

Movement against CAB(CAA) and the role of Assamese people : An analysis

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Abstract: Movement against CAB (CAA) brought the struggles of Assamese people to light in front of the world. This movement creates a new chapter of Assamese people's love for their own land, Culture, tradition and language which can't be ignore by the history of India in future. This is a movement to stop the foreigners to enter Assam (India). But during that time of movement some castes and tribes of Assam were involved themselves in a different way. It means, even though the movement against CAA was about fighting against the government's decision of giving citizenship to foreigners, but some castes and tribes of Assam completely ignored the main motive and started to demand constitutional safeguard for themselves under the clause 6 of Assam accord. In this article, We will try to analyse the roles of these people in this movement and how their motive has changed the whole political scenario during the time of movement against CAB(CAA) in Assam.

Keywords:- Movement against CAB(CAA), Assamese people, constitutional safeguard, political motive.

Introduction

In northeastern corner of India the state of Assam is situated which has its own unique history. Assam was never a part of India before 1826. It was always an independent state before the British came. So the people of Assam had never felt the taste of slavery.

Before the British came to Assam, it was ruled by the famous Ahoms. But due to some political reasons, Assam was attacked by the Burmese and started to torture the Assamese people. So, the British were decided to intervene Assam and declared a war against Burmese and finally through the "Treaty of Yandabo" (1826), the war has finally ended.

Even though it was mentioned in the treaty that the British will never interfere in any kind of issue related to Assam, but as time passed they started to control polity and economy of Assam and ultimately Assam became a part of mainland India indirectly. In later period, as a part of mainland India Assam had also participated in independence movement against British administration and finally got independence. After independence the political issues of Assam has changed one of such issue is illegal immigration into Assam from neighborhood countries of India. This issue has not only threaten the economy and demography of Assam but also put danger the right, traditions culture and language of aboriginal Assamese.

Historical background

Illegal immigration isn't a new thing in India. The arrival of the Muslims after independence, gave rise to a new political culture. Indians census commissioner .B vaghaiwalla said in the first post independence census report of 1951 : "I have personally seen hundreds of persons coming on trains during the first month I held charged of Goalpara district."

On Dec 24, 1949, the Govt of India introduced a bill that become an Act in 1950, known as the Immigrants (Expulsim from Assam) Act 1950 "which provide that any immigrant person excepting the displaced person who because of civil disturbance or fear of civil disturbance entered Assam was liable to be deported." In western border of India the transfer of population between India and west pakistan was over within a few years. But no such transfer of population took place in eastern sector. Again at beginning of 1971, Bengali Hindu as well as Muslim came to India.

The states of northeast India which were curved out of the British Assam are procted by the 6th schedule where non- tribals are not allowed to possess land. But, the issue of illegal immigration to mainland Assam create some unavoidable problems as the aboriginals have no constitutional problems as the aboriginals have no constitutional safeguard yet.

In 1974, the All Assam student union demanded the deletion, deportation and detection of foreign nationals from electoral roll. They also presented a 21 point charter of Demands to Assam Govt on 21 Feb, 1974. From 1979 to 1985, an anti- government campaign started by them which is known as "Assam movement" or Assam Andolan . The movement was supported throughout the Brahmaputra Valley by tribes like Bodo, Tiwa, Missing etc. In 1985 the movement ended with the signing of the Assam accord. The Assam accord was the memorandum of settlement signed in 1985 between the Rajiv Gandhi led Govt of India and the leaders of the Assam movement.

The main points of the Assam accord were all those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1971 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote, those who had entered after 1971 were to be deported.

The central Govt also promised to provide " legislative and administrative safeguards to protect the culture social and linguistic identity and heritage of Assamese people (under the clause 6 of Assam accord). But this promise hasn't been fulfilled yet. So, as a consequence of this unfulfilled promise, in later period, the some tribes and casts of Assam played a peculiar role in the movement against CAB(CAA).

Movement against CAB(CAA) and the role of Assam

The national Register of Citizens (NRC) is a maintained by the Govt of India containing names and certain relevant information for the identification of genuine Indian citizens. The register was first prepared after the 1951 census of India. In 2013, the process of updating

Assam's part of NRC has started. In 31st August 2019, the final updated of NRC has published, which contained 31 million names out of 33 million population. It left out about 19 million applicants that announced as illegal immigrants as Indian citizen, which can be a vote bank for them. Another important point is those states which have inner line permit and constitutional safeguard for their people, are excluded from this Act i.e., these states don't have to take the responsibility of these citizens. So the people have started the movement against CAB(CAA). Within a few days, this movement became so popular that the govt of Assam introduced some techniques to divert the mind of Assamese people. One such technique is the govt of Assam declared that soon they will fulfill the demand of constitutional safeguard for Assamese people according to Assam accord (clause 6). This declaration has changed the whole political scenario of Assam. Some castes and tribes have started to demand govt of Assam to fulfill their dreams, which can be explained as follows-

- (i) **Demand for autonomous council and satellite autonomous council:-** Just after the Assam movement we have seen the emergence of numerous political parties, literary bodies, student organizations. These groups generally focused on their own groups' development, which create identity consciousness among the people of Assam. But the movement against CAB(CAA) reduced this identity consciousness to some extent. But to stop this mass movement the govt of Assam decided to fulfill the unfulfilled dreams of some caste and tribes. One such step is the government declared to establish autonomous council for Moran, Motok and Kunch Rajbanshi people. As a result, those groups (caste & tribe) who were excluded from this has started to demand autonomous and satellite autonomous council for them. For example, we can talk about the Kalita's demand of Pragjyutis Kalita autonomous council on 22 Dec, Mess Kachari Jatiya Parishad's and Hazong student Union's demand for autonomous council on 24 Dec. On the other hand, some other groups like Ahom and Goriya Mouya have started to demand for satellite autonomous council.
- ii) Demand for include in SC category :-** We know that reservation is a controversial issue of India. For some people reservation creates inequality and hatred among people. But some people who don't belong from any reserved category want to include themselves as reserved category. During the movement against CAB(CAA) some groups took the movement as an opportunity to fulfill their dreams. So, they started demanding to include their community as schedule caste. One such example is demand of Kami community (Grokha) to categorise themselves as SC.
- iii) Demand for ST status:-** To safeguard of the interests, rights and privileges, the six communities of Assam have started to demand for ST status during the time of "movement against CAB(CAA)"

From the above discussion, it is very easy to understand that even though at the first phase of the movement the people of Assam had only one motive, (to prevent the Act) but as the time passed they were divided into many groups and so their motives too. On the other hand, some leader of these groups joined the ruling govt (pol. Party) to fulfill their political motive. As example we can talk about

kajal Gohain, Secretary of All Assam Motak sanmilan , Who actively joined the movement ar first, but later he withdraw himself from it and joined BJP. So, we can say that these groups are responsible for the failure of this movement .In future, if those groups are unable to unite themselves as one group ie as people of Assam only, they will loss many opportunities to grow.

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