CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION

The study of the role of Muslims in the politics of Assam makes it clear that they are a major political player in the politics of Assam even today as earlier. No community or caste of Assam today can claim as majority in view of the fact that there are distinct groups of people, tribals and non-tribals, Hindu and Muslims and other religious and ethnic groups, having their own language, culture and racial origin with their own way of life in this multi lingual, multi cultural and multi religious state of Assam. That is why, it is said that Assam is a composite community and its culture is also a composite culture. The Muslims of Assam constitute 30.43% of the state population and hence it is needless to say that they have a great share in it. They have not only played a major role in
the politics of the state but they have contributed to the development of Assamese language and culture. The Bengal-origin immigrant Muslims of Assam have particularly made immense contributions in promoting and maintaining the status of Assamese language and culture. This section of the Muslim population of the state is 75% percent of the total Muslim population of the state which has increased to more than 80 Lakhs. In an estimate, it is found out that the total number of Bengal origin Muslims in Assam are more than 60 Lakhs. In 1951 Census, this Bengal origin section of the Muslim population have en-block accepted Assamese as their mother tongue and as a result of it the number of Assamese speaking people has gone up to 62% percent or more as recorded in 2001 Census figures. It is interesting to note that the Bengali speaking population in Assam as per 1931 Census was twice that of the Assamese speaking population. But, the Census reports of 1971 reveal that the number of Assamese speaking people have touched the figure amounting to 62% percent of the total state population. In this respect, it may be said that
the hue and cry made from time to time by the indigenous Assamese people that the identity of them has been endangered from the Muslim population of the state is baseless and unfounded.

Because of the socio-economic and educational backwardness the Muslims feel that they must play active and positive role in politics in order to bring them to the level of development of other community of the state. Moreover, because of challenges to their citizenship rights, existence and political empowerment as come from time to time from certain anti Muslim organizations of the state, the Muslims feel the need of their active involvement in politics to be reckoned as a political balancing force so that no political party can ignore the interests of the Muslims of Assam whether it is in power or not. In addition to their community interests, the Muslims have played an active role in the over-all development of the state of Assam. In the Pre-independence days the Muslim participated in the freedom struggle, and the Muslim leaders like Muolana
Taibullah and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed did a lot in saving Assam from the conspiracy of including Assam into Pakistan through the grouping plan of the British. During the language movement in 1960 the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley unitedly sided with the Assamese Hindus in support of the Assamese language to be the state language of the state. During the medium movement in 1972 the Muslims again stood solidly behind the Assamese speaking Hindus in favour of the Assamese language to be the medium of instruction of schools and colleges of the state. So, at any period of crisis and question of survival to Assamese live, language and culture, the Muslims of Assam never lagged behind in protesting the interests of the Assamese speaking people.

The socio-economic profile enables us to understand the origins of Muslim organizations which play an important role as interest groups or pressure groups.
Certain organizations of the local Assamese people have launched agitations also against the Muslims of the state right from the beginning of the first decade of the 20th century simply on the ground that the Muslim population has been increasing by leaps and bounds. This allegation of apprehension that the Assamese identity i.e. Assamese language and culture has been endangered is baseless. First, the abnormal growth of Muslim population is due to the fact that the Muslim practise polygamy and that the traditional Muslim Ulemas are always opposed to family planning programme. Secondly, the Assamese language today is the official state language of the state. This status of the Assamese language becomes possible because of the Bengal origin Muslims of the state who have accepted not only Assamese language as their mother tongue but also accepted Assamese culture and way of life even. And this contribution of the Muslim community has made it possible for the formation of greater Assamese society. Thus, the fear that the Muslims of Assam have endangered the
identity of the Assamese people is baseless. It is, however, relevant to mention that the communal forces have gradually entered into the Assamese society which have poisoned the Assamese minds against the Muslims. Thus, anti-Muslim feelings have been created among the Assamese Hindu people with the motive to check the growing Muslim population which becomes a major player in the politics of the state.

Various political and non-political Muslim organizations emerged as interest groups or pressure groups for safeguarding the interests of the Muslim community. They also sought political means through political parties and electoral politics in order to solve their problems for political mobilization.

The issue of infiltration or foreign Bangladeshi Nationals has been created by certain political and narrow Jatiotabadi (nationalist) groups to create mistrust against the Muslim population. It has been an established fact that no political party can come to power in Assam without the
support of the Muslims. Hence, certain political parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P.), the purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (P.L.P) the Assam Gana Parishad (A.G.P) are always behind the agitations against the foreign Bangladeshi nationals but their objective is against the Muslims who pose as a growing political force in the state.

It is needless to say that the imaginary foreigners issue was created by the student organizations like the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) jointly in 1979 which spearheaded the Assam Movement. They pressurised the Government to deport the illegal migrants. But in that process thousands of Muslims who were genuine Indian citizens have been either deported or harrassed on the plea of foreigners. On this ground, the Muslims of Assam did not support the Assam Movement. It does not mean that the Muslims encouraged illegal infiltration or illegal migrants. Like others they are also of the view that the foreigners, if any, should go. They believe that a foreigner is a foreigner. He must be deported.
But it should be seen that no Indian citizen whether he is Muslim or Hindu should be harassed or deported in the name of foreigners. It is on this ground that the Muslims of the state are demanding a kind of "Constitutional Safeguard" in order to protect them from the evil and anti-Muslim forces, whose existence in Assam can not be denied. The Muslims, therefore, fought for the retention of the Illegal Migrants' (Determination by Tribunals) (IMDT) Act, 1983 because this act provided them a kind of protection against the unnecessary harassments to them. But the Communal and narrow extreme nationalist forces who say that Assam should be the place of residents only of the indigenous Assamese speaking people were opposed to the IMDT Act. On their petitions the hon'ble Supreme Court of India has given a verdict making this act invalid. The hon'ble Court also declares in its verdict that the foreigners should be dealt with by the Foreigners Act of 1946. The Muslims of Assam are opposed to the Act of 1946 on the ground that it has given limitless power to the police in dealing with the foreigners. The Muslims have
reason to believe that they will not get justice in the hands of the police as during the period of 1960 to 1970 several lakhs of Indian Muslims were deported illegally by the police under the PIP, scheme which empowered police to identify, detect and deport foreigners. Thus, there is every scope of harassment and illegal deportation of Indian Muslims if the task of identification, detection and deportation is done under the Foreigners Act of 1946. The Muslims of Assam have, therefore, demanded that instead of police the Judiciary should be involved in the identification of foreigners in Assam.

Muslims of Assam are backward not only educationally but also socio-economically. The Central as well as the State Government is seen indifferent towards the upliftment of this Community. This has resulted in turning large number of Muslim beggars and daily wage laborers. There is little scope of work for the Muslim landless and river eroded people and they are compelled to go to other majority dominated areas seeking jobs but it is seen that
they have been subjected to harrassaments in the name of foreigners.

The issue of “D” voters also has disturbed the minds of the Muslims of Assam because a large number of Muslims who are Indian citizens have been made ‘D’ voters denying voting rights to them.

The issues on which the political activities were revolving made the political parties more significant for the Muslim population which further strengthened their political position.

Therefore, the Muslims of Assam apt to think that they must participate actively in politics, because, they believe that it is political decision which has done, or is likely to do harm or help them in the days to come also. Therefore, they think it fit that they must organize themselves politically in an effective manner, so that, no Government of whatever party it may be, can ignore them. It is, indeed, true that if the Muslims become a partner of any government then it will not dare hamper the interest of the
Muslims of Assam. Therefore, the Muslims of Assam have thought rightly that they remain a balancing force in the politics of Assam. It is, however, beyond doubt that no political party in the present context can do any thing contrary to the interest of Muslims. This has been proved time and again in case of Indian National Congress that whenever the Muslim voters have gone against them they failed to come to power in Assam. Role of Muslims in the politics of Assam right from 1937 till today has been significantly recognized by all. They have also begun to participate actively in the politics of the state not only for their own interest but for the interest of the state as a whole, because they believe that their future is associated with the state of Assam. So, they would never do any thing, which may hamper the progress and prosperity of the state. The Muslims are numerically and politically significant. Because Muslims are the balancing political force in the electoral politics of Assam. The point political significant has to be explained from the viewpoint of political representation, position in the Legislature, Deputy Speaker,
Chairman of Assam Public Service Commission etc. Right from the beginning, has to be stressed as it is the focal point. Various Muslim organizations also act as pressure or interest groups in the political system of the State. Like others they also want to contribute to the overall development of the state.