

“Crisis of Political Leadership in Assam”

A

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Submitted

By

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Under the guidance

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DECLARATION

I, Yesminara Hussain, hereby declare that the references and literature that are used in my dissertation entitled, “*Crisis of Political Leadership in Assam*” are from original sources and are acknowledged at appropriate places in the dissertation.

Further, I declare that this dissertation is a bonafide record of research work carried out by me and that no part of the dissertation has been presented earlier for any degree or diploma.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Yesminara Hussain, a research scholar in Political Science from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune has duly completed her research work under my supervision and guidance. Yesminara Hussain is submitting her thesis titled “**CRISIS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ASSAM**”. I have approved her thesis and permitted her to submit to the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune for M.Phil. degree in Political Science. It is further certified that neither this dissertation nor any part thereof has been submitted to this university or any other university in the country or abroad for the award of M.Phil. Degree or any other degree. This thesis is compiled with all relevant conditions specified in the regulations of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

Date: February 2015

Dr. Manik Sonawane

Place: Pune

Guide

BBREVIATION:

<u>AGP-</u>	<u>Asom Gana Parishad.</u>
<u>AASU -</u>	<u>All Assam Student Union.</u>
<u>BTAD –</u>	<u>Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts.</u>
<u>AIML-</u>	<u>All India Muslim League.</u>
<u>ULFA-</u>	<u>United Liberation of Assam.</u>
<u>CADAGAS-</u>	<u>Char Area Development Authority, Government of Assam State.</u>
<u>ISI-</u>	<u>Inter Service Intelligence.</u>
<u>BMET-</u>	<u>Bangladesh Manpower Employment and Training.</u>
<u>UNO-</u>	<u>United Nations Organization.</u>
<u>CRB –</u>	<u>Census Report of Bangladesh.</u>
<u>BSF-</u>	<u>Border Security Force.</u>
<u>IMDT-</u>	<u>Illegal Migrants Determination Tribunals.</u>
<u>NRC-</u>	<u>National Register of Citizens.</u>
<u>VIC-</u>	<u>Voter Identity Card.</u>
<u>NIC-</u>	<u>National Integration Council.</u>
<u>UMF-</u>	<u>United Minority Front.</u>
<u>CEC-</u>	<u>Chief Election Commissioner.</u>
<u>AAMSU-</u>	<u>All Assam Minority Student Union.</u>
<u>CRPC-</u>	<u>Citizens Rights Preservation Committee.</u>
<u>JUH-</u>	<u>Jamait Ulema Hind.</u>
<u>AUDF-</u>	<u>Assam United Democratic Front.</u>
<u>PTCA-</u>	<u>Plain Tribal Council of Assam.</u>
<u>NRHM-</u>	<u>National Rural Health Mission.</u>
<u>BPL-</u>	<u>Below Poverty Line.</u>
<u>ACGU-</u>	<u>Academic Council of Gauhati University.</u>
<u>IIF-</u>	<u>Image India Formation.</u>
<u>CCYM-</u>	<u>Chiring Chapori Yuva Mancha.</u>
<u>KLO-</u>	<u>Kamatapur Liberation Organization.</u>
<u>NDFB-</u>	<u>National Democratic Front of Bodoland.</u>
<u>URPI-</u>	<u>United Revolution Protection of India.</u>
<u>MLTA-</u>	<u>Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam.</u>
<u>ILAA-</u>	<u>Independent Liberation Army of India.</u>
<u>IRF-</u>	<u>Islamic Religious Fundamentalism.</u>
<u>AAGSP-</u>	<u>All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad.</u>
<u>ASS-</u>	<u>Assam Sahitya Sabha.</u>
<u>PLP-</u>	<u>Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad.</u>
<u>AJD-</u>	<u>Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal.</u>

Political Map of India



Political Map of Assam



List of Tables

Table No.s	Description of Table	Page No.
Table No.1	Population of Assam: Assam population as per Census Year 1951-2011	41
Table No.2	District wise Muslim population of Assam in 1874	46
Table No. 3	Tribe wise Population of Assam (As per 1971 and 2001 Census)	49
Table No.4	Scheduled tribes Population and Percentage of the Scheduled tribes to the total Population of Assam as per Census Year 1951-2001.	49
Table: No.5	AGP's Electoral Performance (Assembly Election)	71
Table No.6	List of Chief Ministers in Assam	79
Table No.7	Results of Assam Parliamentary Election 2004	86
Table No.8	Assam Parliamentary Election Result 2009	87
Table No.9	Assam Lok Sabha Election Results 2014 - Party wise Total seats of Loksabha	89
Table No.10	Position various Political Parties in Loksabha Elections (1998-2009)	89
Table No.11	Position of the various Political Parties in Assembly Elections (2001-2011)	90
Table No.12	Insurgency Related Casualties 1991 to 2004 (A Summary of Counter Insurgency Operation)	92
Table No.13	Facilities in Insurgencies & Terrorist conflict in Assam 1992 to 2001	95
Table No.14	Assam over the problem of insurgency in 2014	97

INDEX

Chapter No.s	Name of Chapter and Sub Points	Page No.s
	Acknowledgement	
	Student declaration	
	Guide Certificate	
	Abbreviations	
	Political Map of India	
	Political Map of Assam	
	Table index	
	index	
Chapter -I	Introduction and Research Methodology	1-19
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Leadership	5
1.2.1	Definitions of Leadership	6
1.2.3	Role of leaders	8
1.2.4	Qualities of leadership	9
1.3	Concept of Crisis	10
1.3.1	Origin and Meaning of Crisis	11
1.3.2	Types of Crisis	12
1.3.4	Consequences of Crisis	13
1.4	Research Question	14
1.5	Objectives of the research	14
1.6	Hypothesis	15
1.7	Statement of the Problem	15
1.8	Significance of the Research	16
1.9	Scope and Limitation of the Research	16
1.10	Research Methodology	16
1.11	Chapter Scheme	17
1.12	References	19
Chapter- II	Review of Literature and Theoretical Background	20 to 38
2.1	Introduction	20
2.2	Gopinath Bardoloi, 'The Assam Problem' and Nehru's Centre	20
2.3	Uddipana Goswami, Conflict and Reconciliation: The Politics of Ethnicity in Assam (Transition in Northeastern India),	21
2.4	Sanjib Baruah, India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality (Critical Histories) 1999	22

2.5	Kanak Sen Deka, 'Assam Crisis Myth and Reality', Mittal Publication-New Delhi, 1993.	23
2.6	M Hussain, 'The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity,'	23
2.7	Verinder Grover, 'Political System in India: Politics of influence, violence and pressure groups'	24
2.8	Saikia, Arupjyoti 'A Century of Protests: Peasant Politics in Assam Since 1900'	25
2.9	Amalendu Guha, 'Plater Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral politics in Assam 1826-1947'	25
2.10	Pankaj Bora and Bitapi Bora, , 'Assam Movement: A Theoretical Outlook'	26
2.11	Ratanlal Brahma, "A Study on Political Development of Scheduled Tribes (Plains) of Assam with special reference to Bodos	26
2.12	Mrinal Basumatray, Illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam, with special reference to BTAD	27
2.13	Mirza Zaiur Rahman, "Voting Behaviour of the people of Barpeta Disrtict of Assam: with special reference to Jania, Barpeta and Sorbhang Constituency	28
2.14	Md. Jehirul Islam, "Role of Assom Gana Parishad in Assam: With special reference to Barpeta and Bongaigaon Districts	29
2.15	Binod Khadria, Perveen Kumar 'Immigrants and Immigration in India: A Fresh Approach'	30
2.16	Dinesh Kotwal, 'The Contours of Assam Insurgency'	31
2.17	Sir Edward Gait, 'History of Assam'	31
2.18	Sanjib Baruah, 'India Against Itself Assam and the Politics of Nationality	32
2.19	Goswami Sandhya, 'Changing trends of electoral politics'	33
2.20	Bhupen Hazarika, 'Aspiration for the Ethnic Identity, Social Formation & Nation Building with special reference to North East.	33
2.21	Other / Literature Review (Related study area)	34
2.22	Theoretical Base	34
2.23	Theory of Class Approach	35
2.24	Theory of Relative deprivation	35
2.25	Theory of Structural Conduciveness	35
Chapter - III	Overview of Assam State	39 to 63
3.1	Introduction:	39
3.2	Profile of Assam	39
3.3	Socio-economic Profile	41

3.3.1	The Hindus	41
3.3.2	The Muslims	42
3.3.2.1	Muslims of Assam can be categories in to three groups	44
3.3.2.2	District wise Muslim population	46
3.3.3	The Nepalis	47
3.3.4	The Tribal	48
3.4	Emergence of new Labor classes as a force in Assam Politics	50
3.5	Dominant Role of Assamese middle class in Assam Politics	52
3.6	State Politics of Assam	55
3.7	The Assam Movement 1979-1985	57
3.8	Conclusion	61
Chapter - IV	Assembly Elections and Role of Political Leaders in Assam	64 - 98
4.1	Introduction	64
4.2	Some Opposition Groups in Assam	65
4.2.1	Major Groups	65
4.2.2	Other Groups	65
4.3	Some Major Political Parties in Assam	66
4.3.1	Major Political Parties in India	66
4.3.2	Indian National Congress (INC)	67
4.3.3	Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	68
4.3.4	All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)	68
4.3.5	Bodoland People's Front (BPF)	69
4.3.6	Communist Party Marxist	69
4.4	State Level Political parties in Assam	70
4.4.1	Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)	70
4.4.2	Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF)	72
4.4.3	Assam Assembly Elections and Performance Political Leaders	73
4.4.4	Role of Political Parties in the Elections of Assam	74
4.5	List of Chief Ministers in Assam ⁹	79
4.6	Performance of AGP in the Election of 1996	80
4.7	Parliamentary Elections in Assam	86
4.7.1	Results of Assam Parliamentary Election 2014	86
4.7.2	Results of Assam Parliamentary Election 2009	87
4.8	Issues of Crisis in Assam	90
4.8.1	Problem of insurgency or terrorist	90
4.8.2	Insurgency in Assam	92
4.8.3	Problem of Illegal migration	92
4.8.4	Ethnic Violence	93
4.8.5	Demand of Autonomy	96
4.8.6	Economic Backwardness	96

Chapter -V	Conclusion, Findings and Suggestions	99 to110
5.1	Introduction	98
5.2	Conclusion	98
5.2.1	Underdevelopment	103
5.2.2	Increase in participation	103
5.3	Testing of Hypothesis	104
5.4	Recommendation and Suggestions	105
	Bibliography	112 to 114

Chapter: I

Introduction and Research Methodology

1.1 Introduction:

Assam is an important state of India, and located in the northeastern part of country. Assam has a composite culture of numerous tribes, races each portraying peculiar and is known for its significant role in Indian politics. As far as politics in India is concerned, the state always stays at the front position and it is significantly plagued by the 'United Liberation Front of Assam' (ULFA) strikes and other radical activities carried out by its separatist organization. The politics of sub-regional autonomy have become the agenda of every national and regional political party. And every such political party has given importance to regional autonomy subject while preparing their strategy of Political approach to such questions. No political party in Assam can think of capturing political power without having various tribal and ethnic groups supporting it. It is on this context it may be interesting to see as to what extent different crisis of leadership in Assam have influenced the main stream politics in the state.

India's tension over immigration and citizenship exists in Assam and other North-east states because the region has been forced to accept the majority of post-colonial immigration from erstwhile East Bengal/East Pakistan and the now Bangladesh region in spite of vehement protests. However, these grievances have been drowned out in the pan-Indian din and, consequently, have triggered a series of dangerous insurgencies.¹

Assam has been suffering from tensions and cleavages between immigrant populations and indigenous peoples. The post-colonial management of ethnicity in Assam has been problematic as the state continues to experience bloody ethnic strife, ruthless insurgencies and civilian deaths. Modern states at both the provincial or federal level are critical participants in inter-ethnic affairs as their governments reflect the distribution of power and prestige among ethnic communities and influence these relationships by the policies enacted and enforced.

The geographical situation of Assam as frontier state of India has given to the province its special position and important. Assam as political unit becomes a part of

India only during the British Rule and in the period of imperialist rule. “The doors of Assam were thrown open to the free flow of population from the rest of India. And at the same time, with the attachment of some parts of Bengal and North-Eastern hill areas. The British are gave birth to greater Assam than had ever existed before”.²

Consequently Assam became heterogeneous in character; of course, it has never been a homogenous province. However, a process of socio-cultural mixing towards the growth and development of composite Assamese people and culture was started during the Ahom rule among the diverse ethnic and linguistic groups wanted to preserve their distinct identity within the province. They did not want to merge their culture with the Assamese caste Hindu culture and developed a non integrative tendency it means of maintaining distinct identity. All of them demanded local autonomy on the basis of their respective ethnic identities within the small area where they used to inhabit. Sometimes these types of sectional as well as sub-regional patriotism become so strong among some sections of this people that this led them to demand a sovereign’s independent state outside the Indian union for the sake of maintaining their ethnic identities.³

“The separatist tendency becomes stronger with the separation of Burma from India and growing cry for Pakistan as expressed through the Muslim league. But toward the late forties the centripetal forces become sufficiently strong capable of controlling the centrifugal urges of various group of the province. Consequently, Assam becomes the part of India. Assam though not a Hindi speaking state here predominantly Hindu population subscribing to the Brahman ideology. These states have been the strong holds of national parties too. Perhaps, the new large state of India would not have also allowed Assam to secede from the rest of the country because India would loss a great portion of geography and natural resources”⁴

The politics of autonomy movement has characteristic of political process in the state of Assam since it came into existence. Assam being a multilingual, multi-religious, multi-tribal and multi ethnic state, the various groups in Assam have a different element that has developed a distinct group consciousness.

The geography, economy patterns of migration and the existence of different tribal and ethnic communities are the major factors that hamper the process of territorial and social integration of Assamese people. In the absence of effective

integration of the region, different communities started asserting their demands for autonomy. Even after the reorganization of Assam in 1972 the demand for autonomy on the part of the tribes such as Bodo, Koch-Rajbangsi etc. continued to hang the political process.

The range of this autonomy varied from demanding an area or sub regional autonomy to that of the separate statehood or a status of union territory within Indian federation. At present there are around 23 tribal communities in the state of Assam with distinct identity and consciousness. These communities prefer to launch an autonomy movement to push their political agenda further. This has resulted into the mushrooming of the movements in the state. The national as well as regional political parties also utilize these movements for their political mileage. This has complicated the politics in Assam. The ethnic and linguistic consciousness has even paved the way from sub-regionalism in the state of Assam. The crisis of identity is the cornerstone of various social political and insurgence movements in Assam. In fact the tribes in Assam are demanding sub-regional autonomy from both constitutional and rebellious movements.

In the first instance (1979-1985) the state of Assam witnessed a kind of student movements, which was popularly known as Assam Movement wherein the support was extended by various socio-political and literary organizations to the cause of the movement that was led by the All Assam Student Union. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) along with the 'All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad' (AAGSP) a socio-political and literary organization launched a mass movement in 1979 for the detection of illegal migrants, their deletion from the voter's list (to disfranchise) and their deportation to Bangladesh from the state of Assam. As the large scale migration took place from the neighboring country mainly from Bangladesh and the movement continued till signing the historic Assam Accord on 15th August 1985 in a tripartite talk among representatives of the Central Government, Assam Government and AASU and AAGSP. In 1985, the student leaders called off the Assam Movement and signed the Assam Accord that provided for the detection and deportation of the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants under a law, the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 1985. Government agreed to fence off the entire border between Bangladesh and Assam.

The Assam Movement was a watershed in Assam's post-independent history as it radically changed the direction of subsequent political developments in the state. A democratic mass movement in its appearance, under its covert agenda of extremism made violence an intrinsic part of political movements in Assam. During Assam Movement the regional press started a vigorous propaganda against the dangers posed by the outsiders and decried for the identity crisis. As a matter of fact the uneven economic development in Assam failed to meet the rising aspirations of the Asamiyas (original and actual inhabitants in Assam) and this frustration was expressed in a movement to exclude non-Asamiya (immigrants from other state and other nation) competitors from a share of the cake under the banner of 'culture-in-crisis'.

The issue gradually divided the people of Assam and the Asamiya press did not allow for open or democratic discussions which only deepened the xenophobic fears in the state. In Assam the first phase of Assam Movement started with peaceful demonstrations and rallies, the inauguration of President's rule in December 1979 in the wake of the fall of the then ministry and the return to power of the Congress (I) in 1980 inaugurated a new phase in the state's politics. The confrontations between the movement and the government became more and more intense. The leaders of the movement called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections of 1979 unless the government agreed to remove the names of the foreigners from the electoral rolls. This was followed by an unprecedented mass popular upsurge in the form of sit-ins, strikes and symbolic disobedience of the law. The decision on the part of New Delhi to end President's rule in 1980 and form a state government indicated the center's decision to challenge the power of the movement and to back electoral institutions that reflected the demographic realities of the state. Further, the subsequent government took action against ethnic Assamese officials who were sympathizers of the movement.

These measures accentuated the crisis of legitimacy in the state, for the process was perceived as one of de-Assimilations of the state bureaucracy, which in turn served to reinforce the fear of Assamese mineralization, and the loss of Assamese hegemony to immigrants. Between 1980 and 1982 there were 23 negotiations sessions between the leaders of the movement and the government of India. However, despite the government's hegemonic actions, the movement, instead of declining in intensity

only, became more militant, while the demands became more intense thereby political crisis at every sphere of life. The Assamese press that was sympathetic to the demands of the movement came under censorship and Indian Army was deployed to maintain law and order and several times Presidents rule were also clamped. The capital city of the state was overrun with state police forces and paramilitary forces from the center. The state has been faced large scale violence and lawlessness incidence had been took place during 1979-1985 and thereby political crisis increased.

1.2 Leadership:

Political leader is a person who is been shouldered with responsibility of governing a country, state, region or even a particular community. History has given us many political leaders, both good and bad, who throughout their life have served for the welfare of their country and its citizens. Political leaders are not just people who govern or run the country during peace times but also during times of crisis. They are people who are responsible for making and implementing strategies and policies meant to better serve the interests of the country they govern. The leaders are selected through various processes for examples of which would be through elections, in a democratic nation, and through hereditary or birth right, in case of a monarchy, or even dictatorships wherein one individual declares himself the head of state. A look at the political leader's hall of fame would reveal names like Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Winston Churchill, Woodrow Winston and even Genghis Khan.

The role of the Politicians is to deal with national issues and is driving the country in full gear. People go to vote but they have unpopular leaders of popular parties. Only symbols are elected not politicians. Actually, scenario shows that people are being disappointed by our political leaders. They are always eroding the very essence of democracy. They are devaluing public-moral. At the heart of contemporary political turmoil in India is the changing role of political leaders.

In any case, the political leadership, whether of male or female, is Omni-relevant because of various causes. Its Omni-relevant emanates from its positional centrality backed up by its power wielding and benefit dispensation capability. Leadership is the object of a large amount and heterogeneous variety of societal,

communal and individual expectations that keeps the leader at the center stage except when election is around; and or she /he faces odds when his or her re-election is under serious challenge. We generally have 'transactional leadership'. Leaders grant jobs and receive votes instead or grant subsidies in lieu of campaign contributions.

Leader has the skill to rationalize and displace his or her personal motives by national goals. Another related concept is management. In fact, leadership and management are different concepts that overlap. They are different in that management traditionally focuses on the activities of planning, organizing staffing, and controlling, whereas leadership emphasizes the general influence process.

Management is concerned with creating order and stability, whereas leadership is about adaptation and constructive change. It is also said that managers and leaders are different types of people, with managers being more reactive and less emotionally involved and leaders being more proactive and more emotionally involved. The overlap between leadership and management is the entered on how they both involved influencing a group of individual in goal attainment.⁵

1.2.1 Definitions of Leadership

1. Dran (2004) have defined Leadership in the words, "the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals."
2. Terry has defined leadership as: "The activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives."
3. Millet says that "leadership is often made or broken by circumstances.

The essential circumstances of leadership are twofold-Political and institutional. By the political condition of administrative leadership, we mean the need to be responsive to external political direction and control by the institutional conditions of leadership; we mean the need to be responsive to the requirements of internal operations of keeping an administrative agency in actual running order.

1.2.2 Meaning of Leadership:

Leadership is a topic with universal appeal. Much has been written about it. Despite this, leadership presents a major challenge to practitioners as well as researchers interested in understanding its nature. It is a highly complex, yet valued

phenomenon. Leadership has been defined and conceptualized in myriad ways. The component common to nearly all classifications is that leadership is an influence process that assists group of individuals toward goal attainment. It is defined as a 'process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'.⁶ Then, there are certain concepts, which are integral to the process of leadership. Prominent among them is the concept of power, the potential to influence. Position power, which is much like assigned leadership, is the power an individual derives from having an office in a formal organizational system. It includes legitimate, reward, and coercive power. Personal power comes from followers and includes referent and expert power. It is given to leaders because followers believe leaders have something of value. Treating power is important as a shared resource because of de-emphasizes the idea that leaders are power wielders.

A number of studies have also focused on leadership as a trait. The trait perspective suggests that certain people in our society have special inborn qualities that make them leaders. This view restricts leadership to only those who are believed to have special characteristics. In contrast, the process approach suggests that leadership is a process that can be learned and that it is open to everyone. Similarly, there are two common forms of leadership assigned and emergent. Assigned leadership is based on a formal title of position in an organization. Emergent leadership results from what one does and how one acquires support from followers. Leadership, as a process, applies to individuals in both assigned rolls and emergent roles.

As more and more women begin occupying position of leadership, questions as to whether they lead in a different manner from men and whether women or men are more effective as leaders have garnered greater attention. Writers are asserting that there are indeed gender differences in leadership styles and that in contemporary society women's leadership is more effective.⁷ However academic researchers have a greater diversity in their views. Many argue that gender has little or no relationship to leadership style and effectiveness.⁸ However in the early 1980s ,leadership researchers began studying a new style of leadership first articulated by J.M. Burns (1978) as transforming leadership , later modified and expended into transformational leadership.⁹ Significant research has gone to illustrate that all four components of the

transformation leadership i.e. idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration and the contingent reward as the component of transactional leadership are positively related to the effectiveness of the leadership.¹⁰

The leadership is not necessary an all –or-nothing phenomenon is a group of dynamics. In some groups, leadership functions maybe concentrated almost completely in one individual. In other groups leadership may be shared by a number of individuals. The conception of leadership as a role involving power relationship provide base for defining leadership as a frequency with which an individual in a group maybe identified as one who influences or directs the behavior of other within the group. During the 19th century the idea of born leaders was widely accepted. It is assumed that man of genius emerged from time to time within a society and that these men were destined to exert profound influence upon their society.

1.2.3 Role of leaders:

Leadership is basically the execution of a particular kind of role with an organized group or society and this role is defined essentially in the term of power or the ability to influence others. Like any roles , leadership involves not only the overt display of certain kind of action in the group but also certain patterns of interpersonal perception and certain expectation about the behavior of a leader.

All pre-conditions of the democratic consolidation and the three significant aspects of the operative the democracy veer around the political leadership. People generally interchange the term “leadership” with political leadership. Who should be called political leader and what rules has a leader to play? Jean Blonde has provided a comprehensive analysis of the political leadership but his examination has been based on the experiences of the western democracies. As we know political leadership does not occur in vacuum and it rests and wields power from the community. The scholarship on leadership has articulated the basic characteristics of leader it is confined to two basic dimensions – capacity dimensions and role dimensions.¹¹

The capacity dimension is related to leader’s capacity to provide guidance, direction and coordination (GDC) to the lead the community and role dimension is related to instill confidence courage and obedience (CCO) among the lead groups,

community and nation. Political leadership is not exempted from these kinds of dimensions. It means leader is quite different from a political leader, who influences decision making process with legitimate power to influence the community on the basis of power he or she enjoys among the community. But the formal position holder cannot be a political leader. He /she must have capacity to influence to lead the community and wield power from both the community and states the super structure. Even the head of state cannot be said to be a political leader, if his / her activities limited to wholly symbolic functions. However formal position facilitates opportunities to hold real power. The political leader has the power that exercise over a wide range of value and goals such as socio-economic programs, justice to deprived masses, communal harmony and responsive governance. In India it has been found everywhere since last six decades.¹² R C Tucker has clarified the areas of political leader's roles such as diagnosis of the problems, prescription of course of action and mobilization of those who are made to ensure that the action does take place. That is meant for members of the lead community. The political leader in India has to diagnose the real problems faced by the society, prescribe action for the masses to influence the decision making process for the resolution of the problems and have to mobilize the masses in a way; it does not inflict suffering in any form. Gender discrimination in the political sphere is also one of the most significant issues in Indian polity. Women political leadership would have also to cope up with these shortcomings if they really want to enjoy the political leadership.¹³

1.2.4 Qualities of leadership:

Most of the scholars have suggested different kind of qualities of political leaders. Almost every writer on management has his own list of qualities of leadership. Thus, Barnard has given four qualities of a leader e.g. vitality and endurance, decisiveness, persuasiveness; and responsibility and intellectual capacity in that order of importance.¹⁴ He describes the present trend is to put excessive emphasis upon intellectual attainments by selecting authorities. According to Appleby, a good administrator has willingness to assume responsibilities; demonstrates continuing personal growth; is disposed towards action; is a good listener who asks pointed questions. Works well with all sorts of people; seeks ablest obtainable subordinates; uses institutional resource, does not try to do it all and know

it all himself; cares for power only as it contributes to effectiveness, chiefly as a reserve asset, has self-confidence to effectiveness, chiefly as a reserve asset. He should have self-confidence, and so is ready to admit his limitations and errors; is hospitable to bad news as well as good; respects subordinates as much as superiors; constantly seeks to improve institutional performance and in democratic governments he respects political processes and responsibilities. A leader as the successful head of a big organization should possess some attributes like....¹⁵

1. Decisiveness: Nothing is possibly more demanding to the morale of an organization than a vacillating, procrastinating, hesitating, indecisive chief.
2. Clarity of vision: A leader must know what he wants and what he does not want.
3. Far sight: A leader should be both farsighted and farseeing .He should be able to rise above and see beyond the existing situation.
4. Building up of subordinates: The extent to which an executive can change the base human metal around him into shining gold is an index of his good leadership. He must win the confidence and trust of his staff and inspire them.
5. Participative Management: A leader should, of course, be a good organizer. In addition, he should also be able to create in the workers a feeling of participation in managing the organization.
6. Good public Relations: In modern age, this is a guilty most needed attribute that executive should have the skill to sell his wares.
7. Improvement in Consciousness: The leader should be progressive and be entrusted with the desire to improve performance of the organization.¹⁶

1.3 Concept of crisis:

The crisis is one of the important phenomena that focus on the contemporary situations. The recent bibliography in the social sciences and popular press is vast, therefore crisis tend are a veritable industry. It serves as the noun-formation of the contemporary historical narrative. It is also a non-localities form by which one claims access to history and knowledge of history. It is a criterion that not only counts history but also signifies change. Therefore, crisis achieves the status of a historical philosophical concept as well as it is the mean by which history is located, recognized, understood and assumed.¹⁷

1.3.1 Origin and Meaning of Crisis:

Etymologically the term is originated from the ancient Greek term, 'Krino' which means to separate, to choose, to decide, to judge etc. but specifically it refers to the requirement or judgment. Basically it heads its significance in the domain of law, medicine and theology. But in the 5th and 4th BC, this medical significance is prevailed. Being associated with the Hippocratic School as a part of grammar, it denoted the turning point of a disease or a critical phase in which life or death was at stake and called for unalterable decision. Even though, crisis is taken either as a historical event or as an epistemological impasse, but it serves as a basis or a great deal of writing. Hence forth, there are few conceptual histories of the term. Prior to the achievement of this shift, crisis did not have a time. It was not historically dated and also did not signify historical dates while serving throughout the 17th century. Crisis served as a catch word with a various range of political application but by the date 18th century as a concept, it sheds its apocalyptic meaning.¹⁸

Crisis also notifies the making out of "new time" that denotes a unique qualitative transition phase or it can be mentioned a very specific historical event. The historical concepts are dependent metaphysical (figurative) language or spatial (concerned with place) reference. As historical concepts, crisis refers to the past effects of any event and to their consciousness that arises by the end of the 18th century. Crisis is criterion for what counts as 'history' and is a means of signifying change. It is a means of ascribing history itself. While typically to the 18th century philosophy of history and a corresponding conceptualization of history in terms of progress the epochal consciousness is nevertheless very familiar to us, it is in keeping with common contemporary usage of the terms as a turning point in any particular history. Crisis is defined as both specific as it defines historical era and also structure of recurrence because it establishes and the notion of historical change that takes place in analogous form. The emergence of crisis as historical concept includes the practices or prophecy in favor of the practices of prognosis; was raising the issue of the burden of proof for meaning in the history and for the meaning, significance of history itself. Throughout the invocation of the term crisis as a historically unique transition phase, which could mark an era, the historical experience is likewise generalized as a logical recurrence the historian as the judge of events. And yet

history itself is posited as serving the ultimate form of judgment; a judgment which acts and errors.¹⁹

Crisis is a criterion for what counts as history; crisis signifies change, such that crisis “is” history; and crisis denominate “history” as such. In this way, crisis achieves the status of a historic-philosophical concept; it is the means by which history is located, recognized, comprehended, and even posited. In that sense crisis is not a condition to be observed on the other hand it is an observation that produces meaning more precise, it is a distinction. Crisis is claimed, but it remains latent, it is self-explanatory as it allows the further reduction of crisis, to the other elements such as capitalism, economic sign in almost all forms of fabricated today; it is mobilized as the defining category of our contemporary situation. Crisis is a criterion for what counts as history; crisis signifies change, such that crisis “is” history; and crisis denominate “history” as such. In this way, crisis achieves the status of a historic-philosophical concept; it is the means by which history is located, recognized, comprehended, and even posited.²⁰

1.3.2 Types of Crisis:

Crisis is "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, especially for better or for worse, is determined; turning point." The inability of the economic steering problems to cope towards the reactions of citizens leads to crisis. Crises are described as

- a) Rationality crisis: failure of administrative Political system or welfare state deficiency.
- b) Economic crisis: contradiction of economic growth.
- c) Legitimizing crisis: mass withdrawal of support from “formal democracy”.
- d) Motivational crisis: support for the normative order of democracy and principles of work ethic are in sharp decline.²¹

1.3.3 Causes of Crises:

Domestic economy is an important factor in bringing about crises in both democracies and non-democracies. On one hand, as pointed out by Powell p. 37 and implicitly or explicitly raised by the other authors, "economic development and

modernization are expected to be associated with a citizenry more easily engaged in the political process" and thus creating potential for state crises in non-democracies.

The relationship between the rulers and the ruled is the most important factor in causing crises. Political leadership is also a prominent factor for crisis in a state. In a state leader don't strive for violence against the state but aims to maintain democracy. E.g. Periodic crises of capitalism, Inadequate handling of economic crisis by 'politics', Loss of legitimating through an output-weakness, Loss of trust of citizens in democratic institutions leads to input problems, etc.²²

1.3.4 Consequences of Crisis:

The most common and probably most obvious consequence of crises is to maintain law and order in the regime. Crisis automatically weakens the state which leads the state to lose its coercive power to transformation society. According to Huntington in democracy is either replaced occasionally by temporary or permanent military and executive coups which further reverse the waves of democratization. Crisis may shape the future of a state. Crises could lead to an existential threat to democracy.²³

In simple terms, we can distinguish in crisis theory at least two uses of the term:

1. First, an acute crisis- It threatens the very existence of political order and requires unmistakable action. This perspective is taken to a certain extent from Marx's crisis theory of capitalism. If we transpose this understanding of an acute and final crisis into the democratic system, crisis might seem as a preliminary stage for a democratic collapse, i.e., a system change towards a regime. In the neo-Marxist variant of the early 1970s, a collapse of the "late capitalist state" could be a final stage of a progressing crisis sequence. Though, an ultimate collapse is far from being certain.
2. With the fading of neo-Marxism this variant of crisis theory has almost entirely disappeared, at least as far as mature democracies of the OECD world are concerned.²⁴

1.4 Research questions:

The purpose of the study is to identify leadership style in Assam and to examine various attributes of leadership in the state. The researcher is also interested to have greater understanding of how leaders in Assam failed and how their weak administrative skills affected the political system in the state. Researcher felt it necessary to analyse the evolution of Assam politics in order to bring out the linkages between the political leaders and the insurgents, which led to the rise of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and its transformation from a youth organization into a militant group.

This research will also examine the external elements responsible for leadership crisis in Assam. This research is intended to examine the roots of the governance crisis from different theoretical and methodological perspectives: Specifically, how and why, in the democratic set up, the democratic nation building has been unable to diffuse the challenges to its authority and legitimacy, or to honor its commitments to civil liberties and socio-economic justice?

In the light of the above discussion there was an urgent need to seek the answers of the following questions:

1. What is the present leadership situation and style in Assam?
2. What roles have been played in past and present politics in the governance of Assam?
3. How the state of Assam affected politically, socially, economically and culturally?
4. What has been the impact of past leadership in Assam?

With the curiosity to know and find out the answer, researcher planned and decided to carry out the research on “Crisis of Political leadership in Assam”.

1.5 Objectives of the research:

The objective of the study is to analyze the factors affecting leadership crisis in Assam. The study will highlight the role of political leaders in Assam and their influence over the society. In this regard the study will ascertain the present status of

leadership in the state. In the light of this aims some objective has been set as follows...

1. To evaluate the role of leadership to the overall development of Assam.
2. To understand the reason that why the state is unable to guarantee to the public protection against anti-national elements.
3. To understand the relationship between ethnicity and democratic order.
4. To examine the failure to accommodate regional demands by the state government.
5. To study the relation between under development of the region of Assam and the economic dominance of the alleged outsiders played a part in Assamese unrest.

1.6 Hypothesis:

1. Existing ethnic crisis makes Assam politics a vulnerable politics.
2. Different pressure groups and movements have been played key role in Assam politics.
3. The ideological pattern of political parties is upswing and affecting negatively on political stability of Assam.
4. Illegal migration from Bangladesh and other countries is also affecting the assimilation of political leadership and political pattern of Assam.
5. State's unfavorable geographical conditions, lack of financial facilities and other drawbacks. The leaders are aloof from the main stream of politics in Assam.

1.7 Statement of the Problem:

In Assam polity, state government and local governments have been failed repeatedly to make good on their promises of social and economic justice, the weaker sections of the society are turning to political activism, using extra-constitutional and extra-parliamentary means to fight for their slice of the economic pie and fight for their legal and constitutional rights. Political violence is on the upswing in the state and needs to be understood in the context of the prevailing scenario in the state.

1.8 Significance of the study:

The role of leaders is omnipresent for all positive and negative changes in the state. The Indian state, once seen by society as the mediator of conflict, itself became the source of conflict. The state's subsequent inability to enforce its legal authority has undermined the state's capacity to maintain peace. Due to the ineffective leadership, the state of Assam has endured random violence. Therefore there is need to study the causes responsible for the crisis in Assam. Political leadership is commonly ascribed particular significance at certain period, which concern the ability of political leaders to identify relevant problems, prepare solutions and mobilize public opinion during the period of Social and political change.

This study contributes with knowledge on the significance of political leadership for democratic state building and specifies how the interplay between the contextual change and leadership action can impact political outcome. The present study emphasizes on the symbolic, strategic and relational dimension of political leadership in Assam. The present study intends to examine the changing role and status of leaders in Assam. The objective of the study is to analyze the factors affecting leadership crisis in Assam. The study will highlight the role of important leaders in Assam and their influence. The study will ascertain the present status of leadership in the state. The study will show if there is any imbalance in leadership and how should the imbalance be rectified.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of the study:

The scope of the present research will be crisis of leadership in Assam and governance in the state. External material and moral support has sustained ethnic movements in border areas. The study is only applicable to Assam state only. Conclusion and findings are depend upon the available data and present situation and can't be generalized holistically. The study being one that deals with leadership some sources of information are not easily accessible.

1.10 Research Methodology:

In order to ensure all aims and objectives are the investigation on the secondary resources and general observations is undertaken by the researcher. The present study is descriptive in nature. It keeps a record of secondary data, referring

published and unpublished journals, newspapers, and research articles and books and booklets materials relating to the study.

The topic for the research study is “Crisis of Political Leadership in Assam”. The topic is theoretical and descriptive. For the present research the researcher will adopt the doctrinal method of research to conduct the study.

1.11 Chapter Scheme:

The present study is divided into five chapters and each chapter is devoted to a specific aspect included in the study.

1.11.1 Chapter-I provides introduction to study, contains a definition of selected topic, objectives and hypothesis of the study. This particular chapter has given outlines of the statement of the problem, scope and objectives as well as significance of the present study. It also presents the research methodology to the present study.

1.11.2 Chapter- II deals with the review of literature. In this chapter researcher has deal with various books and articles relating to the topic and present and given short review of the said book or article. These books and articles proved to be a help for this research.

1.11.3 Chapter-III deals with the historical, social, economic and political culture of Assam. Various social and political movements which took place in Assam and role of community/tribe in politics of the state are discussed. Some of the important leaders from Assam and how their influence is highlighted. Political culture of Assam is discussed in brief.

1.11.4 Chapter-IV deals with the performance of various political parties and political leaders in general and Legislative Assembly elections in particulars. This chapter also deals with conflicts and crisis amongst the leaders in Assam.

1.11.5 Chapter-V contains the major conclusions, findings and suggestions of the present study. An overview of the crisis of leadership in the state of Assam and also an overall assessment of people’s participation in Assam Politics. Finally, few suggestions and recommendations are also included. In this chapter testing of hypothesis is also presented.

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Sanjib Baruah, India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality (Critical Histories), 1999. Gopinath Bardoloi,

Uddipana Goswami, Conflict and Reconciliation: The Politics of Ethnicity in Assam (Transition in Northeastern India), Routledge India Publication

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Chapter II

Review of Literature and Theoretical Background

2.1 Introduction:

Literature of 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 the research 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 crisis and related issues like illegal Bangladeshi migration, immigration, insurgency etc. in the early periods can be found in the political and historical literature of Assam. In this regard early phase of Muslim immigration is an important book entitled “Early History of Kamrupa” (1933)¹ by K. L. Barua, and “A Political History of Assam”, by Publication Board Assam, (1999)² is quite appreciable. Till the independence of India the work by M. Kar, ‘Muslims in Assam Politics’³ 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 other authors are like 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.

2.2 Gopinath Bardoloi, 'The Assam Problem' and Nehru's Centre, Nirode K. Barooah, Bhabani Books Publication.⁶

The author has written this book with great sensitivity and skill. An extraordinary work of historical writing, this book by Nirode K. Barooah is an almost complete and most authentic political biography of Gopinath Bardoloi, Assam? Man of destiny? The book gives an exhaustive account of the politics of Assam during the freedom struggle and the first three years of the post-Independence era. The writer

shows great passion and is remarkably candid while writing about the anatomy of the Assamese character in the context of Assam. This book help reader to know the persona called Gopinath Bardoloi.

This book also gives us an idea about the problems faced by the people in Assam. Gopinath Bardoloi is a follower of Mahatama Gandhi. He strictly believed that nonviolence is a strong political tool. He was the most loved person amongst the people of Assam. He was totally dedicated for the cause of Assamese people. The book discusses the socio political environment existing in Assam before independence. It also discusses the political situation in Assam immediately after independence.

The book is thought-provoking which explains how North East, the imperial frontier of British India, has been relegated to the margin in the postcolonial times. Formulating a theoretical base on marginality in the context of North East India with critical analyses, the volume gives an account of the region's political history. The book will serve as a useful reference book for the students of political science, history, sociology, public administration and will also be of particular interest to researchers, policy makers and civil servants.

2.3 Uddipana Goswami, Conflict and Reconciliation: The Politics of Ethnicity in Assam (Transition in Northeastern India), Rutledge India Publication.⁷

This book traces the genesis and evolution of the ethnic and nationalistic politics in the state and explores how this gave birth to nativist and militant movements. It further discusses how the Indian State responses seem to have exacerbated rather than mitigated the conflict situation.

The author proposes ethnic reconciliation as an effective way out of the current chaos and finds the key in examining the relations between three communities Asamiya, Bodo and Koch from Bodoland, the most violent region of Assam, and by particularly redefining Asamiya, an issue of much discord in Assam ethnic politics since the modern day formulation of the Asamiya nation. The book prove essential to scholars and students of peace and conflict studies, sociology, political science and history, as also to policy makers and those interested in India Northeast.

The book explains the complex issues of Assam politics. This book also discusses the problem of Asamiya language and the problems of migration from Bangladesh in Assam. This book is useful the students of peace and conflict studies and research work. This book also discusses the community conflicts existing in Assam.

2.4 Sanjib Baruah, India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality (Critical Histories) 1999.⁸

"India against itself" is a scholarly book written by a person who has witnessed, felt and seen first-hand what is happening in north-eastern India and he feels passionately about it. The author himself is aware of this and wonders "whether eliminating the personal references would necessarily enrich the text". The struggle of the author trying to stay objective and detached, is apparent in many sections of the book. However his personal passion and pain is equally transparent, especially in the end of chapter seven he refers to a song by Bhupen Hazarika "There is neither joy nor sorrow." He makes a case for changing the basic political structure in India, empowering the states more. His belief that a loose system of federalism will work in a country like India which can be argued. He offers a utopian view what he and many of others would like to see happen but does not offer many concrete suggestions how to get there. If read superficially, one can easily make the erroneous assumption that the author is advocating for autonomy of Assam and his sympathies lie with the insurgents. On reading carefully one can feel the author's pathos and his hope for a better India with a stronger democracy rather than a fractured nation. It is not an easy book to read for a person unfamiliar with the academic side of political science which essentially limits the number of readers. Regardless of whether it is an entirely objective view, it offers food for thought and a forum for serious debate about the current state of our 'Nation-State'.

Assam is considered as mini-India and this is reflected in this book. The politics in Assam, issue of autonomy in Assam and basic political structure of the state is discussed in this book. This book is helpful to know the political structure of the state. The book criticizes the problem of nationality and identity in the state. Reading of this book will help to know the nation-state concept.

2.5 Kanak Sen Deka, 'Assam Crisis Myth and Reality', Mittal Publication-New Delhi, 1993.⁹

In this inimitable book, The author has analyzed, in his own style and with an amazing grasp of details, the various ills- economic, political, social, psychological and cultural- with which the Assamese society, particularly its youth, is affected. Especially for readers outside Assam, it is an eye opener. With the precision of an expert surgeon, he anatomized the list of shortcoming of Assamese society and admonishes its youth who, instead of putting the blame on others for their backwardness, should do some soul-searching and find the true cause of their present plight. People from outside have come to enrich Assam through productive activities like trade and business while local inhabitants remain indifferent and shun hard work.

Is there really colonial exploitation in Assam? The Agitation during 1979-85 did much harm by creating division among the populace and thereby alienating many non-Assamese. "Assimilation was the rule the reign of Ahom kings but we are moving in the opposite direction," says the author and then advises the youth of Assam to try to exploit their own intellect and potentialities besides trying to exploit natural resources which are in plenty in the state. Both in practice and precept, Assam has always shown the way to national integration in India. A highly interesting and informative volume draws a flood of light on present day Assam; it would be the cherished possession.

The book discusses the real problems of the Assam by which state is affected badly. This book also gives an idea about the political instability in the state of Assam. The society of Assam which is considered to be mini-India is really depicted in the writings of this book.

2.6 M Hussain, 'The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity,' Manak Publication Pvt. Ltd., 1993.¹⁰

The Post-colonial society in India experienced several historically significant social movements; the Assam movement is a very distinct among them. In addition to general features of a powerful social movement, the Assam movement demonstrated certain specific features, for instance, the issue of foreign national's' participation in

the electoral process of Assam/India which the movement wanted to stop at any cost. Simultaneously, it also aimed at protecting the very distinct socio-cultural, economic and political identity of the Asamiyas. Very conspicuously, the movement was led by a students; and organizations from outside. Besides, it demonstrated remarkable capacity to mobilize the masses.

Any powerful social movement does not appear all of a sudden from a vacuum, it is always deeply embedded in history and society from where it emerges. The Assam movement is no exception. Therefore, instead of emphasizing on the actual period of movement (1979-85) alone, the author looks back into the chequered nature of social transformation that the pre-colonial and post-colonial society in Assam experienced. The study analyses the movement from its incipient stage to its institutionalization. As the fundamental ideological plank of the movement was that the Asamiyas as a nationality were experiencing an identity crisis in their traditional homeland in the wake of continuous illegal immigration from Bangladesh and Nepal, this study comprehends empirically the extent of this identity crisis syndrome. The study of interdisciplinary in its approach and it obviously addresses to a larger audience beyond the social sciences disciplines. The policy-makers, political activists and general readers interested in the study of specific social formation, its polity sub-nationality and ethnic question will find Dr. Monirul Husain's book useful and stimulating.

This book helps one to understand the Assam Movement its background, causes and impacts in the state. It also makes reader understand why the state of Assam signed The Assam Accord 1885 with the Government of India. The book not only gives an idea how the Movement occurred but it also explains the reasons which led to the movement. The state of Assam is facing a problem of identity, refugee and the existence of tribal life in Assam.

2.7 Verinder Grover, 'Political System in India: Politics of influence, violence and pressure groups', Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1989.¹¹

This book deals with the politics of influence, violence and pressure groups. This book is divided into seven parts where case study is presented on the issue of influence, role of pressure group and violence in various parts of the country. Seventh part of the book deals with the regionalism i.e. militant and protective regionalism in

India. In this book part VII Article 42 by Yatesh Srivastava “Assam Militancy: Stem the tide” attempt to explain Assam Militancy from various theories. The book tries to see Assam Movement from various perspectives. The book helps to understand Assamese people for their social, political and economic interest. The author believes that the militancy movement in the state was a safeguard of Assamese nationalities to some section of the society in Assam where as to some others, again it is a movement resulted by relative deprivation. So there are various views or theories to explain Assam Movement.

2.8 Saikia, Arupjyoti ‘A Century of Protests: Peasant Politics in Assam Since 1900’, Routledge Publication New Delhi, 2013.¹²

This particular book is about the Agrarian crisis in Assam. Assam was having a consumption oriented economy with barter system which was replaced by revenue oriente d economy. Tea-plantation was introduced in Assam after colonialism. In this book an effort is been made by Arupjyoti Siakia to cover a large canvas to draw the tribulations and the struggles of the Assamese peasantry. A period of 100 years from 1886 to 1986 was covered in this book participation and sacrifice of peasantry was unmatched in this movement.

In this book Saikia said that the interests of the peasants are always been suppressed by neo-colonialism. It is the complaint of the author though the peasants are the backbone of the Assamese society; it had never been recognized as a major subject in shaping the evolution of the Assamese society. In this book a detailed account of Agrarian setting of Assam from 1900 to 1950 was given. After studying the book it can be said there is appeal that one should respect people’s democratic right to life.

2.9 Amalendu Guha, ‘Plater Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral politics in Assam 1826-1947’, Tulika Books, 2006.¹³

The author is a great historian who tried to cover the unrest which exists in Assam since post- colonial period. In this book the author Amalendu Guha has tried to highlight Assam’s plantation economy, the imperialism of opium cultivation. The book speaks about peasants, workers struggle and the evolution of the ryotsabhas, the Congress trade union and later of the Communist party.

In this book a chronological Marxist framework is given .The analysis of Guha extends from Assam in 1826 to the year of the British Annexation to the post-independence conditions in 1950.

2.10 Pankaj Bora and Bitapi Bora, 'Assam Movement: A Theoretical Outlook'¹⁴

In this article the author have described the various social movements which took place in the state of Assam. This paper presents a historical and theoretical basis of Assamese movements. In this article the author tried to explain the various definitions and features of the movements. The author tried to say that social movement is a form of collective behavior. He tried to say that there are different types of social movements like Alternatives Social Movement, Reformative Social Movement, Transformative and Reactionary social movements.

In this article Assam Movement was theorized and the nature scope, cause and the the relationship and support base of the movement is discussed. This article outlines very nicely that Assam movement refers to that movement in which a demand is made to stop the illegal migration of refugee or foreigners to Assam. This article discussed how this movement is started under the leadership of the ASSU and AAGSP.

2.11 Ratanlal Brahma, "A Study on Political Development of Scheduled Tribes (Plains) of Assam with special reference to Bodos."¹⁵

An unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Tilak Maharashtra Univerity Pune – 2010. An attempt was made in the work to bring out the political development or awareness among various plains tribes of Assam. Special emphasis was given to the Bodos who are the prominent plain tribes of Assam. They (Bodo leaders) along with other leaders started their ethnic movement in the last part of 60s. On the other hand researcher has emphasized that, Independence and adoption of the Constitution in 1950 did not improved social life of Bodos they have feeling of exploitation and injustice by the non-tribal people, who gave rise to the demand of separate state, autonomous status etc. The emerging assertions of different tribes in Assam are an important and sensitive dimension of the politics of Assam. Such ethnic assertions sometimes demands greater autonomy with the prescribed Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, sometimes demands for the creation of separate independent state. Such emerging ethnic assertions adopted both democratic and violent strategy. In this

context Ratan Barma, has investigate the identity of Bodo's ethnic groups. The social and political problems lead to unrest the products of the socio-economic conditions and chauvinistic attitude of other Assamese people towards tribal people responsible for the emergence of different ethnic assertion among them. Another problem was discussed that, the demands of different separate autonomy among tribal people is that the negligence by the Government. In this context the study is very important as it brings to light the political awareness and aspiration of all Scheduled Tribes of Assam in general and Bodos in particular.

2.12 Mrinal Basumatray, Illegal Bangladeshi migration into Assam, with special reference to BTAD, an unpublished dissertation submitted to Tilak Maharashtra University, Pune, Sept. 2011.¹⁶

In this research work researcher tried to find solution of the illegal Bangladeshi migration into the state. In this view he has tried evaluate the root cause and accordingly deal with the problem of Bangladeshi migration. In order to bring some insight in the topic, he has chosen four districts of B.T.A.D., (Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts) namely Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri for the research work.

He has emphasized that, illegal or unauthorized, unregulated 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. 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. 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. 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.

2.13 Mirza Zaiur Rahman, “Voting Behaviour of the people of Barpeta District of Assam: with special reference to Jania, Barpeta and Sorbhang Constituency”, a unpublished dissertation submitted to Tilak Maharashtra University, Pune, May 2009.¹⁷

This is an important attempt was made made by researcher in the work to bring out the Voting Behaviour of the people of Assam. In this research work, researcher emphasized that; the voting behavior of the people of a particular area generally depends upon some sound factors. But to be more distinct in the representative democracy with a multy-cultural, multy-linguistic society the voting behavior of the masses does not indicate a healthy sign in all the places, particularly in the aforesaid area. Behind the certain of it there seems to have some root causes as the ratio of voting behavior again the total number of voters do not tally according to expectation in its outlook. Voting behavior varies from place to place particularly in the so called developed areas we will find that in general major portion of the masses do not expect ineffectiveness and frequent change in policy from the policy makers are that can hurt the interest of the majority. On the other hand, the policy makers are accustoming to change and capturing of power. There underestimation to achieve that also effect the voting behavior. From another point of view the selection of candidate in the election by political parties also creates a non-effective atmosphere in the voting behavior of the people in due time. Because by nature people believe over all acceptability, knowledge as power from knowledge. The political parties seem to faith to meet the faith of the masses in this regard. In most cases organizational weakness, appeasement policy, non awareness to the grievance of the members of parties from the practical workers also effect in the deftness of the voting behavior. Again party's opportunities attitude towards communalism can also be taken into account in understanding the voting behavior of the people. The electoral and party systems are interrelated and interacting is beyond question, but the exact nature of relationship is controversial issue. Proportional representation promote a multiparty system which is rigid, independent and stable ,while the majority ballot system with two ballots gives rise to a multiparty system which is flexible, dependent and relatively stable and the

simple majority single ballot system supports the two party system with alteration of power between major parties.

With the help of this study voting behavior inhabited by variety of people like Hindus, Muslim, and Multi linguistic and ethnic groups. There are eight assembly constituencies in Barletta District. Election have proved to be a powerful instrument of mass political socialization and voting behavior of various Assembly election of Barpeta District since 1952 showed that voters cast their votes in favour of congress as a whole.

Regionalism greatly influences in Assam during the movement of anti foreigners (1976-85). One of the outcomes of the Assam accord was the formation of two regional parties AGP & UMF with the support of the people of Brahmaputra valley the AGP came into power in Assam in 1985 and it was deemed to be a government of Assamese people at the initial stage. In Barpeta district out of eight Assembly segments seven seats were captured by the regional parties.

2.14 Md. Jhirul Islam, “Role of Assom Gana Parishad in Assam: With special reference to Barpeta and Bongaigaon Districts” July – 2012, a unpublished dissertation submitted to Tilak Maharashtra University, Pune, July-2012.¹⁸

An attempt was made in the work to bring out the role of regional political party ‘Assam Gana Parishad’, in political field of life. In this research work, researcher emphasized that emergence of Assam Gana Parishad was predetermined conclusion that would be in power immediately and consequently “the Assam Gana Parishad was voted to power in the general election of 1985 by securing 63 seats out of 126 members of the Assembly. Again it came to power and formed the ministry in 1996 by securing 59 seats out of 126 members of the Assembly. It may be voted that in the last three consecutive Assembly elections as 2001, 2006 and 2011 Asom Gana Parishad is struggling to form the ministry”³ moreover; it is losing its popularity among the all sections of people in Assam due to its several problems.

Lastly, it is understandable from the whole study that the process of working, internal misunderstanding and their policies taken for the development of Assam are not successful to some extent. If the Assom Gana Parishad does not change their policies and reduce internal clash it would not be possible for them to win the heat of

Assamese people. For the time being it would be fine for AGP to give up their main motto against foreigners and should give stress on the overall development including economic, industrial and employment issues. Development is not done by words; it is being proved by works and past record what has been done for the development of the society. Our politicians are seems to make big promises during the time of election, but afterwards everything goes in vain. They are more interested in making bank balance instead of giving something to the society. Thus, AGP has to make a clear mind to serve for the society rather than making false promise and playing with the emotions of Assamese people with some sensitive issues.

2.15 Binod Khadria, Perveen Kumar ‘Immigrants and Immigration in India: A Fresh Approach’, published in Economic & Political Weekly.

In this article author emphasized that, India has been receiving large numbers of immigrants, mostly from the neighboring countries of South Asia, and some from other parts of the world, and hence she needs to be seen as a major immigration country. The article provides a detailed discussion of the problems and concerns of cross-border migrants, and India’s policy stance in dealing with immigration. It argues that India needs to differentiate between the stocks and the flows of its immigrant population. Also, it would no doubt be in the larger interests of the country to control the unabated flows of migrants from across the borders and minimize their ergative effects, but one must not lose sight of the components of a humane migration policy, including investment in the human capital of the migrant population.

In this article, writer provides a detailed discussion of the problems and concerns of the immigrant population, especially the cross-border migrants, and India’s policy stance in dealing with immigration. We argue that India needs to differentiate between the stocks and the flows of its immigrant population. Even as it would no doubt be in the larger interests of the country to control the unabated flows of migrants from across the borders and minimize their negative effects, policymakers must also recognize potential avenues to tap the positive contribution of immigrants. In particular, we recommend investment in the human capital of the migrant population.

2.16 Dinesh Kotwal, 'The Contours of Assam Insurgency' online published an article on www.idsa-india.org, referred 20th march 2015.²⁰

In this article author emphasized that, Assam has unexpectedly undergone a spate of violence. There had been quite a perceptible change in the situation in the period between April and September 2000. But the ULFA specter returned for the worst, when over 200 non-Assamese were killed between October and December 2000. The ULFA emerged from the All Assam Students Union anti-immigrant agitation that began in 1979. The rise of ULFA is linked with the coming of the AGP government to power. But in recent times ULFA suffered a sharp decline. Whatever sympathy the ULFA had till 1998 evaporated following its declaration during the Kargil war that the Pakistani infiltrators were 'freedom fighters'. Moreover, Bangladesh and Bhutan have expressed willingness to cooperate with the government of India to dislodge the militants from their territory. What is most alarming in the whole scenario is the rise of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) supported Islamic militancy in the state.²¹

"The dastardly killing of as many as 16 innocent persons at Naoholia and Kakojan on October 22 was actually the execution of a diabolic plan of the ULFA. It is perhaps for the first time that the ULFA has acted like the Kashmiri terrorists by mowing down innocent villagers. But this in no way is justification for any rational human being in Assam to believe the ULFA that it was not behind the killings. On the contrary, one tends to believe that the ULFA is condemned to taking to this type of dastardly killings after it has been made literally to run for cover from public disdain." The Sentinel, Guwahati, October 28, 2000.²²

2.17 Sir Edward Gait, 'History of Assam', Pragun Publications (2012)²³

This historic book speaks about the early history of the people of Jaintia is as obscure as that of the Kacharis, The dominions of the Rajas of Jaintia included two entirely distinct tracts of country, namely, the Jaintia hills, which are inhabited by a Khasi tribe called Synteng, and the plains country, south of these hills and north of the Barak River, in the Sylhet district, now known as the Jaintia parganas, the inhabitants of which are Bengali Hindus and Muhammadans. The former tract was

the original home of the dynasty. The latter was a later annexation, but it was this area which first bore the name of Jaintia, and which is mentioned in Pauranic and Tantrik literature as containing one of the fifty-one famous shrines sacred to Durga. There is practically no difference between the inhabit-Origin of ants of the Khasi, and those of the Jaintia, hills. They are Khasis both of the same physical type, and they speak the same lan-Syntengs. Guage-Khasi-which is remarkable as being the only surviving dialect in India, excluding Burma, of the Mon-Khmer family of languages. As stated elsewhere, dialects of this linguistic family are believed to have been spoken by the earliest Mongolian invaders of India, and at one time they were probably current over a considerable area. The evidence of philology, therefore, suggests the hypothesis that the Khasis and Syntengs are a remnant of the first Mongolian overflow into India, who established themselves in their present habitat at a very remote period, and who, owing to their isolated position, maintained their independence.

2.18 Sanjib Baruah, 'India Against Itself Assam and the Politics of Nationality,'²⁴

This book, meticulously researched in the history of sub-nationalism and cultural politics in northeast India, is the best critique of general theories of agonistic democracy. In this context author emphasized that, the failing states and ethnic conflict, violent challenges from dissenting groups in the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, several African countries, and India give cause for grave concern in much of the world. And it is in India where some of the most turbulent of these clashes have been taking place. One resulted in the creation of Pakistan, and militant separatist movements flourish in Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Assam. In India against Itself, author focuses on the insurgency in Assam in order to explore the politics of sub-nationalism.

Author offers a bold and lucid interpretation of the political and economic history of Assam from the time it became a part of British India and a leading tea-producing region in the nineteenth century. He traces the history of tensions between pan-Indian nationalism Assamese sub-nationalism. The region's insurgencies, human rights abuses by government security forces and insurgents, ethnic violence, and a steady slide toward illiberal democracy, he argues, are largely due to India's formally federal, but actually centralized governmental structure. Author argues that in

multiethnic polities, loose federations not only make better democracies, in the era of globalization they make more economic sense as well.

This challenging and accessible work addresses a pressing contemporary problem with broad relevance for the history of nationality while offering an important contribution to the study of ethnic conflict. A native of northeast India, Baruah draws on a combination of scholarly research, political engagement, and an insider's knowledge of Assamese culture and society.

2.19 Goswami Sandhya, 'Changing trends of electoral politics' (2012)²⁵

This book speaks about the Assembly elections 2011 in Assam which made political history. The incumbent Congress government headed by Tarun Gogoi, like that of his predecessor Bimala Prasad Chaliha, managed to win a third term, that too with a thumping majority, a rare achievement since 'anti-incumbency' in the states in India is more often the norm. This paper examines certain crucial questions which arise from the election results during the last three decades in the state. Has the context of electoral politics in Assam changed today? Is there a revival in the electoral fortunes of the Congress party? Have these gains been earned by the party itself? A review of the exiting socio-cultural scenario in the state might help us better understand these questions.

2.20 Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, 'Aspiration for the Ethnic Identity, Social Formation and Nation Building with special reference to North East India, Dept. of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, March 26-27, 2007.²⁶

A Paper presented at the Seminar on 'Aspiration for Ethnic identity- Evolved or Created a questions asked in the context of Assam'. In this article author emphasized that the Assam is the homeland of different ethnic groups with a variety of cultures and speaking different languages and dialects. Many scholars consider it the melting pot of diverse races, castes, religions, languages and cultures. Inter-ethnic conflicts and struggle for identity among the ethnic groups too are not new but a frequently occurring phenomenon. However, such conflicts have become more common and all pervading at present. It is to a great extent, due to over politicisation of the factors composing the ethnic identities. Politicisation takes place at two levels- on one level, politicisation of people's cultural, linguistic and most importantly ethnic

sentiments resulting in ethnic conflicts and at another level, politicisation by the decision makers as part of their efforts to find a solution to the conflict. This paper tries to focus on these two aspects of politicisation that is playing a pivotal role in making the identity crises and conflicts an enduring phenomenon in Assam.

2.21 Other / Literature Review (Related study area)

Similarly A considerable amount of work has been done in this related field. Some of them are-

- 2.21.1 Dr. Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharjee's Role of Scheduled Tribes in the Assam Legislative Assembly since 1972. (Ph.D. Thesis submitted to North Bengal University, Siligury, 2000.)
- 2.21.2 Dr. K.C. Dutta's The Bodo Movement and its impact on the politics of Assam. (Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Gauhati University, Guwahati, 2001.)
- 2.21.3 Dr. P.S. Reddy's The working of the Sixth Schedule in North East India. (Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Gauhati University, Guwahati, 1976.)
- 2.21.4 Dr. Subungsa Mushahary's Bodoland Movement: A Study in the Ethnicity and Political Movement among the Bodos of Assam from 1967 to 1997. (Ph.D. Thesis submitted to Gauhati University, Guwahati, 2005.)
- 2.21.5 Madan Chandra Paul's Dimensions of Tribal Movements in India-A Study of Udayachal in Assam Valley (Inter-India Publications, New Delhi: 1989)

2.22 Theoretical Base:

The different social movements which are there today are alternative social movements, Reformative Social movements, Transformative Social Movements, Reactionary Social Movements. Assam movement can be explained applying different perspective to Assam movement. Various writers of social movement had viewed Assam movement from various angles some considered as a movement by upper caste Assamese people.

2.23 Theory of Class Approach:

Karl Marx is the exponent of the Theory of Class Approach. A class character in the movement. Monirul Hussain in his book “The Assam Movement Class, Ideology and Identity”²⁷ and Amalendu Guha in his article “Little Nationalism Turned Chauvinist”²⁸ explained the class character of Assam movement. They tried to explain how the Assam movement was a movement against the resource exploitation of central government of India. Middle class considered The Assam movement as a movement for the benefit of the Assamese educated middle class. In this approach class factor is explained in the Assam movement. The independent democratic structure of Assamese society was favorable to apply this theory. We can see that the identity of Assamese people in crisis due to the exploitation of resources by the center, its step motherly attitude and large scale migration of outsider which gave a structural strain among the Assamese people.

2.24 Theory of Relative deprivation:

The Assam movement can be explained in terms of the theory of Relative deprivation. This theory explains that those people who are deprived of good service or comfort are more likely to organize a social movement to improve their conditions. This theory explains two perspectives, one is institutional perspective and other is individual. This theory can explain Assam movement at individual level and at institutional level. It explains the nature, scope, causes, leadership support base of the movement. New angles of study to Assam movement are opened.

2.25 Theory of Structural Conduciveness:

Next theory of Social Movements is the theory of Structural Conduciveness. This theory is propounded by Neil J. Smellser. It is been seen that all those six condition which are been given by Smellser in his theory are found in Assam .The independent democratic structure of Assamese society was favorable to apply that the identity of Assamese exploitation of resources by the center, its step motherly attitude and large scale migration of outsiders which gave a structural strain among the Assamese people.

There is no specialized books on the issue of political crises in general and leadership crises in particular, but there are several books on related area like illegal

migration such as P. K. Mahanta, “The Tussle Between The Citizens And Foreigners In Assam”,²⁹ and ‘The Assam Movement’,³⁰, 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 review has been taken for the 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. Bijan Kumar Kunda, in his “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.

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Chapter - III

Overview of Assam State

3.1 Introduction:

Assam society is plural in character which shows that besides the main sections of the indigenous Assamese people, there are other sections having diverse faith, language, culture and way of life. This complexity and diversity of the people compounded by the uneven development of different section of society that has been the major factor responsible for the growth of ethnic consciousness leading to the demand for preservation of identity of each group of people. This identity consciousness has led to the crisis and conflicts in the social life of Assam, demanding either more autonomy or at times statehood.

3.2 Profile of Assam:

To understand the society and politics of Assam, one must take into account the geographical location as well as the historical background of the state. Assam is known by different names in the Epic, Puranic and early historical literature. It is mentioned as Prag Jyotisha in both the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata Prag Jyotisha included not only the whole of Assam and the parts of East Bengal and north but also the hill tracks up to the border of China. It is known for the first time as Kamrupa in Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupt (4th Century A.D.) and in the early Puranas. The territory is called 'Asham' in the Ain-I-Akbari and Assam in the Padshanam and the same name was applied by Francis Hamilton in his Account of Assam compiled during 1807 to 1808.

Assam is apparently the English form of 'Asam'.¹ Assam, known in ancient lore as Kampura, originally included in addition to modern Assam, parts of Modern Bengal and Bangladesh. Guuhati the pulsating center of Assam is an ancient town whose history goes back to Puranic days. The city anciently known as Prag jotishpur, was set to have been founded by Narakasur. In the 13th century this country was conquered by the Ahoms, under the leadership of Sukapha, a prince of the Shan tribe who ruled over Assam for 600 years. The advent of Ahom changed the course of Assam history. The Ahom kings had to fight with the Mughlas. The Mughals under

Nawaz, Mirjumla advanced in 1662 as far as to Gargaon, the Capital of the kingdom. But in 1682, and the Ahom under the leadership of Lachit Burphukan were able to expel the Mughal from the state. In 1817 the Burmese appeared in the scene in the Anglo-Burmese war the British troops were able to expel the Burmese from the soil of Assam. Through the famous treaty of Yanadaboo signed on Feb 26, 1826 between the British and King Awa, Assam was brought under the rule of British. In 1874 a separate province of Assam under the Chief Commissioner was created with Shilong as capital. On the partition of Bengal in 1905 east Bengal and Assam were formed into one province and Deccaas as its capital under Lt. Governor. These arrangements were abounded in 1912 due to strong public protest against merging Assam with East Bengal.² On the eve of the independence of India Assam was picked to the category of 'C' under Grouping Plan, of the British government which ultimately would have led Assam to the inclusion of Pakistan.

The people of Assam strongly protested of grouping into 'C' category and due to the timely interference of Mahatma Gandhi Assam was saved from being included into Pakistan. However in China se partition of India the whole of predominantly Muslim district of Sylhet was transferred to the East Pakistan under referendum. Assam lost a good deal of its formal territory, as a result of Political changes from time to time. In 1948, the North-East frontier agency of Assam (NEFA) was separated from Assam and later on made a separate full-fledged state known as Arunachal Pradesh. In Nagaland was curved out of Assam as a full-fledged state.

In 1972 Meghalaya was curved out of Assam as a separate state and thereafter Mizoram was curved out of Assam and made a separate state. These new separate has to be curved out of Assam in order to satisfy the political aspiration of the tribal people like the Nagas, the Luchais, the Garos, the Khasis and Gentians including those of Arunachal Pradesh.³ Assam is located in the far north east part of the country. The area of the state is 78, 523 sq km as against the country's total area of 3,280,483 sqkm. Thus the state constitutes 2.39% population of the total land area of the country. The Population of Assam is 31,169,272 as per 2011 census. Assam is situated at the north eastern Himalayan sub-regions of India. The state is surrounded by Bangladesh on the west and the south and is very near to Burma (Myanmar) on the east and to Tibet, Bhutan and China on the north. Internal the state has common

boundary within Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh.⁴

Assam plains comprising the plain areas of various plain districts which are 22 in number such as Golpara, Dhubri, Kokragar, Bongigaon, Kamrup ? (city, Kamrup rural Barpeta, Nalbari, Darang, Sonitpur, Dhemegi, Marigaon. Nagaon, Goalghat, Jort, Pinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sipsagar and Lakhimpur in the Bhimputra Valley) and in the Surma (Barak) Valley in the plain districts ate Cachar, Karimganj Hailakandi. Assam's hill comprises of two districts, namely, the Karbi-Angolam district and the North Cachar Hills district. Thus, the Brahmaputra valley comprising of 19 districts of plain areas and two districts of hill area of 71,582 square kilometers and the Barak valley comprising three districts has an area of 6,941 square kilometers. The Brahmaputra is the main major river of Assam which links all the plain districts excepting the districts of the Barak valley and it has flown down through Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal. The major river Barak is flowing through the districts of Cachar and Karimganj. The population of Assam is composed of heterogeneous elements of different races, castes, languages and cultures. This diversity led to the growth of diverse social institutions such as, the Bihu which is popularly observed by the Assamese Hindu people and also observed by the Muslims etc. communities including the tribal people.

There are different types of tribal population faiths .Every tribe has its own peculiarities and peculiar social institution. Now days it is observed that the old type of static society is a fat disintegrating in Assam and anew society with modern outlook is emerging which has influence in determining the life and shapes of the economy and social system oh the people of the state.⁵

3.3 Socio-economic Profile:

Table No.1

Population of Assam: Assam population as per Census Year 1951-2011.

Census Year	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Total Population in Assam	8029505	11872771	14957542		22414322	26655528	
% to total population of India	7.38	15.64	9.97		10.85	10.23	

*Source: Election Department, Government of Assam

*Note: Because of the disruption caused by the Assam agitation, the 1981 census could not be held in Assam.

The society of Assam consists of social groups having diverse, religion culture, languages and ways of life. Successive waves of migration at different times and from different directions (that is, China, India, Burma and Tibet) since ancient times made the population of Assam diverse with a multiplicity of race, religion and culture.

3.3.1 The Hindus:

Assam is called a Mini-India having the replica of plural social trait of Indian Society. The Assamese nationality is composed of caste Hindu Assamese like Ahjoms, Koch-Rajbongshis, Morans, Chtiya, Deuris, Kacharis and Muslims. In addition, the black-tribal of Assam's tea plantation, Sikhs, Bohists and a few Bengali and Marwari families have become part and parcel of Assamese nationality.⁶ It may be mentioned that among the caste Hindu Assamese, Brahmins are few in number and Kalitas are large in number. Though the Kalitas are large in number, the society is dominated by the Brahmins because they are intellectual and the means of production are mostly controlled by them.

3.3.2 The Muslims:

The Muslims started to come in Assam since Muhammed-Bin-Bakhtiar attacked Kampur (Assam) in 1206 A.D. but he was defeated. His second attack was in 1227A.D. The Commander-in-Chief was Ewaz Khan who went up to Nowgong district, the central part of Assam. In the same year Nasiruddin attacked Kmapur and defeated the King Prethu. In this way Muslims came as invaders, some of them were defeated while others could establish their rule in some parts of Assam especially in Hajo. Thus, some Muslims remained willingly while others remained as captives. They got mixed up with local Assamese people and married their girls to live there permanently. Muslims, thus, entered Assam as conquerors, administrators, preachers and invites of the local kings. Most of them settled in Assam permanently.

In order to increase revenues and taxes and also for administration , the British Government brought some literate Bengali Hindu to different posts, poor laborers for tea cultivation and Bengali Muslims, for Jute cultivation in Assam. Almost all the

Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims were from Bengal .A few of them came from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, With the beginning of 20th century , it was seen that there was the Bengali galore in the state of Assam in various fields of administration, railway ,post office law, teaching and primary medicine. The British Government encouraged them to settle in Assam permanently at that time Assam was very thinly populated. Local Assamese were not sufficient and well up for the different purposes of the British government. Muslims of East Bengal were expert in cultivation. The soil of Assam was very fertile, where varieties of crops were expected to produce. There were thousands of acres of wasteland in Assam, so, Bengali Muslims cultivators were invited by the British government to settle in Assam for cultivation,. The government gave allotment of khas land to them. These opportunities attracted Muslims of Bengal to migrate to Assam. In this way the Muslims of Bengal started to come to Assam for permanent settlement, like the Hindus.

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.⁷ 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.⁸

The government of Assam not only encouraged Muslims cultivators by giving them railway concessions, but also by providing them 'family ticket' of rupees fie for the entire family to come directly from Mymen Shingh to Nowgong district in Assam It is worth mentioning that in order to check the influx of the Muslims form East Bengal a new device was evolved in 1916 by the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong. This new device is known as the 'Line System' and the system was introduced first in

the district of Nowogng in 1920. The 'Line system' meant that the Muslims coming from East Bengal were not allowed to settle beyond a line drawn by the government. During the second term of the Premiership of Sir Mohammed Sadullah the 'Line System'⁹ was abolished in 1940. In the meantime there was shortage of food in some provinces of India during 1942-43. Under the scheme of 'Grow More Food' Sadaullah Ministry of Assam in its second term again invited Muslims cultivators of East Bengal to come top Assam, to settle at the government waste land and to grow more food .Thus, a new process of immigration started in Assam. The influx of the Bengali Muslims from east Bengal to Assam virtually ended with the attainment of independence and the partition of India.¹⁰

3.3.2.1 Muslims of Assam can be categories in to three groups:

1. Graia, Maria and other contemporary Muslims.
2. Assam origin Muslims or local converted Muslims
3. Miyan Muslims or migrated Muslims of Bengal

The word 'Graia' is related to Muslims of Assam .A good number of Muslims in Assam is commonly known as 'Garias'. The word Garia is derived from the word 'Gour', the capital of the Sulktans of Bengal. Muslims who came from ancient 'Gour' (Bengal) to Assam were popularly known as: Gouria'. Later on they came to be known as 'Garia'. According to Sir Edward Gait, :the ordinary Muhammedians of Assam call themselves 'Garia', an indication of their claim to have come originally from 'Gour' , the ancient Muhammadian capital of Bengal",¹¹ 'Marias' as section of Muslims of Gour origin are known as 'Maria' because they specialize in making brass and articles of brass. According to the Assamese dictionary, 'Hema Kosh', Maria means-: a class of Muhammadians who has been derived from an Assamese word 'Mar or 'Mariua' means "to beat or to strike with a stick". They have their own language but gradually they assimilated with Assamese. Kalibar of Nowgong districts of Assam was their place of Settlement. According to the Census report 1991.¹²

There are 55 villages of Maria Muslims in Assam. They are economically very poor in comparison to other communities in Assam. The government of Assam, therefore, categorized them as most other backward community in Assam. With the advent of Muslims in Assam the process of Islamisation had started. Many Peer, Ghazi, Aulia, Dorbash, Saint, Preacher and propagator also entered in Assam. Their

aims and purposes were to propagate Islam among the non-Muslims. Existing caste system in Hindu society and contemporary social conditions had permitted low caste Hindus and tribal to accept the religion Islam. Thus, many local people of Hindu origin were converted to Islam. Through they were converted Muslims but they retained Assamese language, culture and way of life. So, it is very difficult to find out a difference between an Assamese Hindu and an Assamese origin Muslims excepting their religion. Shahabuddin Talish, a famous historian, who came to Assam at the time of Mirjumla, wrote that, "As for Musalmans who had been taken prisoners in former times and had chosen to merry here, their descendants act exactly in the manner of the Assamese and had nothing of Islam except the name; their hearts are inclined far more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards associations with the Muslims".¹³ There was another kind of Muslims known as the Miya Muslims or migrated Muslims of Bengal. These Muslims who were poor cultivators in East Bengal had migrated to Assam for economic reasons. As that very expert in Jute cultivation the local Assamese also welcomed and embraced them, calling Tahem, Miyan, 'Miya' means 'gentlemen' or middlemen'. They had their way of life similar to the Bengali culture and Bangla was their mother tongue. They he settle in the Brahmaputra valley, particularly the 'Char' areas of Assam Since 1951 census they have accepted Assamese as their mother tongue.¹⁴

They have settle in the Brahmaputra valley, particularly the 'Char' areas of Assam Since 1951 census they have accepted Assamese as their mother tongue. Today the Assamese language is in majority because of the acceptance of the language as mother tongue by the immigrants Muslims. The immigrant Muslims have contributed a lot to the development of Assamese language and culture. But in spite of that they have become targets of harassment in the name of foreigners in the state of Assam.¹⁵ The growing number of the immigrant Muslims has been taken as a threat by the indigenous Assamese people to their socio- economic and political life. It is a fact that the Muslims of Assam have been the balancing factor in the political power of the state as in the Legislative House of Assam, out of 126 seats; the Muslims have occupied as many as 26 seats. And in some 40 assembly Constituency the Muslims voters determined the fate of the contesting candidate. Moreover, out of 2 Lok Sabha seats namely Barpeta and Dhubri have been occupied by two members of the Muslim community. And in five Parliamentary constituencies (L S) the Muslims voters decide

the fate of the contesting candidate. in view of this, the, Muslims of Assam particularly the immigrant Muslims have become targets of constant attack by the indigenous Assamese people .The Muslims have forced certain organization in order to protect their constitutional rights. The All Assam Minorities students Union (AAMSU),Minorities intelligentsia Forum, Assam (MIFA), The Citizen Rights Preservation committee (C.R.P.C), the All Assam Minorities Yuba Parishad (AAMYP) ,the Jami at Ulema-e-Hind all these non-political organizations have been working for the interest of the Muslim of Assam.

3.3.2.2 District wise Muslim population of Assam in 1874.¹⁶

Table No.2
District wise Muslim population of Assam in 1874

Name of the 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

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.

The Muslims population in Assam has risen to 30.43% of the total population of the state as per 2001 census .The Muslims of Assam are of three categories in view of their culture, language and ways of life. The indigenous Assamese Muslims who are original resident in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam are having similarities in respect of their language, culture and ways of life with the indigenous Assamese Hindus people who speak Assamese language. The second group of the Muslims population lives in the Barak valley of Assam whose mother language is Bengali and having affinity with Bengali culture and ways of life.

The third group of the Muslims who have migrated from the provinces of East-Bengal of undivided India (present Bangladesh) to the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam in the first part of the 20th century and settled down in that valley. Although their mother tongue was Bengali but since 1951 census they have recorded their mother tongue as Assamese but still they maintain Bengali culture and ways of life. The immigrant Muslims of Assam are the largest group among the Muslims population of the state. It may be said that the immigrant Muslims of Assam have contributed a lot to the development of the Assamese language as it is who have kept Assamese language as majority in the state. In addition Hinduism and Islam, there are small groups following Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity and also Jainism. Though, they are not a very large group, they have added to the variety in Assam's demographic composition and richness of culture. In addition to those religious groups of Assam, there are several tribal and ethnic groups of people in the state. ¹⁷

3.3.3 The Nepalis:

There is sizable number of Nepali populations in Assam. The Nepal by religion is Hindus but by race and culture they are tied to Nepal in origin. Their fore-fathers have come to Assam from Nepal and Bhutan and have permanently settled in the state of Assam. They speak Nepali language at home though they have accepted the Assamese as their mother tongue. It is fact that though they have accepted Assamese as mother tongue yet than maintain their own identity as Nepali. They are predominantly inhabited in certain districts of Assam like Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemji, Tinisukia etc. At present there is one member of this community having been elected from the Tezpur Parliamentary constituency (Lok Sabha) of the Indian parliament. He is Mr. Moni Kumar Subha. Besides him there are few members of the

Assam Legislative assembly representing this community. There is less conflict between them and the indigenous Assamese people except on the issues of foreign nationals. It has been alleged that many Nepalis have entered Assam without the 'restricted ate permits' either from Nepal or Bhutan. The Nepalis were also made targets of attack during the Assam movement. In order to safeguard their constitutional rights the Nepalis have formed organization named as the All India Immigrant Nepali Association (AIENA). The Nepali students of Assamese their own organization, which is known as the Assam Nepali students union (ANSU) working for the interest of the Nepali people of Assam.¹⁸

There is another ethnic group in Assam, though small in number, have recently added a new dimension to the identity crisis in the state .This group is known as Santhals. They inhabitant in the district of Kokrajarah of Assam. They owe their origin to the tribal people of Jharkhand state mainly .In their bid to preserve their racial identity they are opposing the creation of the Bodo territorial area district council. Sri.Mithius Todo, is the alone member of the Assam legislative assembly representing this community. He is at present holding the cabinet Rank minister of revenue in the Torun Gogoi Ministry.

3.3.4 The Tribal:

The different tribal groups of Assam are an inseparable part of the greater Assamese society. Moreover they have a significant role in the politics of Assam. At present there are al-together 23 trial groups distinctively different from other having been recognized by the government. They may be divided into two groups-A the plain tribes and B the hill tribes. The plain tribes include; Bodo, the Missings, the Rabhas, the Deoris, the Sonowal Kacharis, the Tiwas, the Barmans, the Hajoi and the Mech. The Hill Tribe Include are known as the Dimasa, the Karbis, the Garoes, the Hjongs, the Hakmas, the Hmars, the Lakher, the Mann, the Mizos, the Ppai, the Chintang, the Nagas and their 22 groups, the Kukis and their 37 groups and the Khasis and their groups. All together there are 6 groups in the hill tribes but the Karbis and the Dimasa are the main hill tribe groups.¹⁹ The schedule tribe's population in the state of Assam as per 1971 census is given as below:

Table No. 3**Tribe wise Population of Assam (As per 1971 and 2001 Census)**²⁰

Name of the tribe	2001	1971
Bodo Kacahris	1267015	6,10,459
Kachari including	13378	1,93,619
Sonowal	251725	2,59,551
Missing /Miri	477790	1,38,630
Rabha	236931	95,609
Tiwa/Lalung	143746	23,080
Deuri	35849	964
Man (Tai Speaking)	2582	13,210
Marman of Cacher	-	395
Chakma	4187	39,342
Dimasa	65009	9,139
Garo	17998	6,487
Khasi, Jinta/Synteng etc.	11358	386
Hajong	1638	5,380
Hmar	11189	2,298
Hojai	4582	13, 524
Kuki	21883	2,570
Mech	6738	1,77,194
Karbi/Mikir	285811	8,481
Naga	15354	1,329

Source: As per 1971 and 2001 Census²⁰**Table No.4****Scheduled tribes Population and Percentage of the Scheduled tribes to the total Population of Assam as per Census Year 1951-2001.**²¹

Census Year	Total Population in Assam	Total ST population	% to total population	Total ST (P) population	% to total population	Total ST (H) population	% to total population
2001	26655528	3308570	12.41	2717179	10.23	581391	2.18
1991	22414322	2874441	12.82	2433889	10.85	4440552	1.96
1971	14957542	1919947	12.84	1464590	9.97	455357	3.04
1961	11872771	2068364	17.42	11857033	15.64	211331	1.77
1951	8029505	1867113	23.25	593095	7.38	127418	15.85

Source: Election Department, Government of Assam

*Note: Because of the disruption caused by the Assam agitation, the 1981 census could not be held in Assam.

It means that Assam had a tribal population of 16, 06,648 and their percentage in the total population as 11% as per 1971 census. But as per 1991 census report, the schedules tribes' population has gone up to 2,874,441 and their percentage in the total

population is 12.83%.As per 9171 census report, growth percentage was 10.99% and as per 1991 census, it has come up to 12.83%, so, the percentage of decadal growth is 1.84%. In the plain tribes, the Bodos, the Missing's, the Sonowals , the Rabahs and the Towas have demographically occupied the first , second , third ,fourth and fifth position respectively. These tribes stand at uneven levels in relation to one another in terms of social, cultural political and economic development. Besides, their level of assimilation with and exclusion from the Asamiya also vary drastically .For example, the Sonowals and the Meches of upper Assam have completely assimilated and identified with the Asamiya.

The bodos have developed their language in devnagari script which is now the medium of instruction up to the secondary school level in the bodo dominated are. The missing have very recently adopted the roman script for the developing their language .From 1986, the missing language has been introduced at the primary level in the missing dominated area. Besides the Deoris, Tiwas and the Rabhas have adopted the Asamiyas' script for developing their respective language. Though, some of the plains tribal have become very conscious about their distinct identity and language .it must be admitted honestly that t all of them have been contributing very significantly to enrich the composite Asamiya culture, language literature arts and nationality. The late Nishnuprashad Rabha, a tribal communist leader, became a towering figure in the modern Asamiya culture and theatre. Medini Choudhary a bodo tribal, contributed very remarkably to the enriching of modern Asamiya literature.²²

3.4 Emergence of new Labor classes as a force in Assam Politics

One of the important things that Assam received from the British colonialism was the tea plantation. The British rule tried to exploit Assam economically to the maximum Their Mother country England had tea and export to the imperialist were looking to start their own plantation in their colonies. They found Assam physically the most suitable regions for growing tea plants on a large scale. This was obviously a gigantic task but they became successful in this respect as soon Assam became one of the tea producers in the world. For the massive tea plantation the British needed a strong labor force. As the local indigoes Assamese people were not willing to work in the tea plantation field, so, they had to import tea labor from outside Assam. As are cult of it a new and distinct social group of tea-laborers belonging to the various tribes

from outside Assam emerged in Assam. According to colonial historians Gait the population of tea-labor in 1921 was 1.3 million or one sixth of total population of Assam 1905:362). Obviously they were the most oppressed social group in colonial Assam. Though slavery was abolished in 1843 a new form of slavery emerged in tea estates where tea laborers were treated like slaves by their plant masters. Though the Asamiya masses did not benefit much from the tea plantation, quite a few got middle class jobs in the plantation as babus.

The laborers had an almost slave status in their states and were separated from the indigenous Asamiya and their own kinsmen working in other tea estates. The Christian Missionaries took the advantage of it and entered the tea garden area to serve this backward people by opening schools, dispensaries etc. But their ultimate aim was to propagate their religion Christianity as result of it we find many tea garden laborers accepting Christianity. During the freedom struggle movement the tea laborers were forced to confine themselves to their estates and thus, remained isolated from the main stream Assamese people .this severally hampered the process of assimilating and integration with the Asamiya masses. The tea plantation added a new element and complexity in the composition of social group of Assam in respect of number; the tea laborers have occupied the third position of the population demographically of Assam and have been playing a vital role in the power politics of Assam. Out of 14 parliamentary constituencies of Assam one seat i.e. the Dibrugarh Lok Sabha seat has been occupied by Sri Poban Singh Ghatowar, who belongs to the tea- tribe community of Assam. Besides the speaker of the state legislative assembly Mr.Prathi Majhi also belongs to the tea tribe community.

There are a good number of members representing this community in the Assamiya .The tea laborers have been inhabitation in upper and central district and also in the Cachar district from the state like Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, etc. So, they still maintain a distinct cultural identity like the people of those areas .the tea laborers of Assam have been classified as the other backward class (OBC), But they are not satisfied with this, they are demanding the schedule tribes status (ST) There are some organization like Assam tea tribe association, Assam, Tea tribe students association Assam, Chah Majdorr Sangh etc.

3.5 Dominant Role of Assamese middle class in Assam Politics

India got independence in 1947 and the British colonialism collapsed officially in the working for the interest of the tea people of Assam.²³ Indian sub-continent, however the hegemony of imperialism continued in Assam through their control over the oil and tea industry in Assam. Due to their divide and rule policy, the British succeeded in dividing the people and the county, India became divide into India and Pakistan As a result of partition, Assam lost the Bengali and Muslims dominated Sylhet district to east Pakistan. As result, for the first time the Assamese became the majority group in Assam. The Bengali and the Muslims lost their size in number and suffered frustrating the tribal, groups, both plain the hills continued to remain backward and also the non-castes group like Koch-Rajbagshis remained backward in such situation the Asamiya middle class began dominating the state politics.

In the post-colonial phase the Nagas, Mozos and Khasi tribal emerged with their demands for separate statehood and they got Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur. These small educated tribal; groups were very much conscious of their distinct identity. Due to the oppression of non- tribal, the insurgency and secessionist tendencies of those tribes have not died down even today. In order to meet the aspiration of the hill tribal, the constitution of India granted some autonomy in the form of autonomous district council under the 6th schedule. Accordingly major hill tribal's - the Nagas, Mizos, Garoes Karbis and Dimasa –Kacharis got limited autonomy. Among these groups only Karbi and DimasaKacahri dominated KarbiAngolong and North Cachher Hill Districts decided to stay with Assam.²⁴

The plain tribes of Assam have been sharing their homeland, (the Brahmaputra Valley) with the Assamese. The Assamese ruling class has been successfully keeping away the plains tribal from the limited benefits. The tribal of plain have been deprived of all the benefits of autonomy regarding the constitutional safeguard, they also have been deprived.

Rhea Bodos are technically the first group of people to have been entered and settles down in the plains of Assam. The rate of growth of population in Assam has been much higher than that of the India's average. In 1921, when the growth of population rate was negative for India, Assam had a high rate of growth that is

20.47%. And the gap of growth between India and Assam was 20.77%. The population was increasing in all districts and the three major regions.

The Brahmaputra Valley, the Barak Valley, and the Hill area. Significantly, in hill areas, the population increases at a higher rate than that of both the valley. Except the district of Sibsagar, other districts in the Brahmaputra Valley have recorded much higher growth rates ranging between 35% to 45%. The Goalpara district, near Bangladesh and West Bengal, has shown the highest rate for the period 1961-1971.²⁵ Darrang district also had recorded its growth around 40%. The Bengali-dominated Barak valley was largely equal to the all India average regarding the growth rate. It is argued that the population of Assam increased at an abnormal rate only because of the influx of foreigners from Bangladesh and Nepal. The majority of people living in Assam are highly oppressed and poverty-ridden. To control the higher population growth, we have to try to minimize the number of people living below the poverty line.²⁶

The growth of population has affected the state only due to the absence of proper industrialization. The density of population has also increased in Assam. According to the 1991 census, the density of population in Assam was 286 as against the all India average of per square km. The density in hills is still low, that is between 17 to 37 persons per square km. But regarding the Brahmaputra Valley, it would be much higher than the all India average.

The rapid growth of population has increased the pressure on land. Among all the districts of Assam, Nowgong ranks first regarding density of population which was 302 persons per square km. in 1971 and the other places are Kamrup (289), the Cachar (246), Goalpara (215), Sibsagar (204), Dibrugarh (201), Darrang (198), Lakhimpur (126) AND Karbi, Angolong (16). In 1991, density of population of Dhurbi district was highest per square km i.e., 470 persons and the lowest was recorded in North Cachar district i.e., 31 person per square km.²⁷

One may imagine that Assam's average size of land holding is only 1.47 hectare, the per capita cultivable land is only 0.19 hectares, and the per capita net sown area is only 0.9 hectares against the all India average of 2.30, 0.32 and 1.8 hectares respectively. All these show severe pressure on land. Much more pressure on land is there only because of the slow rate of industrialization, urbanization and non-

application of modern technology in agriculture. The Indian state adopted the path of development for the country is capitalist in nature because private capitalists were given the significant role in modernizing the economy, which created severe regional disparities. For that matter, Assam has remained a de in India and also pressed region. Assam it is a strategically sensitive region, stands near the border of four foreign countries like; China Bhutan Bangladesh and Burma (Myanmar) with political disturbances, perennial flood and under development of roads, railway, power, communication and institutional facilities has failed to pave the way for economic development .though, the state has rich water, mineral resources and forest but still it remain agriculturally and industrially backward. The economy of Assam predominantly is based on agriculture. According to 1971 census 55.86% people engaged as cultivators, 9, 92% as agricultural laborers and 10.91% as workers were engaged in plantation.

Assam has a problem of perennial floods caused by Brahmaputra and other rivers. Thus more than this; one may say that the failure to control the Brahmaputra has kept Assam agriculturally backward. Fertilizers are also playing an important role but due to its low consumption the agricultural sector also remained very low as compared to Indian agricultural situation.²⁸ In order to understand the economic situation of Assam, it is necessary to look into e development of the industrial sector in addition to that of agriculture. Though oil (petroleum) industry and the plywood industry have some growth but tea is the major industry in Assam. The number of tea estates and the area covered by tea plantation has increased. It may be observed that the annual profit from the tea gardens of Assam is more than total annual revenue of Assam in several times .Though Assam produces about 55% of India's total production of tea, yet is deprived over benefits and share. In 1889 at Digboi Petroleum was first discovered accidentally and a refinery established there in 1908 which is the oldest in the country. As we are aware, India is dependent on imports in crude oil. Till 1977, Assam produced half the total crude oil produced in India and also produced half the total natural gas till 1979.The Government of India nationalized the Assam Oil Company and Oil India Limited in 1981. But the oil industry did not develop in Assam. Due to the agitation of the people of Assam, the government of India decided to establish a small refinery at Noonmati near Guwahati and another was established at Bongaigaon.

In 1998-1999, Assam produced about 16.0 percent of total petroleum crude (37.72 million tons) produced in India. In 1981, total production of these refineries was 15.7 lac tones and then it increased to 52.5 lacs tones in 1998. At present a total of 611 mills and factories including paper, match and plywood are running depending upon the forest production in the state.²⁹

3.6 State Politics of Assam:

In the context of the wider social matrix discussed in the earlier pages, it would be meaningful to highlight the salient features of Assamese politics since the formation of the state of Assam. The emergence of the most of the sub-regional movements is, in a way, direct result of the political processes determining the political interactions among the various political actors - both the individual and the institutional. Like, many other states, politics in Assam revolves mainly around the performance of the state government, the national and regional political parties in the state, the various groups and movements in the region. The politics of central government as well as the attitude of national political leaders greatly influence the political processes in Assam. Similarly extra- societal environmental of the Assamese political system also, some times, determines the course of political development in Assam. In order to make sense of the politics in Assam, it is necessary to take into of all these factors effectively.

An ideal meeting of ground of diverse sources, Assam gave shelter to different streams of human races carrying with them distinct cultures and trends of civilization. Astro-Asiatic, Negritos Dravidians, Alpines, Indo-Mongoloids, Tibeto-Burmese and Aryans penetrated in to Assam through different routes and contributed in their way towards the unique function of a new community which came to be known in the later history as the Assamese.³⁰

The present population of Assam composed of diverse religions, races and tiny groups. In the plain districts of Assam there are plain tribes such as, Bodo-Kacharies, the Missing, the Rabhas, the Lalungs, the Deoris, the Sonowal-Kacharies, and the Barman of Cacher. There are other groups like the Ahom, the Chutias, and the Koch-Rajbangsi's etc. Each of the groups mentioned in aspiring to maintain its own group identity which has landed Assam into another crisis of maintaining unity and integrity. The Bodos have been struggling for the Bodo Territorial Council. The other

groups have also demanded 'autonomy'. There are two hill districts in Assam namely the Karbi-Anglong and the North-Cacher hill district both at present having the District Council under the sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Due to the illegal foreigners' issue, Assam Movement was launched by All Assam Students Union (AASU) a student organization and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) IN 1979. It lasted for six years and in 1985, 'Assam Accord', was signed between the Government of India and Assam on the one hand and the AASU and the AAGSP on the other hand.

In this connection it may be mentioned that right from 1952 to 1978, Assam was ruled by the Indian National Congress. In 1978, the first non-congress government after independence came to power under the leadership of Golap Borbora, of the Janata Party. Thereafter the Janata Party Government led by Jatin Hazarika also was formed but in 1983, the Congress led by Hiteswar Saikia came to power. During 1983-1985, Assam saw a turbulent political upheaval against foreigners particularly the Bangladesh foreigners. With the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15 1985, the Saika Hiteswar Congress (I) Ministry has to resign and elections were held to the Assam Legislative Assembly. It may be mentioned that Assam has a unicameral legislature of 126 only. The agitators of Assam Movement- the ASSU and the AAGSP, soon after the accord formed a political party known as Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) with Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and Bhriku Kumar Phukan as president and secretary of it respectively.

After 1985 Assembly elections Assam Gana Parishad won the thumping majority and formed the AGP Government with Prafulla Kumar Mahanta as Chief Minister since December 1985. But they could not work up to the aspirations of the people and the law and order situation worsen during their regime. As a result, President Rule was imposed in Assam. In the general elections that were held in May 1991, the Indian National Congress (I) again got absolute majority and formed the government with Hiteswar Saika's as its Chief Minister. After the normal tenure of Hiteswar Saika's Government, the general elections to the Legislative Assembly were held in April 1996. The Assam Gana Parishad again formed the government with Prafulla Kumar Mahanta as its Chief Minister. But in 2001 elections AGP was defeated and again Congress (I) government came to power with Tarun Gogoi as its Chief Minister. Tarun Gogoi led the Congress (I) government is in power. There is no

doubt the existence of left forces in Assam and they have also relevance. It was evident from the fact, during the period of 1996 to 2001, the AGP had alliance of Government was in power with the support of CPI (M) and CPI, the Peoples' Party, though the CPI (M) extended its support from outside. After 1985, another regional political party was formed it was United Minority Front (UMF) under the leadership of Golam Osmani, a highly qualified person, who got barrister degree from London. Opposing Assam Accord it fought Assembly elections of 1985 and got 17 MLA's.³¹

The minority is an important factor in Assam Politics. The Pro and Anti-illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) (IMDT) Act of 1983 forces were active in Assam Politics. The national and regional forces have been working to popularize the national political parties like Congress (I), the CPI (M), the CPI, NCP, the Samta Party are active, while the AGP and UMF, all regional parties are also trying to gain support from the people.

3.7 The Assam Movement 1979-1985

The Assam Movements has its roots in history and society like other significant social movements. A social movement cannot emerge from a sudden, it emerges gradually. The Assam movement too, took a long time to take the shape of a social movement and this happened in the last part of 1979.

Prior to the elections of 1978 to the state legislature, the regional political parties like Assam Jatyatabadi Dal (AJD) and the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP) raised the issue of the outsiders in Assam and their threat to Assamese identity but failed to fine popular response.

The Mongoldai Parliamentary seat had fallen vacant due to the death of the Janata MP, Hiral Patwari, who died in March 1979 and the process of holding by-elections was started. As the revision electoral roll started some 70,000 complaints were lodged that a large number of person who have got their constitutional right to franchise are outsiders. All Assam Students Union (AASU) very successfully build up public opinion among the Assamese people that till the names of all foreign nationals were deleted from the electoral rolls, the by-elections to the Mongoldoi constituency should be postponed. With this issue the Assam Movement was begin. It should be noted that the issue of foreign national divided the people not only in the Mongoldoi

but gradually the entire Assam .The main cause behind this movement the problem of infiltration by illegal foreigners, mainly from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and Nepal and to a less extent from Bhutan and Burma. By November 1979, the Assam movement reached its peak and continued up to 1985. Within this period, the entire society of Assam was faced by unprecedented violence and lots of people were killed.³²

A Memorandum of Understanding known as Assam Accord 1985 was signed between the Government of India and the Leaders of the Movement in New Delhi on 15th August 1985, which led to an end of six years long struggle in Assam.

Moreover the Assamese need not feel feared by the outsiders if the latter try to maintain their identity in Assam. Kolkata, for instance there are people from many races and language of India but that has not frightened the Bengalis and they never think that the outsiders will be able to harm the Bengali culture, society and literature. The Assamese are suffering from an artificial crisis of identity. This is at the roots of many evils and tensions in Assam. It is to be born in the mind that to broaden the base of the Assamese society, they must learn to exist with the outsiders irrespective of their race, religion and language. Moreover the Assamese blame the outsiders for their backwardness. The tribal group of Assam, on the other hand are blaming the Assamese for their backwardness. These are the factors which are responsible for the unrest in Assam which has led to the demand of autonomy.³³

The leadership of Assam movement popularized the idea that the Assamese people are facing a serious threat to their identity due to the continuous illegal immigrants to Assam from Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma and Bhutan. The immigration of foreign nationals threatens the socio-economic, linguistic, political and cultural identity of the Assamese people. That is why the Assamese people are suffering from identity crisis. Identity crisis today has become a phobia in a section of Assamese people. It is necessary that the other side of the coin has also to be looked into. The social structure of Assam needs to be revised closely. Even today there are people of some ethnic tribal groups leading the life of half-naked primitive cavemen. They are innocent of any other language except their dialects. They still prefer nomadic life instead of permanent settlement. Thus the economic factor needs to be closely studied in view of the fillings of the separatist tendencies that have grown among certain

section of the people of Assam. It is therefore necessary that phase and policies for integrated economic development have to be formulated.³⁴

Assam is passing through intense social and political crisis. In one hand there is movement for preservation of identity and of culture of each tribal and ethnic group in the state, on the other hand, the insurgency problem of the state has posed a great threat to social peace and political stability. The waves of separation has created the terrorist groups like; United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Bengali Tigers Force (BTF), Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam (MULFA), Hindus Liberation Army of Assam (HLAA), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Adibasi Cobra Militant (ACM). It may be mentioned that some Muslim organizations like United Reformation Protect of India (URPI) and Harkatul Mujahadeen Assam Branch (HMUAB) has become very active in the lower and middle Assam.³⁵

Since the 1930's there have been instances of Assamese frustration as the number of cultivators, mechanics and petty traders coming from Bangladesh, Nepal and West Bengal etc increased. Regarding this matter petitions were sent to the Indian National Congress but were ignored by the national leaders.

In the decades after independence, Assam remained backward and under-developed state, there was not agricultural development or industrial development and due to that unemployment has been increasing.

To keep peace with the situation the people of Assam were against the Centre and in the Assembly elections of 1977 CPI (M) won 11 seats. Assamese people started to think that the CPI (M) won 11 seats because of the support of the Bengali Hindus who came from West Bengal. And naturally, the ruling class started counter attacks with the available weapons that Chauvinism. They formed a political party, Assam Jatiyabadi Dal (AJD) and launched propaganda against the CPI (M) as a Bengali Party. Since then the Chauvinistic forces have been counter attacking the influx of foreigners and getting support from the Assamese middle class society.³⁶

The growth of Chauvinistic forces in the indigenous Assamese community has done a lot of hamper to the Asamiya society. As a result of it there has grown an identity consciousness among the different tribal and ethnic groups in Assam.

Moreover the tribal are facing economic exploitation, social, cultural and political oppression.

The signing of Assam Accord 1985 has added a fuel to the fire of the separatist tendencies that have been going on among certain groups of people in Assam. Accord says “constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, as may be appropriate, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, linguistic, and social identity and heritage of Assamese people”. This provision of Assam Accord has created fear and apprehension among the different tribal and ethnic groups of people in Assam that their racial identity, culture and language would be extinguish if this part of Accord is fully implemented. On September 3rd 1985 All Assam Tribal Students Union (AATSU), All Rabhas Students Union, All Mising Students Union, issued a joint press release their reaction to Assam Accord regarding the issue as follows.....

1. The Accord was designed to prolong the basic problems in the political interest of the central government and the Chauvinist forces.
2. It did not fulfill “the aspiration of the people for a democratic and amicable settlement of the vexed Assam tangle through democratic participation of their organizations and political parties.
3. The most important nationality question of the tribal “sons of soil” of Assam remains to be resolved.
4. The right of the self-determinations of the tribal was related to Nationality Question but Rajiv Gandhi completely pushed the tribal and other questions aside and laid down the foundation stone of a new path of domination, exploitation and deprivation upon the tribal and other oppressed nationalities.
5. The accord was a covered deal with the representation of the Assamese speaking caste Hindus.
6. The issue of tribal language remained unresolved.
7. Chauvinism has been resurrected and there was apprehension that the renewed policy will start soon against the tribal causes.
8. The Accord did nothing new about the protection of the tribal Belts and tribal Blocks. Hence the tribal could not trust the Assam Accord signed by Assamese caste Hindus Ruling Clique and the central Government, the tribal representatives having not been taken into confidence.³⁷

3.8 Conclusion:

Assam is a land where a movement for preservation of identity and culture of several tribes and ethnic groups is going to decades. On the other side there is an insurgency problem that has posed a great threat to political stability, peaceful life and Law and order. Assam movement generated certain bellicosous tendencies, many politicians characterized the Assam movement as a secessionist one. However from the detailed study of the movement it is felt so. As noted earlier, behind the Assam movement, the Asamiya ruling class stood solidly, which is a partner of the Indian ruling class. They would not like to serve their coalition with the Indian ruling class, though at times, they wanted re definition and re-arrangements of their relationship. In order to wrest certain concession from the Indian ruling class, this class might have used its secessionist card at times. Assam's integration with India was complete long back, unlike Nagaland or Mizoram. An indigenous capitalist class, capable of challenging the Indian big Bourgeoisie on equal terms is also absent. The Asamiya ruling class is neither capable of leading a secessionist movement nor would they like to become nihilistically ambitious. The Assam movement was definitely not a secessionist movement.

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Chapter - IV

Assembly Elections and Role of Political Leaders in Assam

4.1 Introduction:

Assam, an important state located in the northeastern part of India, is known for its significant presence in Indian politics. As far as politics in India is concerned, the state always stays at the front position and it is significantly plagued by the ULFA strikes and other radical activities carried out by this separatist organization. At National level political parties in Assam have consented on one viewpoint that they should gain courage and attempt to stop terrorism at any cost. The most important national level political parties that dictate the political state of affairs in the state. As Indian political system has been marked with several political parties of national, regional and local. Right from the formation of INC, political parties have come into being leading to the multi-party system.

Before independence Muslim League (1906). The Hindu Mahasabha (1916) and the Communist Party (1924) had appeared in Indian polity. After independence, more than five hundred parties, groups at national; and regional level were formed mostly when the election were declared. In the first general election held in 1952 as many as fourteen national and fifty state level political parties participated in the political process. However, the number of political parties has been steadily increasing. The nature of the party has also been continuously changing due to splits in the existing parties as well as due to the emergence of new parties. BJP, Congress, CPM, CPI, NCP, FB, KC, BID, AGP, SAD, TDT, DMK, AIADMK, SP, Janata Dal (S), Janata Dal (U), JMM, ML, National Conference, Shivsena, Trinamul Congress, PMK, Jana Sakti, Lok Sakti Party, UPF, BPPF and several others have all been active in Indian Politics.

A regional Party or, a local party, writes Stanley, A Kochnock is “Primarily concerned with exploiting local resources of discontent or preserving a variety of primordial demands based on language, caste or community or region.”

The emergence of several regional political parties in India has been a natural development because of the presence of Socio-economic religious cultural pluralism.

Some of the regional parties have been relatively recent arrivals on the political scene. Further in this new era of coalition politics regional political parties have emerged as active actors in the Indian Political System.

Regional assertion in Assam although took its dominant shape in late 80's with the vigorous Assam movement, yet the root of the regionalism can be traced back since pre-independent period. During the pre dominant period Assam had developed the sub-national assertion which of course was basically based on linguistic identity. Emergence of different smaller nationalities in the different part of the country in the post independent period signifies the failure of the nation-building process. As regards Assam, after the achievement of independence the assertion of the tribes became a nagging question. Besides, the language movement of 1960's and, 1970's also indicated the emergence regionalism in Assam. The nature of the political Scenarios has been continuously changing due to splits in the existing parties as well as due to the emergence of new parties in Assam politics. Congress, BJP, AGP, UMF, CPM, BPPF are the active parties of Assam politics. Before the formation of BTAD there were only few parties in this region-Congress, BJP, CPM, AGP, PLP and PTCA. But after the formation of BTAD, the leaders of the Bodo community that spearheaded the agitation merged into a distinct party known as Bodoland People Progressive Front. Later, there has been a split in the party. One faction was led by Hangrama Mahilary, chief of the BTAD and other was led by its Rabiram Narzary.

4.2 Some Opposition Groups in Assam:

There are several opposition groups playing role in Assam Politics as follows...¹

4.2.1 MAJOR GROUPS

- DHD - Dima Halong Dauga
- NDFB - National Democratic Front of Bodoland
- NSCN - National Socialist Council of Nagalim
- ULFA - United Liberation Front of Asom
- UPDS - United People's Democratic Solidarity

4.2.2 OTHER GROUPS

- AAASS - All Assam Adivasi Suraksha Samiti
- ACMF - Adivasi Cobra Militant Force
- ANCF - Adivasi National Commando Force
- ASF - Adivasi Security Force
- ATF - Assam Tiger Force
- BCF - Birsa Commando Force
- BVYLF - Barak Valley Youth Liberation Force
- BLTF - Bodo Liberation Tiger Force
- BTF - Bengali Tiger Force
- GNF - Garo National Front
- GTF - Gorkha Tiger Force
- HLAA - Hindu Liberation Army of Assam
- ILAA - Islamic Liberation Army of Assam
- ISS - Islamic Sevak Sangh
- KLO - Kamatapur Liberation Organisation
- KNV - Karbi National Volunteers
- KPF - Karbi People's Front
- KRLO - Koch-Rajbongshi Liberation Organisation
- KRPF - Koch Rajbongshi Protection Force
- MLA - Muslim Liberation Army
- MLF - Muslim Liberation Front
- MLTA - Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam
- MSCA - Muslim Security Council of Assam
- MSF - Muslim Security Force
- MTF - Muslim Tiger Force
- MULFA - Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam
- MULTA - Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam
- MVF - Muslim Volunteer Force
- RMC - Revolutionary Muslim Commandos
- RNSF - Rabha National Security Force
- TLAA - Tiwa Liberation Army of Assam
- TNRF - Tiwa National Revolutionary Force
- ULMA - United Liberation Militia of Assam
- UMLFA - United Muslim Liberation Front of Assam

Source: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/assam.htm>

4.3 Some Major Political Parties in Assam

4.3.1 Major National Political Parties in India:-²

1. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
2. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)
3. Indian National Congress (INC)
4. Communist Party of India (CPI)
5. Communist Party of India (Marxist), also known as CPI (M)

4.3.2 Indian National Congress (INC)

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee or APCC in the state of Assam as unit of Indian National Congress. The headquarter of this unit is situated in Guwahati in the year 1921. When it was formed Mr. Kuladhar Chaliawas the president of Congress in the state of Assam. There are many additional units such as the National Students' Union of India, the Assam Pradesh Youth Congress, the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress, and the Indian National Trade Union Congress. The position of Indian National Congress is considered as Centre-left.³

During the freedom struggle, the Indian National Congress enjoyed the support of all sections of society, particularly the middle class and the new intellectual elite. In that time, 'Congress' was the popular term of all. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, a big massification of this party took place and in Assam, also it came to be identified as the party of the Assamese people of all castes, religions, creeds and colors. The people of Barpeta District also thought that congress meant Gandhi and without Gandhi congress was nothing. Under the banner of the congress, the Bodo community participated in the freedom movement and smelt the scent of political awareness partially. After the dawn of independence, the congress leaders tasted the regions of power and they enjoyed a high degree of credibility and legitimacy with the masses. The congress party remained the single most dominant party till 1985, and it enjoyed a remarkable popular support among the masses. Its support base included people drawn from all sections of society. The people had faith in "congress because of its secular credentials. The congress always identifies itself with the cause of the people belonging to schedule castes, schedule tribes and other weaker sections of society. After independence, the congress (I) repeatedly got extended the period of reservation enshrined in the constitution for them. It continues to support reservations till today and hence enjoys a sizeable support base among these classes of people including Bodos. But the fruit of reservation could not substantially benefit the poor people. So, the congress has always tried to identify itself with the poor of society. As such it enjoys a good support among the poor and illiterate masses of the societies. Undoubtedly, the Congress is a truly national level party. But during 1979-1985 General Assembly Election of Assam its popularity suffered a decline, because the emergence of new party likes PTCA, AGP, PLP, PDF etc.

Congress has been a major player in the electoral politics of the state of Assam. During 1947-67 it was simultaneously in power both at the centre and almost all the states of the union. In 1967, it suffered a setback when in Assam PTC was formed and CPM became active in this region. Electoral setback was compounded in 1983, when it suffered a split. The congress emerged as the second largest party. However the setback was temporary. In 1991, state Assembly Elections, it ruled the state, which support of BPPF, headed by Mr.Tarun Gogoi. The performance of the congress in this political system of this region was quite commendable at least up to 1983,. But after 1991 there began developing a sharp fall in the popular votes as well as seats in its share.Between1983-1991, its popularity graph suffered a sharp fall. However, after 2000 its images began improving in several states of the union also including Assam. During the Congress regime, the BAC had first seen the light of the day paring the war for BTAD. Thus, after the formation of B.T.A.D., BPPF has emerged as leading party. Inmany constituencies the congress has not contested in General Assembly Election of Assam, 2006. Though, the congress has lost its significance, but its legacy prevails.

4.3.3 Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)

An ex MP Mr.Sarbananda Sonwal is the president of BJP in the state of Assam. State President of BJP is, who is also an ex-MP. The BJP headquarter is known as sAtal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan, in Guwahati. There are wings of BJP is known as AkhilBharatiyaVidyarthi Parishad (student wing), Bharatiya Janata YuvaMorcha (youth wing), BJP MahilaMorcha (women's wing), and BJP KisanMorcha (Peasant's wing).⁴

4.3.4 All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)

The All India United Democratic Front or AIUDF is a regional political party in Assam and it is also gaining influence in the neighboring state such as Odhisa, Mizoram, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Delhi etc. The party raised in 2011 as an influential political party in the assembly elections w inning 18 seats and was the dominant opposition party in the state of Assam.

Previously AIUDF was known as the UDF, which contested 14 Lok Sabha seats from West Bengal in 2009. The President of the party is Maulana Badruddin Ajmal. The party put emphasis on the good governance and wants to depict on the real development of Assam. The party wants to showcase how funds from different government schemes and projects are being misused.⁵

The AIUDF is reorganizing the party right from the grassroots. Dr. Baharul Islam, General Secretary (Organization) of the party, has been shouldered with the responsibility of preparing the next-generation leadership basically amongst the youths of Assam.

4.3.5 Bodoland People's Front (BPF)

It is a regional political party and is considerably influential in and around Kokrajhar and Autonomous District. Mr. Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary became its first MP; elected from Kokrajhar in the general elections of 2009. Mr. Biswajit Daimary was the first person to be elected from the Rajya Sabha in 2008. In the 12th Assam Legislative Assembly, the Bodoland People's Front won 10 assembly seats. Currently, it is a constituent of the ruling coalition government of Assam and the party won 12 seats in 2011 Assam Assembly election.⁶

Indian National Congress always has a monopoly in the state since independence. However, the year 1978 saw exception when the Janata Party emerged as a winner in the general Assembly elections but enjoyed power only for two years as they got defeated again by INC. Between 1985 and 2006, Indian National Congress and the Assom Gana Parishad took to political power alternatively. However, INC is in power since 2006.⁷

4.3.6 Communist Party Marxist:-

Under the influence of the ideology of Marxism, particularly after the successful socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia, several socialist labour organizations were formed in India. Assam was not lagging behind in this regard. The CPM is a leftist party committed to the objective of socialism. Even after the decline suffered by the socialist states and the ideology of socialism, CPM continues to voice its adherence to socialism.

It should be noted that though in pre-independence period, the Indian Congress was taking leading part, yet communist party of India also more or less drew the attention of this region. Many Bodo peoples also became members of the communist party. The communist party of India also extended their co-operation to the Indian National Movement. Many persons were jailed during the pick time of the movement. The CPM identifies itself as the party of the workers, farmers and persons belonging to weaker and poorer sections of society. It has been in a position to enlist meaningful support for its view at least in some parts of the Assam. The party is still active in certain parts of the Assam. It has representation in the Assam Assembly.

4.4 State Level Political parties in Assam⁸

1. Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)
2. Asom Gana Parishad (Progressive)
3. Communist Party of India
4. Bodo People's Progressive Front (BPPF)
5. Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC)
6. United Minority Front
7. Trinamul Gana Parishad (TGP)

4.4.1 Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)

The regional political parties are playing a very significant role in Indian political system particularly in the post congress era and in the age of coalition politics. As far the national level politics is concerned, "the regional political parties plays a king making role."²⁴ Where as so far as the remembered that initially, the Bodos also expressed its solidarity with the agitation. The AGP had the proud privilege of enlisting the support of the people of Barpeta District in the election of the state Assembly. In the Bodo dominated areas AGP able to collect the support of Bodo peoples but in view of the creation of the BTAD, AGP has lost its support base and BPPF has captured its field. It also may be added that the develop entail works could not reach the remote areas of the present BTAD. Finally, mishandling of Bodo agitation by the AGP Govt. and backward booster from other forces during agitation made the people to shift the attention to sub-nationalism.

Table No.5
AGP's Electoral Performance (Assembly Election)

Year	Total number of seats won	% of votes
1985	64	34.54
1991	19	18.36
1996	59	29.70
2001	55	28.64
2006	20	19.79

(Source: Report of State Election Commission of Assam)

Electoral performance of the AGP signifies that the party has to proceed through rise and fall. Various situations, circumstances and factors were behind rise and fall of the party. The rise and fall of AGP also can be the result of the quality of its leaders. When the AGP formed the Government it was expected that the new, young and energetic leader would provide a new direction to the state politics. Their attachment with the movement, their experience from the movement and their charismatic capacity was behind such positive expectations. 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 corruption which was known as LOK scandal. Thus, immature and inexperienced leaders failed to deliver good to the people of Assam once again. Therefore, the people of Assam preferred the Congress as an alternative to AGP.

As a regional political party, its support base is concentrated within the state of Assam not beyond that. Therefore, the success of the party largely depends upon the party's credit to maintain its support base among different social cleavages in this multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi lingual plural society. During its first term the party was capable of getting support from other, some other social groups apart from mainstream Assamese people.

Such broad-based support of the party could not last for long time. The failure of the AGP to redress the tribal problems and parties' decision to make Assamese compulsory under SEBA, created discontent among the tribal voters of Barpeta

district. The AGP Government under the leadership of Sri Prafulla Kr. Mahanta in 1985 released a circular of SEBA according to which Assamese subject was made compulsory to the non-Assamese speaking students in schools. This policy came in for criticism and made with strong opposition from the public. They tried to assimilate all the ethnic minorities in the region. As a result their popularity decreased miserably in Bodo dominated areas also.

The existence of ULFA also effects the functioning of politics in Barpeta district. Sometimes it seems that ULFA itself try to emerge as deciding factor in politics of Assam, particularly during the time of election. The AGP has to suffer badly from the ULFA particularly during the time of 2001 Assembly election when ULFA differently killed the party workers. The bitter relation between the ULFA and the AGP affected the AGP's vote bank. In last Assembly election 2006 AGP make alignment with BJP. Some political observer has claim that this alignment harm the party. But, it also to be noted that in 2006 assembly election AGP on prestigious Barpeta Parliamentary seats where immigrant Bangladeshi, Muslims constitute a sizeable section of the electorate. Besides all this AGP had failed to adopt any remarkable initiative towards the solution of the vexed problems of the state. It has failed to even present its dissidents within the party itself. They therefore, should realize their misdeed and should re-think, re-design, re-orient it so that they can build the confidence among the people.

4.4.2 Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front (BPPF):

The Bodoland Peoples Progressive Front is a recently formed political party of Assam. The Party was formed on April, 13, 2005 with Rabiram Narzary as president and Hemendra Nath Brahma as general secretary. The BPPF is a small political party as it is concentrated into the Bodoland territorial Area District (BTAD). The BPPF is not a single political party rather it is a combination of various Bodos organization that either become the active part of the Party or have supported the Party. After all the BPPF is a common Platform of different Bodo organizations. Organization of the BPPF was almost a repetition of similar incident as it was in case of the AGP. The AGP was mostly to provide opportunity to the leaders of Assam Movement to contest 1985 Assam Assembly Election. Similarly, the BPPF was formed just before the

election of the BTC and to provide a common political forum for the leaders of Bodo Movement.

4.4.3 Assam Assembly Elections and Performance Political Leaders:

Assam under the provisions of India Council Act, 1861 did not have its own democratic institution but was tagged with East Bengal in 1905 and the Institution was then called "Legislative Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam", which started functioning from December 18, 1906. In 1909, the Council had strength of 40 members and out of 40 seats, Assam was allotted 5 seats. In 1912 Assam was reconstituted into a Chief Commissioners' province. In the year 1913, after Assam was granted a Legislative Council under the Government of India Act. 1909, the Assam Legislative Council came into being with a strength of 34 members of which 13 were nominated by the Chief Commissioner and 21 were elected by the people. The Legislative Council of Assam first met on 6th January, 1913 at 11 a.m. at Shillong, which was presided over by Sir Archdale Easel, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Under the 'Government of India Act.1919', the strength of the Legislative Council was raised to 53 members with effect from 1st April, 1921 of which 41 were elected members and the remaining 12 were nominated.

The Government of India Act, 1935 was adopted by the British Parliament on 2nd August, 1935 and was implemented in 1937. The Government of India Act 1935 made provisions for a Legislative Assembly in each province and as a result the Legislature in Assam became bicameral. The Assam Legislative Assembly had the strength of 108 members and all of them were elected members. The strength of the Legislative Council (Upper House) was not less than 21 and not more than 22 members.

After the partition of India, Sylhet district of Assam was transferred to the then east Pakistan by a referendum and the strength of the Assembly was reduced to 71. However, after Independence, the strength of members was again raised to 108. The bicameral Assam Legislative Assembly became unicameral with the abolition of the Assam Legislative Council in 1947. In the years that followed, Assam was truncated to several smaller states. In 1963, Nagaland came into being as a separate State. With the passing of North Eastern (Reorganization Areas) Act in 1971 by the Parliament,

Meghalaya became a full-fledged state. Subsequently, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh also followed suit. After the creation of Meghalaya as a separate state, Shillong continued to be the joint capital of both Assam and Meghalaya. However, in 1972, the Government of Assam decided to shift the Capital to Dispur, Guwahati. Accordingly, the first sitting of the Budget Session of the Assam Legislative Assembly was held at the temporary capital at Dispur on the 16th March, 1973.

With the changing geographical boundaries together with the shifts in the population graph of Assam, the strength of members of the Assam Legislative Assembly has fluctuated during the last fifty odd years. In 1952-57 it was 108, reaching still lower to 105 in 1957-62 (the Second Assembly) and then to 114 in 1967-72 (the third Assembly) until it reached strength of 126 members in 1972-78 (the fifth Assembly) and it has continued to maintain that figure till the 11th Assembly.

Although the Article 172 provides the duration of State Legislative Assembly as 5 years due to the imposition of National Emergency in 1975 the fifth Assam Assembly lasted for 6 years.

4.4.4 Role of Political Parties in the Elections of Assam:

Before independence the Congress was working to safeguard Assamese language and culture. Congress was the dominant political party in Assam for three decades from 1952 to 1978. The Congress was able to secure three to four parliamentary seats out of the 12 or 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the first six general elections to the Lok Sabha. During the declaration of emergency in 1977 when Congress lost support of the people, the electorate in Assam gave the party 10 out of 14 seats in the Parliament. Congress was successful to secure more than 45% of votes in Assam. During this period the Congress Party was gradually losing its widespread support base; yet there was very less chance of any other political alternative. Some regional political groups and parties did emerge in Assam. Some of these, like the 'All Party Hill Leaders Conference' (APHLC) with non Assamese speaking ethnic support base, began to do fairly well. But, their influence was restricted to selected areas that were later carved out of Assam. Attempts to challenge the Congress in the dominant Asomiya community by the People's Democratic Party and the Ujani Assam Rajya

Parishad could not make any mark in the electoral politics of the state. The six-year long Assam agitation was a political watershed in this respect. It was only after this agitation that the regional forces in the Asomiya areas could become significant in the electoral politics of the state.

The first major setback for the Congress was Janata Party coming to power. Indira Gandhi's defeat led to a split in the Congress party. Assam was one of the few states where the rivals of Congress led then by Devraj Urs held its own and emerged stronger than the Congress (Indira). In the assembly elections of 1978 the Congress (I) secured only one seat. The Congress (U), on the other hand captured 26 seats and 24 per cent votes. The split of votes among both the parties benefited the non-Congress parties. In 1977 the Janata Party emerged as the single largest party with 53 seats and 27 per cent votes. The change of government in the center, affected the political alignment in the states as well. The issue of Emergency excesses remained central to the campaigns of both the 1977 parliamentary and the 1978 Assembly elections, yet the results were very different.

There were two important developments of 1978 elections in Assam. First, the left forces emerged as a very significant political force in the legislature with 23 seats in the house of 126 seats .The CPM's which had no seat in the earlier house, won 11 seats .More significantly, it contested only 27 seats and polled 5.62% of total seats .Prior to the CPM's impressive victory in Assam, the left front under the leadership of CPM formed the government in Tripura and West Bengal. This enthused the CPM workers and the supporters to work more vigorously in Assam. However , the possibility of entire east going ' red' alarmed the ruling classes and their collaborator, they together , irrespective of party affiliation within the Right forces patronized and organized systematic onslaught against the left in general and the CPM in particular.

The second important outcome of the 1978 elections was the total rejection of all the candidates put up by two regional parties- (I) The Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) and (II) The Purbanchaliya Lok-Parishad (PLP). Though, both the parties failed to win a single seat in the elections, they very tacitly helped in the defeat of several candidates of the left parties. Both these parties tried to whip up the issue of bohiragatos, the outsiders in Assam. And overtly, they had a very strong anti-left orientation in their political outlook and elections.

After 1978 election there was political instability and upheaval. The Janata government fell in Assam even before the 1980 Lok Sabha election, giving way to a short lived Congress ministry. During this time the Assam agitation had already was at its peak. President's rule was imposed in Assam and an election for only two Lok Sabha constituencies was able to be held in this 'disturbed' state. Congress again came to power at the center and Mrs. Indira Gandhi tried every possible way to influence people and to maintain Congress rule. The election to Assam assembly held in 1983 was a political disaster. The Congress came to power led by Hiteshwar Saikia, but the party was unable to have popular legitimacy. The political impasse was broken after Mrs. Gandhi's death by her son and the new Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who entered into an accord with the students leading the Assam movement. The 1985 Assam Accord paved the way for the dissolution of the Assembly and holding of fresh elections. The Lok Sabha elections, which could not be held in the state in 1984 due to disturbed conditions, were also held along with the Assembly elections in December 1985. The 1985 election was a 'critical' election for Assam, which led a reconfiguration of the party system and realignment of social groups with political parties. There were 79 percent of votes in this particular election. The principal factors behind the Assam agitation recast themselves into a new political party; the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP). This regional party derived its strength from the perception of a threat to the Asomiya identity as a result of large scale immigration.

In the assembly elections of 1985, the AGP rose to power, on the foreigner's issue. Though AGP was very popular but it failed to secure required majority in the Assembly elections. The emergence of A.G.P pushed the national opposition parties to the sidelines. At the same time, this success underlined the limitations of its catchment area the Congress (I) won 25 seats and polled 23 per cent votes. The reason behind the success of AGP was the support of pro-Asomiya nationalist, but the votes of the forces inimical to the movement got divided, with the United Minority Front (UMF) winning 17 seats and securing about 12 per cent votes.

The left parties had put up a remarkable performance during the post-Emergency Assembly election of 1978 with the CPI (M) winning 11 seats and the CPI 05 seats. The Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI) also won 04 seats in that election. But, in 1985, their reaction towards the Assam movement they were almost wiped out. The CPI could not win any seat and the CPI (M) won only 02. The

Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) won 03 seats in Bodo areas and United Tribal National Liberation Front (UTNLF), another tribal party, won a single seat. The Congress(S), the historical continuity of Congress (U), won 04 seats.

The Assembly constituencies have been divided into four broad categories: those with the dominance of Bengali immigrants, where the Scheduled Tribes are numerically preponderant, those seats of upper Assam dominated by Tea growing laborers and the remaining seats were dominated by the dominant Asomiya community, including the tea growing areas. It managed to get a share of votes and a few seats in the immigrant and the tribal areas as well, presumably by mobilizing the minority Asomiya population. Most of the UMFA votes were in the hands of the immigrant constituencies and the PTCA secured votes in the tribal areas only. The Congress did poorly everywhere especially among the immigrant areas. It could gain its influence only in the tea growing areas with 34 percent of votes and 9 seats. The 1985 election led towards the end to the one party dominance of Congress in the state. In the beginning it was assumed that the Congress system would give way to a bipolar competition between the Congress and the AGP. But it was far from instituting a two-party system; the two big parties hardly secured 60 per cent of the popular vote.

The 1985 elections had formed a system of mobilization at large scale and tough competition among the various social, a competition that turned to introduce and sustain party fragmentation. The subsequent elections were to demonstrate this. In 1989 the elections were held in the country. Due to the disturbed political atmosphere in Assam the Lok Sabha elections were not held and further the Vidhan Sabha elections were also not held because of the same reason. The Assembly elections of 1991 showed that the Congress is a dominant political party in the state. The Congress gained remarkable comeback by winning 65 seats and securing a clear majority. The comeback was remarkable, not because of the majority it secured, but there cover staged in the aftermath of the Assam agitation. In terms of popular vote share, the Congress could poll only 29 per cent votes; thus the verdict did not actually reflect a resurgence of support for Congress.

The division of votes of the pro-Assamese nationalist between AGP and Nutan Asom Gana Parishad (NAGP) a faction of AGP and the unprecedented performance of the BJP led Congress to come to power. The AGP was unable to secure the half the

votes which it secured in 1985 elections. The NAGP won five seats with 5.5 per cent votes. The BJP, which was never a significant force before, won ten Assembly seats and polled 6.4 per cent votes. The NAGP and the BJP appealed to the same social constituency as the AGP, which in turn was bound to affect the electoral prospects of the AGP very badly. It was argued that these groups together secured more votes than the Congress. After this election it can be concluded that there a decline of the left was not a temporary. The CPI (M) won 02 and CPI 04 seats in these elections. The political parties representing ethnic minorities, the newly formed Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) of Karbi-Anglong district won 04 seats with 1.6 percent of votes.

Other such parties were unable to attract votes. Loksabha elections were also held along with the assembly polls. The scenario at the parliamentary level was not much different from that of the Assembly elections of Assam. At the parliamentary level, the Congress managed to win eight seats out of 14 with 28.5 per cent votes compared to only four seats that it won in the 1985 elections. The AGP won only a single seat with 17.6 votes. The NAGP could not win single seat but polled a significant 5.9 per cent votes. The BJP won 02 seats in the Parliamentary elections with 9.6 per cent votes in Assam. The NAGP proved to be a threat for the AGP, especially in the Asomiya dominated areas including the tea garden areas. The BJP took an advantage of the anti-migrant voters in the migrant dominated areas and thus made things difficult for the AGP. For the first time, the BJP registered its presence in the state in the Asomiya and the immigrant dominated areas.

An analysis of the constituency-wise performance of the Congress Party shows that, in this election, Congress performance was much better in the areas dominated by the non-Assamese speaking population. Its biggest gains were concentrated in the tea-growing areas. It also returned back with enthusiasm in the immigrant areas, thus indicating that it grab back the support of the Muslims. The Congress benefited in the Asomiya dominated areas and doubled its seats, but mainly due to the split caused by the NAGP's presence. The Congress made a clean sweep in its traditional stronghold, the tea growing areas. The Congress returned to power in 1991, as it would later in 2001, but not in its traditional role as a party representing a rainbow social coalition of all the major communities of Assam. It did not enjoy the confidence and the electoral support of the largest and the dominant Asomiya

community. Therefore, the Congress was now forced to forge a coalition of the various 'minority' groups that put together constitute a majority in the state. It was a precarious strategy, for even when it succeeded it could barely give Congress the kind of majority it had enjoyed in the past. In that sense, the decline that started in 1977 continued despite the party being able to form a government in the state. In the parliamentary elections as well, the Congress was better in the areas dominated by tea garden labour and Na-Asomiyas. In the Asomiya areas it could win where it did, only because of a split in the Asomiya nationalist votes between the AGP and NAGP. Even at the parliamentary-level election the Congress was experiencing an erosion of its support base and the regional forces were trying to be dominant. Electoral politics of the state was thus becoming a sphere where Asomiya nationalist forces and the parties representing the interests of the smaller ethnic groups were beginning to challenge the Congress, the most dominant national party.

4.5 List of Chief Ministers in Assam⁹

Table No.6

List of Chief Ministers in Assam

Name of the Chief Minister	From	To	Party
Tarun Gogai	May 17, 2001	Present	INC
Prafulla Kumar Mahanta	May 15, 1996	May 17, 2001	AGP
Bhumidhar Barman	Apr 22, 1996	May 14, 1996	INC
HiteswarSaikia	Jun 30, 1991	Apr 22, 1996	INC
President's rule	Nov 28, 1990	Jun 30, 1991	-
Prafulla Kumar Mahanta	Dec 24, 1985	Nov 28, 1990	AGP
HiteswarSaikia	Feb 27, 1983	Dec 23, 1985	INC
President's rule	Mar 19, 1982	Feb 27, 1983	-
Kesab Chandra Gogoi	Jan 13, 1982	Mar 19, 1982	INC
President's rule	Jun 30, 1981	Jan 13, 1982	-
AnowaraTaimur	Dec 6, 1980	Jun 30, 1981	INC
President's rule	Dec 12, 1979	Dec 5, 1980	-
Jogendra Nath Hazarika	Sep 9, 1979	Dec 11, 1979	JNP
Golap Borbora	Mar 12, 1978	Sep 4, 1979	JNP
Sarat Chandra Sinha	Jan 31, 1972	Mar 12, 1978	INC
Mahendra Choudhry	Nov 11, 1970	Jan 30, 1972	INC
Bimala Prasad Chaliha	Dec 28, 1957	Nov 6, 1970	INC
Bishnu Ram Medhi	Aug 9, 1950	Dec 27, 1957	INC
Gopinath Bordoloi	Feb 11, 1946	Aug 6, 1950	INC

4.6 Performance of AGP in the Election of 1996

By the time Assam went to the polls in 1996, both for the Parliament and the Assembly, the Congress found itself in a very difficult situation not only because of the alienation of a large section of Asomiyas but also because of the fact that the AGP and NAGP had come together once again. The AGP had realized its limitations of social constituency and the importance of keeping at least some minority groups with it. The other opposition parties including the left parties and even UMF - a party which had been claiming to represent the interests of the religious and linguistic minorities - joined hands with the AGP particularly in view of the unprecedented corruption and indiscriminate use of the repressive state machinery by the Hiteswar Saikia government. The situation was further complicated by the problem of extremist politics of organizations like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and Bodo Security Force (BDSF). In early 1995, it was assumed that the next elections would be fought on the issues of corruption and violation of democratic rights (Baruah, 1996). Realizing to this possibility, the Congress tried to change the focus of politics to ethnicity, an issue which was not in focused by other political parties.

Hiteswar Saikia government was ensuring that the issue of ethnic identities in this multiethnic state will gain vital importance in electoral politics. The Bodos, the Karbis and the Mishings have tried to mobilize 'their' people on ethnic line. The Bodos and the Karbis had already been demanding political autonomy and their movements, like many such others, had acquired an anti-government character. Saikia declared that his government would grant autonomy to all tribal communities. This move of Saikia government was directed in mobilizing near total tribal support for his party. But, the Congress failed because of the lack of credibility of the party and its leadership and the united opposition's ability to keep the focus on corruption and violation of democratic rights.

Organizations like the Committee for the Protection of Freedom of Expression (CPEE) and the Ganatantrik Adhikar Surakhya Samiti (GASS) formed by influential sections of the press, intellectuals and the non-Congress parties played an important role. The anti-Congress and pro-opposition line taken by the extremists too created problems for Congress. That state repression, corruption and ethnic identity remained crucial issues for the election became clear from the fact that almost all manifestos of

the major non-Congress parties focused on these issues. The AGP manifesto promised to bring an end to mal-administration and corruption.

Autonomy and the problems of the tribal people of Assam are the other two issues that they promised to solve if they came to power. The AGP manifesto also declared that the Constitution needed to be amended to grant autonomy to the states. The CPI (M) manifesto accused the Congress government of letting loose a reign of terror in the name of controlling extremists. It also accused the Saikia government of sowing seeds of conflict among the Rabha, Tiwa and Mishing people in the name of granting autonomy. It identified the government as the instrument of massive corruption. The CPI too identified corruption, repression and problems of nationalities as major issues. The BJP included a section called 'Administration' in its manifesto. In which corruption and violation of democratic rights were highlighted. Even a small party like the People's Democratic Front (PDF), representing Bodo ethnic identity, blamed the Saikia ministry of corruption, atrocities and of complicating ethnic problems. It was interesting to note that except the BJP, none of the parties including the AGP really harped on the issue of the detection and deportation of 'foreigners' though most of them insisted that immigration from Bangladesh should be stopped.

BJP was the only party which advocated the pre- 1985 AGP line. But this issue never really took off because its main vehicle, the AGP, decided to play it down, particularly because of the alliances it had to form to keep the non-Congress votes together. Saikia's attempt at diverting the attention of the electorate from these issues by playing ethnic politics in fact boomeranged, leading to division among communities like the Rabhas, Lalungs and Missings and alienation of a large number of tribal from the Congress Party. Even BPP (P), its ally in the Bodo areas, could not keep the focus on issues Saikia chose. The ethnic issue in fact remained live in the Bodo and Karbi areas but was monopolized by the anti-Congress UDF and ASDC. The AGP leadership had realized that alliances are not the possible way to fight against the Congress. Newspaper reports, particularly in the regional press, beginning from 1994 showed that the non-Congress forces in Assam were getting together, initially on the issue of state repression.¹⁰

This understanding culminated in an alliance of the five major parties - the AGP, the CPI, the CPI (M), the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) and the Bodo Peoples Party (Sangsuma) [BPP (S)].

There were efforts to bring the Janata Dal and the United Minorities Front (UMF) also into the front. In the meantime The National Democratic Front, a banned organization of Bodos, directed the Bodo political parties to unite so that the anti-Congress Bodo votes did not get divided. As a result, in the Bodo dominated areas, the BPP(S), the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (FITCA) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) decided to come together. The Bodo People's Party (Premising) IBPP (P) 1, however, remained with the Congress.

The United People's Party of Assam (UPPA), a party representing minority interests, too arrived at an understanding with the AGP. In the pre-election alliance formation of the non-Congress forces, the BJP was isolated. The Congress was the only party which was without any ally. It did try to go for alliance with the BPP (p) in Bodo areas which did not help the Congress. The AGP led alliance was backed by the left, regional forces and the ethnic and religious minorities. The AGP, CPI and CPI (M) came together was the important outcome of this alliance.

The agitation which emphasized on Bengali immigrants from Bangladesh came to be looked as anti-Bengali. It was also oppressed on the ideological based by the left parties. Because of AGP's experience as Ruling and Opposition party it helped to learn a lot about the politics of the state. The AGP realized the importance of the support of the Ana-Asomiya population. During the campaign period The AGP have not mentioned the issue of immigrants, issue of detection and of immigrants in its election manifesto.

The new inclusive strategy of the AGP had thus three components: AGP under Mahanta's leadership accepted back the dissenting faction led by Bhriгу Phukan; the party entered into a political coalition with the left; and the party underscored the need for a social coalition with the non-Asomiya population of the state. This inclusivity strategy paid rich dividends in the final outcome both at the Assembly and the Lok Sabha level. The AGP succeeded in regaining the majority in the state Assembly. On its own, the party's tally of 61 fell a little short of the majority mark of 64, but its left allies (including the ASDC, a Marxist-Leninist group) contributed another 10 seats

and thus gave it a clear majority. The party improved its vote share drastically compared to the debacle of 1991. The return of the NAGP helped the party in not only recovering the 6 per cent votes that it had taken away, but also in improving its vote share by another few points. Eventually, the party secured 30 per cent votes, about 12 percentage points higher than its vote share in the previous election.

This performance appears less striking than its historic victory in 1985, but it needs to be remembered that the AGP contested only 99 seats this time. Its partners - the CPI, the CPI (M) and the ASDC - secured another 6 percentage points. The Congress score was reduced to half, despite the fact that the party improved its vote share slightly.

The same pattern was repeated in the Loksabha elections held at the same time. The Congress and the AGP won five seats each. One seat went to an independent candidate. Compared to 1991 the Congress lost three seats, and the BJP lost one. The AGP gained four seats. The CPI (M), ASDC and independents retained with their one seat each. Compared to the 1991 elections, the Congress lost four seats to the AGP but it won one seat from the BJP. Thus the Congress' loss was AGP's gain. The election also saw the split of the tribal votes with a strong showing by independents in these seats. But in this election the non-Congress alliance could defeat the party in constituencies like Baithalangsua, Halflong, Diphu, Gossaigaon, Sidli and Udalguria.¹¹ In the Bodo areas, independents owing allegiance to the various Bodo factions, which were part of the non-Congress opposition, won seven seats and AGP won the other two seats. In the Karbi areas ASDC's margin over the Congress was so high that the latter appeared to be losing its electoral significance. The alliance proved to be effective in the immigrant areas also. Thus, the AGP and the Congress did equally well. The UMF's failure to make an impact could be understood in terms of the general feeling among Assam voters that political parties do not care specially for particular communities. Even during the AGP's wave in 1985 these voters helped the Congress win the Dibrugarh parliamentary seat comfortably. In fact, the Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha, an affiliate of INTUC, has been organizing the tea labour of Assam since 1947. The organizational strength of INTUC in the tea belt of the Brahmapurra Valley had been on, of the reasons for the Congress dominance in this region.¹²

The situation seems to have changed radically. The BJP, CPI and the AGP have been trying to find a foothold in this region. The AGP in fact, has started the Assam Chah Shramik Parishad to counter the INTUC; In Chabua area 15,000 tea workers were reported to have left the INTUC controlled Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha to join Assam Chah Shramik Parishad (The Assam Tribune, April 17, 1996). The AASU too had been trying to influence the Tea Tribal Student Organization for quite some time now. In the 1996 Assembly elections, of the total of 29 such tea labour community dominant constituencies, the Congress won 16, AGP won 11 and CPI won 1 seat.

The AGP did well among the younger voters than the Congress. The ruling AGP faced a test of its popularity early on as the mid-term elections to the Lok Sabha were held in 1998. The issues in these Lok Sabha elections were the same as in 1996. The situation prevailing in Assam just before the 1998 Lok Sabha election was not conducive to the electoral politics of the ruling AGP. Contrary to popular expectations of a party opposed to state terrorism because of its own experiences during the movement that led to its formation, and its commitments made in the election manifesto, the AGP government imposed repressive measures, in the shape of a unified command, similar in form and content to those followed by the Congress ministry. This led to the alienation of the Assamese middle class from the AGP.

Letter of credit (LoC) scandal regarding illegal withdrawal of more than hundreds crores of rupees from the government treasury in connection with the supply of fodder to the veterinary department, involving several ministers of the earlier Government as well as the ministry including its chief minister together with a host of government officials, turned out to be one of the major scandals that rocked the state and provided an strong issue to the opposition in the election campaign against the AGP.

The people were convinced by the extremists' from taking part in elections process and that was another threat added to the uncertainty and confusion ('A Lesson for AGP', editorial, The Statesman, March 10, 1998; North East Times, January 4, 1998) existing in the state. AGP president was killed by ULFA which created a fear in the minds of members of AGP and situation was much worsens then before. The situation was further complicated for the AGP by the fact that unlike in 1996, smaller

ethnic and religious parties like the ASDC, the PDF and United Minority Front did not join hands with the AGP in this election. The tribal groups like the Autonomous State Demand Committee, Missing Mimang Kebang Autonomous Demand Struggling Front and the Karbi Anglong unit of the CPI (ML) came under the umbrella of Assam People's Front and this was significant for electoral politics in Assam. The AGP was neglected by the tribal electorate. Another problem the party faced was factional politics within it leading to the exit of Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, the former AASU general secretary and the most important leader of the Assam movement and the formation of Assam Jatiya Parishad.

However, in the 1999 Lok Sabha election, there was fear in the minds of the people. But the situation in Assam underwent a sea change owing to the assertion of the democratic right to vote by a large section of the people. Despite 'Bandh' calls and some incidents of violence like the murder of BJP's candidate from Dhubri, gunning down of three AGP supporters and police personnel, the people participated in the election in large numbers. The political parties in Assam did not go for elections campaigns on a large scale. The previous issues were focused in the election manifesto. Congress was criticized on the issue of immigrants by the BJP and promised people strengthen the existing immigration laws and rules and enact new laws. The BJP also assured people to maintain a National Register of Citizens to meet the aspiration generated by the agitation in Assam.

The Congress (I) came up with a peaceful solution to the immigration. Assam Jatio Semillon in its manifesto focused on the issues of correct voters' list up to 2000, repeal of IMDT Act, solution of the unemployment problem, flood control and a corruption free state. The Loksabha election of 1998 was particularly significant as it was held in the midst of a call by militant organizations, namely the ULFA and Bodo extremists, for boycott of the elections. As a consequence, voters' turnout was low in the Assamese dominated areas of the state. The ULFA's poll boycott call greatly demoralized the Assamese voters, the main support base of the AGP. The Congress party polled 38.9 per cent of votes and gained ten seats and its ally, the United Minority Front won one seat.

The AGP and its allies, CPI (M) and CPI contested for 12 seats but failed to retain even one of the five seats it held in the last election. The BJP emerged as an

important electoral force and increased its vote share. Smaller parties reflecting the ethnic and religious identities, namely ASDC, UMF supported by Congress and an independent candidate supported by ABSU, could retain one seat each. On the whole the mandate was against the AGP led alliance and also indicative of decline of the AGP's support among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

This time, however, the slide was even more deadly. Between 1998 and 2001, Assam witnessed the worst of its political history. Violence became the order of the day; unidentified gunmen would knock on the doors of the families of ULFA and former ULFA rebels, and kill them in cold blood by night. These were known as secret killings in Assam. A 2007 inquiry report which was tabled in the state legislative assembly had questioned Mahanta's role in all this. The people of Assam were frustrated, and in 2001, the Congress was brought back to power under the leadership of Tarun Gogoi.

4.7 Results of Assam Parliamentary Election

4.7.1 Results of Assam Parliamentary Election 2004:-¹³

Table No.7

Results of Assam Parliamentary Election 2004

PC	Constituency	Cate gory	Winner Candidate	Sex	Political Party	Vote
1	Karimganj	SC	Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya	M	INC	321059
2	Silchar	Gen	Sontosh Mohan Dev	M	INC	246215
3	Autonomous District	ST	Biren Singh Engti	M	INC	125937
4	Dhubri	Gen	Anwar Hussain	M	INC	376588
5	Kokrajhar	ST	Sansuma K.Bwiswmuthiary	M	IND	689620
6	Barpeta	Gen	A. F. Golam Osmani	M	INC	198847
7	Gauhati	Gen	KiripChaliha	M	INC	353250
8	Mangaldoi	Gen	Narayan Chandra Borkataky	M	INC	345863
9	Tezpur	Gen	Moni Kumar Subba	M	INC	289847
10	Nowgong	Gen	RajenGohain	M	BJP	342704
11	Kaliabor	Gen	Dip Gogoi	M	INC	30893
12	Jorhat	Gen	Bijoy Krishna Handique	M	INC	223624
13	Dibrugarh	Gen	Sarbananda Sonowal	M	AGP	220944
14	Lakhimpur	Gen	Dr. Arun Kumar Sarmah	M	AGP	300865

Source: www.eci.gov.in

Every subsequent poll, from civic polls to Lok Sabha, the AGP has only seen decline in the number of seats everywhere. Its only alliance partner, the BJP, rode on its back in Assam, with both the parties contesting polls on their own in 2011. The AGP could only manage to win 10 seats out of 126 in the state legislative assembly. The AGP's series of electoral failures ensured that anti-Congress votes in Assam became divided.

Table:8

Assam Parliamentary Election Result 2009:-¹⁴						
PC No.	PC Name	Cate gory	Winning Candidate	Gender	Pol. Party	Total Votes
1	Karimganj	(SC)	Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya	M	INC	259717
2	Silchar	GEN	Kabindra Purkayastha	M	BJP	243532
3	Autonomous District	(ST)	Biren Singh	M	INC	197835
4	Dhubri	GEN	Badruddin Ajma	M	AIUD (F)	540820
5	Kokrajhar	(ST)	Sansuma Khunggur Bwiswmuthiary	M	B P Front	495211
6	Barpeta	GEN	Ismail Hussain	M	INC	322137
7	Gauhati	GEN	Bijoya Chakravarty	F	BJP	496047
8	Mangaldoi	GEN	Ramen Deka	M	BJP	307881
9	Tezpur	GEN	Joseph Toppo	M	AGP	352246
10	Nawgong	GEN	Gohain, ShriRajen	M	BJP	380921
11	Kaliabor	GEN	Dip Gogoi	M	INC	434676
12	Jorhat	GEN	Bijoy Krishna Handique	M	INC	362320
13	Dibrugarh	(ST)	Paban Singh Ghatowar	M	INC	359163
14	Lakhimpur	GEN	RaneeNarah	F	INC	3523358

Source: www.eci.gov.in

The AGP's anti-foreigner plank still remains, as the alleged illegal influx from Bangladesh is still the mainstay of political discourse in the tea rich state. But the AGP's is the feeblest voice in this discourse. The vacuum created by the AGP's incompetence to live up to its cause of origin resulted in sharp division of votes in Assam, which has in a way helped the Congress secure more votes beyond its traditional tea worker and Muslim settler vote banks. Perfume baron and minority leader Maulana Badruddin Ajmal and his party, the All India United democratic Front

(AIUDF), is now the main opposition and has won the support of the Bengali Muslim settlers in Assam.

The BJP has the hardliner Hindu votes as well as a larger section of Assamese voters who still believe in Assamese nationalism since the saffron party became vocal on the illegal Bangladeshi issue, taking away the initiative from the AGP. This was the time that the AGP should have taken drastic steps, brought new faces at the helm of things. But Mahanta did not give up, even as it sparked dissidence and this call for a change in leadership has just become louder from then on.

Former minister and colleague from the days of the Assam agitation, Atul Bora, left to join the BJP. State BJP president and former MP Sarbananda Sonowal was himself a firebrand leader of the AGP who left the party after the debacle in the 2011 Assembly polls. Apurba Bhattacharjee, former party president Chandramohan Patowary also joined the BJP and is contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket. Yet Mahanta did not give up, and the two time chief minister of Assam still does not acknowledge the leadership crisis in the party.

Right now, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the AGP is a dilapidated party, and Mahanta a vanquished leader. Perhaps his party, which plans to contest all 14 Lok Sabha seats in Assam, might find it very difficult even to hold on to the only seat – Tezpur – that it had last time. At the far end of his political career, Mahanta will perhaps be the last man to leave the party or step down as its president. Assam does not rely on Mahanta's laurels any more. Perhaps it is high time that the leader takes a back seat.

The prominent issues that dominated the Lok Sabha elections 2014 in the state were the problems of flood and erosion, homes for the poor, welfare schemes for tea garden workers, Adivasis and backward classes. During the campaign, the Congress focused on the economic reforms and measures for the social justice undertaken by the UPA government. It promised to work for the poor and the underprivileged section of the society. The focus of the BJP, on the other hand, was on development and fight against corruption. The party promised to improve the state of Digboi Refinery. BJP was hoping for a victory in the state of Assam and got 50 % of the seats from the total seats i.e., seven seats from the 14 seats.

INC won three seats and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) won three seats. The state of Assam is also an important state in terms of Indian politics. It gives a share of 14 Lok Sabha seats in the Indian Parliament. The national parties in the Assam include Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, and Communist Party of India (CPI). The Congress has a stronghold in Assam with majority victories in the state in the last Lok Sabha elections. In the 2009 elections, seven seats were won by Congress, 4 by BJP and the remaining seats by other regional parties. The 2014 Lok Sabha elections were held in three phases in the state of Assam.

Shown below are the number of seats won by BJP, INC, AAP and others in Assam Lok Sabha Elections 2014.

Table: 9

Assam Lok Sabha Election Results 2014 - Party wise Total seats of Loksabha 14

Sr. No.	Name of the Party	Secured seat	Percentage of Seats
1	BJP	7	50%
2	AIUDF	3	21.4%
3	INC	3	21.4%
4	Others	1	7.1%
	Total	14	100%

Source: http://www.elections.in/assam/#info_id9

Table:10

Position various Political Parties in Loksabha Elections (1998-2009)

Political Party	1998		1999		2004		2009	
	Seat Secured	Votes Polled	Seat Secured	Votes Polled	Seat Secured	Votes Polled	Seat Secured	Votes Polled
Congress	10	39.00	10	38.42	9	35.07	7	34.89
AGP	–	12.70	0	11.09	2	20.00	1	14.60
BJP	1	24.50	2	29.84	3*	30.80	4	16.21
CPI	–	1.00	–	0.60	–	1.66	–	0.92
CPM	–	3.30	–	–	–	0.66	–	0.70
ASDC	1	2.20	1	–	–	0.98	–	–
UMF	1	4.30	–	–	0	0.62	–	–
JD	–	–	–	–	–	1.21	–	–
AIUDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	16.10
BPPF	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5.41
Ind	1	9.50	1	9.40	–	–	–	–
Others	1	5.60	–	5.80	1	13.41	0	12.79

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Note: * BJP+ includes one seat contested and won by an independent candidate supported by the BJP and one seat contested by the BJP's ally JD (U). In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, one seat was won by the same independent candidate, who was not supported by the BJP, and one by the CPI (ML).

Table No.11

Position of the various Political Parties in Assembly Elections (2001-2011)¹⁷

Political Party	1998		1999		2004	
	Seat Secured	Votes Polled	Seat Secured	Votes Polled	Seat Secured	Votes Polled
Congress	70	39.75	53	31.00	78	39.38
AGP	20	20.10	24	20.39	10	16.30
AGP(P)	–	–	1	3.39	–	–
BJP	8	9.30	10	11.98	5	11.50
AIUDF	–	–	10	16.12	18	12.60
BPPF	–	–	11	3.72	12	6.10
IND	19	19.50	22	9.71	–	–
Others	2	3.70	–	–	3	14.20

Source: CSDS Data Unit

4.8 Issues of Crisis in Assam;

The most pertinent issue and crisis of Assam are numerous-The problems like insurgency, infiltration of illegal migration ethnic violence, demand for autonomy, unemployment and economic backwardness can be mentioned below:

4.8.1 Problem of insurgency or terrorist:

The terrorist problem ushered in the state in late 1980's.After signing of Assam Accord 1985 militants like ULFA and BLT were formed and they demanded separate sovereign state of Assam. This militant group wanted Assam as sovereign state. Since 1990's the demand for sovereign state strengthen among the militant groups. For the fulfillment of their demand they attached the innocent people and killed them through bomb blasts, garnet blast and shooting. Since 1990-2014, thousands people have been died and thousands of people injured.

The militant groups like BLT and NDFB was formed among the Bodo people. These militant groups are demanding separate state like Bodoland. Though the Government of India signed 'Bodo Accord'.

The issue of insurgency has remained a vitally important Political plank for all parties. Insurgency has become a part of life in most of the states in North-East India it is more so in Assam, which has been experiencing the wrath of insurgency¹⁰ related violence since 1979 when the ULFA was formed. During the subsequent period of two decades since the formation of ULFA, many more ethno-centric insurgent groups emerged. The Bodos formulate the NDFB ON October 3, 1986; another parallel militant outfit called the BLT was formed in June 18, 1996. A section of Muslims forms their own outfit called MULTA in 1993. Later on, the Hmars and the kukis formed their own militant groups. The inter ethnic conflicts together with the position taken by the insurgent groups against the states and the central Govt., made the political situation terrible unstable there were speculation about which group would be take the side of which political parties in earlier occasion in 1991 and 1996 the assembly election and Loksabha election in 1998 were held under the shadow of the militant's gun, as pointed by Wasbir Hussain¹¹.

While analyzing the burning problem of insurgency in the state, it was found that the state Govt. claimed that the total of 823 militants belonging in the different groups have been killed during insurgency operation between January 21, 1997 & December 31, 200. Added to it the Government also claimed that 5827 militant surrendered during the same period¹².

As such, no headway could be made on political fronts to settle the vexed insurgency problems with mountings operation of the ULFA, NDFB, BLT, MULTA and MULTA and UPDS (United people's Democratic Solidarity)¹³ the casualty in terms of loss of life and permanently maimed in an insurgent ridden political situation in the state is shown in the table.

4.8.2 Insurgency in Assam:

Table No. 12
Insurgency Related Casualties 1991 to 2004 (A Summary of Counter Insurgency Operation)¹⁴

Year	Insurgents Killed	Security personnel killed	Civilians killed
1991	12	21	163
1992	15	41	72
1993	23	23	54
1994	40	38	88
1995	21	66	125
1996	44	88	261
1997	135	89	237
1998	165	77	387
1999	196	87	179
2000	328	80	412
2001	307	86	261
2002	322	36	218
2003	276	15	260
2004	135	25	202
Total	2026	764	2911

Source : Police record Govt. of Assam.

4.8.3 Problem of Illegal migration:

One of the important issues of Assam is the infiltration of illegal migrants causing from erstwhile East Pakistan now Bangladesh, Nepal and Tibet etc. After the partition of free country a large number of illegal migrants came to Assam from Bangladesh. Since the demography of the state the indigenous Assamese people think that due to demographic change their identity will be in crisis.

The 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.¹⁵ 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.

4.8.4 Politics of Vote Bank:

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 impact of the vote bank politics is so severe that even the AGP now a day's 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;¹⁶ and 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

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.¹⁸ Most of the parties have recklessly imported them to inflate their vote banks.

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. 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.

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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

In short, since 1990-1985 Assam movement started for deportation of illegal migrants from the state. Till date no government could solve this issue.

4.8.5 Ethnic Violence:

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.²¹

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.²² 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.²³

There are a huge number of ethnic groups exist in Assam. Ethnic groups try to maintain their identity rights and liberties in the state. Ethnic violence took place between ethnic groups such as Bodo and non-Bodo Assamese and non-Assamese.

Table: 13
Facilities in Insurgencies & Terrorist conflict in Assam 1992 to 2001,²⁴

Year	Category	Fatalities	
1992	C	80	
	SF	34	
	M	19	
1993	C	74	
	SF	24	
	M	33	
1994	C	173	
	SF	35	
	M	63	
1995	C	170	
	SF	73	
	M	27	
1996	C	302	
	SF	87	
	M	62	
1997	C	285	
	SF	85	
	M	167	
1998	C	531	
	SF	72	
	M	180	
1999	C	214	
	SF	77	
	M	212	
2000	C	366	
	SF	65	
	M	327	
2001	C	264	
	SF	59	
	M	283	
Total:			
	C	SF	M
	2459	611	1373

Source: Mirza Zauir Raheman, “Voting Behavior of the people of Barpetha District of Assam”, an unpublished M.Phil dissertation submitted to Tilak Maharashtra University, Pune, 2009.

It is not out of Context to mention that in the recent times there has been symptoms of growing reduction of violence in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam after Bodo accord was signed in 2004, facilitating the formation of ABTC and holding the elections to form the elected council in May, 2005. But the gun factors yielded by the active insurgent, it is feared, will continue to play a dangerous role threatening the democratic process in the state for an indefinite period of time.

The anti foreigners agitation (1979-1985) led by AASU (All Assam Students Union) and AAGSP (All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad) contributed much for uniting the Assamese speaking people. There was a feeling of rear-psychosis that the foreigners would threaten the socio-economic, political and cultural identity of the Assamese people. The crises of identity had confirmed to a large extent, the growth of sub-nationalism force appeared in Assam politics. It may be stated that during the period from 1978 to 1983 there was change of Government for three times apart from President's rule. In order to fulfill constitutional obligation, election to the state Legislative Assembly was to be held before March 1983.

Though election was strongly protested by AASU and AAGSP but it was held in February 1983 adopting coercive method. The majority of the people of the Brahmaputra valley boycotted the election. Only one-third of total voters participated in the election. With the support of minorities, congress came to power in Assam. This Government formed by Hiteswar Saikia was generally boycotted by the majority people. When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister after assassination of Indira Gandhi a dialogue was initiated with the movement leaders at the official level and ultimately widely discussed and forecast Assam Accord was signed on August 15, 1985 between the movement leaders and the central Government. As per understanding, Assam Legislative Assembly was dissolved and elections were ordered to be held in December, 1985.

One of the outcomes of the Accord was the formation of two regional political parties the AGP (Assam Gana Parishad) and formed by the movement leaders of Assam agitation and other UMF (United Minorities Front) with the support of Minorities. With the support of movement leaders in particular and the people of the Brahmaputra valley in general AGP came to power in Assam and formed a popular Government. But in the next election held in 1991, AGP lost its popularity and again congress formed Government. It was due to split of AGP and NAGP (Natan Assam Gana Parishad) and inaction of the AGP Government. So, it has been seen a radical change of voting behavior in Assam electoral politics. However, a vital issue like the IMDT (Act) passed by the parliament in 1983 was left out. This was one of the key issues on which a candidate or party could see the light of a wind or to that context

lose the election in the state. However, not to mention the repeal of the IMDT (Act), the ruling party, AGP declared only 219 persons in the state to be illegal migrants from June 1, 2000 to 30 Nov. 200 out of these 219 persons detected; only 111 were served expulsion orders. Further, the irony was that out of these 111 persons only 11 were actually expelled. It is rightly argue that not a single political party would like to raise the issue of scrapping the controversial act because of the fear of losing the immigrants Muslim's votes.

Ethnic violence took place at BTAD area in 2012 A huge numbers of people killed. Ethnic violence also took place between Karbi and Nagas. The below table gives an example of the number of incidents took place in Assam in 2014.

Table: 14

Assam over the problem of insurgency in 2014; ²⁵

Date	Place/District	Outfit	Killed				Injured
			Civilian	SFs	Terrorist	Total	
Jan. 17	Kokrajhar	NDFB-IKS	6	0	0	6	2
Feb. 21	Goalpara	GNLA	0	0	3	3	0
March 11	Goalpara	UALA	0	0	3	3	0
April 30	Naojan Tinkhuti /Sonitpur	NDFB-IKS	0	0	3	3	NS
May 1-12	BTAD	NDFB-IKS	46	0	0	46	0
May 14	Langtibuk in Karbi A.	KPLT	0	0	6	6	0
July 11	Labdanguri/ Baksa	NDFB-IKS	4	0	0	4	0
August 11	Mongregaon/ Goalpara	ULFA-I	0	0	3	3	0
Aug. 13	B Sector/ Golaghat	NSCN-IM	16	0	0	16	8
August 20	Raimati/ Chirang	NDFB-IKS	0	0	5	5	0
Sept. 11	Langting/ Dima Hasao	UPLF	0	0	3	3	NS
Sept. 28	Mwinaguri/ Kokrajhar	NDFB-IKS	0	0	4	4	NS
Oct. 8	Kokrajhar	NDFB-IKS	0	0	4	4	NS
Nov. 5	Robi Basti/ Dima Hasao	NSCN-IM	0	0	3	3	0
Nov.20	Sespani/ Goalpara	GNLA	0	0	3	3	0
Total*			72	0	40	112	10

Source: www.electionsinindia.com/assam/statepc.aspx

4.8.6 Demand of Autonomy:

Demand of Autonomy is another big issue of the state. The ethnic group demanded autonomy within the state. As a result Bodoland autonomous council and Karbi Anglong autonomous council are formed. The Rajbhongshi of the state are demanding state like Kamatapur and their movements is going on. The demand of autonomy created some problems of the government.

4.8.7 Economic Backwardness

Assam is lagging behind in respect of industrialization. There is no big industry in the state. Due to financial bottleneck and unfavorable geographical negligence of the center to provide financial, insurgency are the main causes of economic development. Due to this a large number of Assamese left Assam and went to other states in search of employment. The leaders has failed to raise the issue before the central government and turning into low profile leadership.

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.²⁶ 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.

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Chapter -V

Conclusion, Findings and Suggestions

5.1 Introduction:

The mushroom growth of 'leaders' in a state is a recent phenomenon. In no age prior to the present one, so many leaders descended to the scene. In a word, leaders are galore today in our society. Nobody is grudging the advent of leaders in swarms, as it were; even if somebody raises a dissenting voice, nobody in the country will listen to him and his voice will certainly be drowned in the din and bustle. We could have certainly said that the 'leadership explosion' was a good symptom, had it been able to solve the social problems. Plainly speaking the real sense of the term 'leader' is not lost and one expert is issuing statement without end is being considered as a leader whether one has credibility or not. No doubt in the past also there were leaders in Assam, in Bengal and in India. India became democratic and republic state in 1950. However, at the level of real culture, India stood far away from the ideal-cultural framework within which it wanted to build –up the post-colonial society. With the successful culmination of the national movement in setting up an independent India and making the country as a Secular-Democratic nation-state, the expectations Of the political leadership and also the masses reached new heights.

5.2 Conclusion:

Northeast India is one of the few remaining strongholds for Congress. The CSDS poll found that almost half of voters in Assam, who have one of the country's lowest per capita incomes and often rely on the Centre-left Congress' welfare schemes, are set to support the party.

But Congress might not do as well as in the last election, said Hiren Gohain, a social scientist based in the state capital Guwahati. Indian National Congress always has a monopoly in the state since independence. However, the year 1978 saw exception when the Janata Party emerged as a winner in the general Assembly elections but enjoyed power only for two years as they got defeated again by INC. Between 1985 and 2006, Indian National Congress and the Assom Gana Parishad took to political power alternatively. However, INC is in power since 2006.

With the emphatic return of the Congress in the latest assembly elections, it might conclude that things are back to where they were before the Assam agitation shook the political framework of the state. But nothing could be further from reality. The Congress of today is radically different from the Congress of the Congress system.

It is no longer the umbrella organization that covers all the various ethnicities and communities of the state. The Congress is principally dependent on the support of the Muslims and other ethnic minorities of the state. Despite the widespread disillusionment with the AGP, the Congress is yet to win back the trust of the dominant Asomiya community that used to be the mainstay of the Congress in Assam. Unlike in most other states, the Congress is not the most favored party of the Scheduled Tribes. No wonder the party does not enjoy the kind of hegemony it had in the pre-1978 days that sense the return of the Congress shows how far the state has traveled from the days of the Congress system.

The cut-off point was not the defeat of the Congress in 1978: Congress recovered from such defeats all over the country. It was the anti-'foreigners' movement from 1919 to 1985 that transformed the nature of political alignments in the state. The short term consequence was the fall of the Congress and the rise of the AGP as the carrier of the Asomiya nationalism. Although the AGP did not succeed, unlike the TDP in Andhra Pradesh, in consolidating its political position and emerging as the stable alternative to the Congress, the party system in Assam underwent a long-term change. The Assam movement started the processes of ethnicisation of politics and political fragmentation. Since then a number of regional and sub-regional parties have emerged as an important political force in Assam politics. Assam's multi-ethnic and poly cultural reality added a peculiar dimension to this trend as most of these parties are based on one or the other ethnic group. The phenomenon is not confined to the regional and sub-regional parties alone. The national parties have also gone through the process of ethnicisation. The decline of Congress's hegemony has been met by two important political developments - the growing significance of regional and ethnic based parties, and the rise of BJP. Since the main issue that has dominated elections in Assam is the concern for identity, the Congress and the BJP have also sought to mobilize a few sections. Yet, to describe the change in Assam as a journey from 'catch-all' party system to political and ethnic

fragmentation does not do full justice to the complexities of politics of ethnicity that has dominated the electoral arena in the last two decades.

The transformation in Assam is better seen as a reconfiguration that involves multiple realignments. It includes the familiar and standard story of the renegotiation of political loyalties by the existing social groups. The disillusionment of the Asomiya middle class the Congress and with search for a political vehicle for their aspirations is an illustration of this process. The changing voting preference of the Muslims across the various elections constitutes another instance of the same process of electoral realignment. This standard story does not recognize another kind of realignment that has taken place simultaneously.

5.3 Findings:

Assam has also witnessed the reworking of the boundaries of social communities themselves or a redrawing of the politically active social cleavages. Competitive politics creates and recreates imagined communities. The sudden political salience of the various divisions within the Muslims or the rise of a large number of hitherto unknown tribal groups illustrates this process. Electoral competition has mobilized many formerly passive socio-economic groups and brought them into political arena. This period in Assam politics also illustrates a realignment in the relationship among various kinds of pre-existing social cleavages: for instance, between religion and migration, or language and caste or tribe and region. The simultaneous operation of these realignments has made contemporary Assam into a virtual laboratory of politics of ethnicities.

Post- colonial India has been experiencing growth, decay, demise and institutionalization of innumerable social and political movements. North Eastern India, one of the most depressed regions of the country, too has, experienced many new social and political movements. A few significant examples are: (1) the Naga movement for independence immediately after 1947 (2) the movement for independence during the mid-sixties, (3) the movement for an oil refinery Assam in the late fifties, (4) the movement demanding to make Asamiya the official language of Assam in 1960, (5) the movement for a tribal hill state , (6) the food movement of 1966, (7) the movement for a second oil refinery in Assam during 1969-70, (8) the movement to make Asamiya a medium of instructions up to the graduation in

Assam's two universities, (9) The All Assam, Students' Union movement for economic development of Assam in 1974 (10) the Bodo movement and the movement for foreign nationals and finally Assam Agitation in 1985. It is thus, evident that Assam has been experiencing an unending sequence of social; and political movements, and hence after since independence with serious social economic and political implications. And it is also a fact that Assam too lacked effective leadership for the state. From the very beginning, the leadership in Assam have raised some persistent question .But now, variety of leaders in ruling the roots-Assamese Student leaders, Bodo Student leaders, Muslim Student leaders, Char-Chapari (reverie areas) student leaders, Koch-Rajbangshi students leaders, Rabha Students leaders, Tea – Tribes' students ;leaders, Tai-Ahom students leaders, etc. all are being in the twinkle of an eye.

Some of these groups' leaders have united themselves under the banner of URMCA (United Reservation for Minorities Council of Assam) to provide leadership in Assam. It seems that the deluge of leaders will sweeps away the people in no distant time. A solution to the 'leadership explosion' may perhaps be found if everybody in the society declares as a leader. Then, and then only, the rate race of leadership may come to stop nowhere in the world. In the society, such large numbers of leaders are to be seen. The pronounced aim of these leaders is to free their respective communities from yoke of oppression, as according to them their respective communities have been subjected to exploitation through the ages. What the six years long movement organized for expulsion of foreigners had achieved is not known to all. Taking the cue from the so-called Assam movement leaders, new leaders belonging to various communities are on horizon today and they are having many organizations on the basis of which many other mini organizations are coming up. The modus operandi of many of these organizations is to blame somebody else for the backwardness of their respective communities, thereby creating tensions, hatred and instability in the society.

By these tactics the leaders are able to draw the support of their respective communities. The burden of some of these leaders is like this: such and such community is the root of all evil' , our community's language and literature; , our agriculture is down because such and such community is playing tricks- and so on and

so forth. The common people bereft of reasoning take the leaders' words as the gospel truth.

These leaders raise another question; who is the real master of the state? According to them, since they are the primitive inhabitants of the state, the state belongs to them and non-else.

But such fanciful talks are creating more troubles and complex situations among the communities themselves. Take for instance the question of the Bodos, No one Bodo communities are standing on the way of the development of Bodo culture and language. But the Bodo leaders have instilled a false notion in the mind of the common Bodo to the effect that the Assamese are responsible for the backwardness of the Bodo. Such negative approach to the problem of development has created contradiction among the Bodos themselves as a result of which they are now engaged in an internecine strife which in turn is causing immense harm to them. What is to be born in mind is that in no stage of history, hatred and enmity has acted as the prime mover of social progress. Only a healthy competition may be the harbinger of progress in all fields in the life of a society.

At present it becomes a fashion of the political parties right from the Congress (I) down to the AGP proclaim that decentralization and maximum right of self-determination and autonomy would solve all problems. Years ago the Congress (I) raised the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao'. The Janata Party under the leadership of Moraraji Desai promised to solve the unemployment problem within ten years. When the general elections approach, the cunning leaders offer such enticing promises to hoodwink the electorate. But has any good come out from all these promises so far? Empty talks on decentralization of power, maximum autonomy, dual citizenship etc. will not go to solve the problems, rather will aggravate the situation and intensify the divisive tendencies.

Economic growth and the process of development do not evolve in a political and institutional vacuum. Economic choices depend on rules, institutions and social constraints that are mediated by a political process. A governance environment characterized by stability, the rule of law, and social cooperation will foster wealth creation provided good economic opportunities are in place. However, in many societies including the Assam, the political process is often messy; institutions are far

from being the ideal set of rules that minimize transactions costs and social relations are characterized by conflict and even violence.

5.3.1 Underdevelopment:

Ultimately, underdevelopment is not only a problem of lack of economic resources but it is largely associated also with volatile politics, dysfunctional institutions and highly differentiated social structures.

The relentless pursuit of equality and individualism leads to a loss of public confidence in the authority of political leadership. But a trusted political leadership is one of the most important conditions for effective governance (ibid. 161).

5.3.2 Increase in participation

The increase in political participation is simultaneously cause and consequence of the declining political authority. But swelling participation leads to polarization and this in turn leads to a decrease in confidence among citizens and by citizens against the state. From this examination, regime type really matters as concerns state crises. Democratic states not only can dampen or decrease the causal effect of the structural and procedural variables, but also can survive state crises at a better chance than non-democratic states.

The subject of this research is to understand the main characteristics of political systems, institutions and social structures in Assam. However, formal political systems do not always guarantee strong presidencies that ensure law and order and warranty political stability

A limited capacity for action by the government, which is not able to keep up with the rising demands. Huntington and colleagues see the main cause for the crisis in the claims of citizens; according to Habermas, the causes are divergent system imperatives of capitalist economy and the social welfare expectations of citizens. However, the results are the same: Government overload and a crisis of trust. Loss of authority, rising participation and over-pluralized interests lead to an overload of government. The respective causal relationships remain largely in the dark. Never the less, Crozieretal indicate a political cycle as a self-healing force of democracy: Rising participation comes with polarization; this in turn leads to growing distrust between citizens and a realization of individual. For a lucid analysis of the structural similarity

between socialist and conservative crisis theories, political powerlessness, this then leads to a decline in participation.¹

Kotter (2001) defines leadership as the ability to cope with change. More change, he argues, demands more leadership. In similar research, others also conclude that adapting to change is imperative to crisis communications, whether it is chaos theory (Murphy, 1996), a classification matrix or the role of perception in crisis communications.² As a result, while companies continue to refine crisis plans, the missing element is the ability to think comprehensively about crises and their consequences.³

Therefore, it can be suggested that adaptability and flexibility can be the essential attributes to crisis leaders that allow them to successfully lead the organization out of crisis. Research reveals that crisis leadership is a natural extension of leadership when examining the skills needed to succeed.⁴ However, argues that skills alone do not make someone a successful crisis leader. For example, someone may be able to communicate well, but if his or her actions and words are not aligned with the vision or mission of organization they will be unlikely to earn the trust and credibility needed to engage and motivate employees and other key stakeholders. Thus, this suggests that in order to develop a better understanding of how people lead during crisis it is essential to be able to understand the difference between leadership and leadership during critical times.⁵

The purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding of how people lead during crisis. , is hoped to provide a better understanding of the difference between leadership and crisis leadership, suggest the most appropriate leadership style. It also aims to explain what role communication plays in implementing change programmes to survive crisis.

5.4 Testing of Hypothesis:

1. It is an attempt to accept the claims that the root cause of political violence in Assam is illegal immigration from Bangladesh by looking at pattern of population growth in the past few decades .Thus the hypothesis is retained.

2. It is an attempt to understand the current violence by looking into the recurring history of political violence and riots in the Bodo heartland. There also the hypothesis is retained.
3. It is been seen that 9.31 lacks people had migrated in Assam. It is an influence that increase was due to the setting of migrants in the state and the majority of these Muslim peasants migrants who settled in Assam during this period were East Bengali Muslims peasants. Here also my hypothesis is provided.
4. This particular research summarize that since 1951 the rate of increase of Assam's population is higher than that of the country as a whole or of any state or province. The reason for this influx is
 - There is increase in an acceleration of the natural rate
 - Hindu refugees have greatly influxes from East Pakistan.
 - There is migration from rest of the country also.
5. I have mentioned that illegal migrants from Bangladesh have become an asset for the Muslims of Assam.
6. It is interesting to note here the reaction
7. Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) lacked constitutional protection and it led to a more aggressive claim for a homeland that would include and protect all the Bodos.
8. There is mounting tension between the Bodo and non-Bodo which led to the two developments. First there is emergence of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDLF) which emerged as a strong opposition party in the state Assembly. This party represents the interest of Muslims in Assam and this has asked for the dissolution of BTC.

5.5 Recommendation and Suggestions:

In order to survive crisis, government should take a more flexible approach to planning, for example, several coherent, multi-point strategic-action plans should be developed, not just one. Every plan should embrace all of the functions, business units, and geographies of a company and show how it can make the most of specific economic environment. Due to abundance of leadership theories it is perhaps difficult to choose one theory that would “tick all the boxes” and resolve all the problems in organization, especially in turbulent critical times. However, after analyzing and

evaluating situational and transformational styles, it can be recommended for the organizations to adopt the “mixture” of these approaches. For example, as it was said above, transformational leadership style can be adapted to reduce stress levels by implementing vision and strategy/”action plan” into managerial/employee “layers” of the organization and ensure employee commitment. Situational approach can be easily implemented by managers into everyday communications with employees to ensure their development, and thus, development and growth of the organization as the whole. However, it is also recommended for the leaders to judge each situation by its own merits and adopt appropriate leadership style that would be suitable for that particular situation. For example, adopting autocratic style when there are minimal time limits for making decisions and there is evidence of cognitive shortcuts and tunnel vision caused by high levels of stress, that could affect effective decision making process. In order for organizations successfully implement all strategic “action” plans and overcome crisis it is also recommended to ensure all relevant information is communicated to all levels of organization, customers and other stakeholders, for example shareholders and local community. Communication may also be endorsed after crisis in order to restore/re-establish trust and loyalty of employees and other stakeholders and thus, ensure re-establishment of organizational/financial performance and productivity.

This research tends to study political leadership in Assam. After the detailed study of Assam politics it can be said that the leaders to overcome their problems and a lack of planning both of which after winning the elections and also enjoying the power. Leadership in Assam collapses because of legitimacy of political system. The leaders play crucial role in the state in determining and executing the political agenda of their political party. Leadership in the state provides a clear vision and objectives for the statesmen during specific crises, the leader’s needs to focused on the population and build a consensus. It also means finding ways of collectively realizing the vision for the benefit of the statesmen

The aim of the study is develop a better understanding of what effective leadership looks like; to identity the determinants of good leadership and ways in which it can be fostered. There is no blueprint for understanding leadership. This

would be a contradiction in terms; leadership is an art, and it is also something of an art to capture what this elusive yet critical concept means in practice.

Assam was exposed to unprecedented the violence. Both the leadership and the government failed to contain violence. Like many powerful social movements, the Assam movement also encountered a counter- movement. Besides, it had a very strong anti- Left tendency, both in ideology and in practice. It also destabilizes the parliamentary politics in Assam: leading to collapse of four state governments within a period of four years. Ultimately, the Assam movement gave birth to a Right wing regional political party 'Assam Gana Parishad AGP which captured political power in Assam, disproving one of its major ideological assumptions that the Asamiya are facing a crisis of political leadership in the wake of immigration of foreigners and inclusion of their names in the voters list.

The career of the Assam movement was also marked by a gradual transformation in goals. The leadership initially demanded 1951 as the cut off, and later on they accepted 1971 as cut off year, for all practical purpose. The change in the cut off year was the result of gradual erosion of its support base. However, the leadership of the movement maintained an unstinting support base among the dominant sections of Asamiyas and therefore, it could bargain for certain concessions. Ultimately, an accord was signed between the Government of India and the leaders of The Assam Movement .the accord recorded the official understanding between the two contending parties. However, under the surface, the Asamiya ruling class came into a anew working agreement with the Indian ruling class redefining their relations at the state level.

The emergence of Assam Gana Parishad as a ruling party in Assam with prominent leaders of the Assam movement leading the state government led to the institutionalization of the Assam Movement .The Assam Movement became a part of the establishment. Though the party came to taste power soon after its birth and the leaders who operated the government machinery were young they had to however accept the hard reality of operating within the old institutions. Because of their severe class limitations they failed to create new institutions or change tangibly the nature of the old institutions. The new party and its young leadership proved too weak before

the old institutions they lugubriously relied on the old institution to accommodate them solidly .And the goal of the Assam movement remained as distant as they were before the beginning of the movement.

Thus after studying the political situation of Assam it can be said that the institutions of leadership needs to be organized. And can be conclude that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Our world is suffering greatly at the hands of people who have placed their desire to be right above the desire to achieve the right outcome. They confuse their need for an ego boost, their quest for power, and their thirst for greed with leadership. Many of the symptoms of poor leadership we're seeing today may seemingly resolve themselves in the near term, but the greater problem won't go away on its own. I've often said, leaders not accountable **to** their people will eventually be held accountable **by** their people. But this assumes the people are strong enough to hold themselves accountable for the past transgressions of turning a blind eye from what we know to be right. We must once and for all learn that what we fail to require of ourselves will be hard to ask from others.

We must demand more from ourselves and more from those whom we place in positions of responsibility. Whether we're talking about executives, politicians, educators, healthcare professionals, or any other class of citizenry, we must stop tolerating those who place self-interest over service beyond self.

- Leadership needs to understand the basic issues and the problems of the state. They should fulfill the demands of the people. The weightage should be given to public opinion .Leadership should be socio-economic developments of the state.
- The political leadership needs; serve the people very sincerely, honestly giving up of self-interest. The mindset of the leaders needs to be changed.
- The political leadership needs to have the capability of farsightedness for the planning up of all round development of the people. They have to sacrifice their selfish interest for the sake of interest of the people.

- The political leadership needs to gain knowledge and proper training to maintain values of democracy and try to provide justice, liberty and equality to its citizen irrespective of its caste, class, religion, language, sex etc.
- The political leadership need to maintain peace, security fraternity and unity amongst its people. A congenial and peaceful atmosphere is necessary for all round development of the state.

Leadership is not about the power and the accolades bestowed upon the leader, it's about the betterment of those whom the leader serves. At its essence, leadership is about people. At its core, leadership is about improving the status quo, and inspiring the creation of positive change.

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