodo people. Even some other insurgent groups have started demanding Sovereignty to secede from India.⁷²

Central Governments disinterest to solve the problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration even after the severe cry and hue of the people of Assam and special interest in other regions like, J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat played as pushing factor behind many autonomous movements in Assam.⁷³ A violent section in All Assam Student Union (AASU) established an arm militant organization namely United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) on April, 17, 1979, "With a purpose to liberating Assam from the illegal occupation of India. They argued the independent political power was the only option for the organized ethnic groups of this state that remain seclusion for centuries."⁷⁴

There initial purpose of the organization solely remained detection and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migration, but through the passing of time their purpose of fight changed to the sovereignty of the state.⁷⁵

5.1.5 Political unrest:

The impact of Bangladeshi immigration is vulnerable in the political sphere of the state. Study of Politics in Assam is incomplete if we do not take account of immigration in to Assam. They are influencing and disturbing the political scenario of the state exceptionally and due to them there has been political unrest in the state since independence of India.

Due to illegal Bangladeshi migration issue political clash took place between the Chief Minister and Prime Minister, when in the early 60's Chief Minister of Assam tried to eradicate Bangladeshi immigrants by evicting them. But the Prime Minister political forced him to withdraw his eviction process.⁷⁶

The ethnic assertion, language movement, Assam movement and also various insurgent movement are the factors which make the state of Assam as one of the most politically disturbed and insecure state of India.⁷⁷ As we know Bengali was the official language of Assam, Assamese people resented against it after independence. The first agitation was launched in 1960 over the issue of official language of Assam and the second in 1972 which was spread headed by AASU over the issue of Assamese as medium of instruction up to University level.⁷⁸

The political unrest was intensified in 1979 due to the detection of thousands of Bangladeshi Muslims in the revision of electoral rolls in Mangaldoi Parliamentary Constituency. It consequently sparked the infamous Assam movement led by AASU against the Bangladesh infiltrators.⁷⁹ Amidst these dins and dust of agitation the ULFA was born on April 17, 1979 to start arm rebellion against the immigrants.⁸⁰

The agitators called for a boycott of the Lok Sabha election until the revision of the electoral rolls elimination the names of the foreigners. Thus, for the first time in the history of country the state refused to participate in Lok Sabha election.⁸¹ AASU had strongly opposed the 1979 parliamentary election and later on the 1983 State Legislative Assembly election on the ground that the polls be adjourned till electoral rolls were cleansed of illegal migrant. Amidst the ongoing agitation, congress Government went ahead for the state Assembly polls in February 1983. During the pools the state witnessed large scale arson, communal disturbance, group clashes and killings. On February, 18, a day after the polling has concluded, the village of Nellie in Nagaon district was virtually turned into a brutal massacre. According to official figure on a single day 2191 Bengali Muslims were butchered in broad daylight by Assamese Hindus and Lalung tribals.⁸²

Since 1979 numerous incident of violence took place in which more than 300 persons including police personnel died up to the end of 1982. The political unrest condition reached their peak during the state Assam by election campaign in February – March 1983, when in a widespread violence 300 – 5000 persons lost their lives and over 3,00,000 persons were rendered homeless.⁸³ Again the imposition of Illegal Migration Determination Tribunnal (IMDT) Act by congress government at the centre had created a political unrest in the state, because at the time of the legislating the Act there was no Member of Parliaments from Assam due to the boycott of Parliamentary election of 1979.⁸⁴

The demand of Bodoland by Plain Tribal's Council of Assam (PTCA) and various tribal people due to the Government's failure in protecting the land of tribals and political domination by the infiltrators had created political unrest more unbearable in the state. The political unrest partially came to an end after the signing of Assam Accord, on 15, August 1985.⁸⁵ After the Accord leaders of the Assam movement formed AGP (Regional political Party) and on the other formed as a protest against the Accord and AGP, UMF was born in the same year as AGP (1985).⁸⁶

These political parties always try to counter each other in every issue of the state and the rise of AUDF (a regional minority political party) also adds fuel to the fire of illegal Bangladeshi migrant and political unrest. The AUDF led by a section of elite has been capitalizing the issue of Bangladesh Muslim immigration in the state in their game of power politics.⁸⁷

As these Muslim political parties depends solely on the vote of illegal migrant Muslims, the leader of those political party always try to impress Muslims by communalizing the illegal Bangladeshi issue whenever Assamese people speak about it. Ultimately it leads to political unrest in the state and between communalism and secularism the issue lost its ground and

became sitent.⁸⁸ The state of Assam due to this political unrest came under five brief spells of President's rule: in December 1979, June 1980, June 1981, march 1982 and September 1982.⁸⁹

5.2 Economical:

There has been a great impact of illegal Bangladeshi migration on the economic field of the state. They are the reason behind the economic underdevelopment of Assam, viz. communication, industrialization, urbanization etc.

It's important to note that most of the Bangladeshi immigrants form the manual workforce in the state: rickshaw pullers, house construction workers, house painters, gardeners, field workers, road construction workers, vegetable vendors etc. Significantly these migrants are willing to work very hard at odd hours and in the most arduous activities which local Assamese labour are unwilling to do. Hence, there's enough space in the workforce for the poorer section as the Bangladeshi people, which motivate them to risk coming illegally to the state to make living. After reaching Assam migrants manage to procure Indian citizenship by producing document bought in the black market. Subsequently, the immigrant families, being amongst the poorest section of society benefits from schemes like the National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Below Poverty Line (BPL) concession, minority student scholarships, old pension etc. And above that the Government has to bear the expense of detection and deportation of the illegal Bangladeshi migrant enormously.⁹⁰

Sources said that efforts by anti – national elements to pump in fake Indian currency notes to India from Bangladesh remains a major cause of concern. In 2005 the BSF seized fake Indian currency notes of face value of Rs. 2.78 lakh from anti national elements. The troops also seized 49,985 Bangladeshi Taka and Indian currency worth more than Rs. 6.35 lakh from anti

national elements in the border and which indirectly plays a severe negative role in country's economic stability.⁹¹

The constant growth of population due to illegal migration of Bangladeshi people in the state is a major problem behind the economic under development in the post independence period of Assam. Huge sums of the Government funds are absorbed to provide different facilities to illegal citizens, relating to education, health care, housing, and emergencies e.g. earthquake, flood, draught, relieves for riot victims, security etc.⁹²

The incessant flow of foreign infiltrators has resulted in a low per capita income mainly because the benefits of development are being shared by a population much larger than the population for whom these benefits were intended. According to Sri Deba Kumar Bora, Chairman of the state Planning Board, the main reasons for the downward trend of the per capita income of Assam is unabated influx of foreigners to the state, Bora pointed out that the per capita income of Assam was higher than the national average in 1960-1961 but it gradually dropped below the national average. According to figures available, the per capita income of Assam in 1996-1997 was Rs. 6663 as compared to the national average of Rs. 10771. Sri Bora said that the influx of foreigners to Assam increased after 1971 and the per capita income stated showing a downward since then.⁹³

Some of the economic impacts of the illegal Bangladeshi migrants can be discussed in the following headlines:

5.2.1 DETECTION & DEPORTION OF ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI MIGRATION:

As the influx of the illegal Bangladeshi migrant continues till today both the state and central government has been spending huge sum of government fund to check, detect and deport these migrants from India and state of Assam particularly. The checking, detecting and deportation of the infiltration are impossible without Government funds and help of the defense personnel's. For the check, detection and deportation of a single infiltrator has to spend huge sum of money from the Government funds, which are always meant for public welfare and development. So, a great amount of money India is spending on the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, which ultimately leads to financial crisis and deficit budget every time.

During the year 2001-2006' government has spent Rs.1.7 billion in the state to identify 9,149 Bangladeshi infiltrators, but could deport only 864 persons back to Bangladesh. Which means one Bangladeshi had cost 1, 80,000 to deport from the country.⁹⁴ According to spokesperson of BJP Dr. Pradip Thakuria since 2001 Dr. Bhumidhar Baraman's (incharge of ministry of Assam Accord implementation department) department has been indulging in wasteful expenditure at cost of the exchequer. Dr. Pradip Thakuria also alleged that for expulsion of one Bangladeshi, Baraman's department has spent Rs. 23.46 LAKH.⁹⁵

The loss of public money to detect these migrants surely and certainly affects the economic development of the state, because the public money which are meant for public welfare, viz. Communication, health care, technology development, employment etc. are diverted to detection of the illegal Bangladeshi and which contributes to the underdevelopment of the state comparing to the other state of the country.

According to Hasibor Rahman, at least 3, 30,076 illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims were deported since 1952, April, 30 to 2002.⁹⁶Hence if we apply previous rate of Rs. 180000 to 330076 illegal Bangladeshi migrants the amount spent on expulsion of them

would be Rs. 5941, 36, 80,000 and if we apply later or second rate of 23.46 lakh it would be Rs. 77435, 82, 96,000 to detect infiltrations in the state. Again in 1986, the Indian Government approved the Indo- Bangladesh border and road fencing project to prevent illegal migration from Bangladesh, the project was budgets at Rs. 3.7 billion in 1986.⁹⁷

The government of India sanctioned the erection of fencing in two phases. The Indo-Bangladesh border work had been initiated in 1989 and till the year approved Rs. 287.617 million but this project estimated Rs. 10.5 billion in 1998 again. It involved the construction of 900 km. of bridges along the Indo-Bangladesh border in the states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.

In 2001, the Director General of Border Road Organization calculated that 1km of border fencing will costs Rs. 2.2 million and one kilometer of border road Rs 4.5 million.⁹⁸ So as India has an approximate 4000 kilometers of border and 3663 kilometers of Road with Bangladesh and if we apply the respective rate of cost as stated by Director General of Border, it would cost Rs. 880,00,00,000 and road fencing will cost Rs. 1648,35,00,000 which means a grand total of Rs. 2528,35,00,000. This implies that Indian Government has to bare the huge sum of money from exchequer just to check infiltration from Bangladesh. The UPA Government has already spent 2404.7 million in this respect⁹⁹and another Rs. 13.27 billion has been sanction for flood light in border, which will be completed by 2011-12.¹⁰⁰

5.2.2 NATURAL CALAMITIES:

Assam is one of the states of India which have been severely affected by different natural calamities such as flood, erosion of river bank, draught, earthquake etc. It has been said that the earthquake of 1950 has changed the geographical setting of Assam and as a result, flood has become a common phenomenon. In fact the flooding became a major blow to the economy of Assam, almost every year.¹⁰¹

According to the assessment made by the committee headed by chairman, Ganga Flood Control Commission, Dhubri, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, Dhemaji, Barpeta, Jorhat, Goalpara, Sivasagar and Nalbari in Assam are flood- prone district in the north – eastern region, Minister of state for water resources Vincent H. Pala said in Rajya Sabha reply to a question by Biren Baishya and of which riverine areas are mostly occupied by Muslim people.¹⁰²

The immigrant people from Bangladesh are the main affected people in flooding, as these newcomers from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh were settled in low and flood prone riverine areas according to the new system of colonization known as line system since British period.¹⁰³ So the river island or sandy shores (locally called Char) of the mighty river Brahmaputra and its tributaries are largely inhabitant by illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators Muslims, they are the most sufferers of flood in the state.¹⁰⁴

The chars of Assam which are mostly dominated by illegal Bangladeshi migrants have 59 Development Blocks and have a population 20, 24, 90 lakhs and out of it 22.90 lakhs is Muslim. Most surprisingly amongst the total 22.90 lakhs 75% population are illegal Bangladeshi migrants. So, if the flood strikes the state they are to suffer first and most, but the main point is that Government has to spend a huge amount of money for the flood relives every year even though they're illegal migrants in the state.

The Assam economy represents a unique example of poverty amidst plenty. In spite of being richly endowed with natural resources the State lags behind the rest of India in many aspects. According to the Planning Commission estimates, only 26.10 % of the country's population was 'Bellow Poverty Line' (BPL) in 1999-2000. Assam's figure was 36.09 per cent. This shows the poverty in Assam is worse than the average of all the states in India.¹⁰⁵ Goalpara and Dhubri districts are the poorest districts in the state, 75.25% of the population of Goalpar and 75.03% of Barpeta are below poverty line.

5.3 SOCIAL:

The impact of immigrant Bangladeshi Muslims is also unavoidable in the society of the state. The social impact of Bangladeshi migrants on Assamese society is mostly to do with cultural and lifestyle. The social fear is that the Assamese way of life will get subverted once the migrants dominate the state. A strong impact is also envisioned in the spheres of language, religion, demographic change, encroachment and rise of crimes. Assam being a Hindu majority state fear that it will become Muslim dominated due to the influx of illegal immigrants. This has also resulted in unnecessary tensions between Assamese Hindus and Assamese Muslims who have made Assam their home for centuries. It is note worthy that former Assam Governor Lieutenant General (Retd) S.K. Sinha also sent a report (of 42 pages) to President K.R. Narayanan in 1998, citing "The influx of illegal migrant is turning the lower Assam districts into a Muslim majority region."¹⁰⁶

The social impact of illegal Bangladeshi Muslims may be discussed in the following heading –

5.3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE:

Before embarking on the discussion of demographic change during the post colonial period it may be mentioned here that different races of mankind – Austric, Mongolian, Dravidian and Aryan had migrated into region particularly in Brahmaputra Valley since the ancient time, which made Assam a multi racial region.¹⁰⁷

Though during the colonial period rapid demographic transformation took place the demographic change of post colonial period is worst in the state. After independence leader of Assam expected that the immigration problem would be solved, but

unfortunately didn't happen as it was supposed to be happend.¹⁰⁸ At present the imbalance of demographic character of Assam is said to be because of Bangladeshi immigrants.¹⁰⁹According to demographer Dass, the heavy immigration from the Bangladesh is one of the main factors behind the higher rate of growth of the population of Assam.¹¹⁰

5.1: trends of population growth: India & Assam 1901 – 1971

year	India			Assam			
	No.in lakhs	Variation lakh	Variation of P.C	No. In lakh	Variation lakh	Variation of P.C.	Difference excess over India
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1901	2383	-	-	32.90(1.38)	-	-	-
1911	2520	137	5.73	38.49(1.52)	5.59	16.99	11.26
1921	2512	-8	-0.30	46.37(1.85)	7.88	20.47	20.77
1931	2789	277	11.00	55.61(1.99)	9.24	19.22	8.92
1941	3185	396	14.23	66.94(2.10)	11.33	20.37	6.14
1951	3610	425	13.31	80.29(2.22)	13.35	19.84	6.63
1961	4391	781	21.64	108.37(2.47)	28.08	34.97	13.33
1971	5479	1088	24.80	146.25(2.67)	37.88	34.95	10.15

Source: Kunda, Bijan Kumar, "Politics in the Brahmaputra Valley since the Assam Accord",

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The above table shows that the population growth rate of Assam is always higher than the all Indian growth rate. The highest population growth rate of all India was 21.64, during the decade of 1961, whereas in the same period the growth rate of Assam was 34.97. Most surprisingly when the all India growth rate deep down to -0.30, Assam witnessed the growth rate of 20.77 in the decade 1911-1921. So the growth rate of Assam population is always higher than the national level because of Illegal

Bangladeshi migration into the state. Former Governor, S.K.Sinha, thus observes, “The unabated influx of immigrants from Bangladesh into Assam and the consequent percept has been a matter of grave concern. It threatens to reduce the Assamese people to a minority in their own states as happened in Tripura and Sikkim.”¹¹¹

Though there're no official figures of actual number of Bangladeshis in Assam, local people says that their population could be six million of the states' 26 million population. That means a little over one fourth of the state's population is Bangladeshi immigrants and the states alone produces over 1/3 of Bangladeshi immigrants in the country.¹¹² The Muslim population of the state was 34,28,969 in 1941, 27,65,509 in 1961, 35,92,124 in 1971, 63,73,204 in 1991 and 82,40,611 in 2001.¹¹³ The district of Barpeta of lower Assam tops the list in Muslim population with 9, 77,943 Muslims and only 6, 62,066 Hindus.

There has been an abnormal rise of 18, 67,409 in Muslim pop in the state. Nagaon district of Assam lies top in the list with the increase of 286954 Muslim populations in six district viz. Dhubri (74%), Goalpara (54%), Barpeta (60%), Karimganj (52%), Nagaon (51%), and Hailakandi (58%) they form majority¹¹⁴ and a very large number of whom are new immigrants from Bangladesh.¹¹⁵ During the period from 1951-1971 at least 37, 59,000 illegal migrants have entered Assam from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh alone. It is established that at least 20, 00,000 foreigners out of total Hindu refugees who took shelter in Assam during Bangladesh's liberation war stayed back and settled down in the state illegally.¹¹⁶

5.2: Distribution of legal & illegal foreigners in Assam in percentage*

Status of migration	Decades				
	1951 – 1961	1961– 1971	1971-81	1981 – 1991	Grand Total
Legal	314183(39.49)	330015(58.76)	NA	40803(6.51)	685001(34.53)
Illegal	481409(60.51)	231574(41.24)	NA	585771(93.49)	1298754(65.47)
Total	795592(100)	561589(100)	NA	626574(100)	1983755(100)

Source: “Migration and assimilation: society, economy, politics of Assam, Page 139.

According to the Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, Assam, in the above table the state of Assam had 4,81,483 number of illegal

foreigners during the period 1951-1961, 2,31,574 during 1961-1971 and 12,98,754 numbers of illegal foreigners during the period 1981-1991 in the state.

Former Chief Minister of the state and leader of Assam Agitation against Bangladeshi immigrants, while commenting on immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, in his book “The tussle between the citizens and foreigners in Assam” has correctly observed, this act was largely responsible for the alarming population growth and demographic change during the decade 1951-61 and 61-71,¹¹⁷ moreover IMDT law has also contributed to a great extent in the demographic change of Assam. The IMDT which was passed by central Government in the year 1983 made sure that no illegal immigrant would ever be thrown out from the state. In it’s over two decades of existence; it could identify only few

hundreds of illegal migrants. Hence the law left terrible impact on the demography of Assam.¹¹⁸

Today, immigration in Assam is mainly of Muslim from Bangladesh,¹¹⁹ Million of people in North East today identify themselves as Na-Assemiya (Neo-Assamese). They are among both oldest and newest inhabitants of the region.¹²⁰As per 1991 population Census, the population of Assam stood at 22.41million. According to Registrar General of India the projected population of Assam stands at 26.37 million as on October 2000, instead Government of India census of 2001 showed population at 26.65 millions, which exceeds 28 lakh of the projected population of Assam by Registrar General of India as on October 2000.¹²¹ This reports this point at illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in the state to some extent.

5.3: Muslim population growth.

Year	% of Muslims	Rise
1951	22.00	1.3 % NA
1961	23.3%	1.3 %
1971	24.3%	1.3 %
1991	28.43%	4.13 %
2001	31.00%	2.57%

Source: Bhan, Susheela, "Impact of ethnic violence on youth", page 52

The table above describes the percentage wise raise of Muslim population in the state. From the table one can make out that the Muslim population of Assam is constantly increasing decade by decade. After the independence of India they formed 22 percentage of the total population of the state and now in 2001 it raised to 31 percentage of the state. They now constitute one of the largest single communities in the state. Their population is increasing rapidly due to illegal Bangladeshi infiltration in the state.

5.3.2 LANGUAGE PROBLEM:

The language clash or problem between Assamese and Bengali is another impact of the immigrant in the society of the state. The root of the discontentment can be traced back to the colonial period in 1937. Since 1926 when the British took over the administration of Assam, it was placed under the Bengal presidency. As Assam was included in Bengal presidency Bengali was enforced as official language and medium of instruction in Assam for the purpose of economy and convenience, although Asamiya was the dominant language even in pre-British period. Naturally a voice of protest was raised against the introduction of Bengali language in place of Assamese in the school and courts in Assam.¹²² The conflict roused because the Asamiya language was not given the same status in Assam. Instead of giving this status to Asamiya language the status was given to Bengali language in 1837.¹²³

But Government officials became successful in diverting the attention of emerging new educated middle class of Assamese people who in the initial year of colonial rule were the loyalist collaborators of colonialists.¹²⁴ So, the relationship between the Asamiyas and Bengalis in Assam always has remained controversial, ever since the arrival of the Bengali "Baboos" in the wake of the British colonial rule in Assam in 1926 although Assam and Bengal were connected in context of social, cultural, economic, diplomatic

and political matter since immemorial time. The main factor for this controversial relationship between the two was language difference.¹²⁵

After the independence of the country also the Bengali remained as official language till 1960. As the Bangladeshi immigration continued to enter the state even after independence and increasing Bengali speaking people, the Assamese people become more conscious about their culture and language. So eventually the linguistic discontent of Assamese people became another popular discontent of post colonial Assam. Such discontent was observed among the Assamese speaking people who had developed the linguistic chauvinism and therefore, tried to reimpose Assamese language by recognizing it as official language in 1960 and by establishing it as the medium of instruction till university level in 1972.¹²⁶

The first Language Movement of Assam started just after the independence of the country; however it has got its momentum in April 1959, when Assam Sahitya Sabha set the year 1960 as the deadline to implement demands. Meanwhile incident and counter incidents of violence began to take place between the Assamese and Bengali Speaking people at the different parts of the state. Under such a situation the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha felt it necessary to introduce the official language bill in the state legislature and consequently Assamese was made official language in lieu of Bengali.¹²⁷

The Act created statewide reaction against the decision of Government particularly by the Bengali community. As a protest against the Assam official language Act the Nikhil Assam Bangla Bhasa Samiti had submitted a memorandum to President demanding reorganization of Bengali for all official purposes throughout the state. As the situation was deteriorating, the central leader of congress party had to intervene on the issue and ultimately Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri came out with a formula which was popularly known as "Shastri Formula" and which provided Bengali dominated areas Bengali official language.

Second Language Movement occurred in 1970's which was known as the movement of "Medium of Instruction". It started when Gauhati University decided to introduce Assamese as the medium of instruction in all college under its jurisdiction with some exception. The decision was to come into effect from the Academic year 1972-73. The decision by Gauhati University to introduce English and Assamese, as medium of instruction again created discontent among Bengalis. Hence, demands were made to declare Bengali also as medium of instruction. Considering the increasing numbers of demands by the Bengali speaking peoples the Academic Council of Gauhati University (ACGU) provided Bengali student to answer their examination question in Assamese, English or in Bengali. The decision of ACGU to permit the student to answer in Bengali had provoked Assamese speaking people and started vehement agitations. Under such an agitational pressure the ACGU came out with revised decision on 12 June, 1972, which included following aspects –

- i) Assamese shall be medium of instruction in all colleges under the jurisdiction of Gauhati University.
- ii) English will continue as an alternative medium of instruction till such time not exceeding 10 years as may be considered necessary by ACGU.
- iii) Student shall have the option to answer within Assamese, English in University Examination.

But the new decision again could not satisfy the Bengali speaking people. The discontentment of the revised circular ultimately led to the establishment of separate University for the people of Barak valley by the Government as that part of the state are mostly inhabitant by Bengali speaking people.¹²⁸

5.4: Major languages in Assam, 1971

Language	No. of speakers	Percentage of Population
Assamese	8904917	60.89
Bengali	2882039	19.71
Hindi	792481	5.42
Bodo	533713	3.65
Nepali	346116	?
Mikir	191354	1.31
Miri/Mishing	177226	1.21
Oriya	150196	1.03
Manipuri/Meitie	87167	0.60
Santhali	86086	0.59

Source: Konwar, Narayan, "Society and politics in Assam" page 77

The above table explains that the Bengali language is in the second position according to the strength of no of speakers, though it is not originated in the state. The native languages Bodo, Mikir, Miri are well behind the non state language, Bengali. This could be a hint of large numbers illegal Bangladeshi migrants into the state. The increasing numbers of Bengali speaking people and the continuance of Bengali as official language till 1960 was the main reason behind the Language Movement in Assam.

5.3.3 LAND ALIENATION:

The land alienation is one of the serious impacts of illegal Bangladeshi migrants into the State. The land encroachment by the illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims caused many clashes among the Mymensighiya Muslims and the native people of Assam. To stop friction between them and Assamese, the Deputy Commissioner first introduced line system in Nowgong now Nagaon in 1916. By that system they were not allowed to settle anywhere they like but were confined to certain areas in villages demarcated by lines.¹²⁹ It's worth mentioning that during the premiership of Saadullah, he had allotted as much as 1, 74,548 bighas of land to the new immigrant Muslims from East Bengal / East Pakistan in between September 1, 1943- 31st December, 1945.¹³⁰

It is also alleged that Saadullah even opened the grazing Reserve and allotted 1, 64,995 bighas of land to the immigrant Muslims to settle down there.¹³¹ As the migration did not stop even after the Independence of the country, the land alienation problem remained unsolved. As a result land alienation became one of the major problems among the tribes of Assam and in fact it is the primary cause of deteriorating economic problem/ condition of the tribals.¹³²

The immigrants at first occupied the most inaccessible areas and the local inhabitants had not much to grumble. As the time passed the flow of outsiders also increased. The tribal folk became victims of multifarious strategies of these immigrants as a result of which the indigenous tribals lost most of their valuable agricultural lands.¹³³ Though the Government of Assam enacted the "Assam land and revenue regulation" Act in 1947 to protect the tribals from the clusters of the land hungry outsiders, due to various reasons, even the special provision of the legislation have not been effectively implemented. As a result large scale alienation of tribal land within the project areas has taken place.¹³⁴

Land alienation within and outside the tribal belts and blocks is one of the pressing problems within the entire sub-plan areas of Assam particularly due to influx Bangladeshi people. The chapter X of the legislation provided that no land within these Belts and Blocks would henceforth be settled with any non-notified persons who had by then encroached on any unsettled land within these Belts and blocks would forth with ejected there from. It also provides no transfer of land in the Belts and blocks to any non-notified person by way of sale, lease, mortgage etc would be registered by the Government. During the first 5 year i.e. from 1947-1951 as many as 31 belts and blocks were constituted. But due to the corruption of Government official the provisions area not implemented proper and allotted lands to non-tribal's and to illegal Bangladeshi migrants.¹³⁵

It is estimated that about 60% of the tribal land was taken over by non- tribal's. It is alleged that for a price, the bureaucrats helped the Bengali immigrants to get land pattas back dated prior to the creation of the tribal block and belts thus legalizing their hold on the land.¹³⁶

All Assam Tribal Sangha, an apex body of tribal organization has accused successive Government of failing to implement chapter X of the Assam land and Revenue Regulation. It is also said that the alienation of tribal people from their land is believed to be one of the root cause of the various tribal upsurges in Assam, including the Bodo statehood movement.¹³⁷ The Bodoland Autonomous Movement land political party PTCA was also influenced by encroachment of tribal lands by immigrants.¹³⁸

Some of the natural lakes situated inside a number of Wild Life Sanctuaries and National Parks, boasting of an abundant fish population, are now reported to have been subjected to heavy poaching at regular intervals by the illegal Bangladeshi migrants Muslim infiltrators and obviously, this has been made possible by the connivance of a few corrupt government officers and employees thriving under political patronage.¹³⁹

The central Government has admitted that forest cover in Assam has shrunk by over 66 Sq. Km. Over the previous biennial assessment, as against the national scenario that forest cover has increased by 45,827km in the last two decades from 1989-2009. But in case of Assam according to assessment made by the Forest Survey of India by interpretation of Satellite data, a net decrease over the previous biennial assessment in forest cover of Assam has been noticed, the minister of state for Environment and Forest, Jairam Ramesh said in Rajya Sabha reply to an unstirred question by Kumar Deepak Das.

According to the Minister encroachment of forest area in Assam has been reported from Nameri National Park (2100 hectare), Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park (800 hectare.), Manas National Park (1700 hectare), Dibru Saikhowa National Park (300 hectare) & Kaziranga National Park (7790 hectare).¹⁴⁰ And most surprisingly, according to the lawsuit filed by the Image India Formation (IIF) a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that 85% of the total encroached forest land in Assam was found to be in the hands of illegal Bangladeshi migrants and they have a major say in 43 out of 126 of the state legislative Assembly Constituencies.¹⁴¹

5.3.4 RIOTS:

The conflict between two communities is one of the greatest tragedies in human civilization. It creates victim, displacement of population due to ethnic clash causes more havoc to the population than the displacement due to the developmental activities. As in the former case, people have to move for live without prior notice, where in the later case, people are well notified before they are to move when a riot erupts many a times people have to run for their lives only with whatever is attached to their body, leaving behind everything.¹⁴²

The illegal Bangladeshi Muslims and riots is the track where the train called society has been running since independence of the country without any hurdle in the state. This

track has taken many lives of people of the state, both illegal Bangladeshi Muslims and native people since the dawn of the Independence. In February and March 1950, anti-Muslim riots took place all over Assam apparently as a reaction to atrocities on Hindus in East Bengal/ East Pakistan. Again during the language riot which took place due to Bengali chauvinism in 1960 and 1972 caused much suffering.¹⁴³

Since 1979 numerous incidents of violence took place in which more than 300 people including police personnel died up to the end of 1982. The riot condition reached their peak during the state legislative Assembly election campaign in February-march 1983. During this period at least 3000-5000 people lost their lives and more than 3, 00,000 people were rendered homeless.¹⁴⁴

The AASU who headed the Assam Movement against the illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims had urged the mass to boycott the election; they opposed the election because of the large number of Illegal Bangladeshi Muslims enrollment in electoral roll. The election was held on 14th February 1983 even after the boycott of election by the native people. The immigrants from Bangladeshis actively participated in the election which invoked the native people which ultimately led to the infamous riot/ massacre of Nellie at Nagaon district of the state on February 18th, 1983. A riot burst out where 3,300 people lost their lives in a six hour long attack at Nellie in the district of Nagaon. Also around 500 or more AASU volunteers had been killed around the election time. Nellie, mostly inhabited by “illegal immigrants” of Bangladesh origin became the scene of a ghastly mass murder.¹⁴⁵

Clashes between Bodos and immigrant Muslim settlers led to the displacement of thousands of people in Kokrajhar district in 1993 and in Barpeta 1994. The riot that rocked Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon district in 1993, 1996, 1998 led to the displacement of 3, 14,342 people belonging to Bodo, Muslim and Adivasi communities. As the blame game goes on the administration faces the haunting task of rehabilitating the displaced people who are still too scared to leave the relief camps and go home. Thousands of

internally displaced people, who lost their homes in the clashes or riots already, live in makeshift relief camps without proper food and with limited access to livelihood opportunities in lower Assam's Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta districts. These people are the victims of riot between Bodos and immigrant Muslim settler in 1993. The children of these displaced people are growing up without basic education and health care.¹⁴⁶

The most recently riot occurred in 2008, October 3rd between Bodos and illegal Muslim settlers in Udalguri district of Assam. The four days violence which began on October 3rd and continued till October 6th 2008 created a volcano like situation that reduced more than 1000 houses into ashes. More than 2, 00, 0 00 people were lodged in 78 relief camps in Udalguri district alone.¹⁴⁷

More than 60 lives were lost along with making the people homeless even in their own homeland. However, in the true sense the riot in Udalguri and Darrang was not between Bodos and illegal Bangladeshi migrants alone, it was between indigenous tribes and illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims. Nevertheless, the Bodos were main sufferer in this communal riot. Still other communities like Rabhas, Garos, Adivasis, Nepalis, and Assamese are equally being threatened in their own motherland.¹⁴⁸ Official report about the riot in Udalguri and Darrang district said that 54 villages were directly affected by incidents of arson and more attacks in which 2505 houses were either completely or partially destroyed.¹⁴⁹

5.3.5 RISE OF CRIME:

The rise of any sort of crime in the state has been the contribution of the illegal Bangladeshi Muslims into Assam. The illegal Bangladeshi Muslims have seriously polluted the social atmosphere of Assam with basic instinct of crime. As they are the

poorest class of the people from Bangladesh, they are attracted to unfair burglary, dacoit, poaching, murder, human trafficking etc.

Recently, three wanted poacher were apprehended by forest guards in Assam's Orang National Park when they were making an attempt to kill Rhinos inside the park. They have been identified as Md. Joynaheddin, Md. Abbas Ali and Alen Khangsai.¹⁵⁰

The relation between Bangladeshi and crime is not a new phenomenon in Assam. The social malady was observed quite earlier, as early as before Independence. Almost all the indigenous people before Independence refused to accept the Muslim immigrants as neighbour because many immigrants were hardened criminals and they felt a potential threat to the free movement of indigenous women. Many indigenous Assamese Muslims also agreed on this issue.

According to Khabiruddin Ahmed the then Secretary and Anjuman-i-Islamia of Barpeta the East Bengal immigrants are mostly aggressive and turbulent and often resort to violence on filmy ground. Dhaniram Talukdar, the then chairman, local Board, Barpeta, also accused that, "some of the immigrants are born criminals; murder, rape, abduction and kidnapping which are unknown to the people of Assam are almost common with them."

According to Kalpanarayan Mazumdar, the then sub-deputy collector of Chhaygaon also, most of the immigrant peasants from Mymensingh and other district of East Bengal appeared criminals and drags of the society and naturally with the arrival of these people, crime had abnormally increased and consequently expenditure under Judicial Administration had gone up. They are very hot tempered and they can perpetrate the most heinous crimes at the slightest provocation.¹⁵¹

Also, Mr. G.C Bordoloi, sub divisional officer observed that, “90% murder case in state, for small plots of land were among the immigrants themselves.¹⁵² To make quick money or to make easy money, major portions of these illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators are choosing the path either anti-social, like illegally cutting & selling fuel woods, killings, bomb-blasts or religious fundamental activities.¹⁵³ Drugs, narcotics and smuggling of live cattle are of the main problem of the bordering area to Bangladesh.

It is also worth mentioning that there has been 20% increase in crime, mainly burglary and it is also said that robbery in the Kolkata suburbs are mostly committed by Bangladeshi's.¹⁵⁴In fact the criminal activities which the immigrants were indulging in Assam triggered for Chiring Chapati Yuva Manch (CCYM) in the state led by some young people from upper Assam districts. Within the perview of law this movement started in 2005. They published leaflets asking residents not to harbor employ or provide food to suspected Bangladeshis and they also started sending SMS through mobile phones.¹⁵⁵

Even a secularist paper has noticed the seriousness of the problem “The police say the Bangladeshis are behind most of robberies, stabbings and other crime being committed in capital.¹⁵⁶ If the condition of capital is like this, what else we can expect from other states far away from the capital? Due to the porous nature of borders, the Indo-Bangladesh border remains both source and destination of interrelated transnational nature of threat. The smuggling and trafficking, in arms, drugs, human life and organized crime have become rampant impacting the security of the state. Human trafficking involving women and children from Bangladesh is one of the major concerns.¹⁵⁷

5.3.6 ETHNIC IDENTITY:

Another social impact of illegal Bangladeshi migrants is the doubt of Assamese people of losing ethnic identity in the hand of illegal Muslim migrants from Bangladesh. Ethnic identity implies anxieties about "Identity", a catch all term for a variety of contradictory perceptions and passions by people about themselves and the others.¹⁵⁸

The problem of ethnic tension is the distinct phenomenon in contemporary times, extensively occurring in most of the multi-ethnic plural societies. The major ethnic conflicts in Assam are conflicts between the Assamese and the Bengali speaking people, and between the immigrant Muslims and Assamese indigenous people.¹⁵⁹

The doubts of the Assamese people are not illogical and not baseless, as the Muslim population is increasing in the state steadily. The Muslim population now forms 1/3 of the total population of Assam. As the percentage of Muslim population is increasing, certainly it implies the Hindu populations are decreasing. So the doubt of losing ethnic identity to the Muslim population / people is logical.

The higher growth of Muslim population in Assam due to unrestricted infiltration is one of the major sources of bitterness and tension in the region.¹⁶⁰ It led to immediate movement against outsiders.¹⁶¹ The Assamese Hindu who happened to be the dominant group in Brahmaputra valley feel that continuous influx of people from Bangladesh has been passing a threat to their distinct socio-cultural identity.¹⁶²

The Governments' failure in curbing the flood of Bangladeshi immigration has given rise to contempt and fury of the indigenous people whose identity has been jeopardized and threatened by the immigrants.¹⁶³

The consciousness of the Assamese people of losing their identity in the hand of Bangladesh Muslims was the contributory factor behind regionalism sentiment among

Assamese people.¹⁶⁴ The former Governor of Assam, Lieutenant General (Retd.) S.K.Sinha also observed that, “the illegal Bangladeshi migrant’s influx poses a grave threat both to the identity of Assamese people and to our national security.”¹⁶⁵

The complex ethnic situation began to unleash ethnic unrest in Assam from the 1970’s onwards due to the continuous population inflow from the neighbouring nations, especially Bangladesh. As a result language, religion and cultural regionalism are becoming the box of ethnic tension as well as ethnic identity movement in Assam.¹⁶⁶ This unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh raised a mass discontent to such a level that people from all walks of life moved into agitation in late 70’s under the leadership of AASU.¹⁶⁷

The anti-foreigner movement in Assam during 1979-85 also expressed serious concern about the danger arising out of the influx of foreigners into Assam which caused threat to social entity of the Assamese people.¹⁶⁸ The main emphasis of Assam movement during the long six years has been on Assamese culture and language. Intellectuals feel that failure at each step to identify and exfiltrate Bangladeshi migrants will encourage Muslim fundamentalist to strengthen their bastion in Assam and minoritize the greater Assamese society.¹⁶⁹

5.4 SECURITY:

The impact of illegal Bangladeshi migrants is tremendous on the security of the people of the state and the country as a whole. The illegal Bangladeshi infiltration into Assam and elsewhere in the region has changed its demography and now it has become a serious threat to future survival of the region’s people and also internal security problems for the nation.¹⁷⁰

5.5: Illegal migrants in India till 1998*

S/L	State	Numbers in million
1	West Bengal	5.4
2	Assam	4.0
3	Tripura	0.8
4	Bihar	0.5
5	Maharashtra	0.5
6	Rajasthan	0.5
7	Delhi	0.3
Total	-	12.00

Source: Supreme Court repeals IMDT Act, Assam, by Sanjay Nayyar. (According to the “India Today” as quoted from Home Minister/ intelligence Bureau Source, 10, August 1998.)

The table above explains the distribution of illegal Bangladeshi in the country. According to the Home Ministry/ Intelligence Bureau there are large numbers of illegal Bangladeshi in the country. With 5.4 million illegal Bangladeshi, the state of West Bengal is in the top of the list of the states affected by the virus called illegal Bangladeshi. With 4.0 millions of illegal Bangladeshi, the state Assam is in the second position in the list of affected states in the country. Most surprisingly and embarrassingly the Capital of India is also not spared by the illegal Bangladeshi migrants. With 0.3 million the Capital is in the 7th position in the list.

So the issue of illegal migration has an implication for India’s National security.¹⁷¹The volatile situation in Assam for decades had paved the way for various terrorist insurgent groups of different scale and size to mushroom and commit scores of violent and mindless incidents like murders, triggering and abductions for ransom, extortions and attacking of economic targets.¹⁷²

It has been established that most of the armed insurgent groups in Assam like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), The Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO), and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) had established camps in Bangladesh and also procured their weapons from the Cox bazaar near the Bangladesh- Myanmar border. With the change of government in Bangladesh and the explicit co-operation of the Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina, Tapan Patowary, the leader of the KLO was caught in Dhaka in October last year. The chairman of ULFA, Arabinda Rajkhowa and its Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Raju Baruah, were caught in Cox Bazaar on Dec 4, 2009 and later arrested by Assam police across the Meghalays-Bangladesh border. The ULFA has been running some ten camps in the Mymensingh – Chittagong areas and had invested a huge fortune through the real estate and restaurant businesses in Bangladesh.¹⁷³

The ability to function with impunity within Bangladesh was not only due to help from within Bangladesh but also because of facilitation provided by a network of illegal migrants from within Assam to the ULFA. Logistical information about the areas in Bangladesh is also provided by this network in lieu of money given to them, which in turn compromises the security of Assam. The October 30, 2009 attacks in Assam which killed 83 civilians and injured 30 was suspected to be the handiwork of ULFA, the NDFB and the Harkat-ul-e-Islami (HUJI) from Bangladeshi illegal migration into Assam.¹⁷⁴

Apart from the above discussed security threats, some of the notified threats are discussed under the following sub-heads:-

5.4.1 RISE OF INSURGENCY:

One of the most important impacts of illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims into the state is the birth of the first insurgent group in Assam. Each of the insurgent outfits in the region was initially raised to a large extent from among people who harbored feelings of

neglect and “colonial exploitation” or who strongly resented certain perceived wrongs to the particular community or sub-region from which they were drawn.¹⁷⁵

As such ULFA was born on 7th April, 1979, with a purpose of Liberating Assam from illegal occupation of India. It was an outcome of a protest movement against the illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Adopting extra constitutional means to protect the socio-economic ecology of Assam nationalism and gave it a militant and racial turn. For them ethnical solution to socio-economic and socio-political malady could possible only through revolutionary changes which could be evoked by independent political power. The Assamese people, who had gradually developed an emotional distance from the centre under congress Government for overlooking the illegal migration for its short term political game found ULFA as their savior.¹⁷⁶

Though the Assam movement came to an end after the historic Assam Accord signed between the government and the agitators in 1985, the social malady called ULFA remained active and became more organized. Hence, ULFA became a well organized, highly influential, widely connected enormously funded terrorist group active in Assam.¹⁷⁷

The other development in Assam around 1984-85 was the surface of Bodo agitations that also took violent shape. The allegations that a former Prime Minister had encouraged the Bodo to start agitation with a view to divide AASU, AGP & ULFA movements in Assam can also not be ignored. Several shades of Bodo agitation have rocked Assam that was helped by the ISI, DGFI and the NSI.¹⁷⁸

By the help and contact of ISI of Pakistan and other insurgent groups in North East viz. National Socialist Council of Nagaim (NSCN) and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Myanmar, ULFA has also emerged as one of the dreaded terrorist groups. It indulged in violent crimes including kidnapping of prominent businessman for extortion and killing civilian and government official to create terror in the state. The ISI of Pakistan, Karen

National Union (KNU), an anti-government guerrilla group in Myanmar and NSCN etc. are major arm suppliers to them.¹⁷⁹

When AGP government failed to control the unlawful activities of ULFA, the centre imposed President's rule in the state in November 1990 and declared ULFA unlawful organization under unlawful Activities Act 1967. However, when AGP returned to power in 1996 Assembly elections, ULFA got fresh chance to accelerate its militancy – nevertheless, strong counter insurgency measure taken up under unified command of Army and Para-military forces not only weakened the ULFA considerably but also forced its leaders to take shelter in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar.¹⁸⁰

ULFA an offshoot of AASU, which fought for detection, deletion (from voters' list) and of Assam from India with the support of same Bangladesh and Pakistan against whom they had launched agitation.¹⁸¹ Both Bangladesh and Pakistan are now using ULFA leaders as their agents to expand Islamic Fundamentalism in North East, basically Assam. Commanding operations from the soil of Bangladesh, ULFA leaders are involved in creating violent disturbances in the state. Deviating from the core agenda to fight against unabated migration from Bangladesh, they are now captive in hands of Bangladesh and Pakistan and cannot take their own decision.¹⁸²

5.4.2 PROLIFERATION OF MUSLIM TERRORIST ORGANISATION:

The illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslim into Assam has been playing a serious role in the proliferation of Muslim Terrorist organization in the state. These organizations can create chaos and riot situation in the state and very dangerous from security point of view. Though government of the state and centre tried some measures it could not check the illegal influx from Bangladesh, hence illegal immigration continues to be sensitive issue exploited by vested political interests. It is widely believed that Islamic militancy has been consolidating because of unabated Bangladeshi immigration.¹⁸³

The Muslim insurgency in Assam which began in a large measure due to the presence of Bangladeshi migrants has deterred industrialists from coming to the area. The benefit of various Government schemes has been cornered by these Bangladeshi immigrants due to their political clout. This is proving to be a great drain on the resources of the country.¹⁸⁴

Pakistan's ISI has been active in Bangladesh supporting militant movement in Assam. Muslim militant organization has mushroomed in Assam and there are reports of some 50 Assamese Muslim youth's have gone for training to Afghanistan and Kashmir.¹⁸⁵ In the aftermath of February – March 1983 violence, a secret Muslim organization known as Muslim vigilance Force emerged. The Muslim Vigilance Force is termed as force for self defense of the minorities and enlistment, proportion & training of youth as death squads.¹⁸⁶

There are 12 to 15 extremist organizations working in the region. Some of these organisations are directly raised by Pakistan's ISI and thus, are the most fanatical with a clear anti – Indian stance.¹⁸⁷

Some of the Muslim Fundamentalist Organizations are as follow:

1. Student Islamic Movement of India: its purpose are to promote Muslim fundamentalism/ Koran ideology, counter any other fundamentalist outfits infiltrate into Government services. Its areas of operation have been reported to be the district of Dhubri/ Barpeta/ Nagaon. This outfit was raised in December, 1992.
2. Student Islamic Organization: It was raised in October, 1992 with a view to propagate extreme fundamentalism.
3. Assam Pradesh Quami Tanzeem: It was founded May/ June, 1992 with entire Assam as its area of operation. It is reported to be the installation of Muslim Chief Minister in Assam.

4. Muslim Liberation Front of Assam: Born in the early part of the nineties of the last century, is an underground militant outfit committed to create a separate Muslim Land for the Muslim of Assam.
5. Minority Volunteer Force: It has been operating mostly in the immigrant Muslim areas with the objective of creating separate state for the minorities of four district of Dhubri, Barpeta, Nagaon and Morigaon.
6. Liberation of Islamic Tigers Force: It was born in December, 1992. Its aims at creating a separate homeland for Muslims to be known as "Islamistan".
7. Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam: Mostly operating in Nagaon and Marigaon districts, engaged in armed struggle for protection of Muslim etc.¹⁸⁸

These organizations attempts to mobilize the Muslim youths in Assam to fight for the cause of Muslims. Pakistan & Bangladesh based foreign terrorist groups like Harkal-ul-mujaheedin, Harkat-ul-Jihad, Jamal-ul-mujaheedin and Harkat-ul-jihad-al-Islam (HUJI) are also reported having active presence in Assam. Another militant outfit named Islamic United Revolution Protection of India (IURPI) has been formed recently covering the Muslim dominated district of Assam.¹⁸⁹

Jihad terrorism, as distinguished from the ethnic terrorism has also started making inroads in Assam. According to the Assam police, the following jihadi organization are now active in Assam; the Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam, the Independent Liberation Army of Assam, the People United Liberation Front, Harkat-ul-mujahideen. According to police, the activities of the entire organization are co-ordinated by the Jamiat-ul-mujaheedin of Bangladesh.

The presence of Bangladeshi based HUJI elements in the North-East has been further attested by BSF Inspector General (Assam-Meghalaya-Manipur Frontier), K. Mishra. Dhubri district of Assam has witnessed the maximum numbers of incidents involving MULTA terrorist Muslim organization. A MULTA cadre whose arrest was reported in the

media on July 4, 2002 confessed to the police that passage along the international border in the Golakganj area of Dhubri district is used as a route to infiltrate into the state from Bangladesh. Nagaon and Morigaon district of Assam have also witnessed MULTA activities. A few of its cadres have been arrested in Darrang district too. Moreover MULTA allegedly maintain base in Jiridam sub – division of Manipur.¹⁹⁰

On 7th August 1999, the Assam police claimed to have arrested four hardcore ISI functionaries. It was disclosed by them that ISI had plans to train 10,000 people in Assam for Jihad to liberate Assam and establish an Islamic country comprising territory of the state and some other parts of North-East India.¹⁹¹ They confessed that the Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI), Bangladesh had recruited and sent a number of young Bengali Muslim immigrants from Assam to Pakistan for training in ISI sponsored camps of Mujahideen. Hence, on this information, the Assam police was able to arrest a number of immigrants Bengali Muslims, who had been trained in Pakistan. They also arrested one Muhammad Muslimideen, the chief organizer of the HUJI Bangladesh in India.¹⁹²

Again, two other Muslim militant organization namely, Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam (MLTA) and Muslim Liberation Army (MLA) are training batches of Muslim terrorist and criminals in Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in Poonch and Rajouri sectors.¹⁹³Forty-two HUM cadres, including some trained in Pakistan- occupied Kashmir, surrendered till 2006-end. Four HUJI cadres trained in Bangladesh surrendered in August 2004. One HUJI cadre was arrested in February 2004. Till 2006-end, 370 jihadi terrorists belonging to different organizations had been arrested and 128 had surrendered.¹⁹⁴

Since 1998, unconfirmed reports were emerging about HUJI-ULFA links. The connection was proved in 2003 from the confession of some arrested jihadi militants and reconfirmed recently when members of HUJI were spotted in Silchar district of Assam along with a few ULFA members.

Also in May, 1999 the Indian Government received sensational information clearly indicating direct contact between a group of Kashmiri Muslim terrorists and two extremist Muslim terrorist outfits of Assam-muslim Tiger Force and Revolutionary Muslim commander.¹⁹⁵ The ministry of Defense in its annual report for 2004-05 released on May 3, has slammed Bangladesh for being “insensitive & unresponsive” to India’s security concerns. It has accused Bangladesh Government of providing base on Bangladesh soil illegal immigration and criminalization of border.¹⁹⁶

The cruel attack of October 30th, 2009 which took place in Assam in which 83 civilians were killed and 30 injured was also suspected to be the handy work of ULFA, the NDFB and Harkat-ul-jihad-e-Islami (HUJI) formed by illegal migrants of Bangladesh in Assam.¹⁹⁷

Today there are several Islamic fundamentalist insurgent groups in Assam all created with the help of the Directorate General Force Intelligence (DGFI) of Bangladesh and the Pakistan Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The main groups are the Muslim united liberation front of Assam (MULFA) and the Islamic Liberation Army of Assam. These insurgent groups are in the vanguard for lebensraum for Bangladesh.¹⁹⁸

5.4.3 THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY :

There is also serious impact on national security due to illegal influx from Bangladesh with the help of Bangladesh and Pakistan’s ISI intend to liberate Assam and thus form it as an Islamic country. It has a serious internal security angle, because many of the new immigrants are radicalized and tend to work for jihadi groups.¹⁹⁹

The Islamic Religious Fundamentalism (IRF) and their religious extremists as well as fundamentalist are being pushed into India regularly, by the intelligence agencies of

Bangladesh and Pakistan; named – Director General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) & ISI, to destabilize the whole Indian province and entire Indian sub-continent as well as South Asian region. The unrestricted illegal infiltration have already endangered the whole North eastern Indian region, while the Indian security is threatened, sovereignty and integration too are jeopardized.²⁰⁰

The Indian security has for the first time acknowledged the emerging security threat from Bangladesh due to ceaseless illegal migration. An intelligence Bureau document, prepared for delegates to the 38th Conference of Directors General of police, states that Bangladesh has emerged as a security threat to India since Bangladesh National party led government of Begum Khaleda zia came to power in 2001.²⁰¹

In 2001, the Supreme Court also expressed the concern that undocumented migrants from Bangladesh might pose a great threat both to economy and security of the country. During the hearing of a public interest petition filed by a lawyer, O.P. Saxena representing the All India lawyers Forum for Civil Liberties (AILFCL), the bench of the Chief Justice and two other Justices of the Supreme Court said that the Bangladeshi migrants were eating into the economy of the country and had to a large extent become a security threat.²⁰² Moreover in 2005, Supreme Court of India labeled illegal Bangladeshi Muslims as “external aggression” into Indian, while striking down the IMDT Act as unconstitutional. ²⁰³

On 24th January 2009, yet another official agency, Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) has ultimately raised alarm over the threat posed by illegal influx. In its report, it mentioned and warned that the illegal immigration into the country is posing a serious threat to national security and in its context to combat the situation; the latest report strongly recommended an identity card (IC) for citizens.²⁰⁴

5.4.4 INTERNATIONAL RELATION:

The impact of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam (India) is tremendous in the international relation between these two neighbouring countries. The international relation between India and Bangladesh is visibly not quite impressive due to issue relating to illegal Bangladeshi migration into India, border disputes, killing of border forces, for sending Islamic militant to India etc.

There are as many as 212 controversial patches on the 4, 097 km long Indo-Bangladesh border and 6.5 km undemarcated border which act as an irritant in relations amongst the two countries.²⁰⁵The mutual firing in the Indo-Bangladesh border became routine for both country security forces. For example, in 2001, Border Security force (BSF) & Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) exchanged gunfire leading to the killing of 19 BSF personnel which obviously had a negative impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations.²⁰⁶

Again recently in the month of April, 2005 Assistant Commandant of BSF, Jeewan Kumar was dragged by BDR into Bangladesh territory and shot him dead while he was trying to negotiate the return of an Indian villager detained across the border. But Dhaka maintains that officer was killed in a gun battle between the two forces started by the BSF.²⁰⁷

The killing is a throwback to the 2001 brutal killings of 19 BSF personnel by rifles after which bilateral relations plunged to a new low. At that time India had absolved Bangladesh's Awami League Government of any responsibility for what it is called the worst border clash in 30 years between the two neighbours. The Indian government blamed the BDR, and described the killings as "a brutal act of murder."²⁰⁸

The India-Bangladesh boundary problems starting from illegal immigration and smuggling to border disputes have had their impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Prime Minister level visits between the two countries have become rarity. High level bilateral contact is restricted to discuss on the sidelines of multi-lateral events, an exception was Foreign Minister Morshed Khan's visit to New Delhi in 2004, primarily to convey an invitation to the SAARC summit.²⁰⁹

Apart from the gunfire exchange between the two counter defense forces, firing and killing of terrorist, smuggler are part of this international border. According to the spokesperson at the Indian High commission, BSF killed a total of 399 people between January 2000 and June 2005 of them, 265 were Bangladeshi, 117 Indian and 17 persons of intermediate nationality. Out of 265 Bangladeshi, 182 were involved in smuggling contraband foods, 42 were cattle smugglers, one arms smuggler, 12 narcotics and drug smugglers, and two were involved in dacoity and 26 in other crimes.²¹⁰

On many occasions the tussle over the migrants at the border rapidly expands into a full scale diplomatic row between the two countries with India forcefully maintaining that the migrants had no right to stay in India permanently, where Bangladesh accusing India of expelling Bengali-speaking Indian Muslim. Bangladesh also vehemently denied the presence of undocumented Bangladeshi's in India and at the same time, refused to accept migrants without formal credentials. At a press conference a representative of the Bangladesh Government observed: "How you call them Bangladeshi's? Are they carrying Bangladeshi passports or any other identification? There is no question of accepting them."²¹¹

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CHAPTER-6

ASSAM MOVEMENT & CONSEQUENCES

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6.1 GENESIS OF ASSAM MOVEMENT:

6.2 PARLIAMENTARY BYE ELECTION 1979:

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ASSAM MOVEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES:

The first political shock that was faced by Assam was in 1946, when leaders of INC were almost selling out Assam by agreeing to the Grouping formula of the British Cabinet Mission. It is a fact that the fate of Assam and North-East would have been sealed for ever if Mahatma Gandhi did not support the views of Asamiya people led by Gopinath Bordoloi on the moment of crisis. Another major event of 1950 was the entry into Assam large scale immigrants from the erstwhile East Pakistan/ now Bangladesh for whose Indian parliament had to enact Immigration Expulsion law which however did not protect Assam from future infiltrators. Successive waves of immigrants flooding the plain district of Assam threatened the integrity and identity of the whole region.¹

6.1 GENESIS OF ASSAM MOVEMENT:

The ever increasing pool of immigrant population is serving as an essential vote bank to the political parties. The demand for restriction of entry of foreigners to the state is made by political parties time and again, yet clandestine patronage and support is visible.² The fall of Congress and the formation of Janata Government in the state had played important role in forming the platform for the Assam movement. The Janata Government fully supported the agitation against the illegal infiltration from Bangladesh and advocated the detection, deportation and deletion of infiltrators name from the electoral rolls. The composition of the state Government of 1978 is as follows:

6.1: Assam state Assembly Election Results, 1978

Party	Seats contested	Seat won	% of vote polled
Indian National Congress	126	26	23.69
Janata	117	53	27.56
Indian National Congress (I)	115	8	8.79
Communist Party of India (CPI)	35	5	4.10
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	27	11	5.62
Revolutionary Communist party of India (RCPI)	10	4	1.40
Plain Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA)	9	4	1.40
Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI)	8	2	0.67
Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)	6	0	0.43
All India Forward Block (ALFB)	3	0	0.09
ALL India Gorkha League	1	0	0.04
Independents	481	13*	25.01

Source: Kunda, Bijan Kumar, "Politics in the Brahmaputra Valley since the Assam Accord", page, 96 Include the member of communist party of India (Marxist Leninist) CPI (ML)*

If we carefully notice the above table we find that the Jantat party could get hold of the maximum numbers of seats in the Assam Legislative Assembly poll. It also shows the fall of Congress in the state for the first time. The Congress rule of 31 years since 1947 came to an end in the year 1978 after the formation of the Janta Government in the state. The fall of Congress was result of ignoring the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration in the state, because of Congress Government's disinterest in solving the issue the people of Assam went against the Congress and gave chance to the Janta party to tackle the issue.

Even the Foreigners' Act 1946, the Immigration (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950, the Foreigners (Tribunals) order 1964, and the Prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan Plan, 1964, also known as PIP Plan could not do away the immigration from the Bangladesh. The above mentioned unabated influx of illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh raised mass discontent to such a level that people from all walks of life moved into agitation in late 1970's under the leadership of All Assam Student Union (AASU), thus bringing into a new era in Assam politics.³

Anti outsider movement launched by All Assam Student Union (AASU) with the full support of general masses including women and children is popularly known as the peoples' movement rather than student movement. The uninterrupted immigration process led to immediate movement against the outsiders. In 1978 seven thousand five hundred (7,500) foreigners were detected only in Mangaldoi parliamentary constituency. In 1979 several lakhs of foreigners were identified from electoral rolls of Assam, and finally the anti outsider movement initiated by the All Assam Student Union (AASU) came up.⁴

6.2 PARLIAMENTARY BYE ELECTION 1979:

Though the Assam movement began long back but the agitation got its momentum in 1979 on the eve of Mangaldoi bye election. It is important to mention here that the Mangaldoi parliamentary seat fell vacant after the death of Mr. Hiralal Patowari on March 28, 1979.⁵ When the issue of a bye election came up, the people of Mangaldoi constituency and Assam represented to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) that the electoral roll of Mangaldoi constituency should be revised as there were a number of foreigners in the constituency electoral roll.⁶

As Janata Party Government was formed in the state, it did not hesitate to order the district authorities to launch a special drive with the active assistance of the police for identifying illegal immigrants.⁷ Considering the mass complain the Commission had lodged 47,658 objections and of these 36,780 was sustained. That is to say, 77 per cent of the objections were found to be correct. As such, the complaint of large scale harassment to Indian citizens falls flat on the ground, again in the second phase of the operation, more than 5,83,000 objections were filed against suspected Bangladeshi nationals in addition to 47,658 objections already filed in the first phase of operation.⁸

After the enquiries conducted, the Chief Election Commission announced that the bye election would be held only after the electoral rolls were revised. The Muslim lobby promptly pressurized the Congress to prevail on the Chief Election Commission to conduct the polls in Mangaldoi without revising the electoral rolls.⁹ As the operation for identifying the alien voters picked up quick momentum, a hue and cry was raised by the Congress (I) leaders from Assam as well as from many Indian citizens who were being wrongly identified as citizens. Their political survival depending on the support of the Bangladeshi voters did not remain silent either. Tremendous pressure was applied on the Chief Election Commission to suspend the operation for identifying alien voters by the Congress (I), the Congress (U), the CPM and all other leftist parties. The Chief Election Commission succumbing to the pressure made a complete volte-face and not only called a halt to deleting the names of alien voters from electoral rolls but also announced tamely that Commission would conduct the election on Mangaldoi on the basis of the 1976 electoral rolls.¹⁰

So without the required majority in Rajya Sabha for the extension of Presidents' rule over the state, the Government had to abandon the proposal as there was no unanimity amongst the opposition. Holding the elections thus became a constitutional composition.¹¹ On the contrary

the issue of revising the Electoral Rolls and deleting the names of foreigners was also totally ignored, thereby throwing a direct challenge to the movement leadership.¹²

Thus very soon the issue of “foreign nationals” received the attention of the people of entire Assam and the press along with the agitators became successful in highlighting the issue of deleting “foreign nationals” name from all the electoral rolls of Assam.¹³The three word detecting, deleting and deporting illegal immigrant became very popular during the period of Assam movement, which is also known as “3D”.¹⁴

When the Assam movement reached to its climax and turned violent, two separate delegations one of legislators (16) led by Janata party leader Golap Barbora and another of writers (4) led by Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya emphatically narrated the alarming problem of illegal Muslim immigration in Assam in their respective memorandum to Rajya Sabha committee of Petitions. Seventy third Report of the committee of petitions. Rajya Sabha dated March 22, 1982. While quoting the memorandum said: “the official statistics showed that a total of 2, 20,690 Pakistani infiltrators were detected in the state during the period 1950-1961 and another 1, 92,339 were spotted in the following decade.”¹⁵

According to Sri Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharya (an ex Indian Police Service officer and ex Deputy Inspector General of Assam Police force) during his tenure in police force of Assam they could deport 3, 00,000 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants back to Bangladesh. But he blames that, the names of those deported foreigners who have been enrolled as voters are not deleted from the Electoral Rolls because of Governments’ ignorance.¹⁶

6.3 BIRTH OF UNITED LIBERATION FRONT OF ASSAM (ULFA):

To be more precise, Assam's problem of militant secessionism, having originated from the vexed infiltration problem, is inseparably interlinked with the problem of infiltration. The rise of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) is the strong proof of this perception.¹⁷ Above that the regional sentiment and Central Government's ignorance to the vexed social, economical and political problem of the state has played a great influence behind the creation of this outfit. The aforesaid destabilizing factors led to the drawing up of new battle lines. The failure of Indira Gandhi to foresee the far reaching consequences of the Assam movement and her eagerness to shield the Bangladeshi infiltrators in for political interests of the Congress motivated a section of the activists associated with the Assam movement from the very beginning, to take the path of violence. The sense of deprivation and deception coupled with geographical, if not psychological, isolation now degenerated into a sense of alienation and unknown of the rest of the country, this sense of alienation ultimately took the shape of secessionism. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) was born.¹⁸ Since the Government failed to tackle the crisis of Illegal Bangladeshi immigration a violent section parted from AASU to form United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). It was born on the lawns of the historic Rang Ghar of Sibsagar on 7th April, 1979, with a purpose of "liberating Assam from the illegal occupation of India". Its leaders like Arbind Rajkhowa; Chairman, Paresh Barua, Chief of staff Pradeep Gogoi; and Anup Chetia; General Secretary gave a militant manifestation to the movement by describing itself as a "revolutionary Political Organization."¹⁹

The former Governor of the state S.K. Sinha also belief that the illegal Bangladeshi immigration issue played a huge role in the outbreak of the insurgence group called ULFA. The ULFA movement initially began as protest against the presence of illegal migrants²⁰ and most of these youth were connected to Congress and left the party the form the revolutionary organization. It is also alleged that former Chief Minister of Assam encouraged he Muttock youth (himself as

Muttock) to form ULFA with a view to belittle and disarray AASU and AAGSP, cannot be denied as rumours.²¹

The ULFA immediately drew attention of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Chinese intelligence agencies and came to their contacts very soon. What was born as a diversionary political movement had later assumed the color of the separatist movement.²² Though the Assam movement came to an end after historic Assam Accord signed between Government and the agitators in 1985, but the social malady called ULFA remains active and became more organized.

6.4 LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT:

The main organization which led the agitation on foreigners' issue right from the beginning was All Assam Student Union. It was set up some time in 1957 with membership from all section of school, college and university students. It claimed to have function as non-political organization wedded to the cause of preserving the identity of Assamese people and the cultural heritage of the state.²³

Though the movement was launched by apolitical student leaders, it was alleged that Asamiya bourgeois stood solidly behind the movement; for instance, the Asamiya bourgeois press played a very decisive role in massive indoctrination, creating restlessness and fear among the masses.²⁴ Thus, All Assam Gana Parishad (AAGSP) was formed at Dibrugarh on August 27, 1979. Even different groups came together to form the All Assam Gana Parishad (AAGSP). Some of the groups and political parties which were the constituent part of this front- All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) are: All Assam Student Union (AASU), Purbanchaliya Lok

Parishad (PLP), Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD), Assam Sahitya Sabha (ASS), Asom Yubak Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AYJCH), Asom Yubak Samaj(AYS, headed by retired bureaucrats) and Young Lawyers Forum (YLF). In this way, it's clear that though the initiative of the Assam movement against the foreigner national issue went into the hands of student leaders - All Assam Student Union (AASU), yet the part played by the constituents of All Assam Gana Parishad (AAGSP) cannot be underestimated.²⁵

During the course of the agitation on the foreigner issue launched by the All Assam Student Union (AASU) it received active support mainly from two local political parties- Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) and Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD).²⁶ The AASU or the AAGSP were under the impression that while the Central Government was actually concerned with violation on the western border and had made special arrangement to deal with them no such concern was manifest in respect of development on the eastern borders. As they wanted to see the arrangement on the western borders they made a day's visit to it. However, they did not come up with any further new suggestion for implementation on the eastern sector.²⁷

During 13 years 1957-1970, the numbers of electorates in Assam had increased by 12 lakh whereas during following 8 years i.e. 1971-79, Assam's electoral rolls had recorded an increase of 28 lakhs. The election commission cannot but agrees that such unprecedented increase could not have been in the natural course.²⁸

In the mean time the then Chief Election Commissioner, A.L. Shakhder, while addressing the conference of Chief Electoral Officers in Ootacamund in September 1998, had referred to the exceptionally high decadal rate of growth of 34.98 population in 1971 in one of the states in the North Eastern region, and said that disturbing reports of large scale inclusion of the names of foreign national were being received.²⁹ Such alternative and pontifical pronouncement from

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) about the growth risk of foreigners swamping the electoral rolls, and reducing Assamese into minority were the best gift for All Assam Student Union (AASU) in support of their cause.³⁰

As part of the agitation against foreigners in Assam the regional political party Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) gave a call for boycott of Independence Day of 1979. The call was supported by the All Assam Student Union (AASU), the Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) and Janata Yuba Chatra Parishad. On August 15, the Dibrugarh student union took out a procession to boycott "Independence Day."³¹

In November 1997, Deputy Prime Minister, Y.B. Chavan visited Guwahati and held discussion with the political parties as well as with the AASU and other organization, like the Sahitya Sabha and minority groups. He offered to take action on the issue of immigration after the election. The regional parties however, took an uncompromising stand and wanted that election should be held only after the preparation of proper electoral rolls. But with the announcement of the Lok Sabha election schedule, the agitation was further intensified. The AASU and the regional political parties gave a call for the boycott of elections.³²

Many national political parties also supported the postponing the election. Atal Behari Vajapayee and Jaswant Singh of the BJP, Raj Narain and Madhu Dandavate of Janata Dal and Shyamnadan Misra of Lok Dal had appealed to Indira Gandhi for postponing the elections.³³ Even the local printing presses refuse to print the electoral rolls which as such, had to be printed outside Assam. Above all, 8800 Government officers and employees had to be airlifted from Delhi to the polling stations.³⁴

In the memorandum presented by the AASU to Prime Minister on 2nd February, 1980 the following eight demands were made:

- I. Foreign nationals must be detected and deported from our country.
- II. Names of foreign nationals must be removed from the concerned electoral roll before holding any election in Assam.
- III. Inclusion of foreign national's names in the electoral rolls in future must be made impossible with the help of adequate and strong election machinery.
- IV. Borders of India with neighboring countries must be fully protected to effectively check infiltrations.
- V. Indian voters residing in Assam should be issued identity cards with photographs affixed.
- VI. Necessary constitutional safeguards should be provided to the people of North-Eastern Region for the next 15/20 years by making necessary constitutional provisions for the protection of the identity of the indigenous people in this region.
- VII. The Government of Assam should be free to reject any certificate issued by the district authorities of West Bengal and Tripura.
- VIII. The authority to grant citizenship certificate delegated to the State Governments should be withdrawn by the Central government immediately from all State Governments so that those foreigners who are detected in Assam do not come back armed with citizenship certificates issued by the other States.³⁵

The agitators stopped the outgoing of crude oil from the State as a protest against the Government decision of holding election. The stoppage of pumping of crude oil to points outside Assam affected the functioning of Barauni refinery in Bihar set up exclusively to process crude from Assam.³⁶ According to the Assam Government report which was to Government of India, a total of 3049 persons have been killed in violence in the state between January and June, 1983.³⁷

On 18th February, 1983, 3300 people were killed in a six hour long attack at the marshy field near Dimal river. The massacre took place right Assembly election. Altogether 14 villages-

Alisingha, Khulapathar, Basundhari, Bugduba Beel, Bugduba habi, Borjola, Butuni, Indurmati, Mati parbat, Muladhari, Mati Parbat no. 8, Silbheta, Borburi and Nellie were devastated.³⁸

The immigrant Muslims had started the violence in a planned manner. Bangladeshis had first murdered 8 tribal children in Nellie and the Nellie massacre took place as retaliation.³⁹ The clashes assumed such serious proportion that under the Samaguri police Station area alone, 30000 native people were rendered homeless on 22/2/1983 and 22 Assamese villages were demolished by arson.⁴⁰

However, when Begum Abida Ali, wife of the former President of India, decided to file her nomination, the state administration was jolted into hectic activity. The agitators had put road-blocks on the way to Barpeta where she had to file her paper and kept a day & night vigil over the activities of her household at Guwahati after her arrival.⁴¹ But, on the eve of last day of withdrawal, when two Independent candidates withdrew their nominations, Begum Abida Ali also withdrew hers, in view of the threats & the disturbed situation.⁴²

Out of the 14 constituencies in Assam only three constituencies- two of them located in Barak Valley and the other one in the autonomous Hills districts of Karbianglong were to be held. The state was then under Presidents Rule due to the withdrawal of support by the Congress-I, the CPI-M & CPI to the Government led by AJD.

The Governor felt that when election in large number of constituencies in Brahmaputra Valley were not being held, holding of elections in two constituencies in the Barak Valley would only further exacerbate the deep schism between the people in the two valleys & result in escalation

of avoidable tension. But the Election Commission finally went in favour of going through with the election in the two constituencies of Silchar.⁴³

Intervening in the debate of Assam in the Lok Sabha on February 22, 1983, Mrs. Gandhi replied to the criticism for ordering elections by posing the question: "Can any group anywhere in India, no matter what their grievances are, hold the country to ransom? Can any group say, 'Our demand have not been fulfilled,' there are plenty of demands; every group has a demand; many of them are justified demands, and we cannot fulfill them because of lack of resources or some reason like that- & because you are not fulfilling our demands, we will not allow you to have the elections or will not allow you do something else."⁴⁴

6.5 ASSAM ACCORD:

The issue of foreign nationals is claimed to be resolved to the satisfaction of all sections of the people of the state when the Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) was signed by the Union Government and the Government of Assam with the AASU and AAGSP in the early hours of 15th August, 1985. Almost all the national political parties supported and welcomed the Accord.⁴⁵ The Congress(S) welcomed the Accord, but opposed the disfranchisement of the 1966-1971 streams. But the Accord was criticized by one of the unit of the Assam movement called AAGSP and other than that All Assam Tribal Youth Union, the Young Lawyers Forum and the Purhbanchaliya Lok Parishad.⁴⁶

The leadership of the movement as it is alleged signed the Accord with great hesitation and confusion for which they had to stay in Delhi for several days even after signing the Accord just to watch the reactions of people of Brahmaputra valley of Assam.⁴⁷ The Accord contained 11

clauses of which clause number 5 deals with foreigners. The year 1966 was accepted as the cut off year for detecting foreigners, and 1971 was accepted as the cut off year for deporting foreign nationals from Assam India. It was also agreed that those persons found to have entered into Assam from 1st January 1966 to 24th March 1971 would be detected, allowed to stay in Assam and disfranchised for ten years; after the completion of ten years they would be given back their right to vote once again. Those who entered Assam from across the international border after 24th March 1971 would be deported in accordance with law.⁴⁸

The details of the clause number five of the Accord is as follows:

- 5.1. For purposes of detection and deletion of foreigners, 1.1.1966 shall be the base date and year.
- 5.2. All persons who came to Assam prior to 1.1.1966, including those amongst them whose names appeared on the electoral rolls used in 1967 election shall be regularized.
- 5.3. Foreigners, who came to Assam after 1.1.1966 (inclusive) and up to 24th March, 1971 shall be detected in accordance with the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order 1964.
- 5.4. Names of foreigners so detected will be deleted from the electoral rolls in force. Such persons will be required to register themselves before the Registration Officers of the respective districts in accordance with the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 and the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939.
- 5.5. For this purpose, Government of India will undertake suitable strengthening of the Government machinery.
- 5.6. On the expiry of a period of ten year following the date of detection, the names of all such persons which have been deleted from the electoral rolls shall be restored.
- 5.7. All persons who were expelled earlier, but have since reentered illegally into Assam shall be expelled.
- 5.8. Foreigners who came to Assam on or after March 25th, 1971 shall continue to be detected, deleted and expelled in accordance with law. Immediate and practical steps shall be taken to expel such foreigners.

5.9. The Government will give due consideration to certain difficulties expressed by the AASU/ AAGSP regarding the implementation of the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983.⁴⁹

Some of other important issues covered under the historic Assam Accord are given below in the form of clauses:

- 8.1. The Government will arrange for the issue of citizenship certificates in future only by the authorities of the Central Government.
- 8.2. Specific complaints that may be made by the AASU/ AAGSP about irregular issuance of Indian Citizenship Certificates (ICC) will be looked into.

The international border shall be made secure against future infiltration by erection of physical barriers like walls, barbed wire fencing and other obstacles at appropriate places patrolling by security forces on land and river routes all along the international border shall be adequately intensified. Further, in order to strengthen the security arrangements, to prevent effectively future infiltration, an adequate number of check posts shall be set up.

4.2 Besides the arrangement mentioned above and keeping in view security considerations, a road all along the international border shall be constructed as to facilitate patrolling by security forces. Land between border and the road would be kept free of human habitation, wherever possible. Riverine patrolling along the international border would be intensified. All effective measures would be adopted to prevent infiltrations crossing or attempting to cross the international border.

- ❖ It will be ensured that relevant laws for prevention of encroachment of Government lands in tribal belts and blocks are strictly enforced and unauthorized encroachers evicted as laid down under such laws.
- ❖ It will be ensured that the relevant law restricting acquisition of immovable property by foreigners in Assam is strictly enforced.
- ❖ It will be ensured that Birth and Death Registers are duly maintained.⁵⁰

6.6 ANTI FOREIGNERS MOVEMENT:

As the anti foreigners movement got its momentum the anti Assam movement came out as a protest against the Assam movement. The counter agitation of Assam agitation was spread headed by Jamait-Ulema-Hind (Assam –Wing), Citizens Right Preservation Committee (CRPC) and Assam Minority Student Union.⁵¹

After the formation of All Assam Minority Student Union in the year 1980 the anti foreigners movement agitation faced strong counter-movement from it and from the left forces.⁵² Thus, the leaders of religious and linguistic minorities felt the necessity of organizing themselves for a counter agitation against the chauvinist's onslaught.

It should be mentioned here that Citizens Right Preservation Committee (CRPC) was originally formed especially of the Bengali Hindu in Brahmaputra Valley was founded in 1979 under the leadership of Kalipada Sen (who became the founder President of United Minority Front (UMF) and who assassinated on October 17, 1986.⁵³ It was originally named as, Indian Citizens Right Preservation Committee, but the prefix "Indian" was deleted from the nomenclature in 1980.

The Jaiat-Ulema-Hind and the Citizens Right Preservation Committee (CRPC) came closer to each other for fighting against the anti foreigners movement in Assam.⁵⁴ The All Assam Minority Student Union (AAMSU) was formed in convention at Jaleswar on March 29th and 30th in 1980. The All Assam Minority Student Union (AAMSU) was formed, "With the idea of lending matching belligerence to the minority movement."⁵⁵

It was also alleged that All Assam Minority Student Union (AAMSU) was constituted on at the initiative of Congress (I) party and its leaders, the blessings of Congress (I) was clear behind the formation of All Assam Minority Student Union (AAMSU). The Jaleswar convention from where it took birth was addressed by Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC.I) President, Lalit Kumar Doley and CPI (M) leaders Phani Medhi, MLA besides Golam Osmani, Afzalur Rahman and Santi Ranjan Dasgupta, minority leader and MLAs Abdul Hai Nagori and Asgar Ali were elected as the President and Secretary of AAMSU in the Jaleswar convention.

Since its inception, the AAMSU accepted minority stance adopted by the Jamiat Ulema Hind and CRPC and it demanded issuing of citizenship certificated to all persons residing in the state till March 25, 1971. The AAMSU firmly stated that refugees who took shelter in India from erstwhile East Pakistan should be taken partition liabilities and be granted Indian citizenship.⁵⁶

And for this purpose the Assam State Jamiat Ulema Hind, CRPC & AAMSU had participated in different levels of talks at New Delhi with the Government of India since 1980. These organizations of the minority communities of Assam became successful in creating pressure on the Government of India.⁵⁷Some of their demands are as follows:

- a) To arrange full security of lives ad properties of all sections of minorities.
- b) To stop all sorts of harassment to the Indian citizens in the name of finding out the so-called foreigners.
- c) To stop immediately the communal and secessionist movement in Assam in the name of expulsion of foreigners from Assam.
- d) To stop all evictions from government land till alternative arrangements are made.
- e) To remove all restrictions on transfer of land.
- f) To ensure impartiality of the police and executive machinery.

- g) To arrange compensation for the families of the victims of last disturbances.
- h) To open all educational institutions and arrange for holding examinations.
- i) To commence new academic year immediately.
- j) To arrange for security and safety of the students belonging to the linguistic and religious minority.
- k) To arrange for payment and renewal of scholarship to all the minority students in the state.
- l) To start giving appointment according to the population pattern right from the sub-divisional levels.

With the formation of the AAMSU, the 'foreigners' lobby not only became more courageous but also got organized to start a counter-movement inspired by no less a person than Indira Gandhi herself. Even the State Administration came forward to help them by withdrawing curfew orders in Barpeta. They took out mammoth rallies in the district of Goalpara, Nagoan and Barpeta sub-division. In Barpeta sub-division alone, more than 300000 processionists of foreign origin participated in as many as 9 rallies held on 26/4/1980. As mentioned before the shouting "Joy Bangla" slogan, the unfurling of the Bangladeshi flag coupled with the display of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's portrait, all with impunity, not only exposed the pro-Bangladeshi stance of Indira Gandhi for promoting the partition interests of the Congress (I), but these also built up a strong undercurrent of communal tensions to be released at the opportune moment. This development cannot be discounted while analyzing the Nellie massacre. Towards the end of the month, Assamese Hindu villages were attacked, particularly in Nagoan district. More than 1200 Assamese rendered homeless after 300 houses were set on fire in that district. Many Assamese people were killed and hundreds injured.⁵⁸

6.7 FORMATION OF ASSAM GANA PARISHAD (AGP):

After the formation of AGP in 1985 after the commencement of Assam Accord was a landmark development in the history of regional political parties of Assam. Although the AGP was formally formed in 1985 yet the AGP was not the product of one day or one year effort. The genesis of the AGP was the product of Assam movement. During the period of Assam movement the leaders acquired certain experiences, certain knowledge & realized the necessity of formation of a regional political party which could be able to carry out the interest of the Assamese people.⁵⁹

After the conclusion of Assam Accord (15 August, 1985) a political convention was held at Golaghat in upper Assam on October 12- 14, 1985 which led to the formation of AGP on October 14, 1985 and both the PLP & AJD- two regional parties of Assam merged with AGP.⁶¹ After the formation of the AGP in 1985, they participated in the Assembly election and won 64 seats out of 126 Assembly seats. The percentage of vote sharing of the party was 34.54.⁶⁰

Post election after forming the Government in the State, it was the major concern of the party to implement the provisions of Assam Accord. Implementation of Assam Accord was in fact the major political issue of the party during the time of election campaign. The basic two aspects of the Accord was economic development of the State and the illegal immigration issue.⁶² When the AGP formed the Government it was expected that the new, young and energetic leader will provide a new direction to the state politics.

AGP is a new party and its leaders are new in politics. Although young, they became seasoned champions of popular caused during the course of the Assam Movement. Some of them developed a sort of charisma around them in quite a short period of time basically to their

simplicity and tenacity of purpose. Another quality of these young leaders is that almost all of them are highly educated, many of them being graduates or master degree holders. Such expectations, however, could not come into practice and reflected in the first term of the party itself when party leaders involved in mega scale correction which was known as LOC scandal.⁶³

6.8 UNITED MINORITY FRONT (UMF):

The United Minority Front of Assam is a post- accord development. It came into the political map of Assam on 9-10 November 1985. It is a one of the influential smaller political parties of Assam. The UMF was the product of protest against the formation of the AGP. The formation of AGP and development of implementation of the Assam Accord created an apprehension among the minorities, particularly among the religious minorities.⁶⁴

This infant regional political party took part in the 1985 poll and the UMF bagged 17 seats to Assam Legislative Assembly and one seat to the parliamentary constituencies. The party was against eviction of Bangladeshis, reservation of 80% jobs for Assamese people, Citizenship Act, 1985, disenfranchisement of 1966-71 streams of people of foreign nationals.⁶⁵ The AAMSU, Jamiat Ulema Hind and CRPC were the important organization and platforms which played key role in bringing the United Minority Front into being.⁶⁶

The people belonging to minority communities came to realize that they were simply used as vote bank, nothing more than that; they would have been thrown away when they were in dire needs. So they felt cheated by the Congress Government and when the election bell rang up in Assam, a special convention of all the minority organization and groups was held at Hojai in

Nowgong district of Brahmaputra Valley. In that convention on 9-10 November, 1985 the UMF was born in Assam.⁶⁷

The Congress became the first and foremost victims of the emergence of UMF as it lost its entire traditional vote bank to the UMF, so it started hatching conspiracy to break and liquidate UMF. The Congress could not accept the UMF sympathetically and lightly.

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CHAPTER-7

MIGRATION IN BODOLAND **TERRITORIAL AREAS DISTRICTS**

CHAPTER-7

MIGRATION IN Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts:

7.1 Status & impact of Illegal B'deshi Migration into BTAD:-

7.1.1 GENESIS OF BTAD:

7.1.2 LOCATION OF DISTRICTS:

- a. KOKRAJHAR:
- b. CHIRANG:
- c. BAKSA:
- d. UDALGURI:

7.2 Recent ethnic conflict between migrants and native people of BTAD :

7.2.1 STARTING OF THE RIOT:

MIGRATION IN BODOLAND TERRITORIAL AREAS DISTRICTS:

7.1 Status & impact of Illegal Bangladeshi Migration into BTAD:-

7.1.1 GENESIS OF BTAD:

The Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts, popularly known as BTAD or BTC was created as per the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Government of India, on February 10, 2003. There are four districts in BTAD, viz. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri with Kokrajhar as it's headquarter. It is spread over an area of approximately 8, 970 sq. Kilometer. There are over 3082 villages in BTAD. The Government of India conceded the status of autonomy to fulfill the aspirations of Bodo people relating to their cultural identity, language, education & economic development.¹

7.1.2 LOCATION OF DISTRICTS:

KOKRAJHAR:

Kokrajhar is an administrative district in the state of Assam in North-Eastern India. The district headquarters is at kokrajhar town. It occupies an area of 3,169.22 square kilometre.² Kokrajhar is one of the main districts of BTC. The district lies roughly between 89.46'E to 90.38'E longitude and 26.19'N to 26.54'N latitude. The district is bounded by on the North by Bhutan by Dhubri district on the South, Bongaigaon on the East and West Bengal on West. It has a total population of 8, 98,991.³

CHIRANG:

Chirang is a new district formed in the BTC area of Assam. After the formation of BTAD, Chirang district has been carved out of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon & Barpeta district. According to BTC sources, the total population of the district is 3, 43,626. Chirang is bounded by Bhutan on the North, by Kokrajhar district on the West, Bongaigaon district on the South and by Baksa on the East.⁴

BAKSA:

Baksa is one of the 27 districts of Assam in North-eastern India. Mushalpur town is the Headquarter of the district. The district is bounded by Bhutan in North; Udalguri in the east; Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup district on the South and Chirang district on the West. It has been made after carving out of certain areas of both Barpeta, Kamrup, Nalbari districts. According to BTC sources, the total population of the district is approximately 8, 62,560. The area of the district is 2400 square kilometre.⁵

UDALGURI:

This district has been made after carving out of the Nalbari, Darrang & Sonitpur district of Assam. Udalguri is the headquarter of the district. According to BTC sources, the total population of the district is 7, 56,671. Area of the districts is 1852 Sq.km it is bounded by Bhutan the north; Darrang and Sonitpur on south and Baksa on west. The main compositions of people are Assamese, Boro, Saotal, Marwari, Bengali Hindu and Muslims, Nepali, Garo & other tribes.⁶

Though the BTAD area has been created recently, the problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration have had been there before the autonomy and creation of the new districts. As the districts are well inside the geographical area of the state of Assam, it is obvious that the illegal Bangladeshi migration issue is indivisible in BTAD. If we take consideration of the history of Assam, it is always there in the presently of formed BTAD areas. For instance in Barpeta, which hardly had any Assamese Muslim population and had a very large presence of Boro population on its northern belt, the percentage of Muslim to total population was just 0.1 % in 1911 and the same rose to as high as 49% in 1941, a 490 fold increase in just 30 years.⁷

According to the 2001 census, the district of Barpeta had 60% Muslim population and in matter of Muslim population, the district also stands in 3rd position with 977443 Muslims population. It is also believed that many of this Muslim population are newcomers from Bangladesh.

But the main point is that after the creation of the BTAD and the district of Baksa, some part of Barpeta, Kamrup, and Nalbari was carved out to form the present Baksa district. So, obviously huge number of illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims of Barpeta, Nalbari and Kamrup came under the newly formed district. Therefore the presence of illegal Bangladeshi Muslims cannot be denied.⁸

The same problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration is persists in other BTAD districts, viz. Kokrajhar, Chirang and Udalguri. The Kokrajhar district was originally a part of undivided Goalpara district which was main haunting place for illegal Bangladeshi Muslims in the initial period of migration into Assam during British colonial system. It was a mare village with railway station till 1956. In 1957, when Bimala Prasad Chaliha was Chief Minister of Assam, due to the demand of the Bodo people led by Rupnath Brahma who was also a minister in Chaliha

Ministry, new civil sub-division was created after carving out the northern part of Dhubri sub-division and some parts of Goalpara sub-division and it was named as Kokrajhar sub-division. The district of Goalpara and Dhubri has a huge number of Muslim populations. At present it has 54% and 74% Muslim population respectively. Hence, after the formation of BTAD, certain areas of Dhubri district has been carved out and added to the new district, thereby the district has a visible number of Muslim populations. According to BTAD sources, Muslim formed 20.36% (1, 84,441 persons) of the total population of the district of Kokrajhar.⁹

The Chirang district of BTAD also has a large number of Muslim populations. According to authority 20% of the total population is Muslim. The same story of illegal Bangladeshi migration is with Udalguri, another district of BTAD of the state of Assam. The Udalguri district is earned from Kamrup, Sonitpur & Darrang. According to 2001 census, 36% of the total population of the district of Darrang was Muslim. Thus after Udalguri was carved out of Darrang; much Muslim population came under the newly formed district. Many of the Muslim population of the district are new immigrants from Bangladesh.¹⁰ It is the district of Darrang where in 1978 & 1979 more than 50,000 illegal Bangladeshi Muslims were detected from the electoral roll of Assam and eventually led to the Assam Agitation of 1979 which ended on 1985.¹¹

The fertile land on the north bank of Brahmaputra has attracted and invited a good number of migrants to the state. The tribal people of the Brahmaputra valley are mostly concentrated on the north side of the great river Brahmaputra.¹² The immigrant Muslims from Bangladesh erstwhile East Pakistan has been pouring into Assam till today and becoming majority constantly.¹³ Hence due to encroachment by the illegal influx from Bangladesh, the tribal people are suffering the most.¹⁴ According to U.M. Badola, analysis of the effect of this showed that the tribal's, the original inhabitants suffered the most in the bargain in BTAD areas. Their percentage has gone down to fifteen today from seventy.¹⁵

Nevertheless, for the said reason, right after the Independence, the first Chief Minister of Assam, Bordoloi had added chapter X to the Assam Land & Revenue Regulation 1886 by passing Amendment Act in the legislative vide Assam Act XV of 1947. This special Act prohibited acquisition of land by non-tribals in the area of tribal belts & blocks. And most of the belts are present in BTAD areas of Assam because of Tribal majority.¹⁶

But the restrictions on ownership and transfer of land in the tribal belts and blocks have been observed in its breach. Consequently there was large-scale alienation of land owned by the Bodos and other plain tribes. For e.g. in the four mouzas, namely, Ambagaon, Harisinga, Barsilajhar and Dakuwa, in Udalguri sub-division of Darrang at present Udalguri district of BTAD, the Bodos make up twenty eight percent of population but owned only 12% of the land. This explains why Udalguri sub-division has been the focal point where the Bodoland movement has been the most intense.¹⁷

Recently, the minister of state for Environment & Forest, Jairam Ramesh said in a Rajya Sabha, reply to an un-starred question by Kumar Deepak Das, that 800 hectares of land of Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park & 1700 hectares of forest land of Manas National Park has been encroached illegally, which fall under the BTAD districts of Assam. Surprisingly, 85% of the encroached forest lands in Assam were found to be in the hands of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. According to Image India Foundation (IIF) an NGO which also implied that the encroachments in the forest land of BTAD are almost under the control of illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims.¹⁸

The huge influx of Bengali speaking Bangladeshi refugees make the inhabitants fear getting swamped and losing their political and cultural identity, along with the loss of economy,

opportunities, according to Kula Saikia. These immigrants held major shares in employment, petrochemical complex, railways, oil refinery, and steel factories etc.¹⁹

Alienation of tribal land is a grave problem which developed a frustration among the tribals. As the tribal societies are agriculture based, therefore, protection of tribal land is important for tribals. It's the reason why British colonial administration in pre-Independence period introduced line system to protect tribal lands from the encroachment by the Muslim peasants from East Bengal/East Pakistan & present day Bangladesh.²⁰

Ultimately, all this encroachment by immigrant led to the formation of plain Tribal council of Assam (PTCA) and subsequently led to demand of separate hill state exclusively for the Assamese tribals and removal of encroachment from their tribal lands.²¹

In the support of the demand of separate state by PTCA, as early as 1983 some young educated Bodo youths, mainly those studying in Shillong, came together to form an extremist group and met secretly somewhere in Udalguri (at present Udalguri district under BTAD areas) area to chalk out a military programme for launching an extremist operation in support of the demand for a separate Bodoland. The organization came to be known as Boro security Force (Br. S.F or BSF), later it was renamed to NDFB. If we analyze from different point of angle the illegal encroachment by illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims and government failure to restrict them or sometime taking side of the immigrants for sake of vote bank politics lead to the formation of this extremist organization and now people are suffering from that. Thus, they are primarily responsible for instable political, social, economic condition in BTAD areas of Assam indirectly, but immensely.²²

The ethnic conflict has become epidemic in post colonial period of North-eastern state. Here, ethnic conflict includes the conflict between the state & ethnic groups/ insurgent groups inter

ethnic & intra ethnic conflicts. The state of Assam is at the top of the list of internal displacement incident.²³ Internally displaced persons constitute one of the largest excluded groups in the society. Displacement from one's home & habitant is very pathetic because when the displaces move from their original habitants, they incur immense losses in life sustaining resources including social networks, neighbours & access to common property resources.²⁴ Tens of thousands of Bengalis, Hindus & Muslims, unleashed during 1960s, 1970s & 80s.

The conflict between the indigenous Bodo and Muslims are solely because of land encroachment by illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims. No non-tribal people can occupy land in tribal area according to the constitution of India, but this illegal Bangladeshi's are encroaching in the Bodo land with the support of some pervert Government official which leads to frequent conflict between them. The inter-ethnic clashes in the Bodo heartland of Kokrajhar now BTAD headquarter and Bongaigaon has displaced large number of people, at one stage the number of internally displaced persons reached more than 3 lakhs. Again the conflict of 1993 caused a huge displacement of people. Almost 4,224 families consisting of about 2, 62,682 persons were displaced by this conflict. At the peak of the Bodo armed movement, Assam accounted for nearly more than half of India's population of Internally Displaced persons, says Sanjib Baruah of the centre for policy research in Delhi. However, in 1998 again conflict started between the two groups resulting in the displacement of 48,556 families consisting of 3, 14,342 villagers. Till April 2005, BTAD headquarter, Kokrajhar, 1, 26,263 inmates were living in 38 state sponsored relief camps in the district.²⁵

7.1: Distribution of population in relief camps of Kokrajhar & Gossaigaon sub-division following the ethnic violence of 1996-97:-

Kokrajhar sub-division:-

No. of relief camps : 15

No. of families : 7269

Adult population: 27,499

Minor population : 14500 total= 41,999

Gossaigaon sub-division:-

No. of relief camps : 23

No. of families : 16687

Adult population: 55,216

Minor population : 29,084 total =84,268

Grand total = 1, 26,263

Sources: office of the Dy. Commissioner, Kokrajhar (April 2005)

7.2: Muslim displaced person in Chirang district of BTAD:

<u>Relief camps</u>	<u>no. of families</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Name of sub-div.</u>
Gorimari	1760	9999	Bijni
Hapachora	1332	6265	Bijni
Balajani	595	2980	Abhayapuri
Tapatri	60	300	Abhayapuri
Total = 19544			

Source: office of Dy. Commissioner, Chirang

Muslim constituted 31.98% of Darrang's total population 1991. Surprisingly in 2001 it went up to 35%. So it is always been a tension between Bodo and Muslim population of Darrang, after the creation of BTAD in 2003 some part of Darrang came under Udalguri district of BTAD and the problem remained fresh as before. Udalguri is one of the four district governed by BTAD and it's also the district in the BTAD where the population of those constituting the "general category" is greater than ST population. And if we analyze critically, it happened due to encroachment by illegal Bangladeshi migration, whereas the areas is restricted for non-tribals.²⁶

Most recently, a weeklong ethnic violence, principally between the Bodo and the Muslim settlers, in two northern district of Assam-Darrang and Udalguri (under BTAD), claimed at least 55 lives and left over 100 persons injured. It started on October 3, 2008 and lasted till 6 October 2008, it also affected other non Bodo population like Rajbongshi, Assamese, Nepali, Garo, Hindu Bengali, Rabha communities in this two districts. Almost 150000 people were displaced and have since been settled in the 97 relief camps set by the government. It started in Udalguri district of BTAD on October 3rd in the Bhalukmari and Mohanbari village.²⁷

7.2 Recent ethnic conflict between migrants and native people of BTAD :

There has been always a conflict between the illegal Bangladeshi migrants and indigenous people of the state since independence of India. The first such clash can be traced back to 1950 riot between illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims and Hindus of the state, where many Muslim people had to leave the state for fear for their lives. The rivalry between tribal indigenous people and Muslim settler are frequently visible in the state. The main reason behind it is the encroachment of cultivation land of tribal people by this illegal settler by the help of some corrupted government official because it's their

sole earning source. The present Chief Minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi has also said that land grabbing might be one of the reasons behind the clashes.

Animosities between illegal migrant settlers and tribal communities have increased in Assam over the years with the immigrant's settling in areas previously dominated by tribal communities. This now makes two sides fight for same political and geographical space. The administration's failure to protect the tribal belts and blocks, which are mostly under BTAD area now, resulted in vast track of land previously belonging to the tribal people being illegally transferred to various non-tribal and immigrant settlers, leading to the displacement of tribal people to forest as well as non-forest areas.²⁸

The BTAD areas witnessed most conflict of clashes between illegal migrants and indigenous tribal people, most specifically the Bodo's. The Bodo's are the largest ethnic tribal group in Assam (12% total population) and mainly concentrated in north bank of Brahmaputra or lower Assam and with the advent of illegal migrants after independence of India and encroachment of land of tribal (Bodo) people by them, a clash between them was bound to take place.

The clashes between the Bodos and illegal migrant settlers led to the displacement of thousands of people in Kokrajhar in 1993 and Barpeta (now Baksa) in 1994 under BTAD areas. The violence that rocked Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon (now Chirang-BTAD) district of BTAD in 1993, 1996 and 1998 led to the displacement of 3,14,342 people belonging to Bodo, Muslim and adivasis communities.²⁹ April 2005, 1,26,263 peoples were living in 38 state sponsored relief camps in the Kokrajhar district and 19,544 people in chirang district of BTAD.

The All Assam Tribal Sangha, an apex body of tribal organizations, has accused successive government of failing to implement chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886. In contravention of the provision of Chapter X revenue officials granted mutation of land deeds to non-tribal people and non-notified classes of

people and allowed the registration of state deeds sought by non-tribal people. The alienation of tribal people from their land is believed to be one of the root causes of the various tribal upsurges in the state, including Bodo statehood movement. This ethno-nationalist assertion also saw the birth of armed rebellion alongside the democratic mass movement among Bodos. One of these two armed groups, the erstwhile BLT, fought for statehood but in 2003 settled for autonomous territory under amended provisions of the Sixth schedule, passing the way for Bodo rule in territory- with a mixed population of Bodo, other tribal groups and various non-tribal groups including illegal migrant settlers. Another armed group is NDFB which asked for a “Sovereign Bodoland.”³⁰

As early as on November 8, 1998, the former governor of Assam, Lieutenant-general (retired) S.K. Sinha, sent a report to president K.R. Narayanan, regarding illegal Bangladeshi migration influx and also said that the influx of illegal Bangladeshi migration is changing these districts into Muslim majority region and it will then only be a matter of time when a demand for their merger with Bangladesh may be made.³¹

The same doubt of Sinha came partially true after the communal clash of between indigenous people and illegal migrant Muslims on October 3, 2008. Right before the clash a regional political party representative of Muslims of Assam demanded separate autonomous areas for the Muslim. The president of the same political party, AUDF, Seth Badruddin Ajmal not only demanded separate autonomy but also threatened to chase away all Assomiya people of lower Assam, which are mostly under the BTAD administration. The recent violence is the fall out of these threats. If the Government had arrested this leader under NSA earlier, then the present situation could have been averted.³²

Recently, in 2010 some Muslim leaders were demanding autonomy for them in lower Assam. The whole situation look like pre-planned, because they first started the riot in BTAD in 2008 and after that they are trying to justify their demand of autonomy states

showing safety of Muslim people. The areas for which they are demanding autonomy are attached to Bangladesh, after getting autonomy they may gradually merge up with Bangladesh also as the areas are almost Muslim majority and that is exactly what the former governor of Assam warned to the Indian Government.

7.2.1 STARTING OF THE RIOT:

Animosities between immigrant Muslim settlers and tribals communities have increased in Assam over the years with the illegal migrants settled in areas previously dominated by tribal communities. This now makes the two sides fight for the same political and geographical space. The administrative failure to protect tribal belts and blocks resulted in the incident which triggered the Assam agitation lasted for 6 years from 1979-1985 on the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migrants.³³ Vast tracts of land previously belong to the tribal people being illegally transformed to various non-tribal and illegal migrant settlers, leading to displacement of tribal people to forest as well as non-forest areas. The chief minister, Tarun Gogoi, also said that land grabbing might be one of the reasons for the clashes.³⁴

The recent communal clashes in Assam are the outburst of the tension that has been simmering for decades. Some say it as a violent face of the peaceful “anti-foreigners movement” launched by AASU in 1979. Again in the same year fear showed up when during the eve of bye election, a sudden spurt in the number of minorities mostly illegal migrants was exposed in the voter list, thus bringing a spark of anger among the indigenous people.³⁵

The history soon repeated in 1979, when the tension between illegal migrants and indigenous people led the infamous Assam movement, where more than 10,000 people died, which was originated in Darrang district.³⁶ The rivalry between indigenous people and illegal migrants again sparked out on October 3rd, 2008, in Udalguri district of BTAD, which was a part of Darrang till

2003. It was between indigenous people and Muslims, particularly Bodo. Ultimately it also spread to Chirang and Darrang district. It was always clear, that the Muslim people of the district of Darrang were against the creation of the district of Udalguri and also against the autonomy status to the Bodo people. They have always been a hurdle in the way of getting autonomy status to the BTAD areas. And the October riot was the outcome of the rivalry which was instigated by illegal migrants.

The 3rd October, 2008 clashes claimed more than 52 lives. This riot was not a sudden outburst of anger between illegal migrants and native people. The seeds of October violence were shown in middle of August, when clashes broke out between the two communities at Rowta in Udalguri district and later spread to Darrang and Sonitpur district, claiming 17 lives. The riot began on August 14 following the killing of Bodo youth by supporters of a bandh called by the Muslim student association, Assam. The bandh had been called in protest against Assamese student union, AASU's drive against identification and removal of illegal migrants; and the harassment of Indian citizens in the name of identification of illegal Bangladeshi Muslim migrants.³⁷

The Bangladeshi Muslim settlers were also angry with local Bodos in some areas of Udalguri and Darrang as they opposed the agitation programmes sponsored by the Muslim during middle of August.³⁸ Of the affected districts, Udalguri has 30% minority population while Bodo are majority. However in Darrang minorities especially illegal migrants constitute a whopping 52% of the total population.³⁹

The clashes that broke out on October 3rd between Bodos and illegal migrant settlers in the district led to displacement of over two lakh people. Some fled when their home were burnt, while others were driven to relief camps by fear of attacks. The clashes left 55 dead; 39

immigrant Muslims, 10 bodos, two Garos, one Bengali Hindu, one Assamese and two unidentified persons. There were 31 dead in Udalguri of BTAD district alone where the riot broke out first; 19 Muslim settlers 9 Bodos and 3 others. In Darrang, there were 21 dead, the place where violence soon spread; 17 Muslim settlers, 1 bodo and 3 others.

According to official reports: 54 villages were directly affected by incident of arson & mob attacks, in which 2,505 houses were either completely burnt or partially destroyed. The residents of about 150 other villages fled their homes out of fear though there was no attack on their villages.⁴⁰

The state government asked for 21 additional companies of paramilitary forces and got 14 companies for deployment in the two districts. Curfew was deployed and the security forces were asked shoot at sight whenever they spotted anyone indulging in riot or any form of violence. Among 55 people killed in the riot, 24 died in police firing; 11 in Udalguri and 13 in Darrang district.⁴¹

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh responded to the violence by sending Union Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahmed as his emissary-Congress President Sonia Gandhi deputed an All India congress Committee (AICC) team comprising Union Minister of state for Home Shakeel Ahmed, former Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Mukut Mithi and senior member of parliament A.H. Khan Choudhry to Udalguri and Darrang. Samajwadi party leader Amar Singh and All India Jamiat Ulem-e-Hind general secretary Mehmood Madani also visited the relief camps. At the meeting of the National Integration Council (NIC) in New Delhi on October 13, the prime minister voiced concern over the clashes.⁴²

Initially the violence in Udalguri and Darrang was accepted as another communal clash of the kind recently seen in many places in India. A different dimension emerged when the local residents reported witnessing the hoisting Pakistani flags in at least two places in affected areas on the eve of the violence. There were reports in Assam's news papers which were picked up by National television – that some apparent settlers shouted pro-Pakistani slogans after hoisting the flags. The reports sparked an outcry across India.⁴³

The situation turned worse when a Pakistani portal called “Pakistan Daily” carried an article entitled “Pakistani flag is a symbol of freedom in India” by one Ahmed Quraishi. Highlighting the hoisting of the Pakistani flag in Assam the article described, “Pakistan's media and intelligence agencies should project these Indian states as retaliation for Indian terrorism inside Pakistan's Balochistan, tribal belt and other cities.”⁴⁴

The BJP, the AGP, the AASU, the AJYCP & various Bodo organizations, including ABSU, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS), the Bodoland peoples' Progressive Front (BPPF) & the Bodo Women Justice Forum, began a vociferous campaign claiming that the “Pakistani Flag” was hoisted by illegal Bangladeshi migrant Muslims who also allegedly shouted slogans such as “Pakistan Zindabad” over loudspeakers in two trouble-torn districts. The parties and organization that took up the issue expressed concern that the country's sovereignty was at stake and described the incident a large design by Pakistani ISI and Jehadi elements to make Assam a part of Bangladesh.⁴⁵ The president of Bodo women justice forum Anjali Daimari also said that “the congress government should know that Pakistani flag on Indian soil is much more dangerous than an AK-47 or AK-56.”⁴⁶

On the contrary, the chief minister of Assam, Tarun Gogoi in order to soothe communal tension said at the NIC meeting that the people involved in the clashes in Udalguri & Darrang were all

Indian citizens. Though certain parties projected the violence as a conflict between illegal Bangladeshi migrants and indigenous people, he had not come across any foreign nationals when he visited the affected areas, he said. He further stated that his government would not allow any internal or external aggression and was committed to protecting the country's territorial identity. He also said that for the purpose of detection of illegal migrants and protections of the rights of genuine citizens. His government was committed to the implementation of the Assam Accord in letter and spirit.⁴⁷

However, what the Chief Minister must have overlooked was that identifying illegal migrants is not an easy task considering that if even illegal migrants are present, they will never disclose their identity for their own good. All this comes from the Chief Minister even though he himself had earlier for several time mentioned that illegal Bangladeshi migration is still a great problem to Assam and other North Eastern states. Thus, making it clear that, all his efforts are towards filling the appetite of vote bank and power politics.

Even after the riot, the Government kept busy in playing blame game instead of trying to rehabilitate the victims of the riots. The congress coalition with BPF irresponsibly blamed the extremist group NDFB (Those who are in ceasefire) just to get emotional support from illegal Bangladesh Muslims though NDFB directly denied the allegation by government and challenged the government to prove their involvement. Indeed, the attempt to blame the NDFB for the clashes has exposed the government to question on to how the NDFB cadre, who are bound by the ceasefire ground rules to remain confined to three designated campus could slip past monitoring agencies, including the Assam police to take part in clashes.⁴⁸

The state unit of the NCP has rejected state government contention about the involvement of the NDFB in group clash taken place in Udalguri Darrang and other districts. Dharendra Adhikari,

NCP president said, "The government is trying to hush up its failure in containing the violence by blaming the outfit." Again Assam DGP Mr. R.N. Mathur also said that there was no evidence of NDFB involvement in the conflict of Udalguri district of the state.⁴⁹ The clashes between Bodos and illegal migrants in the year 1993 and 1994 in Kokrajhar, and in Barpeta in the year 1996 were also the symbol of tension among indigenous people and illegal migrants.

The incident of group clashes between the Bodos and illegal migrants in Udalguri of BTAD area and several areas of Darrang district should be seen from the perspective of increasing strength of illegal infiltrators and Bangladesh based terrorist outfits and radical elements intension to spread religious fundamentalism and disrupt peace stability and security of this part of the country.⁵⁰

The four day violence, which began on October 3rd and continued till October 6th 2008 created a volcano like situation that, reduced more than a thousand houses to ashes. More than two lakh people were lodged in 78 relief camps in Udalguri district alone, forcing the indigenous people homeless in their own homeland.⁵¹

The BJP also alleged that under the security provided by the state government the anti-social elements such as the Muslim student union have been creating an unstable situation at Udalguri by enforcing "Bandhs" & attacking the indigenous people as a result of which the whole region is burning under the fire of communal conflict.⁵²

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CHAPTER-8

STEPS & MEASURES

CHAPTER-8

STEPS & MEASURES:

8.1 PRE-INDEPENDENCE: LINE SYSTEM, EVICTION BY BORDOLOI:

a. LINE SYSTEM:

b. EVICTION BY BORDOLAI:

8.2 Post Independence : by Bordoloi (Tribal Belt) by Bimala Prasad Chaliha, IMDT Act, Assam Accord, Chiring Chapori Yuva Mancha (CCYM):

8.2.1 BY BORDOLOI

8.2.2 BY BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA:

8.2.3 ILLEGAL MIGRATION DETERMINATION TRIBUNALS:

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8.2.5 CHIRING CHAPORI YUVA MANEHA (C.C.Y.M):

STEPS & MEASURES:

8.1 PRE-INDEPENDENCE: LINE SYSTEM, EVICTION BY BORDOLOI:

The problem of migration of Bengali Muslim has been witnessed since the British rule of Assam and persisting till today. Before the Independence of India also government took many measures or steps to control the immigration of Bengali people and among them line system and eviction by Bordoloi were prominent.

8.1.1 LINE SYSTEM:

The idea of the line system was conceived in 1916. It was first implemented in Nagaon in 1920¹ under this dispensation the government drew imaginary lines in the districts under immigration pressure to segregate the settlement of the indigenous population and that of immigration population. Thus, the new arrivals of immigrants were thereafter allowed to be settled only outside this line.²

According to this line system, the colonial Government classified lands into three categories:

1. Lands where only the immigrants from East Bengal could settle.
2. Lands where the immigrants from East Bengal could not settle &
3. Lands where both the immigrants & indigenous people could settle with a line between the two sides.³

The line system was deemed indispensable for retaining sufficient land for the indigenous people & their future generations.

Failure:

Though the sole aim of the line system was to restrict the East Bengal migrants from encroaching the land of indigenous people, the system could barely serve the purpose. The system failed totally to restrict the lands of indigenous people, on the contrary, they rather encroached the lands of indigenous people. Many corrupt revenue officials and other interested parties helped settling even the new arrival inside the line. Even many Assamese land owners welcomed the immigrant's settlers inside their own areas in order to facilitate better cultivation and higher yield.⁴

The Muslim leaders of Assam also played a prominent role in this respect. Many Muslim leaders demanded for a complete abolition of line system, however the indigenous people rigorously insisted on the full implementation of the same.⁵In a joint statement before the line system committee, Muhammad Amiruddin, and then MLA categorically attacked the line system as discriminatory and an unnatural barrier thrown in the way of human advancement. Further, according to them line system was communal in nature; it stood in the way of economic development.⁶ A section of the Muslims peasantry found it impossible to survive without violating the rule, because the river Brahmaputra kept on constantly widening, swallowing the low lands where the immigrants settled.⁷

Towards the failure of the line system and settlement of illegal migrants in Assam, premier of Assam and Muslim leader Saadullah played a very prominent role. Being a staunch Muslim leader Sir Saadullah tried his best to bring in as many Muslim immigrants from East Bengal as possible in order to convert Assam into Muslim majority province so that when time comes for dividing India into India and Pakistan, Assam along with Bengal automatically will get to Pakistan.⁸

Saadullah earned immense popularity from immigrant Muslims by allowing them to settle even in reserved forests and grazing reserves under the pretext of executing land development scheme. He even voiced against line system and helped in violating the scheme.⁹Saadulla was also found guilty of manipulating 1941 census deflating the number of Hindus and inflating that of Muslim and that in the name of 'Grow more Food' campaign, his Government had settled 1,60,000 bighas of land with the immigrants alone to the exclusion of indigenous people in furtherance of their design.¹⁰

8.1.2 EVICTION BY BORDOLAI:

Another step to restrict immigration from East Bengal was witnessed in 1946 by congress cabinet in Assam headed by Gopinath Bordoloi. The government consisted of 5 Hindus, 1 Muslim and 1 Indian Christian, set to implement that agreement by evicting unprotected encroachers. The operation was initiated at Champapathar Pukuripar near Gauhati. The Muslim league raised hue and cry over the issue and suggested that the remedy of "all the evils" therefore lay according to them in creation of Pakistan.¹¹

The government on the other hand asserted that they were doing nothing new but following on agreement reached during the ministry of league leader Saadullah. According to government, immigrants had encroached reserve lands and grazing lands and thus evictions were necessary to maintain the government authority by punishing the law breakers. Gradually, the influx of immigrants had slowed down and many were reported to have gone back to Bengal having seen no hope of being able to settle.¹²

FAILURE:

The eviction policy of Bordoloi was vehemently criticized by Muslim leaders of Assam as well as by the central Muslim league. The main thrust of league criticism of the government's eviction policy was that it was carried out indiscriminately without even sparing the legitimate holders of land. It was ruthless in its operation and adopted at a time of extreme scarcity of food crops and famine condition.¹³

All India Muslim League & Jinnah during his visit to Assam in early 1946, had warned the government that if it did not immediately reverse its policy of "mass eviction" of Muslim settlers and "stop prosecution, a situation will be created which will not be conducive to the people of Assam. The All India Muslim League legislators convention held at Delhi in April 1946 demanded inclusion of Assam in Pakistan as protest against the eviction process of Bordoloi and congress government. In the resolution of the convention they demanded the immediate withdrawal of the "invidious and illegal line system prevailing Hindu areas of Assam."¹⁴

After receiving the threatening by league National Congress leader Patil asked to slow down the eviction process some extent to stop eniction.¹⁵Hence slowly in between the protest against this eviction by Bordoloi Government and the demand of inclusion of Assam into Pakistan by league, the process of eviction disappeared. The central Government had to control the eviction by state government to avoid chaos situations.

8.2 Post Independence : by Bordoloi (Tribal Belt) by Bimala Prasad Chaliha, IMDT Act, Assam Accord, Chiring Chapori Yuva Mancha (CCYM):

8.2.1 BY BORDOLOI:

It was again Bordoloi who took steps to restrict immigrants from encroachment of indigenous peoples land, right after the Independence of India. As the tribals are the main victim of encroachment by East Bengal immigrant, Bordoloi took up the issue in right earnest and added chapter X to the Assam land and Revenue Regulation 1886 by passing an Amendment Act in legislative vide Assam Act XV of 1947. According to the provisions of this chapter, Government of Assam was authorized to constitute compact areas of tribal belts and blocks in tribal inhabited areas. It also allowed only tribal people to settle within such belts and did not give permission of acquiring any immovable property by non-tribal people within the belts and blocks. The steps could restrict the illegal Bangladeshi migrants from encroaching land of tribal people further.

To some extent, this act brought security to the tribal people of the state against illegal encroachment by illegal Bangladeshi migrants.¹⁶ During the first five year i.e. 1947-51 as many as 31 belts and blocks were constituted. Again in 1964, the government of Assam amended the said Act to include some new clauses in it to restrict illegal encroachment effectively.¹⁷

Act was also passed during his reign, which is known as the immigrant (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950 on 13th February. This Act provided for removal of any immigrants from Assam, excepting the displaced persons, whose stay was detrimental to the interest of the general people of India of any Schedule Tribe in Assam, but this Act was unable to enforce effectively due to the communal disturbance in East Bengal & Assam in February & March 1950.¹⁸

FAILURE:

But unfortunately even this specific legal safeguard did not improve the matter much as there appeared a very big gap between what the governments intended to do & what was actually done on the ground. Rampant malpractices & manipulation ensured large scale illegal transfer of land from tribals to non-tribal's in infringement of the provision of Chapter X of the Assam land Revenue Regulation mainly on conclusion with the lower ranking revenue official on whose reports all the action at higher levels had to be taken.¹⁹

Many enquiry committees were set up to find out the corruption in this ground. These committees found out some official of being guilty and responsible of non-implementation of said provisions instead of guarding the interest of tribal people with such belts blocks.

Committee found that the provisions of chapter X of the Assam land Revenue Regulation have now here been sincerely implemented. On the other hand, it appears to the Committee that the officials responsible for the encroachment of tribal lands by non-tribal's & transfer of tribal land to non-tribal people. The subcommittee headed by R.N. Choudhury MLA (a non-tribal) recommended a time bound programme for restoration of tribal lands to their lawful owner and further legislation to prevent any further such illegal transfer of land ownerships. But as usual not much of follow-up action was taken on this report & situation continued to drift from bad to worse.²⁰ So land alienation within and outside the tribal belt & blocks remained the same pressing problem of Assam particularly because of Bangladeshi migrants.²¹

Another blow during his reign towards anti-immigrant measures was given by P.M. Nehru, in 1950 by the “Nehru Liaquat pact”. This pact gave fresh chance to many illegal Bangladeshi migrants to re enter Assam for settlement who had left Assam due to communal violence in the state.²²

8.2.2 BY BIMALA PRASAD CHALIHA:

Bimala Prasad Chaliha also played an important role in the drive against illegal Bangladeshi migrants. After coming to power in 1957, he tried to help the indigenous people by evicting the illegal Bangladeshi migrants from illegal encroachment of lands. He was the first regional politician to propose fencing the border in 1960 in order to isolate the population East Bengal / East Pakistan now Bangladesh. During that period, the Government of Assam under congress Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha launched a campaign to deport immigrants who had settled in Assam since January 1951. He even ignored Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s requests to go slow on the issue.²³ Chaliha refused, saying that the problem was so critical that Assam’s demography & culture would be permanently changed.²⁴

Again during Chalihas government, he enforced new legislation called “the Foreigners’ (tribunals) order 1964. The Act was followed by “the prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan Plan” in 1964 itself, which is also known as PIP Plan.²⁵ It was Mr. B.N. Mullik, the veteran Director of Intelligence Bureau, who had proposed the prevention of Infiltration programme which was implemented by Government of India, whereby about 1,50,000 illegal migrants were repudiated to East Pakistan during 1963-65.²⁶

Under the Foreigners' (Tribunal) order 1964, several Tribunals were set up to hear the appeals of the illegal immigrant issue of the state. Under PIP scheme which came into operation in 1964, 159 watch posts were set up. A police force of 1914 personnel under a DIG was deployed to check infiltration. After the 1965 war, when the BSF came into being, responsibility for guarding the border was taken over by that force.²⁷

FAILURE:

Chaliha's government estimated the influx at 3, 50,000 in the state but unfortunately, the tribunals which were set up during this period to hear the appeals of the confirmed infiltrators could send only 1, 29,000 till 1969 from the state. But he also had to stop the deportation process due to protest of its 33 congress legislators belonging to the Muslim community led by Mainul Haque Chaudhury. They demonstrated against him and said that if all expulsions of the alleged Muslim infiltrators be not stopped forthwith, the Muslim block of congress vote bank would be lost forever.²⁸

Hence, on the ground of request placed by Congress's Muslim legislators of Assam to the centre, the centre advised Chief Minister Chaliha to go slow on the issue of deportation for the sake of vote bank politics.²⁹ Again, it was during Bimala Prasad Chaliha's term, when he had to offer Ali Ahmed a berth in cabinet in 1963 which he accepted on condition of being given the Finance portfolio on the advice of the then Prime Minister Nehru. The main persons who played huge role in stopping deportation were Central Cabinet Minister Fakhruddin Ali & Maniul Haque choudhury. Later Fakhruddin became president of India also.³⁰

The Muslim leaders then encouraged the Bengali speaking Muslim immigrants to declare Assamese as their mother tongue to dodge the police from being detected and some 20 Muslim MLAs in the Government threatened Chaliha to topple his ministry if he does not stop deportations. Ultimately Chaliha's Government had to succumb to their pressure and the PIP Act was put in cold storage. Those who were departed earlier gradually returned and again settled in Assam.³¹ Subsequently, the Muslim population in Assam which was about 19 lakhs in 1947, increased to about 36 lakhs within 25 years of Independence by 1972 & 82 lakhs till 2001.

8.2.3 ILLEGAL MIGRATION DETERMINATION TRIBUNALS:

The measure provided by the Government could not stop the illegal Bangladeshi migrants into Assam. A good number of Foreigners (Bangladeshis') who migrated into India across the border of the Eastern & north eastern regions of the country on & after 25th day of March, 1971, have by taking advantage of the circumstances of such migration and their ethnic similarities & other connections with the people of India and without having in their possession any lawful authority, to do so, illegally remained in India.³²

8.1: Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants in India*

Year	Entered India	Didn't Return	Deported
1971– 2005	-	12,00,000	15,000
2006	4,48,000	24,000	12,000
2007	5,00,000	25,000	11,600

Source: Indian Defense Studies & Analysis.

The above table indicates the presence of large number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants in the country as a whole. It shows that during the period 1971-2005, 12, 00,000 Bangladeshi did not return back to their country, in 2006, 24,000 and in the year 2007, 25,000 Bangladeshis did not return back. Out of 12, 00,000 only 15,000 could be deported, out of 24,000 in the year 2006 only 12,000 illegal immigrants could be deported and in the year 2007 out of 25,000 only 11,600 illegal immigrants could be deported by the Government back to Bangladesh. The numbers mentioned in the above table depicts only those person entered with valid Pass Port from Bangladesh. So it is the proof of the large number of illegal migrants from the neighbouring country called Bangladesh.

So, the government came up with an Act called the illegal migrants (Determination by Tribunal), shortly known as IMDT. The act was passed in 1983 by Indira Gandhi led congress government. The Act was proposed on 15th October 1983 and it duly received the assent of the president of India on December 25th, 1983.³³ It described the procedures to detect illegal migrants (from Bangladesh) and expel them from Assam because the Act was exclusively applicable to the state of Assam only. The IMDT Act does not apply to any religious community, its applicable much to Bengali Hindus as well to Bengali Muslims.³⁴

To determine the illegal Bangladeshi migrants, the Act provided for an Appellant Tribunal of two retired High Court Judges, sixteen district Tribunals of two retired district/ additional District Judges with supporting staff. The border organization of 4000 policemen processes the case of illegal migrants. Under the provisions of the law police can serve notice to a person declared an illegal migrant by the IMDT Tribunals asking him to remove himself from the country within a period of 30 days.³⁵

8.2: Government of Assam Report on the progress of IMDT in respect of detection & expulsion of illegal migrants' (25.3.1971 – 2000)

1	Total no. of enquiries initiated :	3,10,759
2	Total no. of enquiries completed :	3,07,955
3	Total no. of enquiries referred to screening committee :	3,01,986
4	Total no. of enquiries made by the screening committee :	2,98,465
5	Total no. of enquiries referred to IMDT's :	38,631
6	Total no. of enquiries disposed of by IMDT's :	16,599
7	Total no. of persons declared as illegal migrants :	10,015
8	Total no. of illegal migrants physically expelled :	1,481
9	Total no. of illegal migrants to who expulsion order served :	5,733
10	Total no. of enquiries pending with screening committee :	3,521
11	Total no. of enquiries pending with the tribunal :	22,072

Source: Supreme Court Repeals IMDT Act Assam, by Sanjeev Nayyar, July 2005.

The table shows severe failure of the IMDT Act. The Act could only deport 1,481 persons since its application in the state and 22,072 are still pending in the different tribunals of the state. It also shows a sharp contrast to the results achieved under the Foreigners Act, 1946. In fact the IMDT Act made it very difficult to identify illegal migrants, because it put the onus of proving

nationality on the citizen who makes the complaint and not on the immigrant but on the complainant.

FAILURE:

The IMDT Act has failed totally to relief the people of the state from the burden of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. Instead it has haunted the indigenous people more than before and paved the safe passage to illegal Bangladeshi migrants. The Act widely came to be known as the “Black Act”. It made detection and deportation of Illegal migrants virtually impossible. The law placed the onus of proving nationality on the citizen who makes the complaint and not on the immigrant, thus encouraging illegal migrants to move to Assam because it would be most difficult to be deported from there.³⁶

The IMDT is in fact the only immigration law in the world that puts the burden of proof on the complainant to prove that the individual in question is an illegal migrant. The complainants even have to put down money to make the complaint.³⁷ Again the law did not have the consent of the people of the state because in 1983 there was no representative of the people in the parliament. As the election could not be held in Assam due to the agitation against illegal Bangladeshi migration and political unrest. The law was forced into Assam by the Congress Government.³⁸

Moreover the Act was exclusively applicable to the state of Assam only, whereas in other states detection of foreigners is done under “The Foreigners Act, 1946”. In West Bengal, where the

Foreigners Act was applicable 4, 89,046 people were deported between 1983 & 1998 as against 1,481 were physically expelled up to April 30th, 2000 from Assam where the IDMT applied.³⁹ This statistics amply establish the futility of continuing with the IMDT Act in its present form. During the year 2003; 18,861 Bangladeshi's were deported by the government of India and in the previous year, the number was 6,394.

8.3: No of Muslim deported from Assam to Bangladesh*

Year	No. of Muslims Deported
1952 – 1962	26,875
1962 – 1966	1,74,349
1967 – 1973	69,174
1974 – 1984	58,148
1985 – 2002	1,530
Total	3,30,076

Source: Illegal migrants and Indian Muslims in Assam, by Md. Hasibor Rahman.

The above table shows that during the year 1952-1962 the Assam Government could deport 26,875 Muslim infiltrators to Bangladesh, during 1962-1966 the state 1, 74,349 numbers of Bangladeshi immigrants to Bangladesh, during the year 1967-1973, 69.174, and during the period 1974-1984, 58,148 numbers of illegal Bangladeshis were deported from the state. But most surprisingly when we see the period 1985-2002, the Government of Assam could deport only 1,530 persons from the state, after applying the Illegal Migration Determination Tribunals Act. The state could deport more illegal Bangladeshis under the Foreigners Act, 1964 and very little could deport after applying the Illegal Migration Determination Tribunals Act (IMDT), of

1985, which also proves the failure of the IMDT Act to save the state from illegal Bangladeshi infiltration.

Most surprisingly the 16 tribunals under the Act in various districts have located out 10,000 illegal migrants between 1983-2000, of which a merely 1,481 have been deported. The tribunals established under this Act had starved of funds and resources. Out of 16 district tribunals only 5 were functioning. The remaining districts tribunals had only 1 person each on the bench and as such were non-functional. The border organization required to process these cases had been encountering difficulties at every step. Often by the time a complaint is received or the police initiates enquiry against a suspect that individual shifts to another location and is not traceable.⁴⁰ About three lakh cases of suspected illegal migrants from Bangladesh are awaiting judgment at Foreigner's Tribunals across the state as there are not enough judges to dispose of the cases. Since 2001 till May this year, altogether 83,975 cases have been disposed of. Out of them, 12,847 have been declared as illegal migrants under the Foreigner's Act and 2643 under the now-scrapped IM (DT) Act. However, there are still 2, 91,792 cases pending in the tribunals, said sources.

The state government, on August 3, 2009, notified setting up of four new tribunals at Tinsukia, Hailakandi, Tezpur and Mangaldoi. But none of these have started functioning in the absence of Judges, according to recently compiled reports of the Assam Accord implementation department. In Dhubri district, there is just one Judge for two tribunals. The Kokrajhar tribunal Judge is also handling the cases of Bongaigaon tribunal in the absence of a separate Judge.

Similarly, in the three tribunals in Barpeta, there are only two judges and the judge of Tribunal is looking after the Nalbari tribunal as well. The judge for Tribunal II is looking after Tribunal III. The reports show there is just one common judge for the two tribunals at Sivasagar and Jorhat

while the lone judge in Silchar is looking after the second tribunal at Silchar besides two other in Karimganj.

In Morigaon, Darrang and Tezpur too there is one Judge each for two tribunals in each of the three places. One of the two Judges in the two tribunals in Nagaon is also looking after the tribunal in Hojai. Only the tribunals in Golaghat, Karbi Anglong, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and Nalbari have their own Judges handling one tribunal each.

The department's report shows that the maximum numbers of cases are pending in the two tribunals in Dhubri, 13,689 and 34,912. Cases pending in the three tribunals of Barpeta are 14,713, 15,412 and 2264 respectively. There are 8310 cases pending in Dibrugarh, 9799 in Dhemaji, 10089 in Nalbari, 8176 and 8179 in Silchar and 16716 and 1310 in the two tribunals of Tezpur.⁴¹

Every year, thousands of Bangladeshis is identified as illegal migrants all across the world & thrown out of countries from the U.S. and Canada in the West to Japan & Australia in the east. India is only exception; it gets more illegal migrants from Bangladesh than any other country in the world but throws out only a few of them.

Recently after returning from the Border Co-ordination Conference in Dhaka, the BSF official Ashis Kumar Mitra disclosed that nearly 12 lakh Bangladeshi's who had entered India on valid papers have disappeared between 197 - 2005.⁴²

Another hurdle in the path of IMDT Act is the politics of “vote bank”. There are some political parties that raise hue and cry when police initiate action to detect and deport illegal migrants. Yet another difficulty in deporting Bangladeshi migrants according to the BSF personnel is that whenever they try to deport illegal Bangladeshi migrants, they (Bangladeshi Government) do not accept the immigrants saying that they are not Bangladeshis. The BSF tried to deport 39,746 illegal Bangladeshi migrants from 1993 to September 1998, but the later accepted only 9, 253 & refused to accept 30,493.⁴³

After receiving complaint from opposition party i.e. AGP, the supreme court of India also faulted the IMDT legislation under Article 14 guaranteeing right to equality as the law was only for the state of Assam whereas a more stringent law under “Foreigner Act” was applicable to the country. It said the provisions of Foreigners Act were more affective in identification & deportation of foreigners who have illegally crossed the international border & have entered India without any authority of law and have no authority to continue to remain in India.⁴⁴

So, the Supreme Court almost 22 years later struck down the Act as unconstitutional on 13 July, 2005 on a public interest petition filed about five years earlier by Sarbananda Sonowal, then president of the AASU and presently a member of Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) member of Lok Sabha.⁴⁵

After scrapping the IMDT Act Supreme Court have ordained that all cases pending before the tribunals under the IMDT Act, 1983 shall stand transferred to the Tribunal considered under the Foreigners (Tribunals) order 1964 & shall be decided as per provision of Foreigner Act 1946.⁴⁶

Now, the main problem is that though number of Foreigner's Tribunal (FT) has been increased in the last few years, the Assam Government has totally failed to provide the basic facilities required to the tribunals to ensure speedy disposal of the cases because of which large number of cases are pending in all the tribunals.

Serving notice to suspect is another major problem faced by the Tribunals. The tribunals send the notice to the suspects through the respective Superintendent of Police's of the district and around 50% of the notices are returned unnerved forcing the tribunals to re-issue the same, which also slows down the process of detection of foreigners. The police often complain that they could not find the suspect to serve the notice to appear before the tribunals, while shortage of staff of the police also creates problem in this regard as the border police personnel are often engaged in other duties including maintenance of law & order.⁴⁷

8.2.4 ASSAM ACCORD:

The unabated influx of illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh raised mass discontent to such a level that people from all walks of life moved into agitation in late 1970's under the leadership of AASU.⁴⁸ This agitation (Assam Agitation) was full of violence against the Bangladeshi immigrants.

The issue of foreign nationals is claimed to have been resolved to the satisfaction of all sections of the people of the state when the memorandum of settlement was signed by union government and the government of Assam with AASU and AAGSP in the early hours of 15th August, 1988. The Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi from the historic Red Fort on 15th August, 1985 in his maiden Independence Day address to the nation declared another great achievement of

the accord with the leadership of Assam movement putting an end to six year long struggle and turmoil in Assam.⁴⁹

The Accord tried to console the agitator to some extent. The accord contained 11 clauses of which clause number five (5) deals with foreigners. The year 1966 was accepted as cut off year for detecting foreigners, & 1971 was accepted as cut off year for deporting foreign nationals from Assam/India. It was also agreed that those person found to have entered into Assam from 1st January 1966 to 24th march 1971 would be detected, allowed to stay in Assam and refranchised for 10 yrs; after the completion of 10 yrs they would be given back their right to vote again. Those who entered Assam from across the international border after 24th March 1971 would be deported in accordance with the law.

The government of India also committed itself to prevent future infiltration for which patrolling by security forces on land and riverine routes all along the international border would be intensified together with erecting of physical barrier like wall, barbed wire-fencing etc.⁵⁰ Thus, according to the Assam Accord of 1985, the Fencing of Indo-Bangladesh border and road were approved in 1986. But the actual fencing started 7 yrs later in 1992. Official claimed that 80% of the 4000 km border was fenced & it would be completely fenced by 2006-07, but still remains incomplete⁵¹

The BSF has also installed sophisticated gadgets including Thermal Night Vision Device (TNVD) & Telescopic Gun (TG) besides trained dogs to further tighten their vigil along the country's longest international border," said BSF spokesman A. K. Singh.

The Central Government has also decided undertake floodlight along that stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border where barbed wire fencing has already been erected. It was expected to be

completed by 2011-12.⁵² Poles for floodlighting were erected on a length of 30 kilometers and cables were laid on an 18th kilometer stretch in March 2011. So the fencing work is still going on in Indo-Bangladesh international border since 1992.

Along with the border fencing, the deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migrants was also assured by the Central Government to check the demographic change of the state of Assam by the Accord. Thus the people belonging to Bengali descent apprehended a danger to their deportation following the Assam Accord.⁵³

FAILURE:

Though the Accord received very warm welcome from different political parties, it totally dissatisfied the people of the state. The leaders of the Assam Agitation signed the Accord with great hesitation and confusion for which they had to stay in Delhi for several days even after signing the Accord just to watch the reactions of people of Brahmaputra valley of Assam.⁵⁴

The cut-off year for detecting and deporting illegal Bangladeshi migrants also shocked the people of Assam. The central government forced the agitators to accept 1971, 25th March as the cut-off year for detection of illegal Bangladeshi migrants, which was very much against the leaders of the Assam Agitation and of course against the Indian Constitution.⁵⁵

The Assam Accord postponed the cut-off year for detection, determination and deportation of foreign nationals by 23 years. For the rest of India the cut-off date for the purpose is July 19,

1948. Nowhere in the world except in India, have two dates of detection, determination and deportation of foreign nationals' exist.⁵⁶

Again, if we point out at the fencing scheme to check illegal Bangladeshi migration, one can see different problem in executing the scheme. For e.g.; there are as many as 212 controversial patches on the 4,097 km long Indo-Bangladesh border and 6-5 kilometer. Undermarked border which act as an irritant in relations between the two countries.⁵⁷ In some areas along the frontier, the places of worship are located right near the zero line making it impossible to construct the fencing 150 yards away from the zero line.

A strong wave of reaction has been pouring into Ahmed Siddique's accusation that National Building Construction Corporation Ltd. (NBCC) gave away more than 1000 bighas of Assam's fertile lands to Bangladesh at Madanpur of Karimganj district, the minister visiting to inspect the border area on Wednesday.

The state's regional party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and students groups are blaming the state government for such negligence and demanded a high level inquiry into the matter. AGP president Chandra Mohan Patowary alleged both the Centre and state Government has neglected the border sealing issue for a long time. He accused NBCC for faulty construction at the Assam- Bangladesh border areas. "The AGP and an all-party delegation informed the union home ministry about NBCC's poor construction in the Assam-Bangladesh border area, a year ago. But none of the governments paid enough importance to the matter. Now a Congress minister is admitting that the NBCC has handed over Indian land to Bangladesh. It is very sad and alarming indeed."

According to Siddique, land near the international border pillar number 1370 at Madanpur of Karimganj district has gone to Bangladesh. The barbed wired portions that vary from 150 meters at some places to 300 meters at others from zero point, have been occupied by Bangladeshi residents, totaling to 1500 bighas approximately, he said. The minister alleged NBCC constructed a boundary that has no resemblance to the boundary designs given by the state government.⁵⁸

Moreover if we compare between Assam and Punjab's border fencing, we can clearly notice that preference was given to Punjab. The fencing of Punjab started on 1988 and was completed in 3 years only by 1991. Whereas the decision to fence the Indo-Bangladesh border of Assam was taken in 1985 but actual work started in 1992 and the fencing work is still in progress. The quality of fencing in Punjab is superior, it is two feet taller, observation towers and lighting of the fence have been provided in Punjab, all along the border. But in Assam observation tower have been constructed in few areas only and there is no lighting anywhere in Assam. The density of troops guarding the fence is also higher in Punjab according to S.K. Sinha.⁵⁹

As the border fencing of Assam is still in progress, no one knows when it will get over. People of the state are wandering if they will be able to see full fencing of the state or not. But the government is always busy in issuing new dates of completion of the same after crossing the deadline every time so shamelessly.

Thus, from this instance, one can find out to what extent the central Government ignores the North-eastern states and do not have any interest to solve illegal Bangladeshi migration issue. Rather they are busy in playing vote bank politics for gaining political power. So the burden of illegal Bangladeshi migration has to be taken by the people of the state of Assam.

8.2.5 CHIRING CHAPORI YUVA MANEHA (C.C.Y.M):

The congress led Assam government says that it wants to solve the issue of illegal immigration on the basis of Assam Accord and make 1971 as cut-off date of migrants. But this assertion of Government remains only statement of intent. Very little has been done on the ground to check the influx of Bangladeshi's.

So, as a remedy to the situation the people of three districts in upper Assam decided to act on their own within the boundaries of law. It first started in the district of Dibrugarh, where on April 12, 2005, a group of youngsters got together to form Chiring Chapori Yuva Mancha (CCYM). They published leaflets asking residents not to harbor, employ or provide food to suspected Bangladeshi's. They also started sending SMS through mobile phones. As the messages spread, there was all-round cooperation from people in the district and nearby areas.

As result of this movement, thousands of Bangladeshi's who have been working as labourers and rickshaw pullers have been leaving the town of Dibrugarh. AASU, Asom Student Union & Motok Student Union also joined the campaign.⁶⁰ However, soon the state government feared communal backlash as certain quarters tried to give the issue a religious colour. The then, Assam Home Minister Rakibul Hussain asked the district administration and the police to remain vigilant to ensure that no genuine Indian citizens are harassed in the name of hounding Bangladeshi's and also to prevent any sort of communal tension.

The zonal organizing secretary of BJP, V. Satish welcomed the move of the mancha saying this kind of social pressure was needed to remove illegal migrants. He said, “The congress government is protection the migrants for their vote bank so this mancha had done the right thing.”⁶¹

As expected the AAMSU warned both Delhi and Dispur to be ready to face an unexpected situation if stern action was not taken against the communal leaders responsible for the exodus of the “working class” minorities from upper Assam districts. The student group claimed that the religious minorities working as wage earners in the Upper Assam districts are actually from the Erosion-hit villagers of Morigaon and Barpeta districts. But these are actually a very old and often used trick by Muslim people to defend the illegal Bangladeshi migrants in Assam. It said dubbing them foreigners & imposing an “economic blockade” on them was a conspiracy of both the BJP and the AASU for their narrow political gain, which would ultimately lead to ethnic bloodbath.

Hence, every possible move to eradicate the illegal Bangladeshi migrants simply disappears between the fight of communal issue and Vote bank politics. Every step to check infiltration seems extinct in the state because of the opposition by Muslim people and due to the support of political parties to Muslim people.

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CHAPTER-9

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

9. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

1. Central Government does not want to check illegal Bangladeshi infiltration for the sake of vote bank politics.

YES (47) NO (3)

2. The massive illegal Bangladeshi migration poses a grave danger to social harmony.

YES (39) NO (2)

CHI-SQUARE TEST:

STEP 1:

H_0 – There is no relation between illegal Bangladeshi infiltration for the sake of votes and social harmony.

H_1 – There is relation between illegal Bangladeshi for the sake of votes and social harmony.

STEP 2:

Level of significance: 5%

STEP 3:

Observed Values:

	YES(INFILTRATION)	NO(INFILTRATION)	ROWS TOTAL
YES(SOCIAL HARMONY)	47	1	48
NO(SOCIAL HARMONY)	0	2	2
COLUMNS TOTAL	47	3	50

STEP 4:

EXPECTED VALUES

	YES(INFILTRATION)	NO(INFILTRATION)	ROWS TOTAL
YES(SOCIAL HARMONY)	45.12	2.88	48
NO(SOCIAL HARMONY)	1.88	0.12	2
COLUMN TOTAL)	47	3	50

OBSERVED (O)	EXPECTED (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
47	45.12	1.88	3.5344	.07833
0	1.88	1.88	3.5344	1.88
1	2.88	1.88	3.5344	1.2272
2	0.12	1.88	3.5344	29.45

TOTAL: 32.6355

CHI SQUARE = 32.6355

Degrees of Freedom = (C-1) (R-1)

$$= (2-1) (2-1)$$

$$=1$$

Since level of significance is 5% and degree of freedom is 1.

Therefore, table value= 3.841.

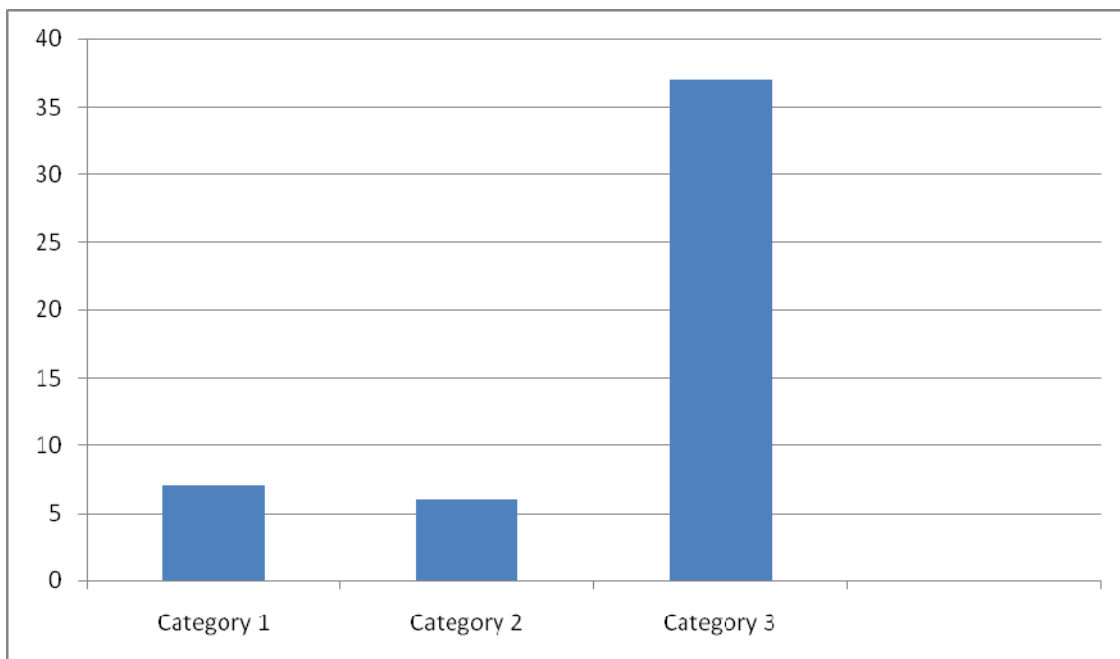
Now since Chi Square (32.6355) is greater than 3.841, so null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

Therefore, there is relation between illegal Bangladeshi infiltration for the sake of votes and social harmony.

ANALYSIS: From this Chi Square test, I observed that the illegal migration of Bangladeshi is disturbing the social harmony of the people of Assam. To keep the people of Assam in peace and harmony, there should be a control over the migration of Bangladeshi to Assam by the Central Government.

3. The “Vote Bank Politics” in Assam is :

1. Not visible (7)
2. Decreasing (6)
3. Increasing (37)

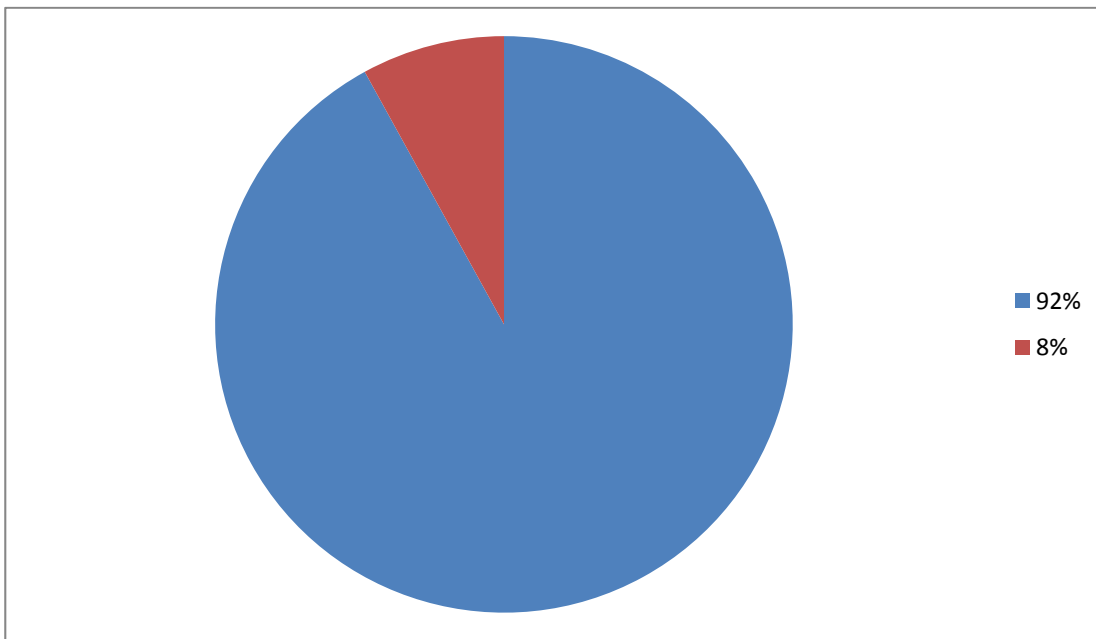


From the above analysis of the responses of the respondents it is found that “Vote Bank Politics” is increasing a lot up to 74%. However some of the respondent i.e. 12% feels that the situation is under control and about 14% does not seem to see the situation at all.

4. Do you believe that Muslim Terrorist Organization is increasing because of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam?

YES (46)

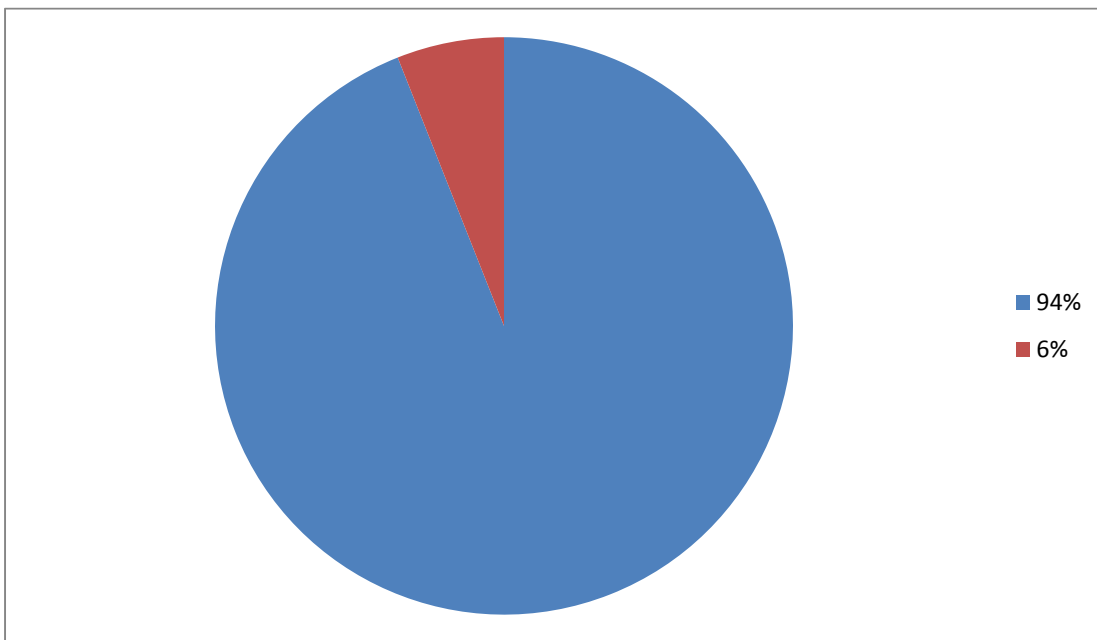
NO (4)



From the above figure it can be seen that 92% of the respondents believe that Muslim Terrorist Organization is increasing because of illegal Bangladeshi migration in Assam, whereas 8% of the respondents do not see the same.

5. Do you think illegal Bangladeshi migrants are playing decisive role in government formation in Assam?

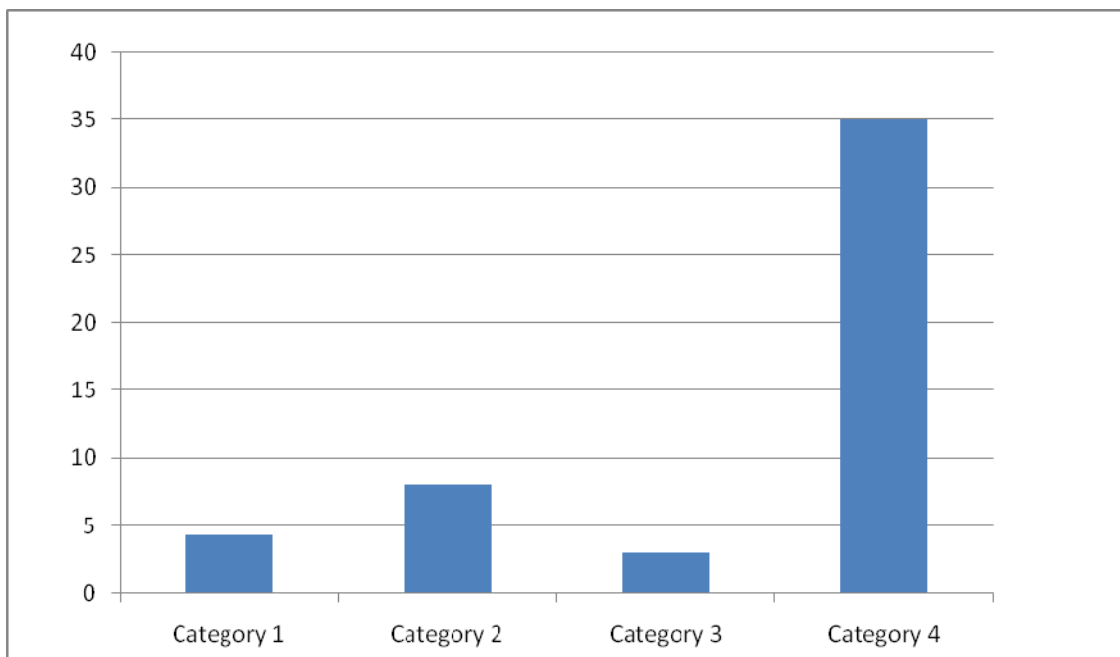
YES (47) NO (3)



From the analysis of the above figure it can be seen that 94% of the respondents are of the opinion that illegal Bangladeshi migrants are playing a vital role in forming the Government in Assam, whereas 6% of the respondents think otherwise.

6. Who is responsible for large number of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam?

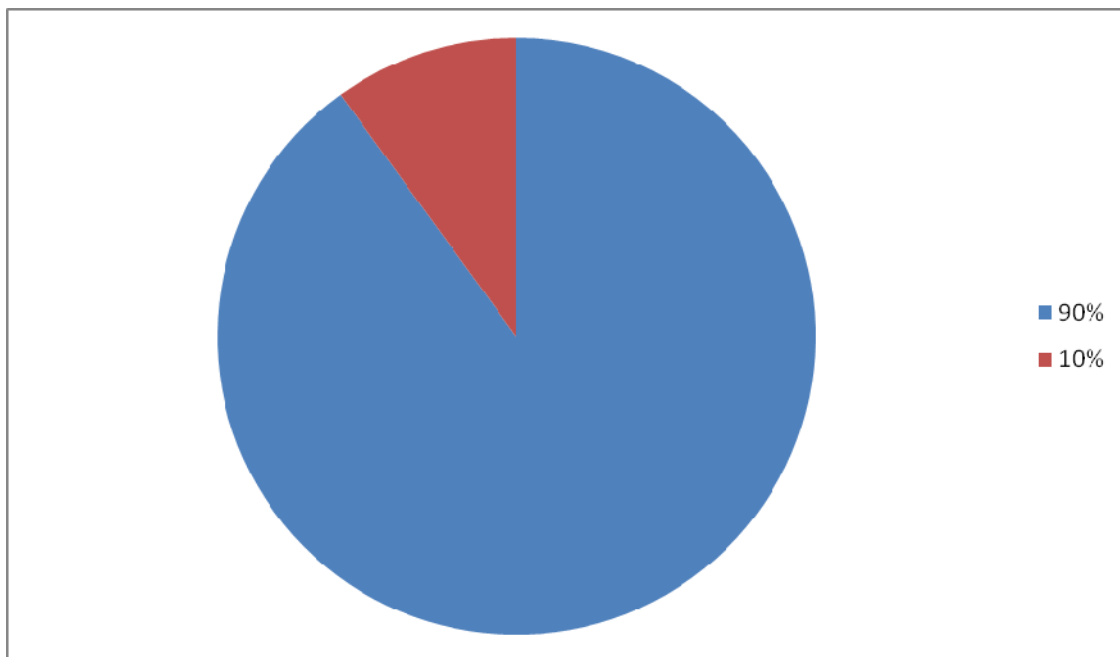
1. State government (4)
2. Central government (8)
3. General People (3)
4. Both State and Central government (35)



From the figure above it is seen that 8% of the respondents feel that the state government is responsible for the large number of migration of illegal Bangladeshi into Assam. 16% of the respondents feel that it is the Central Government who is solely responsible for the situation. 6% of the respondents feel that the general public is to be blamed for the situation, however 70% of the respondents feel that both the state and the central government respectively is to be blamed for the large migration taking place in Assam.

7. Is illegal Bangladeshi migrant's threat to National security?

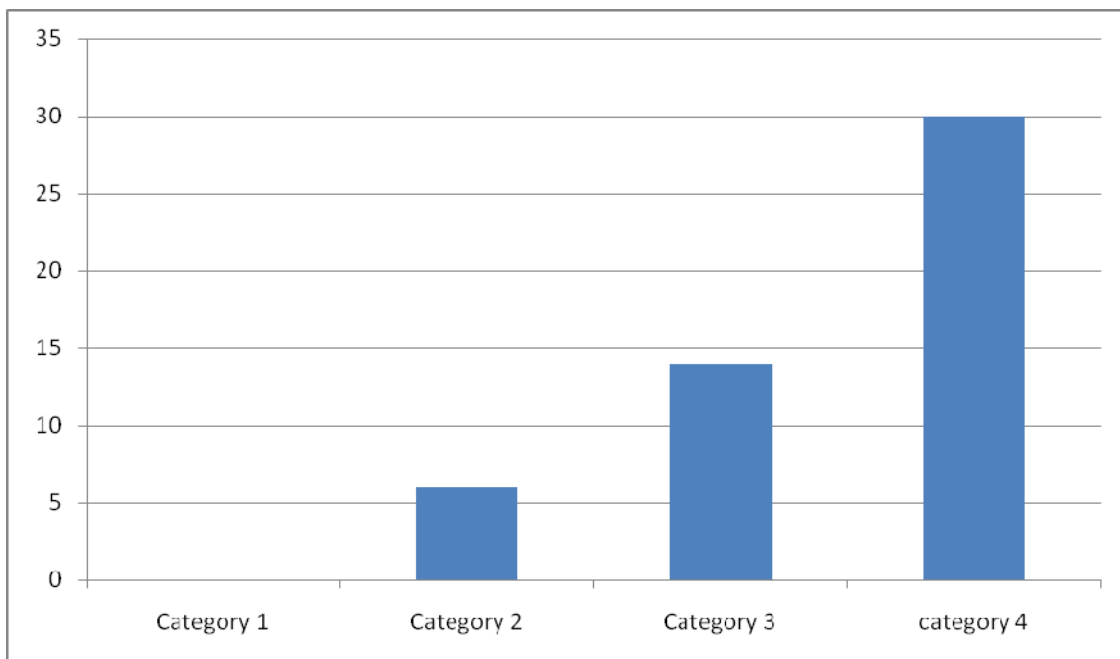
YES (45) NO (5)



From the figure above it is seen that 90% of the respondents is of the opinion that illegal Bangladeshi migrants is becoming a threat to the national security to the country whereas only 10% of the respondents do not feel the same.

8. What are the chances of Assam of becoming a Muslim majority state in near future?

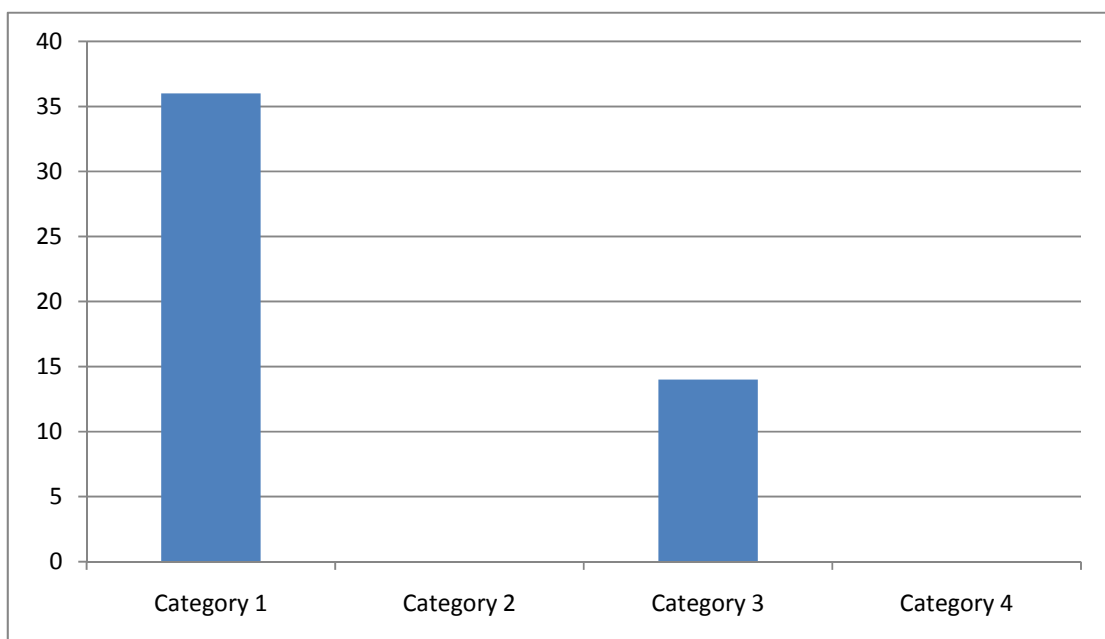
1. No chance (0)
2. Twenty-five percent (6)
3. Fifty percent (14)
4. Hundred percent (30)



According to the responses it is found that there is no chance of the state becoming a Muslim majority state in near future. However 12% of the respondents feel that there are 25% chances; 28% respondents feel that there are 50% chances; 60% of the respondents feel that there are 100% chances.

9. Whom do you think responsible for the riot that took place in Udalguri?

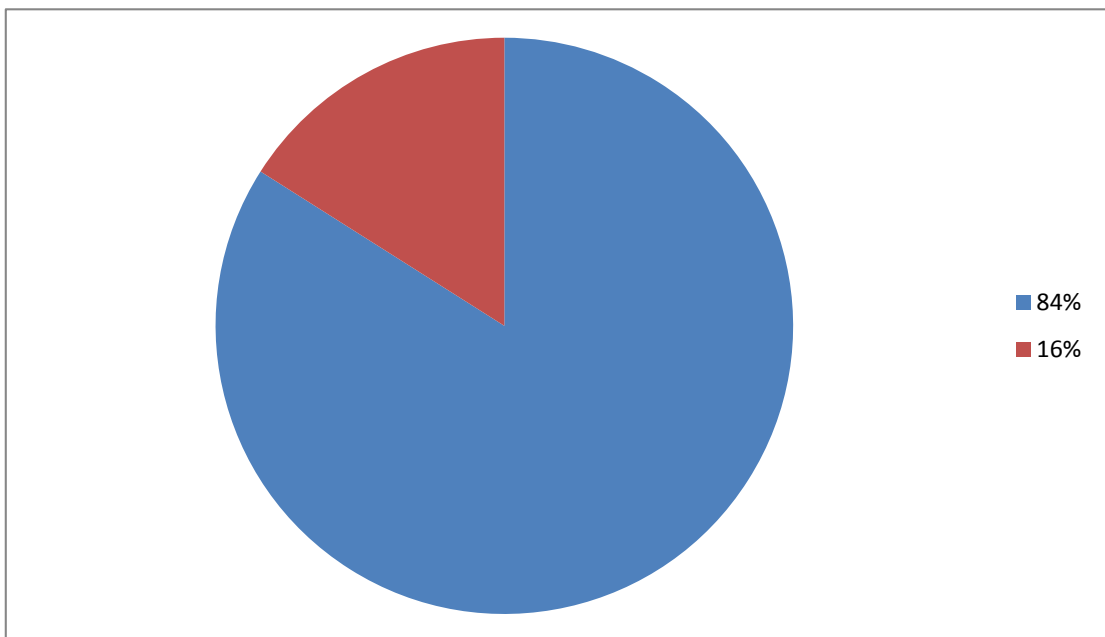
1. Illegal Bangladeshi migrants (36)
2. Bodos (0)
3. Government (14)
4. Native Muslims (0)



From the analysis of the responses it is seen that 36 respondents i.e. 72% respondents are of the opinion that illegal Bangladeshi migrants are responsible for the riot that took place in Udalguri. 14 respondents i.e. 28% respondents are of the opinion that it is the Government who is responsible for the riot.

10. Do you think the riot (Udalguri) was the consequence of ignoring the illegal Bangladeshi migrants into Assam?

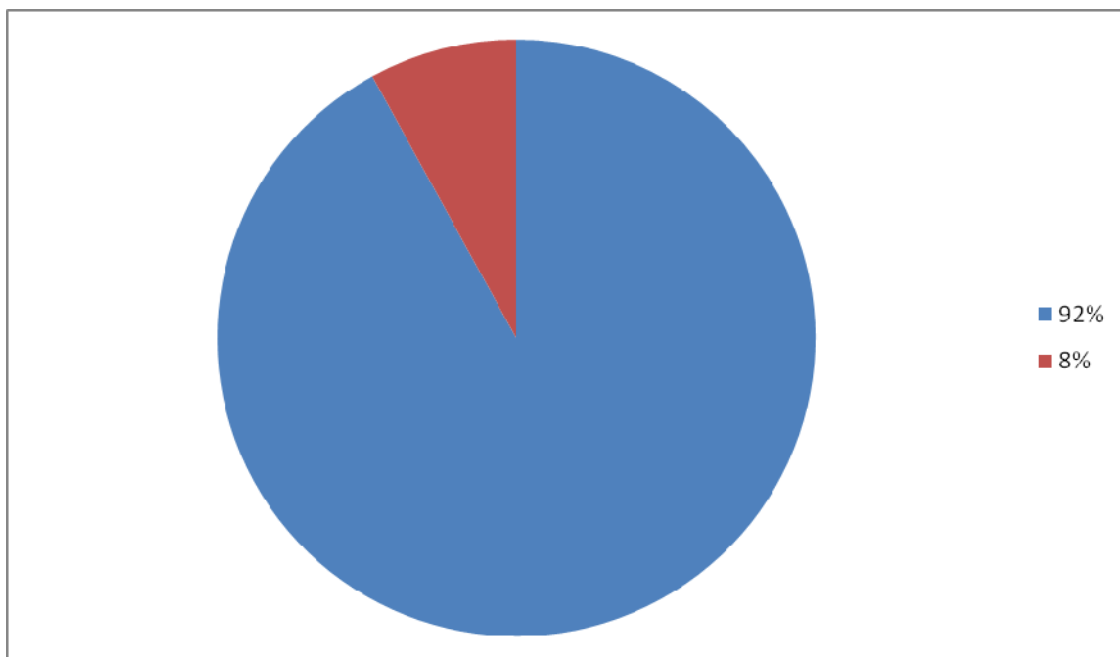
YES (42) NO (8)



From the figure above it can be seen that 84% of the respondents feel that the riot of Udalguri was the consequence of ignoring the illegal Bangladeshi migrants into Assam, whereas 16% of the respondents do not feel the same.

11. Do you think Government supported the illegal migrants for the sake of creating “vote bank”?

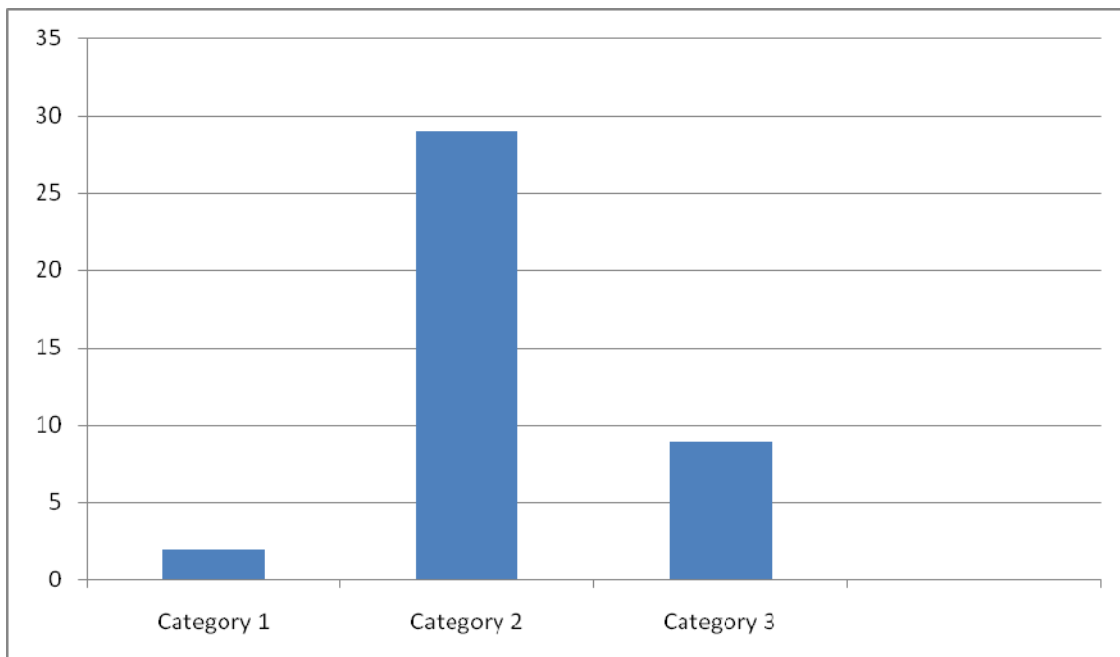
YES (46) NO (4)



From the figure above it is clearly seen that 92% of the respondents feel that the Government supported the illegal migrants for the sake of “vote bank”, whereas only 8% of the respondents feel that the Government has got no hand over it.

12. What steps should be taken by the Government to stop such riot in future?

1. Deploy more military (2)
2. Deport illegal Bangladeshi migrants (29)
3. Create good-will amongst the aggrieved communities (9)



According to 4% of the respondents the government should deploy more military in order to stop the riot that took place in Udalguri in near future. 58% of the respondents feel that illegal Bangladeshi migrants itself should be deported. 18% of the respondents feel that through creating a good-will amongst the aggrieve communities the situation can be kept under control.

CHAPTER-10

CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

CHAPTER-10

10.1 CONCLUSIONS:

10.2 SUGGESTIONS:

10.2.1 POLITICAL:

10.2.2 SOCIAL:

10.2.3 ECONOMIC:

10.2.4 SECURITY:

10.2.5 DIPLOMACY:

10.1 CONCLUSIONS:

Though the Supreme Court decision would provide impetus to the drive against illegal immigration, concrete effort would be needed on other fronts. The magnitude of the problem is such that unless all sections of the society including the genuine Assamese minority cooperate in this effort it would be very difficult to deal with the problem. The worse thing to happen would be to communalize the situation. Even after these illegal immigrants are identified, the biggest challenge India would face is from the Bangladesh side. With the regard to illegal immigration, the official policy of Bangladeshi is that there is no Bangladeshi residing illegally in India. Indian would face an uphill task in convincing Bangladesh to take back these migrants who has already crossed over to this side of the border. The scrapping of IMDT Act has removed an important legal handicap, but it will not by itself solve the problem of illegal immigration. Now the job of security and administrative agencies will start, who have not only to identify the illegal immigrants but also find means of deporting them. This is a stupendous task for which our security forces would require strong political backing. The issue of illegal Bangladeshi immigration should be kept above politics in national interest so that the departments responsible for doing the job can perform their duty dispassionately and without giving a political or communal undertone to the issue.

The Census of India shows the fact that the rates of growth of Muslim populations are the highest precisely in the districts that share a bored with, or lie close to the border with, Bangladesh- particularly Dhubri, Barpeta, Karimganj and Hailakandi-giving credence to the widely belief that illegal migration from Bangladesh was the source of these demographic trends. Such migration clearly continues unhindered, despite the barbed- wire fencing being erected in stretches and the presence of the Border Security Force (BSF) along the border.

It is high time that the Indian Government have a proactive policy rather than a reactive policy to this issue. The need for the hour is to understand that it is no longer a humanitarian problem but a security problem which has become a hydra headed monster. The time has come to deal with it assertively but without hampering bilateral relations. It is time to both of the countries to understand the seriousness of the issue and set up time bound measure once and for all. This will help in its final solution and the problem will not emerge cyclically as it often does.

It is time New Delhi should take some stern steps against Bangladesh considering the seriousness of the situation prevailing in the North Eastern part of the country which has put forward a challenge before the internal security and the identity of the indigenous people of this region.

The general masses of the Assam are very much sure that they (illegal Bangladeshi migrants) are responsible for the communal violence which had occurred in different time in the state. The Assamese people believe that the illegal Bangladeshi migrants should be sent back to their homeland without any further delay. People feel that their presence in the state is affecting the economy of the state. They are also encroaching tribal land moving into the reserved forest land for shelter and livelihood. Now days intended to earn easy money by poaching wildlife animal and exporting it to developed countries via Bangladesh. Muslim migrants from Bangladesh are changing the demographic pattern of the Assam. Their population is increasing day by day whereas the Assamese population is shrinking every day, due to the infiltration. The alarming proportion of increasing population of the State and decreasing number of Assamese people here indicates an uncertain future for the greater Assamese society. Some immediate steps to distinguish the people of the land from illegal migrants are the need of the hour, especially before the census in 2011. The Political parties are using them as a "vote bank" for capturing political power and for creating the vote bank the political parties; especially the Congress does not want to solve the problem, even though the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh himself represents the state of Assam to the Rajya Sabha, since the last two decades. The Government in the State and the centre is always in denial mode. In the name of taking measures they

instead help the illegal Bangladeshi migrants for the sake of vote bank politics. By doing this the Government is ignoring the National security, which is very much important for the existence of a country.

In the later part of the 70's the issues drew reactions from the local people, the Assam Movement started and the historic accord was signed. But unfortunately, the problem still persists, which points to the need for a different approach to find a suitable solution.

10.2 SUGGESTIONS:

10.2.1 POLITICAL:

1. Discourage "vote bank" politics by consistent writings and propaganda against it. All political parties should also try to root out the vote bank politics. There is something in the idea for either side of the political spectrum. The Congress party's fortunes in Assam will brighten once the illegal migration issue is settled. It can claim to have protected the rights of Bengali-speaking Indian Muslims who no longer face the risk of harassment.
2. Vigilant media coverage of election patterns and voter increases in Assam based on census data analysis. Media should be active and portrait the real picture of the election pattern and change of electoral rolls in front of the people of the state.
3. Effective profiling of politicians in Assam to check corruption in political processes. Political parties should not give candidature to those who have criminal record and pro Bangladeshi feelings.
4. Vigilant monitoring of Assam's voter list by a special body constituted by the Election Commission of India. It could monitor and check the unnatural growth of the electoral rolls for a safe and sound election without any disputes.

10.2.2 SOCIAL:

1. Assamese society must establish a mechanism of assimilation of the existing migrant population into their way of life so that they do not get radicalized. They should accept them as bothers and help them in assimilating with the Assamese culture.
2. A migrant till date who has made Assam home to be granted a right akin to that of a “denizen” which will include work permit and health care facilities without voting rights, then only the people of Assam will not think that they are politically dominated by illegal Bangladeshi migrants.
3. Work permits have support of the population of Assam and are therefore perhaps the only way to monitor the flow of illegal migration into Assam. The real political problem is not so much the inflow, but the accumulation of illegal immigrants in one state. If work permits are subject to state-wise quotas, then it is possible to distribute the flow across Indian states. This will allow migrant workers to work in states that need them, and prevent them from crowding in certain states.

10.2.3 ECONOMIC:

1. Work permits are issued at the border posts in the India-Bangladesh border by a separate body named the “Working Permit Issuance Authority” which should not form a part of the Border Security Force (BSF). Though working in close co-operation with it.
2. Systematic documentation of illegal migrants so that they can be monitored and turned into viable workforce in India duly paying its taxes to the state.
3. Jobs to be duly identified in which Bangladeshi migrants can work in Assam so that local people do not feel threatened by an outside workforce in their midst.

10.2.4 SECURITY;

1. Inculcate greater professionalism in the BSF personnel as well as offer better monetary incentives to prevent bribe taking in border posts.
2. Border fencing to be completed diligently. Since certain areas of the fencing are riverine areas, these have to be secured manually.
3. Floodlighting and laying of roads to enable effective patrolling as well as reducing gaps between border posts.
4. Ensuring that the BSF is equipped with the latest technology for border patrolling.
5. Assignment of the border guarding duties to a single force.
6. Keep a vigilant check on the linkage between local politicians and insurgent leaders by an outside body.

10.2.5 DIPLOMACY:

1. Un-interrupted dialogue mechanism with Bangladesh on the issue of insurgent camps in its territory.
2. With the stand taken by Bangladeshi, it will be not be possible for India to deport millions of illegal migrants to Bangladesh. From 1993 to September 1998, the BSF tried to hand over 39,493 illegal migrants to Bangladesh Rifle. The latter accepted only 9,253 and refused to accept 30,494. Further our capability to identify and deport over six million such people is questionable. In these circumstances, deportation of these illegal migrants is not now a practical proposition.
3. The both country should try to bring down the gunfire battle or border disputes amongst themselves
4. There should be better co-operation between the border security force of both the country to stop human trafficking, drugs smuggling and cattle smuggling in the India-Bangladesh border.
5. Indian Government should pressurize the Bangladesh Government to take back its illegal migrants in India.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX:

The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 (Act No. 39 of 1983) [25th December, 1983]

An act to provide for the establishment of Tribunal for the determination, in a fair manner, of the question whether a person is an illegal migrant to enable the Central Government to expel illegal migrants from India and for matters connected herewith or incidental thereto.

Whereas a good number of the foreigners who migrated into India across the borders of the eastern and north eastern regions of the country on and after 25th day of March, 1971, have, by taking advantage of circumstances of such migration and their ethnic similarities and other connections with the people of India and without having in their possession any lawful authority so to do, illegally remained in India;

And whereas the continuance of such foreigners in India is detrimental to the interests of the public of India.

And whereas on account of the number of such foreigners and the manner in which such foreigners have clandestinely been trying to pass off as

citizens of India and all other relevant circumstances, it is necessary for the protection of the citizens of India to make special provisions for the detection of such foreigners in Assam and also in any other part of India in which such foreigners may be found to have remained illegally. Be it enacted by Parliament in the thirty fourth year of the Republic of India as follows:

Chapter-I

1. Short title, extent and commencement

- I. The Act be called the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983.
- II. It extends to the whole of India.
- III. It shall be deemed to have come into force in the state of Assam on the 15th day of October, 1983 and in any other state on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint and different dates may be appointed for different states and references in this Act to the commencement of this Act shall be construed in relation to any state as references to the date of commencement of this Act in such state.

2. Application- Nothing in this Act shall apply to or in relation to-

- I. Any person who was in any state and who had been expelled from the state or India before the commencement of this Act in that state or in relation to whose expulsion from such state of

India any order made before such commencement under any law is in force;

- II. Any person detected as a foreigner at the time of his entry across any border of India;
- III. Any foreigner who, having entered into India under a valid passport or travel document, continued to remain therein after the expiry of the period for which he was authorized to remain in India under such passport or travel document.

3. Definition and construction of references- (I) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires-

- I. "Appellate Tribunal" means an Appellate Tribunal established by the Central Government under sub-section (I) of section 15;
- II. "Foreigners" has the same meaning as in the Foreigners Act, 1946 (31 of 1946).
- III. "Illegal migrant" means person in respect of whom each of the following conditions is satisfied, namely-

A. The Act received the assent of the President on the 25th December, 1983 and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section I on 26th December, 1983.

- a. He has entered into India on or after the 25th day of March, 1971;
- b. He is a foreigner;
- c. He has entered into India without being in possession of a valid passport or other travel document or any other lawful authority in that behalf;

- IV. "Notification" means a notification published in the Official Gazette;
 - V. "Prescribed" means prescribed by rule made by the Central Government under sub-section (I) of section 5.
- B. Any reference in this Act to any law, which is not in force in any area, shall, in relation to that area, be construed as a reference to the corresponding law, if any, in force in that area.
4. Overriding effect of the Act-
- I. The provisions of this Act or of any rule or order made there under shall have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 (34 of 1920) or the Foreigners Act, 1946 (31 of 1946) or the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 (10 of 1950) or the Passports Act, 1967 (15 of 1967) or any rule or order made under any of the said Act and in force for the time being.
 - II. In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section (I), nothing in the provision to section 2 of the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 (10 of 1950) shall apply to or in relation to an illegal migrant as defined in clause © of the sub-section (I) of section 3

QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Due to the illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam communal violence are:

Decreasing Ceased Increasing

2. Illegal Bangladeshi migration are causing

Economic exploitation Social development Economic development

3. The "Vote Bank Politics" in Assam is

Not visible Decreasing Increasing

4. Illegal Bangladeshi migration is causing

Political awareness Political Development Political unrest

5. Do you believe that Muslim Terrorist Organization is increasing because of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam?

Yes No

6. Do you think illegal Bangladeshi migration are playing decisive role in Government formation in Assam?

Yes

No

7. Who is responsible for large number of illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam?

State Government

Central Government

General people

Both State & Central Government

8. Central Government does not want to check illegal Bangladeshi infiltration for the sake of vote bank politics.

Yes

No

9. The massive illegal Bangladeshi migration poses a grave danger to social harmony.

Yes

No

10. Do you think Muslim population is growing rapidly in Assam?

Yes

No

11. Is overgrowing Muslim population endangering the overall population of the natives of Assam?

Yes

No

12. What do you think is the main cause of high population growth of Muslims in Assam?

Lack of family planning Illegal Bangladeshi migration Polygamy

13. Is illegal Bangladeshi migrant's threat to national security?

Yes

No

14. What are the chances of Assam of becoming a Muslim majority state in near future?

No chanc 25% 50% 100%

15. What do you think about the riot that took place at Udalguri district in Assam?

Obvious

Preventable

16. Whom do you think responsible for this riot?

Illegal Bangladeshi migrants Bodo

Government

Native Muslims

17. Do you think riot was the consequence of ignoring the illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam?

Yes No

18. Was the riot preplanned expedition by migrants?

Yes No

19. Illegal Bangladeshi migration hoisted Pakistani flag at the riot place. Is it true?

Yes No

20. Do you think Government supported the illegal migrants for the sake creating vote bank?

Yes No

21. How is the relation post riot amongst the aggrieved communities?

Normal Tense Recovering Can't say

22. Did the riot create a sense of hatred between the migrants and the other tribes/ religion of Assam?

Yes No

23. Is there any chance that this kind of riot will spark out again?

No chance 25% 50% 100%

24. What steps should be taken by the government to stop such riot in future?

Deploy more military Deport illegal Bangladeshi migrants

Create goodwill amongst the aggrieved communities

25. Do you feel safe after the riot?

Yes No

26. Was there any politics behind the riot?

Yes No