CHAPTER - I
CHAPTER I
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Migration can be defined as a form of geographic or spatial mobility involving change of usual residence between two clearly defined geographical units. Illegal migration refers to inter-country movement of people not in accordance with national laws and regulations. As the person does not figure in the emigration records of the recipient country, the process is called undocumented migration. In the present study, those who have entered Assam and other North Eastern States without valid documents in post 1971 period are termed as undocumented migrants. In India the illegal migration from Bangladesh to its northeast region is a serious problem for the country. Illegal migrants exert additional strain on the state economy and pose a serious threat to the internal security. These includes economic pressure, law and order problem, engaging in terrorism, political instability and their role in fomenting ethnic conflict. Because of its serious demographic, socio economic and political consequences, it is very important to study about the estimate number of undocumented migration in Assam and other northeast states and also other significant aspects associated with this problem. With this point in view, the present study is an attempt to estimate an approximate figure of illegal migrants of Assam and other northeastern states by applying Laslie Matrix population projection model for the periods 1971-2001.

The migration is a complex social phenomenon and the factors associated with it are not easy to generalize. Nevertheless, all types of migration are always
engendered by a simultaneous operation of 'push' and 'pull' factors. The Bangladeshi illegal migration to northeast region of India is due to both the pull and push factors. Better employment opportunities and availability of fertile agricultural land in India act as a pull factor while the poverty, subsistence living, ravages caused by floods and other natural calamities in Bangladesh act as push factors (Godbole, 2006). Because of continuous flood effect usable land decreases every year in Bangladesh and also population rapidly increase due to high birth rate. Thus, there is an ingrained culture of migration in which people are forced to move from area to area seeking relief from poverty. Without fuss, without tumult, without undue trouble to the district revenue staff, a population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to Assam valley during the past twenty five years (Hazarika, 1994).

The illegal migration have several social impact on our Indian society as a whole and ultimately on our economy. These Bangladeshi migrants are working as a very cheap labour and they can work any adverse situation. This has helped them to get employment in Assam and other northeastern states easily. However, by making low cost labour easily available, the process of unhindered immigration reduced the incentives to technological change. This is less likely if directly or indirectly immigration raises production costs. In Assam and other northeastern states, they have occupied the traditional cultivated and forest areas. They are very much inclined to do processing and deforestation. Because this is not their country and they can destroy everything to earn money and livelihood. The illegal migrants have also great impact on the identity of ethnic groups all over the
Northeastern States. In a state like Tripura for instance, because of continuous large scale illegal migrants from Bangladesh the local tribal people is now become reduced to a minority (Vohra, 2006). Obviously they cannot digest the situation which creates confrontation and violence and also because of this insurgency started and it has a manifold impact on the economy. Another impact of illegal migrants is the threat to our work culture. In our society almost all the family is keen to send their children for school education and we are creating a very elite class society where they get white colour job or government jobs. Now everybody has given up the traditional cultivation work and this gap has been filled by the Bangladeshis, not only in Assam or the northeast but all over the country (Sarma, 2006). Furthermore our developing nations has not only been burdened with the responsibility of feeding millions aliens, but is also facing serious threat to the security of the region by ISI sponsored Islamic insurgents. The illegal migration from Bangladesh has seriously affected the security scenario in the northeast. During 1979 to 1984 an unprecedented mass movement involving people from all walk of life of erupted against illegal migrants from Bangladesh spearheaded by students of Assam under the banner of All Assam Student Union (AASU). People took to the street the struggle of protecting Assamese identity under perceived threat from Bangladeshi. This resentment of Assamese people against the illegal Muslim settlers triggered a reaction from the Muslims leading and as a result the number of Muslim extremist groups is formed. Besides the Muslim terrorist groups, there has also been an increase in the Muslim fundamentalist groups. In August 1999, 4 ISI agents had been arrested in
Guwahati city and during interrogation they reveals that the ISI had established its network in Lower Assam districts including Dhubri and Goalpara (Roy, 2006). Most of the important NE terrorist groups including ULFA, NDFB, NSCN-IM, NLFT, ATTF and ANVC have established camps in Bangladesh. In the light of the recent terrorist attacks in different parts of the country, security agencies have been expressing concern that these illegal immigrants could well be involved or lured in terrorist activities in exchange of money or other procurement. The group of ministers (GOM) in its report on reforming the national security system made public on 23 May 2001 expressed grave concern over the security threat and large scale illegal migration from Bangladesh.

So far the International boarder of India and Bangladesh is concern the total boarders is about 4096 km (De, 2008). Regional politicians in Assam first proposed fencing the border in the 1960s in order to isolate the population of East Pakistan. During that period, the Government of Assam under Congress Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha launched a campaign to deport immigrants who had settled in Assam since January 1951. He ignored Prime Minister Jawharlal Nehru's request to go slow on the issue (Upadyay, 2005). In 1986, the Indian government approved the Indo-Bangladesh Border Road and Fence project to prevent illegal migration from Bangladesh. However, the progress of that project was very slow (Schendel, 2005). According to the Annual Report 2005-2006 of Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, fencing was necessary in order to prevent illegal infiltration and other anti-national activities from across the border. By the year 2004-2005, 1502 kilometers had been fenced. A total of 2535.80 kilometres
fencing has been completed in Phase I and II out of 4096.7 km long Indo-Bangladesh border (Shamshad, 2008).

In 1983, Indira Gandhi government enacted the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) (IMDT) Act mainly on the grounds that it provided special protections against undue harassment to the “minorities” that were affected by the Assam Agitation. But a number of criticisms were made of the Act with a demand for its amendment and abolition throughout late 80s and 90s by AASU, AGP and section of Assamese print media (Karlekar, 2005). The Act was challenged in courts and in response to that the Supreme Court of India struck down the Act in 2005. The court also observed that though enquiries were initiated in 310,759 cases under the IMDT Act, only 10,015 persons were declared as illegal migrants and finally only 1,481 were physically expelled up to April 30, 2000.

This problem of illegal migration is a global challenge, and yet no one developed country has developed a good workable and acceptable legal immigration plan that eliminates illegal immigration. They emigrate mainly for economic reasons; most of them are either unemployed and wish simply to earn decent revenue and to improve their standards of living. They think the host country will offer them a better life and better future. In many industrialized countries in Western Europe and North America, as well as in some upper middle income developing countries and high income oil exporting countries in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, the national labour markets easily absorbed a great number of undocumented migrants, in addition to those who
were legally admitted as permanent or temporary migrants. Moreover many such illegal migrants also regularized their status once they had found employment.

1.2 MIGRATION HISTORY OF NORTHEAST INDIA:

Because of the reason of historical links and geographical and physical proximity, there has been continuous flow of Bangladeshi immigrants to the northeast India throughout the twentieth century. The North Eastern region in general and Assam in particular have been the destination of various streams of migrants originating in different part of the sub continent. The process was started with migration of population labour to meet the growing demand of the European tea planters. During the early period of British rule, Assam was administered under the government of Bengal by chief commissioner till 1874. The only interest of Colonial Rulers was in increasing government revenue through tea cultivation and exploitation of mineral and forest resources. At that time Assam was sparsely populated and the native Assamese laborers were not enough to cater the need of huge work force required for commercial cultivation. The British government was hitherto compelled to bring laborers from other parts of India. It continued till 1937. By that time the number of tea garden laborers reached more than 10 lakhs in Assam (Census of India, 1961, Assam, General Report, p 134).

Another large influx of migrants was that of Muslim peasants from the East Bengal. The states shares 262 km border with Bangladesh, of which 92 km is riverine (Sinha, 1998) and therefore migration from Bangladesh to northeast India is much easier. The pressure on agricultural land in Bangladesh was
tremendous due to high growth of population. Assam was sparsely populated (density 39 people per sq.km in 1900-1901) and having a rich tract of alluvial land, inhabitants of the relatively densely populated Bangladesh were immediately attracted. Therefore most of the Muslim peasant migrated to Northeast India, especially to Assam and started cultivation of jute, rice, pulses and vegetables. In the labour market, their demand was increased among the indigenous cultivators due to their skill in the field and dedication to hard work. Consequently successive waves of fresh migration of farm labourer started pouring in. There first target being the than district of Goalpara, where their number increased from 49.1 thousand in 1901 to 118.2 thousand in 1911 (Saikia, 2006). According to the 1961 census superintendent Pakyntein "Merely the advance guards or rather scouts of a huge army following closely on their heels."

In the subsequent two decades the migrants advanced towards the districts of Nowgoang, Kamrup (the then Barpeta sub-division) and Darrang. By 1931 most of the waste lands of the Brahmaputra Valley was already occupied by the settlers. By 1941 they penetrated the then North Lakhimpur district. In August 1942, after Saadulla returned to power of Assam for the second time, a new resolution on the land settlement under the slogan "grow more food" was announced and invited Muslim cultivators of East Bengal to come to Assam, to settle at the Govt. wastelands. The govt. of Assam not only encouraged Muslim cultivators by giving railway concession but also provided "Family ticket" of rupees five for the entire family to come directly from Mymensingha to Nowgoang district of central Assam (Ahmed, 1999). According to the 1961
The other significant wave of migration was that of Hindu and Muslim refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan as a result of Partition. The Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971 also resulted in large scale of both Hindu and Muslim refugee in India. The peculiar socio-political events that followed in the fledgling new nation, exerted constant pressure on the Hindu population in East Pakistan. Consequently their number started to decline steeply. In 1947 the Hindu population in East Pakistan was 27%, by 1971 it reached 14% and by 1991 it was further down to 10%. During 1950 about 3.64 million Hindu were reported to have immigrated to the eastern border state of India (Visaria, 1969). By August 1971, the number of Bangladesh refugees in India was recorded 7.55 million of whom 6.97 million were Hindus, 0.54 million Muslim and 0.04 million others (Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, 1972). This number later increased to nearly 10 million (Greenough and Cash, 1973). Their illegal settlement and then their electoral support for Indira Gandhi’s Congress government further aggravated Assamese fears of Bengali cultural domination and central government ambitions to undermine Assamese regional autonomy (Boruah, 1980).

Migration from Nepal to India has an authentic record since the early period of British rule. They started settling in the uncultivated and unowned hill slopes. Nepalis from the neighbouring kingdom of Nepal, who have been migrating
to Northeast India since the colonial times have long integrated into the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society of the region (Nath, 2005). The number of Nepalis in Assam alone went up from 1.01 lakh in 1951 to 3.54 lakh in 1971. In recent years hundreds of thousands of women and girls have been trafficked across the Indo-Nepal borders. Every year about 5000-7000 Nepali girls are sold to Indian brothels and more than 200000 Nepali girls are currently involved in Indian sex trade” (Dutta, 2005).

1.3 NEED OF THE STUDY

The study of the undocumented migration has a special significance, for a developing region like North Eastern India as it is directly associated with the economic development of that region. It also brings to light the population redistribution, besides providing a useful insight into the social, economic and other forces responsible for such movements. So far the illegal migration is concern it is a serious problem for the country and it is also important to from historical point of view and also equally important politically. Although this is a major issue and its constitute an important component of Assam’s population, no serious and scientific attempt has been made to estimate the number of illegal migrants and other characteristics associated with the problem of Assam. How many Bengalis entered and remained in Assam after the 1971 Pakistani civil war and the 1972 war between India and Pakistan is unknown. According to government estimates the population of Assam increase from 14.6 million in 1971 to 19.9 million in 1981, i.e an increase of 5.3 million which is 36.3 percent growth.
(Weiner, 1983). But during this period national population growth is 24.7 percent and this high growth of population of Assam is due to the large scale migration mainly from Bangladesh, Nepal and other states of India. But how much of this migration are from elsewhere in India and how much are from neighboring country illegally, still the correct figure of the number of illegal migrants in Assam and other northeastern states is not known. There is no such estimates based on sound demographic tools are available. This has lead to making wild guesses of immigrants at various points of time made by different studies and media groups to suit their convenience. Such guess estimate is more plentiful especially for the period 1971-1991 as the census of 1981 was not conducted in Assam. Consequently widely divergent estimates of migrants are found for this period. Because of its serious demographic, socio economic and political consequences, it is very important to study about the estimate number of undocumented migration in Assam and other northeast states along with cause of this migration and also different socio economic and demographic aspect.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Keeping in view the importance of illegal migrants the present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

1. To identify socio cultural aspect of illegal migrants.
2. To measure the contribution of population growth due to illegal migrants in this region.
3. To develop suitable statistical technique to estimate the illegal migrants.

4. To estimate the volume of illegal migrants for each state of northeast region.

1.5 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

An attempt is made to give a brief review of the work done in the field of Migration and population growth. The interest has been rising in the field of migration during recent years and several studies have analyzed immigration and its impact on countries of the world. According to conservative estimates Skeldon (2000), there is a stock of around 11 million illegal migrants worldwide. So far as illegal migration of Northeast India is concern the scholars of various disciplines has received attention in the recent years because the problem of immigration in to this region is markedly difference. In India several research works have been conducted on migration based on birth place statistics of census data (Davis, 1965; Zachariah 1964; Kundu and Gupta, 2000). Analysis report based on inter district and interstate migration has been made from census data by the superintendent of census operation in their provincial report. According to Bora (2007) the process of immigration in to undivided Assam which started during the British times has attained such a magnitude during Post independent period that it has surpassed
many of the known instances of inter-regional migration of population in the contemporary period. According to Saikia (2002), the Bangladeshi immigrants were brought to Eastern India for the fulfillment of economic needs, later on politicians utilised these immigrants as their supporting elements and further later it was made an issue of ethnic and religious sentiments. But the political importance is still predominates for the continuous flow of immigrants in Assam and West Bengal. A study by Jogesh Ch. Bhuyan (2006) estimated that the natural growth rate of Assam in 1991 for entire religious groups combined is 19.4 per thousand. If the decadal growth rate of Muslims is considered higher say 20.5 percent, the growth rate for the twenty-year period is calculated at 45.2 per cent. The excess of about 11.5 lakhs may be considered as illegal migrants of Muslim, mostly from Bangladesh and among these only a few entered with passport during this period. In several other studies it is express that illegal migrants have become very powerful in northeast India due to the competitive politics of vote bank. The large scale migration from East Pakistan was encouraged by the politician mainly to be able to win elections without any sweat (Kumar, 2006; Bezboruah, 2006).

Datta, P (2002) in his research paper discussed the basic features of Nepali migrants in India relating to volume, sex ratio, spatial variation, growth rates and migration cohorts using census records. Also an effort is made to estimate fresh migration rate, annual migration and return migration of Nepalese. There are other few studies where the various impact of illegal migration which is mainly socio-cultural, economic and security reason have been briefly discussed (Sarma AK, 2006; Madhab J, 2006, Singh P, 2002). Sarifa Begum (1979), a demographer
of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies in Dhaka, calculated that nearly 3.5 million people ‘disappeared from east Pakistan during 1951 to 1961 probably as a result of partition. She indicated that another 1.5 million might have entered India between 1961 and 1974. Visaria PM (1969) in his study on migration between India and Pakistan in the 1951-61 decade leads to the conclusion that there was a substantial net migration of Pakistan-born persons into India, but only a negligible net migration of India-born persons into Pakistan.

In northeast India the political boundary has been changed frequently after post independent period and as a result new states and district has been formed. In 1955 the States Reorganization Commission anticipated the political integration of north-east India through the merger of Manipur and Tripura with the then composite state of Assam (Chaube et al., 1975). Taher (2007) describe the geopolitical changes in the North-Eastern region along with formation of new states and district during different census periods. The major jurisdictional changes in the administrative set up of Northeast India right from district level to administrative units above the village level during 1971-1991 are briefly described in series- 4 , part-II A census of India 1991.

In Assam and other northeast region the growth of Muslim population is much higher than that of other religious people. The proportion of Muslim rises from 15 to 31 percent and that of other Indian religion except Christian and Hindu declines from 86 to 65 percent during the period 1901 to 2001 (Joshi et al., 2005). As a result of high population growth rate among the Muslims the proportion of Muslim population in the state Assam has increased from 24.56 percent in 1971 to...
28.43 percent in 1991. On the other hand, the proportion of Hindu population has decreased from 72.51 percent in 1971 to 67.13 percent in 1991. Such high growth of Muslim population in the state during the last two decades is indicative of the prevalence of high birth rate and immigration among them (Kar, 2007). Ahmed (1999) explains historical background of settlement of Muslims in Assam. There were thousands acres of wasteland in Assam. So Bengali Muslim cultivators were invited by the British Government to settle in Assam for cultivation. After giving allotment of ‘Kharaji’ (Permanent) Patta of the occupied land, British government levied revenue taxes on them. The census of India published its “First Report on Religion Data” based on the latest enumeration of 2001, in September 2004. The absolute numbers of literates, workers and non workers, categories of workers etc., at India/state and district levels for all the religious communities have also been presented for the first time in independent India. Ali (2003) describes the distribution of tribal population and their growth in different census period in Northeast India.

So far as linguistic composition of Assam’s population is concern about 420 languages and dialects of different language families are used in a complex and wide-ranging ethno and socio-linguistic configuration in north-east India (Samuel, 1993). In a study by Kar (2007), the speakers of Assamese language has declined from 60.88 percent in 1971 to 57.81 percent in 1991. Bengali increased from 19.71 percent to 21.67 percent, Hindi decreased from 5.42 percent to 4.62 percent and some other Assamese language speaker like Boro, Karbi, Mishing and Rabha also slightly increased.
The growth of population is also higher in northeast region than the national average. The population growth rate of Assam was highest during 1951-61 among the major states. The other states of north-eastern region also recorded high growth rate except Nagaland. During 1961-71 the population growth rate of the entire region continued to remain high, being 35.04 percent. The whole region felt the effect of migration particularly from what is known as Bangladesh (Bhuyan, 2006). According to Kar (2007) the birth and death rates in Assam do not deviate much from that of the national averages. Thus it can be said that growth of population in Assam has taken place due to both natural increase and migration. Premi and Mathur (1995) discuss India's demographic and socio cultural setting in terms of population growth, urbanization, patterns of internal migration. In an another study by Premi and Tyagi (1982) analyze the population growth during 1961-71 based on district level data and shows that besides the wholly urban districts of Bombay and Delhi and a few other districts with large urban centers, the main concentration of very high growth rate is found in northeastern India. A study by Ashok Swain (1996) traces how the annual population increases in India and in division of Bangladesh declined correspondingly between 1961 and 1991. Population density almost tripled after the beginning of this century. According to Mishra (2002) the population dynamics in the North East India as in other societies and regions has two basic components: dynamics through natural process and dynamics through induced process. As regarding to the natural growth rate of population during the period of 1971-2001, all the states in the region have registered higher growth rate than the rate for the whole country. As a result, the
increasing population pressure in this region has given rise to linkages between quality of life, population dynamics and environmental degradation.

In this study the population projection done by using Leslie matrix population projection technique. This was developed by P.H. Leslie in 1945.(Leslie,1945). The heart of his technique is based on the Leslie matrix, which uses mortality and fecundity rates to give a projection of an population distribution based on initial population distribution of age groups. Rogers (1969) and Bruce and Emily (2002), explained the application of Leslie Matrix model in population growth of demography and Biology. The material on matrix population models in this study is extracted from the different books (Keyfitz and Hal, 2005; Smith,1992 ). The various methods of Population projection, mainly projection by using life table survival rates explained briefly in the book “Methods and Materials of Demography “ by Swanson and Seigel (1980).

As far as the international studies of Migration is concerned, with the growing improvement of international migration, a varieties of methods and assumptions about migration have been applied along with a combination of survey, census and administrative data to develop estimates of net international migrants in different countries. According to Martin P; Widgren J (2002), the international migration is relatively a new phenomenon but is already a global challenge in the 21st century. In 2000, at least 160 million people were living outside their country of birth or citizenship, up from an estimated 20 million in 1990. Hence, the management of international migration is likely to become more controversial, difficult, and urgent. In the study by Ghosh (2003), discussed in his paper about
major obstacles that often impede migrants' access to human rights in Indonesia and highlighting the sharply enhanced vulnerability of migrants in certain special situations. Clarke H (1996) in his paper discussed about issues in the reform of immigration policy (IP) in Australia such as the need to base policy on consensus and policies using forward planning and stable intakes. According to Ryan J (2002), the women now outnumber male immigrants to the major immigration countries of Australia, the US, and Canada, and this shift is due to the increased migration of women from Asian countries. A study by Surtees (2003) about the migration of domestic workers from Indonesia and the extent to which this migration results in the violation of labour and human rights. She argues that a carefully derived picture of the migration of Indonesian domestic workers allows to locate sites of vulnerability for trafficking and exploitation which is necessary to intervene effectively to end these violations. Hadi A (2001) in his paper examines the changes in the left-behind position of women of Bangladesh at the family level as a result of the migration of adult men overseas. Findings reveal that the overseas migration of adult males has a significant positive association with women's decision-making capacity and education of girls in the migrant families. The remittances as well as the influence of secular values have reduced the practice of dowry in marriages. Stephen Castles (2003), focuses mainly on issues of forced migration and concludes that the so-called migration crisis arises because of the vast imbalances between North and South with regard to economic conditions, social well-being and human rights. According to Adepoju (2003) the traditional migration configurations in West Africa have changed in recent years.
as countries are simultaneously origin, destination and transit for migrants. He discussed how brain circulation, the number of female migrants and trafficking in illegal migrants and refugee flows have intensified as poverty, conflicts and economic deterioration has worsened.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

In view of the outlined objectives, this present research is organized in to six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: This chapter, which is introductory in nature, presents the background of the migration of Northeast India along with cause and various impacts due to migration. The need and objective of the study are also pointed out. Further, a review of existing studies related to migration and population growth are detailed.

Chapter II: Describes the background of the study area and data used in the present study. How the geo political boundary of northeast India has been changed throughout the different census period are described. The different types of data and about their source also pointed out.

Chapter III: The chapter deals with the analysis of growth of different religious population in Assam and all districts in different census period. The change of population with respect to different major linguistic group is also presented.
Chapter IV: Explain the trend of population growth in all northeastern states of India in different population growth. Further the population growth rates also compare with the natural growth rates of respective states and periods.

Chapter V: The chapter deals with the estimation process of undocumented migration in northeastern states of India. The census population has been projected by applying Leslie Matrix projection model for the period 1971-2001. The estimated population between two censuses periods are calculated by adding this projected population with the census net migrants of respective periods. Finally undocumented migration is estimated by subtracting estimated population from the actual census population of respective periods.

Chapter -VI: The overall summary and conclusion of the thesis is presented in this chapter.