The agitation carried various programmes to press their demands. These programmes were supported by a massive following and participation. The intention for the mass-based programmes, showed their preparedness to carry on a long struggle. As stated in the previous chapter, the death of a sitting member of Lok Sabha Mr. Hiralal Patwari from Mangaldai Constituency, started the widespread resentment against the foreign names that were present in the rolls. It was not an easy task to fight against the foreigner's problem which had already strengthened its roots in Assam from many decades. The general awareness and resentment both needed to be channelised to give a concrete form of agitation. The drive against the foreigners was refined and shaped by the leaders and made it a huge mass movement, based on non-violent principles of peaceful persuasion.

The chronological version given in this chapter attempts to cover the style of the programmes designed, participation, through the figures available and also the violence occurred during the agitation.
AASU called for a boycott of classes on 6 and 7 September, which, was called, 'Gana Abhasthan Dharmagnat.' It included procession in front of DCS Court, SDO SDC or BDO. The demands included immediate detection and deportation of foreigners from Assam and steps to prevent the influx from mainland India.

During the first press conference, after taking office on 9 September, the Chief Minister (CM) Mr. Jogendranath Hazarika, did not sympathise with the agitation but assured the students that their demands would be looked into and asked all the people for their support and help. But, the students were in no mood to listen the assurances.

There was a clash between students and police after 7 September, boycott of classes. Central Reserve Police force (CRPF) Units in Nowgong entered Nowgong College. Students went on hunger strike on 8 September and partial hartal was observed in town.

The AASU called for mass picketing from 12 to 14 September and appealed the students to abstain from classes and to join the picketing peacefully. AASU's press release said it was for detection and deportation of foreigners. The Assam Tribune reported on 13 September, that first day's
picketing launched by the AASU passed off without any major incident. District Kamrup also reported picketing trouble free. AASU also reported the picketing as peaceful. Police arrested 268 students and number finally reached to 500, in Gauhati and were released at 4 P.M. Despite 144 Cr. FC picketing was successful. In Dibrugarh normal functioning of banks and offices was paralysed.

Civil administration was completely paralysed due to mass picketing on Second day of the picketing. At Gauhati police burst some tear gas shell to chase away a mob in front of commissioner's office. Over 550 volunteers were arrested on violating 144 Cr FC, however were released at 4 P.M. Government and non-government office could not function normally. Dispur (state capital near Gauhati) wore a deserted look in the offices due to picketing.

At all places, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nowgong, Barpeta normal work was paralysed. Medical students of AMC Dibrugarh, abstained from classes on the second day of picketing.

Meanwhile, a directive from the Central Government said that no more names were to be struck off from the voters' list for the 1980 midterm polls, that brought 1.5 lakh foreigners in voting list who had managed to enter their names, in the rolls.
This directive was not tolerable to the people. The movement which had begun some months before the directive was generating strength. Though mostly students picketed in front of various offices, the mood had picked up.

The directive of the Election Commission was criticized in the editorial of Assam Tribune. It reported the directive to be against the vital interests of the State and country. Besides negating the constitution and representative of People's Act 1951.2

To this reaction, the CEO Sri S. L. Shakdhar said that mere voting right was not the proof of the person being Indian citizen. They could be deported even after the elections.3

Certainly this directive of CEC was not proper. Once if the people vote, they could claim themselves as citizens of India in future and the representative eluted by the illegal migrants cannot be recognized as the true representatives.

Though CPI (M-L) supported the detection and deportation of foreigners, but wanted the names of BAHRAGAT to be included in the rolls.

Mr. KML Chhabra, Officer on special duty of Home Ministry was dealing with the election matters in the Home-Ministry
arrived in Assam on September 23. A demonstration was launched by the PLP before Sri Chhabra demanding deportation of foreign nationals.

Slogans like,

'We condemn Election Commission'.
'Down Down All India Parties.'
'Election Commission withdraw latest Direction.'

Were called by the demonstrators. AT reported on 24 September that, the Home official heard the views of different organizations. Lawyers' association wanted a proper scrutiny of the voters' list and deportation of foreign nationals. CPM opposed the indiscriminate deportation of people in name of foreigners. It means they wanted the other Indians to be safe. AJD expressed that the directive violated the provision of representation of people's act 1951.

The AASU announced the organization of mass-rallies throughout the state by the students to oppose the chief election commissioner's directive. Response in Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Nalbari was spontaneous.

There was a twelve hour hunger strike on 26 September in protest against the CEC Directive, which was to continue till 10 October. There was a good response from Dibrugarh, Lanka, Nowgono, Dhubri Tinsukia, Darpeta and Jorhat.
The ONGC employees in Nazira, oil city of Assam went for a strike from 12 to 24 September.

Mr. Chhabra on his return to New Delhi met the then deputy prime minister late Mr. Y. B. Chavan. Mr. Chavan assured the Assam chief minister of every help from the centre to help in checking the infiltrators. He also called it a nationwide problem.

It was clear from the proceedings that the response from the proceedings spontaneous and they were prepared to oppose any issue that disregarded their interest. Defiance to even 144 Cr. P.C. was successful. The whole of Assam except some lower parts of the state was standing for their own cause.

The Assam CM Mr. Jogendranath Hazarika indicated that more tribunals were to be set up in addition to the existing 10 to deal effectively with the issue of foreign nationals in the state. The tribunals were to conduct summary trials and onus of proving the bonafides with the persons accused. The infictators intercepted on the border and found on their journey and the re-infiltrators would be pushed back or deported without referring to the tribunals.

The chief minister said that there were at least two lakh foreigners in the state.
This statement of the CM was definitely a show of concern towards the problem but still the actual action by the government was awaited. The AASU, AAGSP, ASS, PLP, AJD, Assam college teachers' organization and many other organizations called for an All Assam mass rally on 6 October at Gauhati. A resolution was passed urging all national parties and other parties not to put up candidates and to abstrain from the elections (mid term poll-1980 Loksabha).

It was declared by the government of Assam that five more tribunals at Nongpoh, Gauhati, Mangaldai, ?Nalbari, and Golpara to check the infiltrators. 8

The CEC declared that all the North-Eastern states' voters would have identity cards (I cards). 9

ELECTIONS AND AGITATION :

The midterm polls to the Loksabha were declared and accordingly Assam had to undergo the polling exercise for the Loksabha seats. Now the movement leaders wanted the post-ponement of the elections. As referred earlier, the election for the Loksabha was to take place without checking out the foreigners names, the people of the state were naturally against it.

Setting up of five more tribunals and issue of identity cards to the North-Eastern voters were certainly
election based consideration of which, the latter could be implemented but the former declaration was doubtful in working. This non-implementation of the tribunals, was supported from the fact that the movement was on, despite the announcement. It showed a clear lack of faith in government's steps.

Now it was clear for the people and leaders to tackle the first task that was set against them, i.e. Loksabha polls. The entire force was directed towards its postponement.

The Home Minister Sri Y.B. Chavan was on a visit to Assam, who categorically ruled out the postponement of Loksabha polls in Assam. But the AASU firmly replied that the agitation would continue till the last foreign name was checked out. The delegation told the Home Minister that CEC's directive was a gross-violation of democracy. Inclusion of foreign names in voters' list endangered socio-economic structure of the state. Scrutiny of the voter's list of Mangaldai district revealed that there were as many as 38,780 foreigners names out of which 26,786 persons were declared foreign nationals by competent court.10

It shows that AASU's DECISION was firm in postponing the polls.

A massive peaceful rally of youth, students and other sections of people was organized on 6 November, to convey
that there could be no elections till foreigners' names were omitted from the list. It also wanted to launch a rigorous agitation, if the demand was ignored. Rally was organized by the AASU, PLP, AJD, ASS.

Clashes occurred, on 8, 9 and 10 November in Naharkatiya, between Assamese and Bengalis. Serious concern was expressed by all organizations.

**SHARP REACTIONS FROM WEST BENGAL AND CPI(M):**

The West-Bengal CM Mr. Jyoti Basu's reaction to the drive against the foreign nationals was sharp. He asked the union government to immediately take up the matter of harrassment of non-Assamese speaking people. The move to get BIDESHI (Bengali word for foreigner) out was getting mixed up with the presence of 'BAHIRIGAT' His indication was towards Bengalis who were staying in Assam. This kind of statements converted the influx issue into Assamese Bengali clashes — A six day Gana Satyagraha was launched from 12 Nov. to 17 November by AASU and AAGSP. Thousands of people courted arrest in front of DC Kamrup on the first day. The government declared the educational institutions closed till November 22. AT of 13 November reported that,

On the first day many people offered Satyagraha — in front of DC's office.
Nowgong - 5,000  Tezpur - 336
Halem - 1,620  Golpara - 500
North Lakhimpur- 800  Patcharkuchi - 2,000
Jorhat - 2,500  Sibsagar - 3,000
Barpeta - 559  Sibsagar - 4,000
Mangaldai - 1,200  Deuputy Magistrate Sri Rajkhowa

promulgated 144 Cr P.C.

On the second day the participation was flowing -
Gauhati - 2,182 out of which 276 ladies were there and all
of them courted arrests in front of DC's office. Gauhati
Lawyers' association also decided to offer Satyagraha.

On the third day -
3,289 persons including 509 women offered Satyagraha at Gauhati.
In Tezpur more than 1500 people counted arrest, at Mangaldai
2,372 courted arrest. Following organizations extended their
support to the agitation.

All Gauhati college employees union, Assam Text book
production and publication corporation officers, Assam state,
ter-state carriers, Apex Bank association's union, All
India Telegraph traffic employee's union (Group D). Nowgong
Marwari Yuvak Sangh, Nowgong Bengali Sammilani, All Assam
Motor transport association.
Gana Satyagraha gained momentum and participation from all the sections.

On fourth day, AT of 17 November, said that at,

- Dergaon - 4,429
- Nalbari - 12,000
- Nowgong - 16,853 people participated.

On fifth day thousands of people courted arrest.

- Nalbari - 25,000
- Dibrugarh - 15,000
- Barpeta - 17,700
- Dergaon - 6,000
- Dhubri - 1,600
- N.Lakhimpur - 10,000
- Golpara - 3,590
- Jorhat - 50,000
- Golaghat - 13,000
- Sibsagar - 15,000
- Mangaldai - 4,783
- Lanka - 500

Even on final day thousands of people participated.

AASU and AAGSP announced to launch picketing in the central and state offices from 19 to 22 November. Picketing on the first day paralysed the civil administration demanding postponement of polls. Essential services milk, water, electricity, all modes of transport, Post and Telegraph services, News papers and AIR were exempted from picketing. It was also launched to defend socio-cultural identity of the Assamese people. All shops and business establishments remained closed. Barpeta and Sibsagar were totally paralysed. In
Patshala, State government offices and banks could not function due to picketing. In Nalbari and Tezpur government offices and banks could not function. In Rangiya all educational institutions, government and non-government offices, railway office and banks remained closed. The work of the ONGC including drilling and production were totally paralysed. Mangaldai, Dibrugarh Nowganng and Golaghat observed a successful picketing day. The Dispur secretariat was deserted. LIC and High court also remained paralysed, reported AT, of 20 November. On the second day the same success followed. But there were clashes at Lumbding in a railway colony between opposite forces of the movement. Several persons around 75 were arrested and same policemen were stabbed.

Civil administration remained paralysed. On the final day several hundred picketers were arrested for violating prohibitory orders. There was firing at Duliajan Tea Garden.

A parallel three day Satyagraha by Cachar Sangram Parishad to protest against the atrocities on linguistic minorities was successful. This evinced a clear difference between the two communities and it partitioned the movement. On 22 November Assam Tribune reported that polls in Assam for electing the representatives to the Loksabha would be held on 3 and 6 of January 1980.
AASU and AAGSP called for a four day picketing from 27 November. All essential services were exempted. AASU and the AAGSP called for the closing down of all educational institutions.

Functioning of the central and state government offices was totally paralysed on first day demanding postponement of polls, till the voters' lists were corrected by deleting foreigners' names.

On the second day, Mangaldai rally demanded deportation of foreigners. 80,000 people attended it. It was organized by AASU and AAGSP. 16
were disappointed and therefore decided to intensify the anti poll agitation.

AASU soon announced its action plan. On 3 and 4 December, Assam Bandh for thirty six hours was declared and picketing from 5 to 8 December in government and semi government offices was also announced. Essential services were exempted. It was in protest against elections and preventing the candidates from filing nominations. Assam Bandh was total and successful. AT said on 4 December that inspite of strict govt. order, none turned up at their places of work. On the second day the thirty four hour bandh concluded peacefully. Normal life was paralysed. Train services in Assam and a portion of North-frontier railways were suspended. It was not affected in Cachar region. All modes of transport were suspended.

Picketing paralysed the working of government and non-government offices. Representatives of thirtyfive state government and semi government associations and unions at a meeting unanimously decided to boycott the election. It expressed concern at the forceful imposition of an unconstitutional elections on people of Assam, reported AT on 9 December. Nominations for the elections in Cachar (Part of Lower Assam) with Predominantly Bengali population, were filed. There was a police action at Lokotokia area of Gauhati when Begum Abida Ahmed was prevented from filing her nomination, when the volunteers were picketing in front of Fakruddin building
from where the Begum Abida Ahmed was to leave for nomination. Some stone throwing was initiated by some group and then police resorted to lathi charge. Eleven women volunteers were injured. A DSP was also injured severely.¹⁸

Government of Assam sent out urgent orders to the district and sub-divisional authorities to "whatever police protection necessary to prospective candidates for mid-term parliamentary poll."¹⁹

The mood against the midterm poll was picking up and more and more candidates were prevented from filing nomination.

On 10 December, there was a twelve hour bandh which was sponsored to prevent candidates from submitting nominations. The bandh was total. All the educational institutions were declared closed till 10 January, 1980. No nomination was filed in Brahmaputra valley. The bandh saw the death of a student leader, Khargeshwar Talukdar in lathi charge at Bhabhanipur, 150 K.M. from Guwahati. No nomination was filed in 10 Assam constituencies.²⁰

Altogether sixteen candidates filled nominations for four out of fourteen seats. Eight candidates filed their nominations for two seats. (1) Silchar (2) Karim Ganj.

Four candidates for autonomous district of Karbi-Anglong
and North Cachar Hills (scheduled Tribe). After such a lot of violence, that resulted out of preventing Begum Abida Ahmed, her nomination was rejected, on the ground of, "Oath of affirmation accompanying the nomination as required under law was found invalid," reported AT on 12 December, other three candidates' valid nominations were followed by their own withdrawals.

JOGENDRANATH HAZARIKA'S EXIT:

Yet another move towards political instability was seen by the fall of Jogendranath Hazarika's ministry following the withdrawal of support from Congress(U). Unstable state governments could not look after the problems of influx and the agitational demands.

Assam came under president's rule on 12th December. There was a unique silent procession to mourn Talukdar's death. Members of banks LIC, GIC and government and semi-government offices, members of trading community, medical students and doctors of Gauhati Medical College, apart from students attended the procession. On 12 December, CEC announced that polling would be held for three parliamentary constituencies in Assam, they were Silchar, Karimganj and autonomous districts. In other eleven constituencies no poll was possible.
The group clashes at Pandu resulted in curfew.

There was a great pledge taking programme which was known as 'Sankalpa Divas' on 18 December. We pledge today to sacrifice our lives for national cause of Assam and promise that we will remain active participants of movement launched by AASU and we will save our motherland from the clutches of foreigners and from any danger that may come."

19 and 20 December were declared as non-co-operation days. It was total and successful. Almost all the employees voluntarily abstained from the work. It was observed by Assam public health engineers Association, RBI Workers Union, Assam Roej Nigam Shramik Sangha, Gauhati wholesale consumers' co-operation Karmi Sangha, Assam government construction Corporation engineers association. 22

There was proposed on 8 day picketing programme in Karbi- Anglong from 24 to 31 December. Branches of AASU and AAGSP at Karbi Anglong decided to launch mass picketing in front of DC and election office. On 27 December AASU and AAGSP started a three day non-co-operation movement. Following organization announced their participation in non-co-operation. All Assam Economics and statistical Services Association, Gauhati University workmen's union, Assam Beej Nigam Shramik Sangha, All Gauhati Food Corporation of India, Employees Karma Parishad, Assam agricultural university, teachers' association, Khadi commission Karmachari
Union, Assam, Meghalaya Mizoram State electricity supply workers' union, officers employees, Assam civil Service (ACS class II), Assam secretariat Gazetted officer (class I) Association, Assam finance service association.  

Janata MLAS went on a hunger strike on 30 December, for the postponement of elections.

1979 - AN EVENTFUL BEGINNING:

The long awaited agitation began with student leadership taking charge of the proceedings. It was full of action based programme. People's intentions were clear and specific. Originally students observed picketing, and later on the support was flowing from various organization. The leaders had to fight foreigner's issue with relevant problems of detection, deletion, deportation, with proper organization of the programmes to be executed. The response to various proceedings was remarkable. Initial phase was the co-ordinating one. There was a lot of violence too, group clashes often involving opposite forces Occurred and it further sharpened the Assamese-Bengali tension. It was necessary for the AASU leaders to assure the genuine linguistic minorities in the state about their status. Death of a student leader was a serious concern to the movement leaders. Violence was steadily increasing. The leaders did not think it to be important to take concrete steps for its stoppage. Gandhian theory of non-violence
demanded, immediate suspension of the movement, after any violent occurrence for example, Chauri Chaura incident in 1922. Gandhiji immediately suspended the movement following violence at Chauri Chaura. Suspension of further programmes in Assam agitation was necessary to curb violence. To this Prafulla Kumar Mahanta said, "If not suspension, we did not announce any fresh resumption," but it is not true. After Khargeshwar Talukdar's death various programmes of non-co-operation picketing and bandh were announced.

Postponement of midterm polls of 1980, was a reasonable achievement in the beginning of the agitation. Attitude of the Central Government was clear, it was not much interested in solving the issue to the immediate effect because, its fate was unstable in the beginning and temporary after that. The real tussle was to come after the formation of popular government at the centre. All the steps taken were almost to show its concern but not the intention. This caused a further loss of faith in the government, amongst people.

Now it was necessary for the leaders to capitalise those feelings of the people for opinion formation and strength generation.
AASU called for a fifty eight hour bandh on January 1, 2, and 3, to express strong resentment of Assamese people against the decision of CEC and Central Government, regarding the remaining three constituencies. Essential services including Post and Telegraph, and Telephones were exempted from Bandh. The North East frontier railway and IAC announced suspension of operation. Bandh was successful except Gachar. It paralysed working at offices and normal life was also affected, reported AT on 2 January. Polling in autonomous districts of Karbi-Anglong was postponed due to lack of election personnel.

**A SOLID MOVE : OIL PICKETING :**

Oil installation at various places in Assam were subject to picketing since 27 December, 1979. Oil flow was stopped from flowing out of Assam. AASU and AAGSP announced that picketing of oil installation would continue. This led in shutting down of three refineries at Digboi, Guwahati and Bongaigaon.

There was an out burst of violence in Digboi (Oil Town). AT reported on 5 January that a group attacked peaceful picketers with lethal weapons, brickbats and broken bottles. Curfew was clamped at Digboi. Curfew was imposed on Barpeta, Nalbari and Silehar. Barpeta and Nalbari sub-division
and parts of Gouhati sub-division of Kamrup district were declared as disturbed areas for two months under Assam disturbed Areas Act, 1955 and the Armed Forces special Power Act, 1958.

Oil installations in Assam had been affected by the picketing and production also suffered for 10th day. Transportation of crude oil to Barauni refinery from oil fields of upper Assam was stopped.26

10 January was observed as protest day to condemn the decision of the government of Assam to deduct salaries of its agitating employees.

Picketers were teargassed at Moran, to disperse them. Despite government's order declaring Oil India refineries and oil installations as protested areas about 2,000 picketers turned up.27

On January 12, Assam Tribune reported that over 3,000 indigenous peasants and their families fled from their homes in Kaomari (Nalbari sub-division) following organized attacks by Bangladeshis.

There were also reports of atrocities on the villagers in North Kamrup by army personnel and CRPF. The CRF and army personnel had forcibly entered the houses, and beating up young boys in the villages of Arikuchi, Marwa Bala.
At oil picketing about 1,000 picketers were arrested in different oil installations. Oil supply was prevented for 16th day.

Congress(I) Forms Government At the Centre

Congress(I) formed its government claiming absolute majority in parliament. Mrs. Indira Gandhi became prime minister of India on January 14. An era of conflict started.

17 and 18 January were observed as anti-repression day and anti-repression of women day, respectively.

At Duliajan at least seven persons were killed and over 100 were injured in a BSF firing, while picketing at oil installation. According to former general secretary of ASS Nagen Saikia, Ananta Kumar Handique and Bhaskar Bora of Dibrugarh Gana Songram Parishad, fifteen were killed and one hundred and fifteen were injured. Police fired twenty eight rounds.

An oil India executive Dr. Robin Mitra was stoned to death by the people at Duliajan. This cut sharp the two communities, Assamese and Bengali openly. Dr. Mitra was Bengali speaking, and Bengalis accused the Assamese for such heinous murder. This could be a serious blow to the peaceful nature of the agitation. Picketing at Narangi oil refinery (near Gauhati) continued round the clock.
Black day was observed in protest against unconstitutional elections of two members from Cachar to the Lok Sabha on January 20. AASU and the AAGSP had requested all government employees, private establishments, business and commercial establishments, shops, markets and Air to observe bandh. As of 21 January '80 reported that round the clock picketing at Narangi continued. About 3,000 men and women picketed at Narangi.

AASU was invited to New Delhi for talks on 2nd February 1980 with the Prime Minister.

On 1 and 2 February, mass fasting was launched, demanding deletion of foreign names from voters' list and their deportation from the state. On the fast days, mass prayers were arranged for those who died in the agitation.

Thousands participated in mass-fasting for Twelve hours from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. wearing black badges, in front of DC'S, SDO's, SDC's and BDO's offices, all over the state.

Jorhat - 1,500 Kampur - 192 Dibrugarh - 300
Golaghat - 50 Sootea - 60 Lanka - 68

Several thousands at Tinsukia, Barpeta Sibsagar, Rangiya and Halem observed fast.
AASU and AAGSP announced some concessions in oil blockade.

Transportation of crude oil was kept limited to North-eastern region. Digboi refinery was to start production and oil fields at Duliajan and Moran were to be opened for Guwahati and Digboi refineries. Offices of Narangi would open. Picketing was to continue at Marketing divisions of oil at Tinsukia, Noormati and Bongaigaon.

Concession to the oil picketing, was necessary because it was impossible to do picketing at all the installations. It was also equally important to divert some force to other programmes. The Central government did not show its anxiety towards the picketing. Specific reason for picketing was not announced, just as a part of next phase of agitation, oil picketing was continued.

Eight member delegation of AASU met the prime minister at New Delhi on February 2. Deletion of foreigners names from voters' list, influx check and issuing of identity cards to the Assamese people were the main demands. Cut off year demanded by the AASU was 1951 and the government offered 25 March 1971 as the cut-off year. Talks failed.

The next phase of agitation was February 4 inefinite mass Satyagraha from February 4, in front of DC, SDO and BDO officers. Attendance on the opening day was alarming.
Gaunati - 3,000 out of which 1715 were women
Dergaon - 65 Biswanath charali - 2,000
Dibrugarh - 500 Kampur - 311, Nalbari - 800
Behali - 300 Halem - 91, Jorhat - 754
N. Zakhimpur - 1437 Barpeta - 401
Rangia - Nowgong - More than 5,000
Dhubri Tinsukia Sib Sagar - over 900.31

Mass Satyagraha was joined by Khasi Students union,
Khasi tribal welfare and development association Meghalaya.
3,298 persons had attended the man Satyagraha.32

Gana Satyagraha on third day attracted lot of participation.

Mojai - 300 Sibsagar - 1,500 Kampur - 721
Barpeta - 584 Jorhat - 2,129 Dergaon - 930
Nalbari - 2,582 Nowgong - 8,000

More and more people jointed the Satyagraha All Assam State
government under taking workers' federation, Gauhati Lawyers'
Association.

Dibrugarh - 5,000 N. Zakhimpur - 1,150
Sootea - 498 Nalbari - 2,750 Rangiya - 300
Mangaldai - 409 Barpeta - 1,221 Tezpur - 1,554
Digboi - 500 Mojai - 402
Nowgong. More than 1,500.33
Central government employees including banks, LIC, FCI, refinery, North Frontier Railway, Members of Gauhati tea auction trade, consisting buyers, brokers, and warehouse representatives. 200 Khasi students. Over 70,000 people including 3,000 govt. employees offered Satyagraha. 34

According to AASU 10,000 people joined in Mass-Satyagraha. 35

The government issued a warning to the employees to be responsible for their own actions, if they participated in the Satyagraha, on 13 February.

On 14 February, Satyagraha was suspended but picketing at oil installation was to continue.

GOVERNMENT'S REACTION

According to official sources, the oil picketing was causing a loss of Rs.15 Lakhs a day. The union petroleum Minister Mr. P. C. Sethi announced on 4 February that there could be no oil crisis in the country if the Assam impasse was not resolved. The Minister later during the month said that the loss was as much as 14,000 tonnes of crude oil a day and the loss from closure of four refineries was 5,000 tonnes HSD and 1,000 tonnes of Kerosene oil. 36
This meant that the government was not prepared to listen to the demands so early and did not even show its concern towards oil blockade.

Next programme of action was mass-picketing from 3 to 15 March, 1980. There was no picketing on 6, 7 and 8 March. It was in continuation with the movement to defend the socio-cultural identity of Assamese people. Picketing was successful at various places. On the first day was successful, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Golaghat, Golpara, Nowgong, Tezpur, Dhekri Duliajan. During other day of picketing, it was spontaneous and total. The 47th session of Assam Sabha at Raha near Nowgong demanded 1951 as base year. The role of literary organization of Assam, Assam Sahitya Sabha was quite constructive.

On March 26, twelve hour bondh was called against the adamant attitude of the union government. On 28 March a mass rally was organized.

COUNTER AGITATION BY THE CONGRESS (I):

Happenings in Assam certainly resented the people. The Youth Congress and the Chhatra Parishad of the Congress(I) of West Bengal on March 22, a road blockade of goods traffic to and from Assam at Mallabari near Sitiguri, from 24 March. On the opening day of the blockade, 500 Congress (I) followers
were arrested at Siliguri and New Jalpaiguri towns of West Bengal. Next day was the squatting programme in railway tracks at Siliguri, New Jalpaiguri and near Bagdogra, by the Congress (I) workers. There was lathicharge at several places. The CPI (M) was against the blockade. This blockade lasted for several days, and it spread to other places. On 31 March, cong (I) Chhatra Parishad announced one week suspension of the blockade. Though it was announced to be resumed, but it did not resume.

The PM Mrs. Indira Gandhi disapproved of both the blockades, viz. Assam's Oil blockade and West Bengal's road blockade.\(^3\)

AASU had an informal meeting with the Assam and Meghalaya govern Sri L. P. Singh at Shillong and he had offered 1967 as cut off year but it was not acceptable to the movement leaders, and the meeting failed. It was very important meeting and a crucial one too, and it was partly responsible for a prolonged movement. (Detailed explanation follows in the next chapter).

The next phase of Satyagraha from 3 to 10 April. From 3 to 5 April there was squatting in front of offices of DCS, SDOS, BDOS, and picketing in front of government offices was planned. Following organization participated in the Satyagraha.
Gauhati University workers' union, Assam Tribune employees' union, North Gauhati Students union, Assamiya Jati Unnathi Sadhini, Sangha Samaj Sevi Matri Sangha, Gauhati Lawyers' association, High Court Bar Association, 6,000 employees of Chandrapur thermal project, Assam agricultural university teachers' association, Gauhati university teachers' union, Employee's union, Board of Secondary education Assam, Greater Gauhati bank employees' co-ordinating committee, Gauhati medical college junior Doctors' association. On 8 April, a lakh people offered Satyagraha.\textsuperscript{39} AT said on 11 April, 1980 that Government employees offered Satyagraha defying the threat of the government and according to AASU total Satyagrahis on 10 April were 5,62,459.

In a bomb blast in upper Assam, the Commissioner of upper Assam division, Sri B. S. Parthasarthy, stationed at Jorhat was killed.\textsuperscript{40}

Oil India executives joined the non-co-operation on 21 April.\textsuperscript{41} The police burst teargas shells and used lathis on crowd in curfew bound areas of the city (Gauhati), Bamunimaidan and Ganesh Guri Charali injuring 68 persons. At least 50 Teargas shells were burst.\textsuperscript{41}

The oil India executive employers association at its crucial meeting at Duliajan adopted a resolution which
stated "Considering the prevailing situation and mass sentiments expressed by the people of Assam and workmen of the company the executives have decided not to participate in the company operations which will lead to pumping of crude oil beyond Gauhati against the will of the people." They decided not to extend co-operation to pumping of crude oil beyond Gauhati.\textsuperscript{42}

Round the clock picketing was lifted on 19 April but the workers continued the non-co-operation. On 7 April, BIMA was promulgated in the state. Police, army and CRPF managed the oil installations.

Forest produce was prevented from going out of Assam. There was a four day picketing in front of government offices. It evoked a lot of violence. There was on unprovoked lathi charge by CRPF men, injuring many, out of which 13 were seriously injured. According to an eyewitness, over 1500 people many of them tribals, who came in procession were stopped by police and the lathicharge started suddenly.\textsuperscript{43}

Several persons were injured in lathicharges at Kampur and Nalbari. The Kampur police had to burst teargas shells to disperse the picketers, who were squatting on railway tracks to stop the flow of forest products out of Assam.
On 28 April, the non-co-operation paralysed all the activities of the state except Cachar. Railways, roads and airlines were also affected besides banks and government offices.

On the same day, 28 April, Assam's loud protest was conducted against the injustice. Thousands of people belonging to different strata of society came out on streets beating drums, clanging cymbals and bills, blowing horns, trumpets and Conch shells to give martial sound as per the call of AASU and AAGSP. It lasted for 90 minutes.

Peaceful and Harmony processions were carried out on 1 and 2 May. Prayers were offered. From 5 to 9 May thousands of people courted arrest before the offices of DCs, SDOs and EDOs all over the state shouting, "EITHER DEPORT FOREIGN NATIONALS OR ARREST US!"

Gauhati - 1500  Brama - 150  Jorhat - 152
Sootea - 210  Lanka - 300  Rangiya - 5,000
Nizakhimpur - 280  Dibrugarh - 364  Sibsagar - 1,500
Barpeta - 200  Golpara - 2,000

5 May, 1980, was observed as Mother's day, the call was given by All Assam Women's vigilance committee. Devotional songs were sang and community prayer was offered.
Protest days were observed on 13 and 14 May, against the imposition of undeclared emergency in the state and introduction of black laws. On 15 May, two AIR employees decided on non-co-operation against the broadcast of biased news.46

On 15 May, freedom fighters surrendered Tamrapatras against,

(1) Repressive measures against peaceful agitators

(2) failure to settle foreign nationals issue, Constitutionally. The call was given by the AASU and AAGSP. In Tezpur - 35, Sibsagar 42, Nalbari - 21, Nowgong - 153. N. Lakhimpur - 25, Tamrapatras were surrendered.47

A Gherao programme was arranged on 19 and 20 May, which included,

(1) Gherao to the general manager of North East Frontier railway demanding eviction of foreigners in illegal occupation of railway land.

(2) Gherao of SDOs for the eviction of foreigners illegally occupying lands, grazing reserves and land with tribal belts and blocks.

(3) Divisional foreign officers and range offices of forest departments were to be gheraoed to demand the eviction of illegal occupation of forest land.
There was a non-co-operation programme from 21 May to 29 May. Officers and employees of the government were to refrain from all sorts of co-operation in protest against repressive measures against officers employees and agitators. Working of the government was paralysed following employees' non-co-operation.

THE MINORITY BACKLASH AND VIOLENCE:

The minority rally organized by AAMSU a lot of violence occurred on 26 May. Three were killed in police firing, and curfew was clamped at several places. In Barpeta 10,000 people attended, at Nalbari 400 and in Mangaldai 7,000 people attended the rally.

Communal violence spread to more areas. 7 were killed in communal clashes and over a dozen sustained injuries at Nowgong and Kamrup districts, and rampaging groups set fire at select houses. AT reported on 29 May, 1980 that Twenty four were killed in three days. A serious communal violence rocked parts of Nowgong dominated by Bangladeshis when they made attacks on indigenous villages.

Death total rose to 33. 2 June death too went up to 45, out of which 18 died in police firing and 27 in clashes and arson.
The AASU and the AAGSP announced that from 10 to 20 June, anti-Conspiracy week would be observed, besides 10th being students' day and 13th black flag day. Students day was observed in memory of those who had lost their lives since 1974, in agitation. On 13 June, Black Flag Day was observed all over North East. Meghalaya students union, All Manipuri students union and students Coordinating committee, All Mizo students action committee, Tribal students federation, Naga Students federation, All Arunachal Pradesh students union had entered their support to the black flag day. AASU wanted hoisting of black flags all over public places, shops, business establishment and wanted everyone to wear black badges.52

On 12 June, 1980 President's rule was extended in Assam.

In June, demand of 'UDAYACHAL' was reiterated, by a five member delegation of PTCA. Support of the PTCA to AASU and AAGSP had already declined. It had always regional autonomy in mind and were not sympathetic towards Assamese people at all.

On 21 June, two persons were killed in police firing in North Lakhimpur and twenty nine injured when processionists of volunteer force of AASU, AASB defied prohibitory orders.53
26 June, was twenty four hour Assam Bandh with usual exemption to essential services. Next programme of action was air-rail blockade from 4 to 6 July. Goods trains were exempted. There was lathi charge on peaceful picketers at Borjhar airport (Gauhati Airport). Fifty were injured, police burst tear gas shells. The number of injured went up to 4,000. North-East Frontier Railway, suspended all its rail services. Sibsagar district students' union in protest against repressive measures, and indiscriminate arrests called for Sibsagar bandh. It was total and peaceful.

Mass rallies of state, central and semi-government employees were held in protest against the laws like ESMA, 1980 (Assam). The call was given by the co-ordination committee of Asom Karmachari Parishad. Gauhati district Karmachari Parishad, Gauhati district bank employees Parishad, Asom Kesari Sangha, Gauhati University Workers' Union, Assam electricity employees Parishad, Harijan Majdoor Seva Sangh. Extended their support.

From July 25, onwards, some mediation efforts by the Manipur chief minister Dorendra Singh were made between AASU and AAGSP and the government. Talks were held at Imphal. (detailed analysis follows in the next chapter) and AASU's insistence was on relieving the victimised employees. On 8 September, various educational rallies were arranged.
The talks of AASU began with the government of India in New Delhi which began on September 17. Government side was represented by the Home Minister Guani Zail Singh. Statement came over the cut off year. Movement leaders were far 1951 and the government wanted 1971 as the cut-off year. Talks were adjourned till 11 October. In the October round there was a controversy of '61-'71 entrants.

In a renewed phase of agitation, on 26 October, a batch of 1,000 people aged over 60 resorted to fast- unto-death to save Assam from being swamped away from foreigners.56

From 28 October, an indefinite, programme of MLA gherao started. Thousands joined the gherao programme. On November 1, there was a Dispur March to gherao MLAs and boycott Dispur Secretariat. Participants were Navjyotikala Parishad, Assam debating Society, Ullubari Anchalik Gona Sangram Parishad, Uzan Bazar Volunteers' force, AJD, PLP, Yuwachhatra Parishad, All Assam non-government employees Parishad. About 100 were injured in lathicharge, one person was killed in police firing in Assam civil Secretariat premises, when a huge crowd of people marched to Dispur to gharao 40 MLAs. The person killed was a government employee Dilip Chakravorty.57
Thousands participated in silent procession to mourn D. Chakravorty's death. Three day state mourning was observed, which paralysed the work in all the offices. In spite of repeated warnings and pay cut orders by the State government, the employees of the secretariat at Dispur did not attend their duties, as a part of indefinite non-co-operation programme. Assam administration continued to be paralysed for 9th day. The non-co-operating staff squatting in front of Secretariat demanded removal of principal adviser H. C. Sarin and the Home Secretary. Administration remained paralysed for 11 days. ONGC oil fields, offices at Nazira and Sibsagar come under army control. Gherao and mass squatting continued by AASU and AAGSP volunteers. Twelve hour Sibsagar bandh was called 5 November, in protest against police atrocities.

The government employees went on non-co-operation from November 24, in protest against the suspension of employees, removal of Sri H. C. Sarin and Home Secretary and a judicial inquiry into the death of Dilip Chakravorty. The non-co-operation was complete and the administration was paralysed. It evoked a lot of violence. Two were killed in Guwahati violence and twelve were injured. AT reported on 26 November, 1980 that, a police sub-inspector was stabbed. A mob was lathicharged and police burst tear gas shells to disperse the crowd.
A nine hour fast was observed by school and college students on 29 November. Services of oil India executives who had participated in the agitation were discontinued.63

Government announced the cash reward to willing employees to join the duties from Rs.200/- to Rs.1200/-.64 Still the non-co-operation continued. Transport was exempted. Banks and Post and Telegraph operated on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The non-co-operation was suspended on December 11. There was Nalbari bandh due to alleged CRP atrocities on bank and 'STATEFED' employees.

Mrs. Anwara Taimur became chief Minister of Assam on December 7, In 'Sunday' 14 December, Pradeep Das Gupta wrote,

"Saturday December 6, was the day of Amavasya (New Moon), worse it was during hours when saturn was most malignant that night that the ministry of Begum Sayeda Anwara Taimur took the oath of office to end the president's rule that had been imposed 359 days ago whom the people elected three years ago."

On the agitational front, Satya grahis were lathi-charged and tear gassed and there were four rounds of firing in Tamalpur.65
Police resorted to lathicharge and firing at Rangiya and Barpeta when thousands of people came out defying prohibitory orders, to offer Satyagraha, on the first day of thirteen day mass satyagraha programme. Six satyagrahis were killed at Rangiya and Mirza in police firing and seventy six were injured at Tezpur. Several persons were injured in lathicharge and two others arrested as demonstrators who made attempts to force their way into courts in violation of prohibitory orders.

1980 - YEAR OF ACTION AND REACTION:

The proceedings of the agitation in the year 1980, were a show of sound leadership, mass following solidarity and violent upheaval in Assam. The attitude of the people were decisively against the government and the participation was almost habitual. Lot of action was witnessed from both the sides, government and the agitators.

(1) AGITATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND VIOLENCE:

Initial achievement of midterm poll postponement, encouraged the tempo of the masses. Picketing at oil installation was the important programme of the year. It brought out one factor, that was the show of strength. It was a prestige issue for government and the Assam agitators. Defiance of the prohibition was great. Participation was
tremendous, whether it was a remote village or offices of government servants, teachers, women, doctors or students the participation was remarkable. It was the demonstration of fearlessness and determination. The picketers sustained lathicharges, teargas shells and often firing, from police and CRPF. Sometimes the lathicharge was unprovoked also. But the leaders merely spoke about round the clock picketing, never did once they remind the government about their resentment against the illegal immigrants. In fact with the occurrence of violence they encouraged more and more participation. If the leaders wanted to impress the government through oil blockade, then it was quite costly work out on their part and poor judgement of the strength of the government. They had granted some concessions to the oil blockade and finally they had stopped the picketing unconditionally.

It made the government's attitude towards them more stubborn.

Non-co-operation, mass Satyagraha and MLA Gherao programmes exhibited miraculous participation but often their indefinite nature brought a sad end by violent clashes.

The whole Assam was ready to go for any fight and was prepared to meet the challenge. Support from the government employees was an unusual success. People's participation and support were tested in almost all the ways and the devotion to the cause was admirable.
Government acted smartly, whenever the agitational programmes were on full swing, the leaders were called for talks.

With the failure of each negotiation, demands in the agenda of the movement leaders increased, for exempt from cut off year, to '61-'71 entrants, from the entrants to the lifting of repressive measures on government employees. Government employees participation was not at all harmful to the government, because that only allowed it to put more and more laws, such as ESMA, to strengthen its own hands.

Government also was responsible for pampering the minorities, and it had sponsored AAMSU to counter the AASU and AAGSP. It often invited other organizations for talks with AASU and AAGSP. An unsuccessful attempt was West Bengal blockade, but it further worsened the Assamese-Bengali tension. Government also made some arrests under IPC against AASU and AAGSP. Leaders including B. K. Phukan, Nibaren Bora. Several government employees were suspended.

Every kind of drama was played, from the movement's side, there followed (1) participation, and (2) determination, from government's side, there was (1) repression (2) slowness, and two other vital factors of minority and tribal walkout
and violence, collectively decided the fate of future course of agitation and negotiations.

- 1981 -

After Mrs. Anwara Taimur took over as Chief Minister of Assam, the new phase of agitation began with a token hunger strike by a 17 member group including 6 MLAs for 10 hours at Shillong Raj Bhavan. They demanded immediate solution of foreign nationals' issue and withdrawal of all repressive measures adopted so far against the people of the state. Group consisted of leaders mostly belonging to Asom Janata Dal and Progressive Democratic front led by the former Chief Minister Jogendranath Hazarika, submitted a memorandum to the governor Sri L. P. Singh, with demands such as,

1. removal of all repressive measures
2. discard all press restriction
3. foreign nationals issue has been a grave threat to the integrity and stability of the country and popular movement launched by the AASU and AAGSP should be considered as will of the people.

On 2 January, a writ petition was filed on the Assam Tribune and Dainik Assam in the Gauhati High Court against the validity of Assam Special Powers (Press) Act and
notification issued under it. The High Court ordered on 6 January that UNI and PTI news items could be published without comments. The directorate of public relations could issue specific orders that an individual item would affect public order. He should also give reasons in writing. In the Parliament the issue was discussed in a big way. The proceedings of the Parliament were not allowed to be published. Finally it was confirmed that A-36.(A) provided substantially true reports of any proceedings in parliament to be published without any adverse consequence to the press.67

During 7 to 11 January, meetings were organized by the AASU and AAGSP to mould the public opinion. Official sources quoted a limited response. On 11 January two persons were killed and three injured in a bomb blast at Kalaigaon near Mangaldai. Another bomb exploded on railway track at Changsari near Gauhati.68

From 12 January, symbolic Satyagrah was organized against repression. Volunteers courted arrests in groups of four before the offices of DCs, SDOs and BDOs. News papers of January 3, described the response as quite big.

On 3 February, 500 teachers, employees and students took out a silent procession in protest against CRP lathi-charge on students, holding a black flag demonstration during union communication minister's visit to Gauhati.
There was a non-co-operation on February 6, essential services, oil and tea gardens were exempted. Official spokesman termed it a little response. Attendance in Kamrup, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh offices was 75%. In Golpara, Nowgong and Darrang and Zakhimpur, it was around one third. Cachar North Gachar and Karbi-Anglong ignored the bandh. In Guwahati refinery, technical staff did not turn up but the administrative staff did turn up. North-East Frontier Railway headquarters functioned normally. Banks were closed, and a thousand attended the Dispur secretariat.

LOSS OF ENTHUSIASM AND PARTICIPATION:

The non-co-operation programme did not arouse much of response, it could be due to frequent violent occurrences that were fresh in people's minds and also due to loss of academic proceedings. There was no net loss of support but certainly the participation was reduced.

On 11 and 12 February, AASU and the AAGSP observed hunger strike outside Raj Bhavan, Shillong.

On February 12, there were bomb blasts at AIR Dibrugarh and Guwahati. Transmitters and the two stations were partly damaged. On February 13, there were bomb blasts on the Mahakatia Baraura pipeline at Puranigudem near Nowgong.
On February 18, there was a dawn to dusk bandh at Rangiya (Kamrup) and Dhekiajuli (Darrang), it was called by the local units of AASU and AAGSP, and 7 non-Congress (I) parties to protest against the arrests of peaceful agitators. The Bandh was total and peaceful.

On February 26, all school and college students went on fast to protest against the arrests of the two AASU executives, and Bharat Norah, who tried to stop the truck that was carrying plywood. There were two bomb explosions on March 18, in MLA's hostel complex. One was near CPI(M) MLA Deepak Bhattacharjee's residence and another was near Janata MLA Ralin Malik's residence.

AT reported on 7 April, 1981 that, Sri E. S. Parthasarthy, Commissioner of Upper Assam was killed in a bomb blast at Jorhat in his chamber.

In a bomb blast IOAC pipeline near Batua in Barpeta sub-division was damaged. On 13 April, there was a bomb blast on the railway truck chhaparmuch near Nowgong. On 29 April, there was a bomb explosion outside the bedroom of Dr. Tarani Mohan Barua, AJD president, AASU condemned the bomb attack on Mr. Parthasarthy and blamed anti-social elements.

On May 11, was Kamrup bandh, to protest against the arrest of H. Bora, Adhinayak of AASU volunteer force,
Swechha Sebak Bihini, in connection with a bomb blast of December 1980. On May 12, AASU observed a general protest day against students' repression.

THE NEGOTIATIONS AND FURTHER SLOWING DOWN:

AASU and the AAGSP (25 member delegation) held talks with the Union Government. Government's side was represented by H.M. Giani Zail Singh on May 18. The first official meeting was held on May 19, government side agreed to defect the aliens and could be dispersed if not departed.

Dispute came over 1961-1971 entrants Assam talks were adjourned for ten days. June 15, was Assam bandh in protest against repressive measures and to focus on rising price.

Mrs. Anwara Taimur submitted her government's resignation on June 28, following a resentment among Cong(I) in Assam. Assam came under presidents' rule on 30 June.

11 August, was observed in protest against failure of the Centre to resume talks on foreigners' issue in Assam with in ten days from the adjournment date in Delhi on 11 July and promulgation of ordinance banning strike in essential services. Students of schools and colleges abstained from classes.
Assam talks resumed on 18 August and a series of talks followed. Finally on November 4, the talks were declared as failure. The stalemate came about 1961-1971 entrants and the formula for the detection of foreign nationals in general.

November 10, was the day when mass rally was arranged. Thousands joined the rally.

On 19 November, thirty six hour Assam bandh was observed. It was spontaneous on the first day, one was killed in firing in Dhing. On November, 30, was path bandh, students, teachers, lawyers attended it and was a complete success. Four hundred were arrested and there was police firing at two places in which one was killed.

On 14 December, a thirty six hour civil disobedience movement was launched, it was termed as ticketless travel. Volunteers travelled without tickets in buses. Over 300 were arrested for travelling without tickets.

The second day of disobedience was by and large peaceful. 700 volunteers were held. The state government had deployed CRPF in large number and patrolling was intensified.
On 19 December, AASU urged the people of Assam to resist the census operation and elections until the solution was reached on foreign nationals.

On 22 December, president's rule was extended in Assam.

Poster campaign was conducted on 27 and 28 December. Posters such as,

(1) 'DEPORT FOREIGNERS'
(2) 'BETRAYAL OF PEOPLE OF ASSAM NOT TO BE TOLERATED.'
(3) 'STOP GOVERNMENT CARNAGE IN ASSAM.'

The AASU and the AAGSP announced thirty six hour road and river-based transport blockade from 31 December. Government Offices functioned normally. Operation of road transport was affected in Brahmaputra valley, but all long distance train functioned normally.

PROCEEDINGS WITH BOMB-EXPLOSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS:

In 1981, bomb-blasts were quite frequent. The overall programmes were not as dense as the previous year, but the negotiations with the Central Government were of main interest.
Though there was not much excitement on the agitational front, but the views and attitudes of the government side became clear. Extremist element in the agitation was gaining momentum. It was a blow to the non-violent character of the movement.

= 1982 =

There was a spontaneous response to path bandh of 31 December 1981. Three persons were killed and ten others were injured as the police opened fire to break a road blockade at Dimow on the National Highway No.37. Over 1,000 people including AASU General Secretary Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, and its adviser Lalitchandra Rajkhowa were arrested by police, mostly as a preventive measure.

Thirty six hour path bandh ended, four more were killed in the police firing. On 2 January, there was a total blackout for one hour in Gauhati to protest against brutal killings.

In New Delhi on 1 January, seven AASU leaders led by Bhrigu Kumar Phukan fasted for twelve hours on the Boat club lawn in protest against brutal repression in Assam.

The AASU and AAGSP announced the defiance of mass-prohibitory orders. On 4 January, it was called Dispur March. The response was total, shops, business establishments,
factories and markets remained closed and a total blackout was observed in protest against government carnage and brutal killings by CRPF.

In an attempt to take out a silent procession in violation of prohibitory orders in protest against repression and atrocities by the government through CRP and police, 160 lawyers were arrested. Five movement leaders were detained under NSA.

(1) Bharat Nath - Assistant General Secretary AASU.
(2) Jaynath Sarma - Convener of Swecha Sebak Bahini.
(3) Jatia Mali - Ex AASU Member.
(4) Gagan Dutta - Organizing Sec. AASU.
(5) Girin Barua - General Secretary of Nowgong Students Union.

On 5 January, there was a bomb explosion in the main bazar area of Gauhati.

A state employee Prafulla Boro died due to CRPF beating, following a clash between AAGSP and CRPF. There was a twelve hour Assam bandh on 7 January. Government sources quoted the attendance in Secretariat and NEP railway as normal. AT of 8 January 1982, called it total and spontaneous.
On January 9, teachers and students in different parts of Assam observed a black day in protest against CRPF atrocities.

On 10 January, AASU and AAGSP with All Assam Karmachari Parishad observed a non-co-operation. Air services were exempted. It included ticketless travel, and going to the cinema halls without tickets. There was no money transaction in post-offices. Over 300 volunteers of AASU and AAGSP were arrested all over the state. Only 15 buses of Assam state transport corporation (ASTC) operated.

Government sources put the number of arrested persons at 200. Train, bus and ferry service were not affected. There was lathicharge at Barpeta bus stations. Three bomb explosions occurred in Darrang, Nowgong and or Rangiya - Rangpura railway track. The civil disobedience movement evoked no response from Cachar, North-Cachar and Karbi-Anglong and received lukewarm support everywhere.

K. C. Gogoi, new Chief Minister.

On 13 January, Keshav Chandra Gogoi was sworn in as Chief Minister of Assam. It was the fourth ministry and last since 1978, that Assam saw. It was a most short lived ministry and collapsed on 19 March 1982.

There was a twelve hour non-co-operation on 12 January, 1982, by employees. It was total Teachers and workers
also participated. Non-co-operation paralysed the administration, banking, insurance and water transport all over the state.

There was a boycott of Republic Day celebrations by imposing Janata Curfew. It was in protest against curtailment of democratic rights of citizens and government murdors. The curfew was from dawn to dusk.

Republic day celebrations were badly affected all over the state except Cacher N. Cachar and Karbi-Anglong.

Tripartite talks began on 19 January. Opposition parties were invited. Mr. Ravindra Verma presented formula for the detection of foreigners. AASU presented a 15 point questionnaire for post 1971 entrants.

AASU announced new phase of movement on 10 March. The decision to start fresh agitational programme involving freedom fighters, women, farmers, lawyers, doctors was taken at joint executive committee meeting of the AASU and the AAGSP.

Freedom fighters observed a twelve hour fast, defying prohibitory orders all over Assam in front of offices of DC, SDO and EDO demanding an immediate solution of foreigners issue in Assam.

On 15 March, about 80 women were arrested all over the state, while attempting to break the security cordon in front
of offices of DCS, SDO, BDO to observe twelve hour fast on the first of the five day taken fast.

Keshav Chandra Gogoi Ministry resigned on 19 March, and the state came under President's rule. On March 25, Lawyers boycotted courts and memorandums were submitted by the lawyers state, district and sub-divisional authorities incorporating demands.

The protest was shown by the Assam Doctors by wearing black badges on their duties.

On 8 April, Assam's Chief Secretary Sri Ramesh Chandra was gheraoed the AASU and the AAGSP on the issue of special casual leave to government, employees, who intended to attend the Diphu session of AAS.

On 15 April, people lighted lamps in homes and community and 'Bihu' (Festival of Assam celebrated 13 April on 14 January, 14 and 19 October every year). Pandals, as a mark of respect to the martyrs who had sacrificed their lives during the movement.

On 27 April, AASU and AAGSP announced fresh phase of movement from 6 May, oil refineries, telephones and telegraph departments were not exempted.

On 6 May, a twenty four hour Assam Bandh was observed. Army was asked to be ready to assist the
administration during the bandh. Government employees, were warned about disciplinary action, if they abstained from duty on May 6. The government had prohibited strike in thirteen different parts of the state, under ESMA. On 5 May, as a preventive measure, government arrested sixty persons including some members of the AASU, and the AAGP. The response was tremendous, it paralysed the working of the state except in Cachar, N.Cachar and Karbi-Anglong. But government sources claimed the response to be lukewarm. Train and telegraph services were affected. Oil installation at Duliajan and Digboi carried out pumping normally.

Around midnight, a bomb exploded in a compartment of Maligaon - Gauhati shuttle train at Maligaon. One was killed and three were injured. Another bomb explosion, took place at Birkuchi in Gauhati bundling section and other on track between Tihu and Pathshala.

The constitutional compulsion demanded elections in Assam. The CEC, Mr. Shaikh held the view that election commission could revise electoral rolls on its own, so that the elections could be held within six months, if the ongoing negotiations failed or no solution was reached.

We assured that the revision would be done by the EC only.
At a meeting held in the campus of Gauhati University on 12 May, it was decided not to have any more bandhs in May 1982.

The next phase of agitation started with a boycott of classes by students in Brahmaputra valley on and June 3.

On 8 June, a ten hour blackout by Switching off lights was observed from 6 p.m. to protest against the failure of the government to find a solution to the alien's issue.

There were no private vehicles on the road. Some newspaper offices, cinema halls and hotels could not function normally. The police had arrested 50 persons from different places in the city as a preventive measure.

There was a bomb explosion at Ambari in Gauhati on 9 June, seventeen were killed and twenty-eight were injured. It was a Bengali dominated area. Motive behind the explosion was not clear, but it was heard that the shops that kept the lights on during the ten hour blackout of June 8, and the bomb was placed by AASU and AAGSP. AASU condemned the incident and called it an anti-social elements work. The HM Giani Zail Singh had expressed deep concern at the explosion.
On 10 June, students of the Brahmaputra valley observed a solidarity day in the memory of those killed in 1974 students' movement. On 15 June, there was a call for bazar bandh by the movement leaders and it passed off peacefully. It was against Centre's apathetic attitude towards solving the issue. It was not observed in Cachar, N.Cachar and Karbi-Anglong. Some closed shops in Guwahati were forcibly opened by the police, and several persons were also arrested for closing the shops. Forty persons including Nibaran Bara and Prasenjit Brahma (AAGJP) were arrested. According to Indian Express, 20% of the shops were open.

From 19 to 21 June, homage to the student martyrs was paid. It began with wearing of black badges to mourn the deaths of two students at Sunari.

On 21 June, 8 Dn. Tinsukia mail was derailed in Siliguri. It occurred due to removal of fishplates. Three were killed.

On 28 June, there was people's Curfew in Guwahati to protest the meeting of Union Minister of state for Home Affairs Mr. N. R. Laskar. The Assam Congress (I) had scheduled a rally at Judges Field in Guwahati on June 29, to popularise the 20 point programme. The rally was to be addressed by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Mr. Laskar
and the Union Deputy Education Minister Mr. P. K. Thungon. Agitation leaders called for a twelve hour Kamrup bandh and people's curfew in Greater Gauhati. All Assam Tribal Students Union and All Assam Tribal Protection Committee condemned the bandh. Government employees were warned against the participation.

On 4 July, was observed as martyr's day in memory of language movement of 1960.

The Congress (I) High Command on 27th July, reconstructed regional adhoc provincial committees of Assam and several other states. The new Assam PCC (I) was headed by Harindranath Talugdar, Mr. Hiteshwar Saikia was one of the vice-presidents, while K. C. Gogoi, N. R. Lazkar, R. N. Basumatari, Zaheerul-Islam, Mathias Tadu and Anwara Taimur were members.

This was a prelude to assembly elections.

On 12 July, Offices of the governor and the two congress (I) leaders were burnt. On Independence day, Janata Curfew was observed as per the call given by AASU and the AAG3P in protest against centre's attitude towards aliens' issue. It had paralysed the normal life.

A Series of tripartite talks between the agitation leaders and Centre along with opposition parties followed.
The talks were unsuccessful. Aliens disenfranchisement and deportation remained unsolved even when Mr. Ravindra Verma evolved a new formula.

On 2 December, a twenty four hour Assam Bandh was called. The bandh paralysed life in Assam.

The village rallies were held on December 6. Rallies were held in and around Gauhati. They took place in Beltola, Jyotinagar, Rupnagar, Maligaon and Sualkuchi.

The next phase of the agitation was confined to symbolic protests to remove the inconvenience to the public. It was announced by AASU & AAGSP.

On December 9, there was a two hour blackout from 5 P.M. to 7 P.M. It was peaceful and successful and was followed by a booster campaign on 12 December 1982.

On 15 December, there was a programme for 15 minutes of slogan shouting and was to be carried out not on streets but inside. On 17 December, women went out on a nine hour taken strike to protest against police atrocities.

There was a major incident during slogan shouting programmes at Majo (near Gauhati). Official sources reported that the crowd of people defied 14+ CR Po and went out on street to shout slogans. When chased by police, it started throwing stones. Six rounds were fired to disperse and in
the process, one CRPF Jawan was killed and one sub-inspector of police and two CRPF constables were seriously injured. The casualties were also reported from crowd.  

On 27 December, a thirty minute Sonket Dhwani was observed from 6 P.M. Assam staged a loud protest for an hour by beating drums and musical instruments and shouting slogans like,

"No Solution no election"

"Go back all CRP and BSF personnels"

"Deport all foreigners from state".

It was peaceful and without any untoward incident.

There was a cycle procession and Padyatra from 28 December to 31 December. It was by and large peaceful.

IN SEARCH OF SOLUTION :-

The proceedings of the year 1982 were not much dense. It was not due to an over dosing of the events but the negotiations that were conducted occupied prominence. The tripartite talks between the Central Government opposition parties and the agitation leader's tried to sort out the difficulties. Often it decided the fate of phase of agitation.
On the agitational front bomb explosions were quite regular, this indicated the well set feature of violence in the agitation. The movement leaders called it anti-social element's responsibility. The SSB which was organized to indentify the foreigners, was charged with the violent actions.

The AASU and the AAGSP wanted the solution of foreigners' issue first and then the polls in 1983. As the president's rule was extended for six more months after its expiry, the elections were to take place.

The two Cabinet ministers Mr. R. Venkat Raman and Mr. Prakashchandra Sethi with AASU and AAGSP leaders jointly inspected the border at Sonarghat, Chatrasal Dhubri and Bhadorchar areas. This was the indication that there was a possibility of concluding the foreigners' issue.

During 8 to 10 December, many senior officials were in Delhi for discussion with Central offices and the Home Ministry. The Assam officials reported that the law and order situation was not uncontrorollable and elections could be held with regular administrative measures.

This was the election bell from the Assam officials. Agitational programme fluctuated once again. Now the issue was the postponement of the Assembly polls.

It was clear that if the negotiation failed the polls would come. So, there was a dim possibility of arriving
at the settlement. The fear of losing the state election was also running in Centre's minds if the solution had been reached.

Thus it was the beginning of the most bloodiest phase in Assam's fate. The crackdown of violence, communal in form and much more dreadful than one imagined.

= 1983 =

The tripartite talks began on January 4. It was believed that government was to consider 1966 as cut-off year.

AT, on 2 February, reported that lawyers were arrested and remained in jail custody till 13 February, under Section 188 Cr P.c when they took out procession at Gauhati demanding cancellation of mid February polls. (Assembly polls were declaration 7 January to be held on 14 February.)

One person was killed in police firing when police opened fire in self-defence to disperse a violent group of people who attacked a police party with sharp weapons injuring one Jawan seriously. Police party was attacked when they went to investigate a kidnapping case of a supporter of a candidate contesting the elections, at Sadiya.

Seven persons were killed at different places out of which five died of police firing and two of mob violence.
Miscreants set fire to a temporary Cong. (I) office at Manipuri Basti (Gauhati). Two coaches of passenger train were badly damaged at Dibrugarh. One PWD jeep was set on fire in Nowgong.

On February 5 police opened fire on a mob of about 1,500 which attacked Tanglar Police station near Mangaldai. A number of incidents of bomb blasts occurred at Paltan Bazar, Uzan Bazar (both in Gauhati) and Lakhimpur. Police opened fire in air to disperse a crowd of about 400 which attempted to kidnap an election candidate in Golpara sub-division.

There was a three hour black out and path-bandh with Janata curfew.

On 7 February, AT reported that in the curfew bound areas of Jangla four were killed and two dead, who were the supporters of independent candidates. Mir Abdul Halim Cong. (I) assembly candidate in Bhabanipur, (Kamrup district) and his security guard were injured when a bomb exploded in his car.

A 400 strong torch light processionists at Khumati, Sibsagar dist. attempted to set fire to the house of Sri Jibkanta Gogoi Congress (I) candidate for assembly seat.

Apart from attempts to set fire to road bridges in several places, mob set ablaze a bazar under Panary police
station in Darang district. A passenger train compartment was set on fire in Nowgong district.84

A police sub-Inspector Bipin Mahanta was killed in an ambush at Tezpur.

Seven persons were killed, six in police firing, out of which, four fell at Belsor, one at Nonoi, Nowgong, where a crowd attacked the police. At Jorhat, one independent candidate was attacked. One died at Lanka, Nowgong district.85

Three were killed in police firing and one was stabbed to death in Numrup. The total toll in few days went up to thirty five.86

AT reported on 11 February, 1983 that, twelve persons died in Kamrup district in police firing. Seven bridges and Irrigation Department office at Pathshala in Kamrup district. A number of bridges were set on fire. Road Communication between Gauhati and Golpara was cut off as a bridge was set ablaze. Several wooden bridges and two RCC bridges were damaged at Gohpur & Mowain.

A spontaneous ten hour black out, was followed by twelve hour Janata Curfew in Gauhati in protest against P.M.'s visit, on 10 February. It paralysed the normal life in the city.
Total toll went up to fifty six on February 11, seven were killed in police firing, out of which four died in Lakhimpur district, two in Kamrup and one in Sibsagar district. Over 2,500 oil employees joined non-co-operation from 7 February. Over 200 oil executives submitted their resignations.

AT reported on 13 February, that fourteen more died in election violence and houses were set ablaze. On February 15, AT said that 100 more were killed at Gohpur, 6,000 were rendered homeless.

Violence spread to more areas, eight died in group clashes and three in police firing. Congress (I) candidate was killed for Biswanath Charali constituency in Darrang district.

There were clashes and police firing at several places. Four CRPF personnels were shot dead.

Indefinite curfew was clamped in Mangaldai. Three died in Lakhimpur, and three died in Dibrugarh. Clashes and arson increased to more areas, at Mangaldai three died twenty six in group clashes and four in police firing.

AT reported on 20 February, that, on 19 February, sixty three officers of Assam government were dismissed. Fifty were Gazetted and thirteen were non gazetted.
In the Assembly polls, out 126 assembly seats, 105 went for polling. In twelve parliamentary constituencies, polling could take place in five constituencies only.

A nine hour, Gauhati bandh was called on February 2, protest against the P.M.'s visit to Assam.

There was a call for twenty four hour non-co-operation to protest against installation of the so called illegal government in Assam, killing thousands of people, and rendering lacs homeless.

On 7 June, it was declared that twenty Tribunals and one appellate Tribunal were being set up in Assam. Each tribunal was to be manned by three judges or additional district judge of district rank and three appellate tribunal judges were to be of the status of High Court, to hear the appeal against verdict of tribunals.

At district and sub-divisional level screening committees were already formed under SP and SDPO to examine the post 1971 migrants immediately after detection. On 29 August, there was a thirty six hour bandh, call. The bandh was satisfactory.

On 10 September there was a twenty four hour path bandh. Illegal migrants' ordinance was promulgated on October 13, to facilitate the detection of post '71 migrants, in Assam.
On October 6, AASU and AAGSP had called the students for a boycott of classes on 10 September, to demand an early solution of foreigners' problem, dissolution of the so called illegal Assam assembly and also to register protest against CRPF atrocities.

There was a call for twenty eight hour road and rail blockade from 11 November, and a three hour blackout from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. in protest against Centre's lack of sincerity in finding a solution to the burning problem of illegal migrants in the state.

There was a programme of six day long, token hunger strike called jointly by AASU and AAGSP, in protest against police atrocities in the state from 5 December, with the participation of lawyers and students. Students stayed away from classes and observed a ten hour token hunger strike in their educational institutions along with the batch of four lawyers who held hunger strike in front of the offices of DCs and SDO, all over the state in protest against police atrocities.

Artists, journalists, literateurs in front of the offices of DCs, SDCs and BDOs participated in the fast. Freedom fighters observed a ten hour hunger strike in front of DCs, SDOs, SDCs and BDo offices.

AASU and AAGSP members observed fast.
On the Republicday, there was a programme of nine hour hunger strike.

On February 2, call was given to observe a road blockade and Gauhati bandh for 3 February, to protest against the Assembly formation.

Students were to abstain from classes all over the state on 13 and 14 February, with 14 February 1984 to be observed as a black day. People belonging to all walk a live were appealed to come out of their homes violatory 14 Cr PC. to offer Satyagraha in front of SDGs, BDOs, SDOs offices. It was in support of ‘detection, expulsion of foreign nationals in Assam and the so called illegally imposed Assam Assembly.

Satyagrahis were beaten up by and over 100 were injured. 91

On 15 June, twenty four hour Assam bandh was called in protest against Centre’s insincerity to solve foreigners’ issue.
Rail road blockade and black out were observed on 25 June 1984.

Then in the following time, series of talks were held and finally the accord was reached on 15 August, 1985. The agitational programmes were not there.

1984-85 -

In the second phase of 1984-85 agitational programme occupied Assembly dissolution demand. The tempo had almost died off, because the violent incidents came as a crackdown on the people in 1983 elections and the students had already lost two academic years. It was evident that people were tired of its delay. Assam had attained normalcy from 1983, and a settlement was awaited.

(b) Programme Analysis

In Assam's context, the agitation not only defined the goals well, but had recognized the nature of congress culture of the government. Movement leaders designed the programmes in such a style that they produced a collective force to influence the government. Decision making area was the matter of concern.

Methods of protest in Assam movement's context would be classified as under :-
**NON-VIOLENT METHODS OF PROTEST**

(With Reference to Assam)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disrupting the Working of Authority (Peaceful Persistence)</th>
<th>Show of Strength (Influence)</th>
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<td>Affecting Eco-Activity</td>
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<td>Affecting Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revival of Response</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strike Bandh Blockade</th>
<th>Pick Satyam, Nonco, Pro-Rallies J. Curfew Concession</th>
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<td>Observance of Days</td>
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**Anti-Oppress, Black Protest Solidarity.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>(1) Sankalpa Siksha</th>
<th>(2) Anti-Cooperation</th>
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<td>(3) Prayers for dead in Agi.</td>
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<td>(9) Cycle procession.</td>
<td>(10) Pledge taking or Sankalpa divas</td>
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</table>
Methods of protest were designed to persist peacefully and at the same time to influence the authority by show of strength of the movement.

In disrupting the working of the authority economic activity, and the administration had to be defied as well as paralysed. With the help of strikes, bandhs and blackades, economic structure was totally disturbed and often was in chaos.

**STRIKE**: Strikes showed an extreme symbol of dissatisfaction though it was aimed at affecting the economic working such as factories, shops, business-establishments.

"It (strike) is used not to wield economic influence but to communicate sorrow, determination, revulsion or moral or religious feelings about the matter in question. Although the form of this method is largely economic, the effect is that of symbolic protest."^22

Hunger strike was more convenient all over Assam because it did not require any pre-planned work out and was a good instant food for other proceedings. Students & women mostly observed hunger-strike.

ONGC employees went on strike from 13 to 25 September 1979, this was a major disruption in economic sector of the state. Supporting the economic defiance there were
statewise hartals. Though these types of strikes did not occur too often, but were very successful. Strikes, in Assam's proceedings, were viewed as a mark of continuance of proceedings.

The leaders were aware of response generation and continual mass participation to create the atmosphere. For this purpose they stressed on a quantitative aspect also.

**BANDHS** : Bandhs formed the platform to launch the onslaught of various other programmes. Bandhs were a success to a great extent. They had paralysed the working of the state government, provided largest support to the leadership, and confidence among the masses. The state was almost in chaos, giving maximum benefit to the agitationists. Most crucial issue was to compel the government to look into the burning problem. Bandhs varied from twelve hours to fiftytwo hours often accompanied by blackouts always exempted essential services such as, electricity, milk supply and newspapers. Exemption of essential services was a welcome gesture. They were called to protest against various agitating issues like, protest against polls (mid term polls 1980) proceedings, police atrocities, adamant attitude of the Central Government over the agitating constitutional issues, such as cut off year for detection, deletion and deportation of foreigners, granting of citizenship, etc. Bandhs were called after any major occurrence, not only as a mark of protest
but to show the strength to the authority. For example, Bandhs of 3 December, 1979, 10 December '89 and 1-2 January 1980 were against the poll proceedings of midterm Loksabha polls and also to show their solidarity to the government. Each bandh gave a little time to the people to relax.

Blockade mainly economic, and transport was successful but was responsible for a lot of violence. Blockade on the forest produce, was the most striking and transport blockade of 31 December, had totally paralysed the working of the state. Though the government claimed that the buses and trains functioned normally, the people denied it completely.

Second type of protest could be classified as affecting the administration, in the category of disruption of authority through peaceful persistence.

**PICKETING, SATYAGRAHA, NON-CO.OPERATION :.**

**STRENGTH GENERATION :.**

These traditional and time tested ways of peaceful persuasion, brought a lot of success, morally and numerically. Picketing in front of DCs gathered a lot of organizations and people from all walks of life joined the Satyagraha. Picketing was always organized, Picketing was instrumental
in postponing the midterm polls of Lok Sabha in 1980. It was a moral booster for the agitationists, but that phase of picketing had generated lot of violence. Most controversy was picketing at oil installations. It cut across the limits of days, and continued for months. It was round the clock and participation was tremendous. It prevented the flow of oil to go out of Assam. Women formed an important part of the agitation and particularly the picketing.

It had worried the government considerably and the mood of the picketing picked up by saying "We will give our blood but not allow a drop of crude to go out of the state without a Settlement."

Sudden lifting of blockade without any achievement was a victory for the government. Many intellectuals called it a useless exercise. It brought about some bit of doubt in all minds regarding the non-violent methods, because during oil picketing, violence had established itself comfortably. Since then, picketing was placed around bandh, rallies or demonstrations. Oil employees and executives had offered Satyagraha and non-co-operation. Picketing at oil installations was an excellent work out and brilliant idea on part of the leadership. Death of Dr. Robin Mitra, an oil India executive, was a considerable set-back for the agitation as a whole.

Gherao and boycotts played quite good and appreciable supporting role. There was an MLA Gherao programme. During the
agitation period, the leaders always boycotted the independence day and Republic day celebrations, to send the protest straight to the Central Government, and AASU conducted its own function, attendance in which was quite thick.

Non-Co-operation formed the heart of the whole proceedings and Gana Satyagraha commanded the participation from all over Assam. It was like a unity of various professions and organizations. Lawyers boycotted courts, doctors wore black badges, students boycotted their classes, State, Central Government employees refused to attend the duties, this was the story of non-co-operation in Assam. "The ruler's power depends on the continual availability all assistance not only from individual members, officials employees and the like, but from subsidiary organizations and institutions which compose the system as a whole. These may be departments, bureaus, branches, committees and the line. Just as individuals and independent groups may refuse to co-operate. So too these unit, organizations may refuse to provide sufficient help to maintain effectively the ruler's position and to enable him to implement his policies."93

Non-co-operation was such a success in Assam. There were processions and rallies to mourn, for martyrdom, peace and harmony, and silent processions to reach the hearts of people.
SECOND Category is the show of strength to influence the government.

(i) Revival of Response :- For pursuing the cause of foreigners' influx, it was very vital for the leaders to keep the initiative alive and at the same time, to exhibit their resolution and strong and wide participation to the government. Observance of black day after a certain phase of violence, sometimes blackdays were accompanied by switching of electric current at homes. Often against the so called atrocities of CRPF, Assam had observed anti-oppression days. Protest days were also observed. This type of protest (Symbolic) pampered the sentiments of the masses. It was necessary for the leaders to keep the spirit alive and going because, if once it slowed down then never could it be picked up. It is true in post-1983 phase till the signing of accord.

(ii) Meeting the Mood :- The young leadership had its own ways of fighting the challenge. Pledge taking programme was a successful one and it reflected the desire of the Assamese people to go far a long and determined battle for their cause. "We pledge today to sacrifice our lives for national cause of Assam and promise that we will remain active participation of the national movement launched by the AASU and we will save our motherland from the clutches
of foreigners and from any danger that may come." It leaves every researcher and student of this movement spell-bound.

Surrender of Xam Tamrapatras by the freedom fighters was a moral support for the movement. Persons who had devoted their lives for the cause of Indian independence exerted pressure on the Central Government and gave a swing to the movement.

Emotional composure by the leaders was seen on the day when people lighted lamps to pay homage to those people who died for Assam's cause, who were fondly called martyrs and another was the prayer's day in memory of martyrs.

Cycle processions and sound processions were unique.

All the modes of protest of articulation can not be seen as independent otherwise each of them becomes not only insufficient but irrelevant.

(III.)

- 1983 - Assembly Elections in Assam

Assembly polls of 1983 were an important event of the six year old agitation. Filled with bitter memories, the elections and its aftermath cannot be erased out of anybody's
mind. The 1983 elections were important in the movement History in the sense that, firstly it determined the fate of 1985 Assam accord and secondly, it was responsible, for bloodiest violence in the state. Whether the elections should have been conducted or not is a debatable question and much has been said and written about it.

The government wanted the elections not only on constitutional grounds, but to show its strength to the movement leaders. Political motive of capturing the state office was there but the Late PM Mrs. Gandhi had some other ideas. She and her government tested the minds of the leaders, had they participated, the students would have won few seats, if not absolute majority. The boys missed a chance of participation in the government.

The Congress government played with communal sentiments, and its pain is felt even now. On human consideration the elections were undesirable.

President's rule which was to expire on 19 March, 1983 could have been extended, beyond it, if,

(a) Proclamation of emergency in the state of Assam.
(b) EC certified that on account of difficulties of holding elections in Assam, continuation of president's rule was necessary.
Another way out was to amend the Article 368 of the Constitution. There was a lot of talk about the amendment by in the end, only government's decision prevailed. The trarpartite talks during the January 1983 talks were to be decisive. The election commission noted as under in its report:

"Some of the parties were reported to have agreed to support the constitutional amendment in case the talks did not succeed. The commission therefore naturally expected that the talks would succeed leading amendment to the constitution, or it would be approached for a certificate as envisaged by Article 365 (5) after the proclamation of emergency in Assam, unfortunately this was not to be."

EC was ready for preventive measures but after the failure of tripartite talks of 4 January, elections in the state were declared on 7 January.

The students were caught in poll-roll dilemma. Under any circumstances, they did not want elections. 1979 rolls without revision were to be used and this according to AASU it meant the elections with foreigners votes. Frequent breakdown of talks was another point of resentment. According to AASU executive in Sunday, March, '83,
"We do not recognize the elections. We do not recognize any government that is the outcome of these (1983) elections. We will fight until we are given justice. Unless we do so, we will be ruled in our state by foreigners."

AASU declared that elections were imposed on Assam, and "Fraudulent means cannot buy truth". 

The course of violence began from the beginning of February. At reported on 7 February, 1983 that in curfew bound areas of Jangala, four were killed and two dead who were the supporters of independent candidates near Sibsager. Mir Abdul Halem, Congress (I) Assembly candidate in Bhabanipur (district Kamrup) and his security guards were injured when a bomb exploded in their car.

A police sub-inspector Bipin Mahanta was killed in an ambush on 7 February. At reported on 9 February, seven persons were killed six in police firing, four in Belsar, one at Nanoi (near Nowgong), where crowd attacked the police. Another at Jorhat where independent candidate was attacked, one died at Lanka in Nowgong district. Three died in police firing and one was stabbed to death. Total toll went up to 35.

Twelve persons died in Kamrup district in police firing. Seven bridges and irrigation department offices at Pathshala in Kamrup district were burnt. Road communication
between Gauhati and Golpara was cut off as a bridge was set ablaze.97

The AASU asked the "AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL" to investigate into the matter. Forteen more died in past twenty four hours and several houses were set ablaze in Kamrup.98 On 15 February AT said in Gohpur clashes, one of the bloodest one at least 100 persons were killed in group clashes, 6,000 were rendered homeless. Communal clashes spread to new areas of Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup districts, claiming 126 lives, on the opening day of polls. In Darrang district the death toll went up to 100, when they were massacred at midnight raid by gangs of fifteen villages. Three people were killed when police opened fire to prevent mobs from snatching ball of boxes from polling stations in Kamrup and Dibrugarh districts.99

Mr. Satyanarayan Ram, Congress (I) candidate from Biswanath Assembly Constituency was murdered during the day, time. The number of casualties increased to 273 in anti-poll agitation.100

Worst communal violence occurred at Nellie on 15 February. 'Sunday' (March 1983) put the death toll to 600. It further said in Assam, poll violence claimed 2,500 lives.
Three Jawans of CRPF were killed when a contingent of Assom police opened fire. Anti poll violence claimed 20 more lives. In Rangmati, three persons and in Dibrugarh district eleven persons were killed in arson and communal clashes, claiming 25 more lives. Five were killed in Lakhimpur district eight in Mangaldai sub-division and two other died in police firing. Death toll on 16 February clash between CRP and Assam police rose to six.

The violence within the residing communities of Assam was alarming. All the sections fought with one another. There was no set pattern of confrontation.

(1) MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS V/S ASSAMESE TRIBALS & ASSAMESE MUSLIMS

Foremost in this category is Nellie massacre. In this category, of violence, the area spreads over Morigaon sub-division and Nowgong district where Tribals (Assamese) villages and Muslim immigrant villages intercept. The tribals were Lalungs and Boro kacharis. The first ominous came on 11 February, when five dead bodies of Lalung children were found. The next day in Lahoughat eight bodies were found, five of Lalungs and three of Muslims. On 18 February, people living in fifteen villages around the small town of Nellie had to pay dearly for their right to vote. Well over 600 persons were butchered.
Organized attacks on the villagers started by, approaching Dimal Bir near Nowgong burning the houses and killing people on the way. The Villagers offered a little resistance that they could. Able bodied men could escape, women and children and old persons were killed. This attack was by the Lalungs on immigrant muslims, following an accumulated tension. This hatred dates back to 1937, when Sir Sadullah had encouraged muslim migration to Brahmaputra valley under 'Grow More Food' campaign. Char lands of the valley was originally occupied by these tribals. After partition immigrants pushed away the tribals and occupied those lands considerably. Another reason was, Lalungs were supporters of AASU and were therefore anti-poll.

Backlash by tribals came in the places Bor bori and Nelli. On February, 18 about 5,000 Assamese attacked village Unalguriati (Inhabited by immigrant muslims). Those people ran towards Bar bori, there too, the rioters caught them, All the sides were covered by the attackers and 585 were killed.

Second case of backlash came from Nellie.

(2) TRIBALS V/S. NON_TRIBALS :-

Incidents at Gohpur were very unfortunate as the clashes occurred between the tribals (BOROS) and non-tribals. In Gohpur area the Boros occupied the forest land, who had
decided to leave Nagaland due to frequent troubles by Nagas. Non-tribals also encroached the forest lands. Assamese resented it and when forest department launched a move against tribal encroachments, they were assisted by Assamese. These resented the Boros. Even the other tribals settled there, but main divide was between the Boros and non-tribal Assamese. Relations between them were strained during agitation period. Boros under the banner of PTCAs supported the elections because of their disliking towards Assamese. Boros wanted their Bodo language to be recognized in the state andood for an autonomous, tribal state in Assam called 'UDYANCHAL'. Boro Kacharis being a major tribal group in the state (others being Lalungs, Mishings, Deeris Mechs and Rabhas) enjoy special status such as job reservation. They feel that Assamese culture is being forced on them.

Tragedy look place in Darrang district. Boro Kacharis attacked Gohpur with bows and arrows, spears and Daos. The carnage 12 February lasted for an hour. Police could not reach in time, partly because it was busy with elections and partly because the connecting bridge was broken by the AASU supporters against the elections. The act was said to have been done in relations. 14,000 villages were affected by the tribal attack. Immigrant Muslims also joined the Boros.
At the places like Dhekiajali North Lakhimpur, Goreswarp Tamalbari Rowmari area, Khairabari, Bishsupur and many more.

RESULTS

The voting of the poll was very low. Out of 126 Assembly seats in sixteen constituencies poll could not be held, four constituencies were uncontested and in 1 constituency the polling was countermanded. Total 105 constituencies went for polling. In twelve parliamentary constituencies, only in five constituencies polling was completed in seven seats polling could not be completed.

In Sibsagar district the average polling was hardly 5.65% It had sixteen seats put in one, poll could not be held. Out of fifteen in eleven seats polling was not even 5%.

In Lakhimpur district, out six seats, three were general and three were reserved for scheduled tribe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 GENERAL</th>
<th>3 RESERVED</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONST.</strong></td>
<td><strong>percentage of polling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 6 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 1 %</td>
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In Dibrugarh, out of twelve constituencies there was no polling in three. So in nine constituencies the polling was as under:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONST</th>
<th>Percentage of polling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 % to 26 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 % to 20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>below 10 %</td>
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In Darrang district out of fifteen constituencies, in six there was no poll, in one constituency there was partial poll and in one, poll was countermanded and there was no contest in one.

For six seats, result was under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Percentage of polling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More than 30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.47 %</td>
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In Nowgong out of fourteen constituencies in one polling was partial therefore could not be completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Percentage of polling</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More than 30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 % to 25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>less than 5 %</td>
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In Kamrup out of twenty four constituencies, three were unopposed and rest twenty one seats stood as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Percentage of polling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>More than 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20% to 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10% to 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3% to 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2% to 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1% to 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Golpara out of nineteen seats, there was no poll in three seats, and one had partial poll. So fifteen seats stood as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Percentage of polling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>More than 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relation between growth rate and poll percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH GROWTH RATE AREAS</th>
<th>POLL PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>LAW GROWTH RATE AREAS</th>
<th>POLL PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOLAKGANJ</td>
<td>59.51</td>
<td>BOKAGHAT</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILASIPARA WEST</td>
<td>68.95</td>
<td>MARIANI</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILASIPARA EAST</td>
<td>45.69</td>
<td>DERGAON</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH SALMARA</td>
<td>73.49</td>
<td>BEHALI</td>
<td>NO POLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANGACHAR</td>
<td>79.44</td>
<td>MAJULI</td>
<td>NO POLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLPARA EAST</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>KALIABOR</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH GROWTH RATE AREAS</td>
<td>POLL PERCENTAGE</td>
<td>LAW GROWTH RATE AREAS</td>
<td>POLL PERCENTAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOLPARA WEST</td>
<td>41.94</td>
<td>DIGBOI</td>
<td>17.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORBHOG</td>
<td>52.58</td>
<td>GOHPUR</td>
<td>NO POLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARPETA</td>
<td>38.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAGHBOR</td>
<td>70.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHHAYGAON</td>
<td>26.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANERY</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDALGURI</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANAMUKH</td>
<td>50.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOJAI</td>
<td>50.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAJABAT</td>
<td>47.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows a co-relation between the growth and polling percentage. Polling was heavy in high growth rate areas and low in poor growth areas. Foreigners hold the key in these high growth rate areas and they derioted the fate of the candidates.
1. AT, 15 September, 1979.
2. Ibid., 16 September, 1979.
3. Ibid., 19 September, 1979.
4. Bahirigat: - People outside Assam
10. Ibid., 3 November, 1979.
15. Ibid., p-22.
19  Ibid., 9 December, 1979.
20  Ibid., 11 December, 1979.
21  Ibid., 11 December, 1979.
22  Ibid., 20 December, 1979.
23  Ibid., 27 December, 1979.
24  In an informal interview with Prafulla Mahanta on 30 May, 1987.
27  Ibid., 11 January, 1980.
30  Ibid., 1 February, 1980.
31  Ibid., 5 February, 1980.
32  Ibid., 6 February, 1980.
33  Ibid., 8 February, 1980.
34  Ibid., 9 February, 1980.
39 AT, 9 April, 1980.
40 Ibid., 7 April, 1980.
41 Ibid., 20 April, 1980.
42 Ibid., 21 April, 1980.
43 Ibid., 25 April, 1980.
44 Ibid., 29 April, 1980.
48 Ibid., 19 May, 1980.
49 Ibid., 27 May, 1980.
50 Ibid., 28 May, 1980.
51 Ibid., 2 June, 1980.
52 Ibid., 14 June, 1980.
53 Ibid., 22 June, 1980.
54 Ibid., 5 July, 1980.
56 Ibid., 27 October, 1980.
57 Ibid., 2 November, 1980.
58 Ibid., 6 November, 1980.
59 Ibid., 6 November, 1980.
| 60 | Ibid., 13 November, 1980. |
| 61 | Ibid., 24 November, 1980. |
| 63 | Ibid., 30 November, 1980. |
| 64 | Ibid., 1 December, 1980. |
| 65 | Ibid., 20 December, 1980. |
| 66 | Ibid., 23 December, 1980. |
| 68 | Ibid., p-115. |
| 69 | Ibid., p-115. |
| 70 | Ibid., p-116. |
| 71 | Ibid., p-116. |
| 72 | Ibid., p-124. |
| 73 | AT, 20 November, 1981. |
| 74 | Ibid., 16 December, 1981. |
| 75 | Ibid., 29 December, 1981. |
| 77 | AT, 1 January, 1982. |
| 79 | Ibid., p-140. |
80  AT, 26 March, 1982.
81  Murthy, T.S., cit., p-172.
82  Ibid., p-174.
83  Ibid., pp-238-239.
84  AT, 7 February, 1983.
85  Ibid., 9 February, 1983.
86  Ibid., 10 February, 1983.
87  Ibid., 12 February, 1983.
88  Ibid., 16 February, 1983.
89  Ibid., 17 February, 1983.
90  Ibid., 19 February, 1983.
91  Ibid., 16 March, 1983.

Truths unfolded, Fraudulent means cannot bury Truths, (Guwahati, AASU) cover page.

At, 10 February, 1983.
Ibid., 11 February, 1983.
Ibid., 13 February, 1983.
Sunday, March, 1983.
Ibid., March, 1983.
Ibid., March, 1983.
Ibid., March, 1983.