CHAPTER- VII
CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the major findings of the present study are summarized. Besides, the limitations of this study are reported and suggestions for further research to overcome these limitations are also made.

7.1. MAJOR FINDINGS :

The discussion in the preceding chapters leads to the following inferences supporting the proposed hypothesis.

The Muslims in Assam during the period of study (1874-1947) were mainly influenced by the communal considerations while making political decisions, and this has been validated by the findings in the main themes of the present study viz., Sylhet-Bengal Reunion, Politics of Immigration, and Partition Politics and its impact on Assam.

On the issue of Sylhet-Bengal Reunion, the Muslims initially made common cause with the Hindus but gradually became conscious of their communal interests and as the continuance of the district of Sylhet in Assam significantly added to the numerical strength of the Muslims of the Province which also added to their significance as a community, the Muslims in increasing numbers began to support Sylhet's retention in Assam and majority of them openly subscribed to this view since 1928 till 1940. Thus, from 1928 to 1940, the Muslims guided by their communal considerations openly supported retention of Sylhet in Assam.

After the passing of the historic Lahore Resolution by All India Muslim League in 1940, the Muslims reversed their stand and again guided by their communal considerations, began to support Sylhet's transfer in Eastern Bengal as Eastern Bengal seemed to form the 'Eastern Wing' of the proposed state of Pakistan. The opinion of the majority of the Muslims on this issue got reflected
through their representatives in the legislative bodies, in the press statements and speeches.

On the issue of Immigration again, it is found that, the Muslims were opposed to any restriction on immigration of East Bengal peasants and farmers and also on their settlement in the Brahmaputra Valley districts. A perusal of the legislative debates on the issue of immigration makes it clear that the Muslim representatives of both the valleys took a united stand in opposing any measure that might be taken to restrict immigration of East Bengal peasants and farmers, who were mainly Muslims. Although different grounds have been put forward by the representatives of the Muslim community, but the fact of the matter was that immigration was significantly adding to the numerical strength of the Muslims in the Province, and there developed a prospect of Muslims outnumbering the Hindus in the Province, and this was the main reason why the Assam Muslims were so much sympathetic to the cause of the immigrants. Here again, the politics pursued by the Muslims on the issue of immigration bears proof of their being guided by their communal interests, as stated in the hypothesis of the present study.

Coming to the issue of All India Partition Politics and its impact on Assam, although Assam was seen as a part of 'Muslim Geo-politics' since late 1930's, the issue of the Assam's inclusion in a proposed Muslim state of Pakistan, came to be seriously considered only since 1944. It is also observed that the idea of including the whole province of Assam in Pakistan and the arguments put forward in support of the same, came directly from the All India Muslim League and the Assam Provincial League in this regard, only performed the role assigned to it by the High Command. In any way, the League was able to win the support of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of the Province on the issue and this was proved by the election results of 1946. The League, fighting the elections to the Assam Assembly on the sole issue of Pakistan, won 31 out of 34 seats reserved
for the Muslims. The election results also established the claim of the League that it represented an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of the Province. The time of elections of 1946 represented the climax to justify the hypothesis of the present study as to how an overwhelming majority of the Muslims, guided by the communal considerations, rejected the nationalist organizations like the 'Jamiat' or the Congress, and rallied behind the Muslim League.

Another vital aspect which has been observed is the direct impact of the All India Muslim League Politics on Assam since 1937. At the time of the elections of 1937, the Muslim verdict was divided at the all India level among small provincial parties, and the Muslim League had not yet emerged as the sole platform to represent unified Muslim opinion in the country. But the period between 1937-1946 marked the rise of the League as a vital force and by the time of elections of 1946, the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah emerged as the sole representative of the majority Muslim opinion in the country. Same had been the case with Assam where the Muslim opinion was divided among small parties in 1937 but the years following 1937 elections, saw the rise in the position and strength of the League and by 1946 the League emerged as the sole representative of the majority of the Muslims of the province which was proved by the election verdict of 1946 Assembly elections.

The demand for inclusion of the whole Province of Assam did never seem a practicable one, although the Assam Provincial League under the influence of its High Command insisted for the same. Subsequently, when the freedom was at sight and the inclusion of the whole Province of Assam, except the district of Sylhet seemed impossible, the Brahmaputra valley Muslims, except the immigrants and those residing in areas bordering Bengal, were found to be "lukewarm" towards their response to Pakistan demand as well as the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Provincial Muslim League under the leadership of
Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the Provincial League President, against the 'eviction policy' of the Congress Government headed by Gopinath Bardoloi.

With the declaration of the Sylhet Referendum, the focus of the Muslim League was shifted to the district of Sylhet and after the Referendum, towards the Radcliff Boundary Commission, and the areas bordering Sylhet. In brief, since the declaration of the Mountbatten Plan or the Partition Plan, the 'Muslim separatist politics' spearheaded by the League, was mostly concentrated in the Surma Valley and some of the immigrant-ridden areas bordering Bengal. The result of the Sylhet Referendum followed by the declaration of the Radcliff Award marked the close of the chapter of the ‘separatist politics’ spearheaded by the Muslim League in Assam in the pre-independence period. In course of the whole era of the League politics in Assam from 1937-47, majority of the Muslims leaving apart few nationalist Muslims, were guided, like earlier, by their communal interest or the consideration of the Islamic fraternity or brotherhood.

7.2. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

For the vast area covered by the study spanning over a long period of more than 70 years, viz., 1874-1947, it was found very difficult to collect all data from the primary sources. Though archival records such as News Papers, Assembly Proceedings, Gazettes etc., have been used to derive conclusions, in cases, the secondary sources were to be used due to lack of of primary materials, the collection of which in all cases would have been a very time-consuming task. Therefore, for any further research on Muslim Politics in Assam, it would be wise to take up a major project for a longer period to overcome the limitations of the present study.

Besides, further studies may be made on the sub- themes of the present study such as - Sylhet-Bengal Reunion Movement, Politics of Immigration, and Partition Politics and Assam, so as to make more and more detailed investigations on these themes.
Further, another vital suggestion is that the present study being a historical one, is being mostly based on archival records such as - Legislative Proceedings, Press Notes, Memoirs, News Papers, Leaflets etc. and due to time constraint, opinions of the persons having genuine information of the subject could not be gathered. As the opinions of eye-witnesses or the descendants of the eye-witnesses to the historical events can be, on occasions, a better source of information than the archival records, a further research may be conducted by using more of these oral information which could not be done in the present study.

Finally, another vital area of further Investigation may be to assess the legacy or impact of the 'Muslim Politics' in pre-independent Assam on the present day politics of the state since many of the political developments in Assam in the post-independence period are closely linked to her past i.e., the period before independence.