

MIGRATION INTO ASSAM AND ITS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS ON SOCIETY

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Abstract: Assam has experienced huge and prolonged immigrations before independence of the country of India. Immigration has been posed a serious security threat to the people of Assam. Migration is a continuous phenomenon and it continues in near future. Article 19 of the Constitution of India provides its citizens the right to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any part of the country. In Assam, migrated people can be divided into two categories- (1) Foreigner and (2) Indian. The large-scale migration influxes into Assam have created a major identical problem's in Assam. Historically, Economic factors have contributed to voluntarily migration of people into Assam.

Keywords: Immigration, phenomena, territory, voluntarily

Introduction: Migration is not a new phenomenon in Assam. The influx of large scale immigration started during the colonial rule of British. The British government encouraged the people to live in Assam. The large scale of tea garden people's came into Assam during the British rule. From 1971(Bangladesh war), the flow of illegal migration into Assam has been increased. 10 million people entered into Assam during the Bangladesh war. Illegal migration has posed a serious identity threat to the indigenous people of Assam. The Assam agitation or Assam movement was started from 1979 and ended in 1985 against the illegal migration. The Assamese indigenous people feared that illegal migration can abolish the true identity and culture of indigenous people of Assam. During the period of Assam movement as reported 855(later on 860 as submitted by AASU) nos of people sacrificed their lives in the hope of an "infiltration free Assam" in the 1979-1985 Assam Agitation.¹ The leaders of Assam movement were demanding the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants from Assam. Finally, the Assam Accord was signed in 1985. It was a tripartite accord signed between the government of India, state government of Assam and leaders of Assam movement. The clause 6th of Assam Accord envisages Constitution, legislative and administrative measure to safeguard, protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

Methodology: This paper is based on qualitative research and descriptive in nature. The date and informations were collected from secondary information. Secondary informations were collected from books, journal, newspaper, article, website etc.

Objectives of the paper:

1. To know about the history of immigration into Assam.
2. To examine how immigration has impacted on political and social conditions of Assam.

A brief migration history of Assam:

1. Immigration during pre-British period: at an early stage, Mongoloid and Austro-Mongoloid people were come to Assam. Simultaneously, Aryan people came from northern and Eastern India to this

region. Sukapha established the Ahom dynasty in Assam. He also came to Assam after crossing the Patkai Mountains. All groups of people inhabiting in Assam have come from different places at different times of history.

2. Immigration during British Rule: In 1826, Yandaboo Treaty was signed between the British and the Burmese. As a result, Assam went under the British colonial rule. The British government encouraged large scale of immigration into Assam. The British developed the tea industry in Assam. They imported labour from Bihar and Other provinces to work in tea gardens. The Assamese people living mostly in upper Assam and cultivating one crop per year, were not interested in working as labour in the tea gardens nor in increasing or expanding land cultivation to meet the additional requirement of food for the large labour population employed in the tea garden's. Therefore, the British encouraged Bengali Muslim peasants from present Bangladesh to move into lower Assam for putting virgin land under cultivation. During Sir Mohammad sadulla's Muslim league ministry, a concerted effort was made to encourage the migration of Bengali Muslim into Assam for political reasons.²
3. Immigration during partition: In 1947, Bengal was partitioned into the Indian state of west Bengal and the Pakistan province of East Bengal. The majority of East Bengali came and settled in the city of Kolkata. Later, a number of people moved to the Barak valley of Assam and Tripura.
4. During Bangladesh war, 1971: In 1971, East Pakistan became an independent country and East Pakistan named was replaced as Bangladesh. During Bangladesh war, around 10

². Sinha SK (1998), *Report on illegal migration into Assam, president of India.*

Million east Bengali refugees entered India. Of whom 1.5 million may have returned after Bangladesh war. Remaining refugees inhabiting in India and never went back to Bangladesh.

5. Migrants from Nepal: In the beginning of 19th century, a number of Nepalese people started migration into Assam. They occupied wasteland and char land. They mainly involved in dairy farming. Firstly, they were started live in the Darrang, kamrup and Lakhimpur district of Assam.
6. Migration from other states: From Rajasthan, Punjab, Traders, Artisans migrated into Assam. Marwari's people played an important role in enhancing trade in Assam. The Punjabi's were mostly skill carpenter, contractors and Business.

Illegal migration and Assam Accord: Illegal migration refers to the migration of people into country through means that violates the immigration laws of that country or the continued residence of people without the legal right to live in that country.³ According to Section 2 (1) (b) of the citizenship act of 1955, an "illegal migrants" as a foreigner who entered India:

1. Without valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or
2. With a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.

In 1971, East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan and became an independent country named as Bangladesh. During Bangladesh war, 10 million people entered India. After became Independent, the influx of immigrants never stopped. The immigrants from Bangladesh are also known as Bangladeshi immigrants. In 1978, re-election was going to held in the mangoldoi lok sabha constituency to fill the seat of Hiralalpatwari after his death. During the process of the election, election officials observed an abrupt and dramatic increase in the number of registered voters. AASU (All Assam Students Union) demanded that the election be postponed till the names of foreign nationals were deleted from the electoral rolls and they

demanded permanent sealing of the Indo-Bangladesh border. The Assam agitation or Assam movement started from there.⁴ in 1985, Rajiv Gandhi government entered into negotiations with AASU and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad and signed an accord in 1985 known as Assam accord. Assam Accord

³ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_immigration

⁴ Aai Assami

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/aaiassami.wordpress.com/2016/10/16/assam-movement/amp/>

has defined illegal migrations as those who came to Assam after 24 December, 1971. However, the stream that infiltrated legality between 1 January 1966 and 24 December 1971 was not to be deported and was to be given Indian citizenship after a lapse of ten years.⁵

Social and Political impacts of Migration:

1. The influx of large scale of immigration has posed a serious identity threat to the indigenous people of Assam. The Assamese culture will be insecurity, employment of local people will be diminished by illegal Migrants.
2. Declining of forest land: large areas of forest land and wasteland were occupied by immigrants for settlement and cultivation. Declining of forest land areas and settlement of immigrant has posed a serious threat to the wildlife and biodiversity of Assam.
3. Vote Bank politics: Indian political parties used immigrants as vote bank for their party. Political parties welcomed migrants in their respective States. The political parties said the migrants to give them government facilities. Political parties used them to gain their vote in election. Such group of people cast it votes on the political leaders who give them security, government facilities etc. In Assam, The All Assam Students Union (AASU) said that The BJP led Government enacted the citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 for vote bank politics. This act gives Indian citizenship for illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
4. National Register of citizens (NRC): The NRC is the list of Indian citizens and was prepared in 1951 on the basis of the census of 1951. The process of NRC update was taken up in Assam as per Supreme Court order in 2013. In order to wean out cases of illegal migration from Bangladesh and other adjoining areas, NRC Updating was carried out under the citizenship act, 1955 and according to rules framed in the Assam Accord. In the case of Assam, there was a cut off date march 25, 1971 after which all foreigners as per the Assam accord were to be detected, deleted and expelled in accordance with law. The final updated NRC for Assam was published on 31 August, 2019. It contained 3, 11, 21,004 persons names out of 33 million population. It's excluded 1,906,657 people from Final NRC.⁶
5. D voters: D voter's means doubtful voters. Doubtful voters create a major problem in the clear Updation of NRC. D voters are those who have been disenfranchised during electoral roll revision for their alleged lack of proper citizenship credentials. The Assam Government said that there is 1, 13,738 D-Voters in the state. Barpeta district leads the

⁵ Sinha, SK (1998), *Report on illegal migration into Assam, president of India.*

⁶ *India Today*, 31 August, 2019

Table with 17,227 D- Voter's followed by Sonitpur (16, 537), Nagaon (98, 28) and Dhubri (7, 133)⁷

6. Rise of Communalism politics: The influxes of large scale immigration have caused the rise of communal violence in Assam. In Assam, There was influx of large scale immigration of Bengali speaking Muslim from Bangladesh. Therefore, two types of communalism have emerged in Assam politics- one is Hindu politics and another is Muslim politics.

Immigration of large scale has increased ethnic tension between the state's indigenous population and Bengali migrants. In Kokrajhar, Muslim migrants were attacked by Bodo separatist's rebel. More than 100 migrants were killed in one such raid at Bansbari, a makeshift camp for displaced Muslim in 1993. (What lies behind Assam violence, 26 July, 2012, BBC). In July, 2012, communal violence happened between indigenous Bodos and Bengali Speaking Muslim. As of 8 August, 2012, 77 people had died and over 400,000 people were taking shelter in 270 relief camps, after being displaced from almost 400 villages. Eleven people have been reported missing.⁸

Conclusion: Illegal migration into Assam has been posing a serious threat to the indigenous people of Assam. Migration is a continuous process. The influxes of large scale immigration have impacted not only Assam but also whole country. The migrant's people changed the Democratic conditions of Assam. Illegal migration has badly impacted on socio-economic, political situation of Assam. There has been emergence new problem's likes declining of forest land, poverty, hunger, ethnic clashes etc. Migration is a major reason behind the population growth of Assam. The influx of illegal migration from Bangladesh is changing border district of Assam into a Bengali speaking Muslim majority areas. The government should take stringent measure to the identification of illegal migration with the help of local people and deportation of illegal migration to the Bangladesh. Border fencing with Bangladesh should be completed in full swing. The implementation of The Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) act, 1983 created a complicated situation in Assam. Therefore, IMDT act should be repealed.

⁷ The Hindu, 2 march, 2020

⁸ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Assam_violence

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