CHAPTER - II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENT OF MUSLIMS IN ASSAM
(1200 - 1947 AD)

Before going into details about the "Educational Progress of Muslims community in Assam after Independence with special reference to MORI GAON DISTRICT", it is most essential to know briefly about the historical background of settlement of Muslims in Assam. (a) Settlement and establishment history of Muslims in Assam; (b) Original pattern of Muslim population in Assam; and (c) Political Position of Muslims in Assam during Post-Independence Period are directly or indirectly related with the education of Muslims. Without knowing these important factors the study of the educational progress of Muslim Community in Assam would remain incomplete.

Assam is the frontier Province of India in the North-East. The boundaries of Assam lie between latitudes 28°18', and 24° North and longitudes 89°46' and 97°4 East. It contains at present an area of 54,000 square miles of which a little over 24,000 square miles constitute the Plains, 19,500 square miles the southern hill tracts, and the rest is the small hills to the North. Hemmed in, as India is by the sea on the South-East and South-West, and by the lofty chain of the Himalayas on the north, the only routes between India and the rest of Asia which is possible for migration on a large scale, lies to its north-west and north-east confines. In Assam, both Ahoms and Muslims entered as invaders. Ahoms entered Assam from the Eastern border in 1228 AD, while Muslims from the West in 1206 AD. Ahoms could establish their permanent empire, but Muslims could not do so successfully. However, Muslims were able to conquer some parts of Assam and administered them temporarily. From that time Muslims started to settle in Assam.

1. B.K. Barua: Cultural history of Assam (Early Period)
2.1. **Settlement and Establishment of Muslims in Assam during Muslim Rule (1200-1800 AD.)**

The entrance of Muslims in Assam can be stressed at the time when Mohammad bin Bakhtiar wanted to conquer China through Assam. It was the year 1206 AD. Mohd. bin Bakhtiar attacked Kamrup (Assam) and was himself defeated. His second attack was in 1227 A.D. The Commander-in-Chief was Ewaz Khan who went up to the Nowgong, the Central Part. In the same year Nasir Uddin attacked Kamrup and defeated the King Prethu, who died later.

In this way Muslims came as invaders, some of them were defeated, while others could establish their rule in some parts of Assam, specially in Hajo. Thus some Muslims remained in Assam willingly, while others remained as captives. Once they got mixed with local Assamese and married their girls to live there permanently.

"As for the Mussalmans who had been taken prisoner in former times and had chosen to marry there. Their descendants are exactly in the manner of Assamese and have nothing of Islam except the name; their hearts are inclined far more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards association with Muslims". It is said by Shahab-ud-Din Talish.*

Muslims thus, entered Assam as conquerers administrators, Preachers and invitees of the local kings. Most of them settled in Assam permanently. Due to the propagation of Islam by different 'Peers 'Preachers' and 'saints', hundreds of lower Castes Hindus and Tribals embraced this religion (Islam). In this way the number of Muslims in Assam was increased during the medieval India. The influx of Muslims into Assam was ended for the time being, when Mughals were defeated at Itakhuli (near Gauhati) in 1682. This was the last war between Ahoms (Assamese)

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3. Ibid.
* Shahab-ud-Din Talish, a famous historian, who came with Meerjumla, when he attacked Assam in the year 1661 A.D.
and Mughals, after which Mughals did not try to regain eastern part of Assam. During that time, the Mughal administration of Delhi was on the decline. The administration of Bengal also collapsed due to the British occupation of Bengal. However western part of Assam was still under the administration of Muslims. This is the brief settlement history of Muslims in Assam during Muslim India.

2.2. Settlement and Establishment of Muslims in Assam during British rule (1801-1947).

Assam was completely a sovereign country, ruled by the Ahoms for more than 600 years. Though some portions of it were occupied by Muslim rulers, yet they could not establish permanent rule. The last quarter of the 19th century saw the eclipse of the powerful Ahoms' rule in Assam owing to their own internal squabbles. Also, Assam was for a few years under the Burmese invaders who were invited by an Assamese General (Badan Bar-Phukan) to help him in his war against the ailing Prime Minister of a minor king. The Ahom king there upon sought the help of the British, who were in the neighbouring Dacca to purge Assam of the plundering Burmese. With the expulsion of the Burmese and consequently by the TREATY OF YANDABOO, Assam became a protectorate of the British in the year 1826 AD and the king of Assam was reduced to a vassal of the British. 8

In order to increase revenues and taxes, and also for administration, the British Government brought some literate Bengali Hindus to different posts, poor labourers for tea cultivation and Bengali Muslims for jute cultivation in Assam. Almost all the Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims were from Bengal. A few of them came from Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. "With the beginning of the 20th Century, it was seen that there was the Bengali galore in the state of Assam in various fields of administration, railway, post-office, law, teaching and pri-

mary medicine"9 The British Government encouraged them to settle in Assam Permanently. At that time Assam was very thinly populated.10 Local Assamese were not sufficient and well-up for the different purposes of the British Government.

Muslims of East Bengal were expert in cultivation. The soil of Assam was very fertile, where varieties of crops were expected to be produced. There were thousands of acres of Wasteland in Assam. So Bengali Muslim cultivators were invited by the British Government to settle in Assam for cultivation.11 After giving allotment of 'Kharaji' (Permanent) Patta of the occupied land, the British Government levied revenue taxes on them. These opportunities attracted Muslims of Bengal to migrate to Assam. In this way Muslims of Bengal started to come to Assam for permanent settlement, like the Hindus. This interstate migration continued till the Independence of India.12 This would be clear from the following table.

TABLE NO. 2.1.
Population growth in Assam, 1901-1971 AD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Decadal variation in Assam</th>
<th>Decadal Variation in India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3,289,680</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>3,848,617</td>
<td>+16.9%</td>
<td>+5.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>4,636,980</td>
<td>+20.4%</td>
<td>-0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>5,560,371</td>
<td>+20.1%</td>
<td>+11.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>6,694,790</td>
<td>+20.4%</td>
<td>+14.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>8,028,856</td>
<td>+19.9%</td>
<td>+13.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>10,837,329</td>
<td>+34.9%</td>
<td>+21.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>14,625,152</td>
<td>+34.9%</td>
<td>+24.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1971. Series -3 Assam part II A, Page 76*  
* Incalculating the figures of population, Mizoram has been excluded.

10. Isot Marianiang: op.cit. p.15.  
11. op.cit. p. 15.  
12. The Secretary op.cit. p. 3-8.
2.2.1. **Muslim League Ministry in Assam and implementation of the Scheme, "GROW MORE FOOD".**

Sir Syed Saadullah, was popularly associated with the All India Muslim League and supported the movement of Mr. M.A. Jinnah. Syed Saadullah through his efficiency and Calibre, was able to from a league Ministry in Assam in 1937. He served as Minister of Education and Agriculture during 1924-29. During his days as head of the Assam Government, he took particular interest in Planning and development, rural uplift, eradication of unemployment, land-reforms and Promotion of 'Cottage Industries. For the development of lowlying regions of Brahmaputra and Barak Valley he favoured and encouraged immigration of peasants from Bengal and gave credit for the agricultural development of Assam, particularly the introduction of Jute cultivation in Assam Valley. The Government of Assam not only encouraged Muslim Cultivators by giving Railway concessions, and also by providing 'Family Ticket' of Rupees five for the entire family to come directly from Mymensingha to Nowgong district of Central Assam. In 1940, in the second term as chief Minister, Saadullah refused to accept the Land Regulation Rules, made earlier by Shri Gopinath Bardoloi. He abolished 'Line system.' He again re-inforced the colonization scheme and Permitted thousands of immigrant Muslims to settle in the Government waste-lands. Towards the end of 1940, he decided to make an assessment on the Government waste-land of Kamrup, Nowgong and Lakhimpur district of the state. After measurement, 30% of the total Government land was kept reserved for future and the remaining 70% was to be distributed among the local and migrant people.

During 1942-43, 'Food shortages' started in some provinces

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14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.

* By 'Line System' Immigrant Muslim were prohibited to enter into the Assamese Hindu areas.
of India. In order to meet this 'Food shortage' the Government of India introduced the scheme of GROW MORE FOOD and ordered the state Governments to implement it immediately. Accordingly 'Saadullah Ministry' of Assam implemented it. Under the Scheme of 'grow more food' Syed Saadullah again invited Muslim cultivators of East Bengal to come to Assam, to settle at the Government waste-lands and to grow more food. Thus, a new process of immigration started in Assam. The growth and gradual increase of Muslim population in Assam can be confirmed from the following table:

### TABLE NO. 2.2
Total Muslim population of Assam in each decade and percentage of variation in each decade from 1901 to 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Muslim Population</th>
<th>Decade Variation</th>
<th>Percentage of Decade Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>5,03,670</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>6,34,101</td>
<td>+ 1,30,431</td>
<td>+ 25.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>8,80,426</td>
<td>2,46,325</td>
<td>38.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>12,79,388</td>
<td>3,98,962</td>
<td>45.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>16,96,978</td>
<td>4,17,590</td>
<td>32.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1901-1941.

The influx of Bengali Muslims from East Bengal to Assam was virtually ended with the attainments of Independence and the Partition of India. The immigration of Muslims into Assam, continued from 1206 to 1947 A.D.

### 2.3. ORIGINAL PATTERN OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN ASSAM

The original pattern of Muslim population in Assam is quite different from the Muslims of other states of India. Tribals were the original 'sons of the soil'. Like Hindus,

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Secretary, op. cit. p. 6.
Muslims also entered into Assam in different succeeding waves. Many Muslims entered as conquerers, preachers, administrators, and cultivators. Some other entered as appointees and/or invitees of the kings. Muslims began to come Assam from different parts of India in twelfth century A.D. This process continued to the early part of the twentieth century. Very few came outside India and the largest number came from Bengal. Those who settled permanently in Assam were assimilated into the local people. When adopting local language and culture their original language was dead, they identified themselves as Assamese. On the basis of their origin, Muslims of Assam can be grouped into three broad categories:

1) Garia, Maria and other contemporary Muslims.
2) Assam origin Muslims or local converted Muslims, and
3) Miyan Muslims or migrated Muslims of Bengal.

2.3.1. GARIA, MARIA AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY MUSLIMS:

GARIA MUSLIM:

The word 'Garia' is related to Muslims of Assam. A good number of Muslims in Assam are commonly known as 'Garias'. The word 'Garia' has been derived from the word 'Gour'. The capital of the Sultans of Bengal.

Muslims who came from ancient 'Gour' (Bengal) to Assam were popularly known as 'Gouriya'. Later on, they came to be known as 'Garia'. According to Sir Edward Gait, "The Ordinary Muhammedans of Assam call themselves Garia, an indication of their


claim to have come originally from 'Gour' the ancient Muhammadan capital of Bengal. Though the word 'Goria' is not free from controversy, yet almost all the reliable writers are unanimous about its original from 'Gour' the capital of Bengal. It is true that the Muslims came from 'Gour' to Assam at different times and most of them settled here (Assam) permanently. Since then they were called 'Gourias' or 'Garias', according to the tradition, the term still continues to this day. During medieval period Muslim ruled over most of the sub-continent-India. Assam was attacked by Muslims at different times during the Muslim rule in India. Sometimes they able to establish their Kingdom in Assam. But the durations of their rule were very short, The rulers of Assam sometimes established good relations with the Mughal rulers of Bengal and Emperors of Delhi. Sometimes, treaties and agreements were also made among the rulers of Assam and the Mughal Emperors. During the entire period of Muslim administration in India, hundred's of Muslim soldiers were captured by the rulers of Assam, whenever they lost the battles with them. The soldiers who became prisoners of war did not bring their wives and children with them. Getting their freedom, they married the local girls and settled here permanently. In course of time they were so assimilated with the Assamese that it was very difficult to separate Muslims from Hindus except for their Muslim names. Shahabuddin Talish a famous historian, who came to Assam at the time of Mir-Jumlah, wrote, that "As for the Musalmans who had been taken prisoner in former times and had chosen to marry here, their descendants act exactly in the manner of the Assamese and have nothing of Islam except the name; their hearts are inclined more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards association with Muslims". The Muhammadans who had come here from Islamic lands engaged in the performance of prayer and fasting but were forbidden to chant the call to prayer, or publicly recite the "word of God".

24. Edward Gait, op.cit. p.95
Thus Muslims were taken as prisoners and they settled down as inhabitants of this region. As they came from 'Gour', they were known as Gorias.\textsuperscript{29} Hem Chandra Barua, in his Assamese Dictionary "Hemakosh" define 'Goria' means 'A Jawan' or a Musalman in case of whom, the words "Unsuccessful", 'unskillful' 'Lazy' and 'Worthless' are appropriately used.\textsuperscript{39} Hence Garias are 'those Muslims' who were unsuccessful in the battles. According to some writers, the Ahom king brought some Muslim 'Jula' (weaver) from Gour of Bengal and they were also known as 'Gorias'. The Dictionary of Chandra Kanta also gives the similar meanings. Hari Dev Goswami wrote in his article 'Chand Kha' that there were sufficient residents of 'Gorias' (Muslims) during the days of king, Kamateswar Durlabh Narayan in 1330-1350 AD. According to him, the Muslims who came in 1205-AD were able to establish a village known as 'Goo Garia'.\textsuperscript{31} At present there are many villages of 'Garias' in Assam. Sankar Dev, a renowned writer of Assam, has used 'Gorias' to mean 'Jawan' (a Muslim foreigner) 'Turuk (a Turki) and 'Banggals' (a foreigner).\textsuperscript{32} So Garias is synonymous to foreigner.

During brief Mughal rule in Assam, some Muslim officers, thanedars, subedars were appointed here to look after the conquered regions.\textsuperscript{33} Most of them settled here permanently. Very few of them brought their wives and children. They took local wives, and were assimilated with local Assamese. Moreover, due to establishment of good relations between Muslims and Koch rulers, between Ahom and Muslim rulers many Muslims came from Gour of Bengal. They established many villages in lower Assam. Hajo, very near the modern Gauhati, was one of the largest Muslim colony in lower Assam.\textsuperscript{34} According to Mohini Kumar Saikia, "The

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Syed Mozidur Rahman as quoted in Agradoot, op.cit., November 10, 1985, pp. 7-8.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Hem Chandra Barua, op.cit. p. 282.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Hari dev Goswami,"Chand Kha" as quoted in Saptahik Nilachal, Gauhati, July 24, 1987, p.1; Rofiul Hussain Barua, op. cit. p. 50.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} Rofiul Hussain, op.cit., p. 52.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Rofiul Hussain Barua, op.cit., p. 28.
\end{itemize}
Muhammadan Colony settled earlier in Hajo region still survived and it increased the Muslim population there in a considerable extent. Moreover for their better administration Ahom rulers brought expert Muslim mechanics, technicians, artists, sculptures and even writers. Most of them were allowed to settle here permanently. They also brought Muslim AKHAR KATIA (Letter Maker), KHAR GHARIA (Maker of fire arms), KARCIPAR SANKARA (Embroiders) and PERCY PARHIA (Persian Reader). They used Muslim labours for construction of Buildings, making combs and fans of ivory. Muslim tailors were appointed for making dress for kings and nobles. Almost all of them settled here permanently and got mixed with local people. Descendants of all these Muslims, mentioned above are commonly known as 'Gorias'. It is narrated by old people that the Muslim prisoners who were worried for their wives, children and other family members, once became impatient and strongly demanded their release to go back to their own place. Meanwhile, established peace was continuing among the Ahoms and Muslims. So, if they (prisoners) are allowed to go back to their own place, it would certainly create problems for them (Ahom) afresh. Because after having received this news, the Mughals surely would take revenge on Ahoms. During peace treaty Ahoms did not disclose information regarding prisoners of war. Therefore, the Ahom king rightly thought that it would be better to allow the prisoners to take local wives and to be established here permanently. The girls who were expelled from the society for their sexual corruption were allowed along-with other ugly and aged girls to marry the Jawan (Muslim prisoners of war). Being socially deprived and an outcast group, they easily embraced Islam and married the Muslim Prisoners which were released. As they expelled from the Hindu society they were called in Assamese "Garia-Para" which means outcast of the society. Dr. Lila Gogoi describes the origin of 'Gorias'

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid. p. 348.
in different manner. According to Gogoi, "In ancient Assamese Society specially during the days of Ahom, both the boys and girls who engaged in illegal sexual enjoyment were expelled from the society and they were called 'GARIA PARA'. These families of 'Garia Para' were living in the villages, established by them at Dekhow-Mukkh. Azan Fakir, a great saint, went there and Propagated Islam among them. Being a expelled and deprived group, they easily embraced Islam. Few Muslims of this section of upper Assam were generally called 'Garias'.

**MARIA MUSLIM:**

'Marias' a sub-caste among the Garia Muslims. They are known as 'Marias' because they specialize in making brass and articles of brass. According to the Assemese Dictionary, 'Hema Kosh' 'MARIA' means - 'A class of Mohammedans who worked in brass'. A brazier engaged in the particular occupation of Brass since their settlement in Assam. The word 'Maria' has been derived from an Assamese word 'MAR' OR 'MARIUA' means 'to beat' or 'to strike with a stick'. According to Sir Edward Gait, "The Muhammedans who were taken prisoners (by Ahom kings) in this war were settled in different parts of the country, it is said that they were at first ordered to cut grass for the kings Elephants but were found quite unfit for this work. They were also completely ignorant of agriculture. They were then left to their own. Then they took to working in brass, an occupation which their descendants who are known as 'MARIAS' carry on to this day".

"The ordinary Muhammedans of Assam call themselves 'Garia' an indication of their claim to have come originally from Gauz, the ancient capital of Bengal. MARIA' may be corruption of this

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42. Ibid.
word. The term may have reference to the way in which they fashion their wares by beating; 'mariba' means "to beat" in Assamese." The term may have reference to the way in which they fashion their wares by beating; 'mariba' means "to beat" in Assamese.\(^{46}\) So, it is now apparent that a section of Muslims who took the particular profession of 'working brass' in Assam is called 'Moriais' though originally they came from Gour and was called 'Gorias'. This section of Muslims contributed much in making utensils of brass.\(^{47}\) They had their own language but gradually they assimilated with Assamese. Kaliabar of Nowgong district (Assam) was their first place of settlement.\(^{48}\) According to the recent report, there are 55 villages of 'Maria' Muslims in Assam.\(^{48}\) But they are economically very poor in comparison to other communities in Assam. The Govt. of Assam therefore, categorised them as more other backward community (M.O.B.C) in Assam and provides a very meagre facilities for their economical uplift.

**OTHER CONTEMPORARY MUSLIMS:**

During the entire invasion as well as ruling period of Muslims in Assam, some propagator, Saint, Peer, Aulia, Darbesh, and gazi came from Arab countries and entered India through the west and reached north eastern region specially in Assam.\(^{50}\) Their main ambition was to spread islam. Due to their Islamic calling thousands of lower caste Hindus and tribals in Assam were greatly influenced and atleast converted into Islam. Azan Fakir or Shah Miran (Baghdad), Shah Madar (Madina), Shah Jalal (Turkish) and Ghiasuddin Aulia (Arab) were some of the notable persons. The number of such persons who came from abroad were very few, but most of them married here and settled permanently. For example, Azan Fakir married a Assamese girl at Garhgaon, the ancient capital of Ahom, (upper Assam).\(^{51}\) Besides some

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\(^{48}\) Ibid.  
\(^{50}\) Sushil Sarma, *op.cit.*, pp. 336-354; Rofiul Hussain Barua, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-33.  
\(^{51}\) Ibid., Sushil Sarma, *op.cit.*, p. 352.
Muslims came from Delhi, Ajmer and other states of Indian Union. Most of them would not return. They settled here permanently and mixed up with local Assamese. From their origin they cannot be termed as 'Garias' because they did not come from 'Gour'. They settled scattered in different parts of Assam. It would very difficult to find out their origin on the basis of which distinction between Garias and other Muslims at that time, it is the general idea that the Muslims who speak Assamese language at their home or those Muslims for whom Assamese language becomes a mother tongue now, are called 'Garias'.

2.3.2 ASSAM ORIGIN MUSLIMS OR LOCAL CONVERTED MUSLIMS:

With the advent of Muslims in Assam, the process of Islamization had started. During the entire period of Pathan and Mughal's invasion of Assam many peer, ghazi, Aulia, Darbesh, Saints, preacher and propagator also entered in Assam. Their aims and purposes were to propagate Islam among the non-Muslims. The kings of Assam highly honoured them which helped to spread Islam among the masses. Some of the Ahom kings even sanctioned grants or allotted land property to build 'Khanqah' or Dargah to practice and preach Islam. Many Ahom kings including Rudra Singha appointed Muslim Imams (religions preacher) to lead the prayers and pray to Allah for the welfare of Assamese king as well as for state, Shah Nawaz was one of the appointed peers in the days of Sargadew Rudra Singha and he was highly honoured. His residence was very close to the capital (Garh-gaon) of Ahom kingdom. He had many disciples. All of them prayed to God for the well being of the king, when he went out of the capital (Kareng). Ali Mech was one of the kings of Mech Tribes also embraced Islam and helped Muhammed-bin-Bakhtiar Khilji, when he invaded Assam in 1206 AD. It was the great encouragement for Mech along with other tribes to convert into Islam. "Kings' religion was the Ryot's religion". Hence hundreds of mech tribes

52. Sushil Sarma, op.cit. p. 343; Rofiul Hussain Barua, op.cit., pp.8-33.
54. Ibid. pp. 352-353. Rofiul Hussain Barua, op.cit., p. 25
55. Dr. Surjya Kumar Bhuyan Asomia Musalman as quoted by Sushil Sarma,op.cit., pp. 343-344.
LOCATION OF MORI GAON
ASSAM, INDIA

ASSAM

INDIA

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

meghalaya

tripura

mizoram

manipur

arunachal pradesh

map-1
accepted Islam along with their king Alimech. Existing castes system and contemporary social conditions had permitted low caste Hindus and tribals to accept the religion, 'Islam'. Mr. Amalendu De pointed out in his book "Islam in modern India" that "Like Eastern Bengal the local converts of Assam also originated from amongst the lower castes and aboriginal tribes". Dr. Lila Gogoi also pointed out that there was a great saint, Azan Fakir (Shah Milan/Shah Miran) by name, who had spreaded Islam among the inhabitants of 'Gariapara' of Dekhow mukh. Responding to this Islamic calling, they had willingly accepted Islam. If an investigation is made to find out the origin of Assamese Musalmans, there would be no doubt that hundreds of Mussalan villagers, whose originality were Hindu. Kanaisuba, Gohainpara, Nagar bahi, Harim khuja, Marai and Ghopa of Darrang District (old); Degali, Bhogpur, Madhabpur of Nalbari District; Jalguti, Rowadhala, Fathari and Tarabari of Nowgorg district (old) are the few examples of Muslim villages, fore-fathers of these villagers were Hindus. Twenty years after the Baktiar Khilji's invasion, Hisamuddin Iwaz (also known as Ghiasuddin Baktiar) the then Governor of Bengal, led the second Muslim invasion of Kamrup in 1227 AD and could reach up to Sadia, the eastern Boarder of Assam, He was allowed to propagate Islam in this state. During his invasion, Sheikh Jalauddin Tabrizi, one of the great saints and preachers, who came here to propagate Islam. He had established an Ashram at Hajo and atlast died at Garigaon of Gauhati. Ikhtiar uddin Malik Yuzbeg (Tugril Khan) conquered Kamrup in 1257 AD and had established a capital at Gauhati, He declared himself a first Muslim king of the Kamrup and made coins in his name. He built up two Masjids (Mosques) one at Gauhati and another at Hajo. He introduced Friday prayer

57. Rofiul Hussain Baruah, Ibid., p. 10.
58. Ibid.
60. Dr. Lila Gogoi as quoted in Agradoot, op.cit.,November, 1985, p.7.
62. Ibid
63. Rofiul Hussain Baruah, op.cit. p.12
64. Ibid
65. Ibid., p.13
in Kamrup and ordered the Ryots to exercise Islamic practices. The existing situation also did compell the Kamrup ruler to allow the practices of Islam in his kingdom. Burhan uddin and Shah Jalal, the great Sufi saints spread Islam in Badarpur and sylhet during the period 1304-1385 AD. Shah Madar a great divine saint (born at Madina) came to India in 1398 AD when Taimur, the king of Samarkand invaded India. Later on he entered into Assam and spread Islam. Madari Fakir, a Muslim community of Kamrup had been derived from his name Shah Sharifin, a divine, who established a 'Khanqah' seventy miles away from Shillong. He instructed Islamic Principles among his followers. Ismail Ghazi (also known as Massalanda Ghazi) a famous saint as well as an army chief of Babrak Shah, who conquered the Kamata kingdom during 1460-1480 AD also preached Islam. After this incident, Chakradhaj, the king of Kamata himself accepted Islam. He was converted in presence of Ismail Ghazi and tried to learn Islamic principles from him (Ghazi). The king Jaimalla (Jadu Malla), the son of Ganesh of Bhaturia, (north Bengal) had accepted Islam and changed his name to Jalal uddin. Neladhaj, another king of Kamata had permitted to extend Islamic culture in his state. After conquering Kamata in 1502-AD, Alauddin Hussain Shah had extended his kingdom up to Hajo and ruled over more than 20 years continously. In the name of celebration of his glorious success, he built a mosque at Rangamati, district of Goalpara and a Madrasah at Maldah. During his days, the Islamic culture and traditions reached their climax not only in Koach-Kamata, but also in Ahom and Kachari kingdoms. One of the notable saints of the reign of Hussain Shah was Ghausuddin Aulia. He was the first Aulia, who settled permanently here for the propagation of Islam. He sacrificed the whole life for spreading of Islam in Assam. It is the general belief that he had a Durgah' at the top of Gaururachal Hill at Hajo, where

68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid. p. 16.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid. p.17.
74. Ibid. p. 19
he built a mosque too. After construction of this 'Masjid' Gaururachal became famous as 'Poua-Macca' where hundreds of Muslims and non-Muslims gathered every year for religious ceremonies of piety and piousness. Besides, some other peers like Shah Akbar, Shah Bogmar, Shah Shoran and Shah Kamal also came with Mir Jumla, when he invaded Assam.

It is to be noted in this connection that besides the conquerors, the sufis also played a vital part in the spread of Islam in Assam. However, these sufis were linked with the sufis of Bengal. Sufism, was first introduced in Northern India in the 11th century AD at the time when Muslim rulers established their rule in India. Through that channel it entered into Bengal and from Bengal sufism was extended to Assam. It should be noted that the sufis of the early period belonging to different orders performed various duties as saints, warriors and preachers. They accompanied the conquerors with their bands of warrior-saints. Same pattern was repeated in the early history of Islam in Assam. Ismail Ghazi and Shah Jalal the sufis of the Suhrawardi order - were saints warriors and preachers. Shah Jalal played a great part in the spread of Islam in eastern Bengal and a large part of Assam bordering Bengal. His shrine at Sylhet had been a place of pilgrimage to the Muslims of Bengal and Assam. Thus this influx of sufis into Assam was possible because of the existence of various sufis centres in Bengal.

From the evidence mentioned above it is clear that with the calling of Islam, the peaceful religion, many lower caste Hindus and tribals of Assam converted to Islam. "According to M. Jinnah 75% Indian Muslims are of Hindu origin. Infact, Nehru also says that 95% of Indian Muslims are converted Muslims. Some rules, regulations, customs and traditions which are not

75. Ibid.
76. A Sattar op.cit, pp. 8-33.
77. Amalendu De, op.cit. p. 195
78. Ibid.
- Orders of Sufis are many as (i) Suhrawardi (ii) Chisti (iii) Qalandar -
   (iv) Madari (v)Adami, (vi) Naqshbandi and (vii) Qadiri.
80. Ibid., Amalendu De op.cit. p.197
81. Ibid., p.197.
permitted by Islam, are still continuing among them". They (converted Muslims) are no doubt local Assamese and their mother tongue as well as spoken language is Assamese. But they are so scattered in all-over Assam that it is very difficult to treat them as a separate community differentiate them from the Garia Muslims, whose mother tongue is also being Assamese. Though they are not 'Garias' yet people of Assam wrongly call them to be 'Garias' based on Assamese language, spoken at home as 'mother tongue' since ancient times.

2.3.3. MIYA MUSLIMS OR MIGRATED MUSLIMS OF BENGAL:

Assam lost her independence, as already pointed out, in 1826 to the British. During the early period of the British rule, Assam was administered under the government of Bengal by commissioner till 1874. The British Government was much more interested in increasing government income through enhanced revenues and taxes. Moreover, they wanted to produce more raw materials for the Industries of England. There were some big jute industries in Dandi and Manchester, for which raw jute from Assam was most essential. At that time Assam was sparsely populated. Therefore, the local Assamese labourers were not sufficient for the cultivation of jute, tea, rubber and other rabi crops. The British government was then compelled to bring labourers from other states specially for the cultivation of tea and jute. The labourers for tea gardens were brought from Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. They were non-Muslims. For the cultivation of jute and rabi crops they brought expert Muslim cultivators from Bengal, specially from East Bengal under the scheme of 'GROW MORE FOOD'. They (East Bengal Muslim Cultivators) were invited by the British Government to come to Assam and to settle here permanently. The local Assamese welcomed

85. Iscot Marbaniang, op.cit., p. 15.
them and embraced them calling them Miyan. 'Miya' means gentleman or 'middleman'. When they entered Assam, it was meaningful. Now the term has fallen into disrepute and is used an insulting way. Mostly they are treated as lower class citizens. Though Miyan Muslims made greater contribution to the recognition of Assamese as the state language and the medium of instruction as well as in the field of cultivation, they have been yet treated as "a step mother's son" in every respect. They were politically harassed in 1950 and 1965 respectively. In the name of foreigners more than six lakhs Indian Muslims were forcibly and illegally deported from 1963 to 1966. The so-called foreigners movement of Assam launched by Assamese chauvinists from 1980 onwards was directly or indirectly against these Miyah Muslims. More than 10,000 thousand Muslims were brutally killed in 1983, Muslims of Bengali origin in this part of Assam are commonly known as 'Miya' (Miyan). From 1951 they declared themselves as Assamese. They used Assamese language every where except in their homes. Like the other Bodo, Kachari, Karbi and Nepali they have also used their own mother tongue at home. Two third of the total Muslim population of Assam are of Bengali origin and they used their own language 'Bengali' at home and Assamese in public. Due to the gradual assimilation into Assamese they could not speak Bengali well. Those Bengali Muslims living in the towns and cities due to their assimilation with the Assamese are so mixed together that, it is now difficult to differentiate between Bengali and Assamese. Their mother tongue is also becoming Assamese and they are commonly treated as 'garias'. Thus the number of garias (Assamese speaking) is increasing day by day in Assam. The distinction between 'Garias' and 'Miyas' is only the 'language' and the era in which they arrived in Assam. Although the origin of both is the same place, i.e. Gour of Bengal. The Muslims who came earlier from 'Gour' (Bengal) and completely merged into Assamese and also Assamese became their mother tongue are categorised as "Gorias". On the other hand, the Muslims who came later from Bengal and yet have

to fully merge with Assamese and whose mother tongue has not yet become Assamese, are to be categorised as "Miyas".

So, on the basis of language spoken at home the total Muslims of Assam can be divided into two groups:

1) Assamese Muslims, and
2) Bengali Muslims

Despite a common religion the Muslims of both sections mentioned above are two different sects in Assam. The Assamese Muslims are linked with Assamiya speaking people, whereas the Bengali Muslims seem to be closely related to the Bengali speaking people of Eastern region of India. The Assamese Muslims, descendents of the prisoners and officials under the Muslim regime or the local converts of the earliest period, are relatively better off and educationally advanced. 87

As Assamese Muslims they take part to a certain limit in the common development of Assam along with their Hindu counterparts. At the same time they have closed links with all sects of Muslims in Assam as a distinct and separate community. So for various socio-political issues the Assamese and the Bengali Muslims follow identical lines. Still they have differences.

The Bengali Muslims are quite conscious of their numerical strength as well as their identity as a separate linguistic group. Moreover, Bengali Muslim are well aware of their contributions to the economic growth of the state. The percentage of Bengali Muslims is much higher in comparison to the Assamese Muslims. That is why, Muslim leaders in Assam draw their strength, power and position through Mian Muslims.

2.4. POLITICAL POSITION OF MUSLIMS IN ASSAM DURING POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD: (1948-1990)

2.4.1 The Riot of 1950:

The communal bitterness had already started between Hindus

and Muslims in India as well as in Assam with the proposals of partition of the country. Whatever may have been the causes behind the partition, the intellectuals of Assam specially from the Ministry of Gopinath Bardoloi, started to develop a communal hatred among the Hindu masses to rise against the numerical strength of Muslims in Assam. Hindu militants raised the question that the predominant position of Hindus in the state be lost by large number of Muslims. So the internal policy of the Assamese intellectuals was to minimize the number of Muslims in the state. This way political as well as social position of Hindus may remain safe for the future. The Assamese intellectuals, no doubt were influenced by biased and derogatory writings of C.S. Mullan and S.P. Desai of Pre-partition period. C.S. Mullan (I.C.S.) the Census Commissioner of 1931 wrote:

"Probably the most important event in the Province during the last 25 years an event moreover which seems likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than did the Burmese invaders of 1821, the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilization has been the invasion of a vast horde of land-hungry Bengali imaginants mostly Muslims from the districts of Eastern Bengal and particularly from Mymensingh. The invasion began sometime before 1911 and census report of that year is the first report which makes mention of the advancing horde. But as we know, the Bengali immigrants censused for the first time on the "Char" (Riverine) lands of Goalpara in 1911 were merely the advance guards or rather the scouts of a large army following closely at their heels. By 1921 the First Army Corps had passed into Assam and Practically conquered the district of Goalpara".

"It is said but by no means improbable that in another 30 years Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam in which the Assamese will find himself at home".

88. Amalendu De, op.cit., p. 201.
89. The Secretary, The Assam Cultural Association: ASSAM The Crisis of Identity, op.cit., p.4.
90. Ibid.
In 1931 Census report projects a Poignant picture of the influx in almost military terms:

"The Second Army Crops which followed in the years 1921-31 has consolidated their position in that (Goalpara) district and has also completed the conquest of Nowgong. The Barpeta Sub-Division of Kamrup has also fallen to their attack and Darrang is being invaded. Sibsagar has so far escaped completely but the few thousand Mymensinghias in North-Lakhimpur constitute an outpost which may, during the next decades prove to be a valuable base of major operations".  

S.P. Desai (I.C.S) Special Officer Incharge for Examining Government Reserves, 1938 also wrote in a defensive manner. He expressed his apprehensions way back in 1938 as under:

"I found that the immigrants absolutely ignored the local officers (from Sub-divisional Officer downwards) so much so that they did not even answer questions put to them. The Assamese pamuas (farmers) gave dohai (invocation) in the name of the king, Emperor. To this some of the thoughtless among the immigrants are paid to have replied that the immigrants themselves are the kings. Verily, the cup of humiliation for the Assamese is full. They felt that the Law is meant for them only and not for the immigrants. That the Government which is their custodian and trustee of their interests has failed them. All sections of the local population are greatly perturbed and their talk exhibits deep rooted bitterness.

They (immigrants) come in numbers raise sheds and later begin in cultivate. The few graziers in the neighbourhood are incapable of doing anything apart from protesting and appealing to local officers. The only alternative for the grazier is to shift himself bag and baggage. But where he is to go?"  

R.B. Vaghaiwalla (I.C.S) the Census Commissioner of 1951 also humiliated Muslims which directly or indirectly inspired Assamese Hindus to grow hatred against the immigrants. Even today, many

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91. Ibid.
92. Ibid. p. 5.
Assamese Chauvinists among different groups like — All Assam students Union (AASU), All Assam Ganasangram Parishad (A.G.P) and Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuva Satra Parishad (AJYSP) do not hesitate to use these humiliating writings as instruments to incite and excite emotions of the Hindu masses. This often leads to agitations against the Muslims. During post-Independence period, this agitation has been used in various forms, in different situations in the name of detection of foreigners. The net result was, lakhs of Indian Muslims were harassed in and around the state of Assam.93

The Assamese intellectuals specially the congress party leaders, though saved Assam from Cabinet Mission's demarcation of 'Pakistani districts', yet they willingly left Sylhet, a Muslim majority area for the East Pakistan. This helped to minimise the numerical strength of Muslims in Assam.94 The process of reduction in the number of Muslims from Assam directly or indirectly is continuing till today in different forms.

"Truely, in Assam, no community ethnic, religious or linguistic — is really in an absolute majority. But an aggressive and chauvinist section of the leadership of one dominant minority group in Assam has been trying desperately to capture and hold the state power by itself for its own sectarian interests by raising mischievous slogans from time to time and misleading the people to fratricidal and useless quarrels. It is due to their misdirected jealousy that there has been communal outbursts in Assam against the Muslims in 1950 and the Bengalis in 1960..."95

The communal disturbances, before and after the partition (1947) had undoubtedly created tensions among the Muslims. In Assam the riot of 1950 was a dreadful blow for the security of Muslims. Hundreds of Muslims were killed and their houses burnt. Both movable and immovable properties were damaged. The

94. Amalendu De: op.cit., p. 204.
95. Syed Shehabuddin, Muslim India, Vol. IV, No.38, February 1986, op.cit., p. 55
main ambition of the miscreants was to drive out the Bengali Muslims from Assam state. Compelled by the constant fear for their lives and property and further bloodshed, Muslims took refuge in East Pakistan. The number of Muslims migrated to East Pakistan was several lakhs. 96 According to some it was eight lakhs. In the same way thousands of Hindus in minority in East Pakistan also started to migrate to India under similar conditions.

2.4.2. Nehru Liyaqat Agreement:

In order to reduce communal tension and to maintain peace between both the communities the Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Md. Liyaqat Ali Khan had signed an agreement on 8th April, 1950. 97 This agreement was known as 'Nehru Liyaqat' agreement. According to this agreement, the people who left their own country earlier with valuable property, due to the communal violence, may return into their own home on or before 31st December 1950. If they return (from Pakistan to India and from India to Pakistan) within the appointed time, their citizenships along with the properties would be returned. 98 The Indian Muslims who took shelter in East Pakistan started to come back to their own homes again.

2.4.3. The Census of 1951:

The time for their return was limited and the last date fixed was December 31, 1950. But the tense situation was still continuing. The process of return was very slow, because of the doubt of security and recurrence of riots. Meanwhile, the process of census of 1951 had already been started. This was the first census after Independence. Hence its importance was great. According to Pakistan Census of 1951, the total migration

98. Ibid.
99. IMAM ZAFAR: Muslims in India, New Delhi, Orient Longman Ltd. 1975, p. 76.
from the territories of the Indian Union to Pakistan was 72,26,600. And specially from East Zone (Assam, West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar) 7,01,300 Indian Muslims migrated to different states of Pakistan during the period 1947-48. (TABLE NO.2.3).

TABLE NO. 2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From to</th>
<th>East Zone (Assam, W. Bengal, Orissa, &amp; Bihar)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Bengal</td>
<td>6707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachi</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWFP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7013</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Pakistan, 1951, vol. 1 (Govt. of Pakistan, Karachi).

* Column 1: indicates the total population which migrated from the specific region of Indian territory to different parts of Pakistan including the Erstwhile East Pakistan.

+ Column 2: indicates the percentage of total migration from a particular region of India to different parts of Pakistan.

! Column 3: indicates the percentage of migrated Muslims from each region of India to a particular region of Pakistan.

100. Ibid. pp. 76-77
TABLE NO. 2.4.

Total Muslim population of Assam with decade variation and percentages of decade variation. (1901-1971).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Muslim Population</th>
<th>Decade Variation</th>
<th>Percentage of Decade variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>5,03,670</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>6,34,101</td>
<td>+1,30,431</td>
<td>+25.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>8,80,426</td>
<td>2,46,325</td>
<td>38.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>12,79,388</td>
<td>3,98,962</td>
<td>45.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>16,96,978</td>
<td>4,17,590</td>
<td>32.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>19,95,936</td>
<td>2,98,958</td>
<td>17.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>27,42,287</td>
<td>7,69,573</td>
<td>38.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>35,92,124</td>
<td>8,26,015</td>
<td>29.82**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Lakhs of Indian Muslims took shelter in East Pakistan due to communal riot of 1950. Most of them did not return to their own places of Assam before the Census of 1951. So, lakhs of Indian Muslims had been dropped from the Census Report (1951) which was admitted by the Commissioner himself. The number of Muslims, therefore was smaller in 1951 than their number in other decades.

** Lakhs of Indian Muslims were forcibly deported from Assam to East Pakistan during the period 1962-68, under the scheme "Prevention of Infiltrations from Pakistan (P.I.P)" of the Indian Govt. Therefore, the number of Muslims was decreased during the said period. The census Report of 1971 was one of the evidences.
At the time when thousands of Indian Muslims decided to settle permanently in Pakistan, then the Muslims of Assam who took shelter in East Pakistan due to communal riot could not immediately decide to come back to their own places in India. Meanwhile the census of 1951, in India was completed. The last date of return also expired. Therefore, Muslims who returned late to their residents in Assam remained excluded from the Census report of 1951.\textsuperscript{101} (Table No.2.4).

As already pointed out earlier, the road communications in Assam of that time were not good. Except narrow footpaths, there was no roads in 'Char' (riverine) areas of Assam. Census Enumerators did not go to enumerate in the 'Char' or interior places where good number of Muslims were residing. Accordingly the interior 'Char' areas remained excluded from the enumeration. Thus lakhs of Muslims were not included in the Indian census Report of 1951 (Table No.2.4). In 1961, the Census Commissioner admitted the fact regarding this exclusion:

"Some Muslims of Goalpara and Kamrup district who might not have been able to come back to their homes in Assam during the 1951 census".\textsuperscript{102} Therefore, those Muslims were excluded from this census of 1951. Again he pointed out that:

"Some Muslims living in the Chars or Sandbanks of the river Brahmaputra might also have been left out of the count of the 1951 census".\textsuperscript{103}

It was the responsibility of the Indian government to count how many Muslims migrated to East Pakistan to seek shelter? Out of the number who migrated how many returned back to Assam? Why the number of Muslims not included in the 1951 census is not known neither there is any information regarding the place or the area from where they have been left out. Nor, can we ascertain the number of Muslims from Char areas left out from the 1951 census. These were some of the important questions.

\textsuperscript{102} Census Report, 1961, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN ASSAM 1971

HINDUS 72.51

CHRISTIANS 2.61

MUSLIM 24.56

FIG. 2
Why did not the Government of India take initiative in this regard is not known. However, there is a statement from the government that the Muslims who took shelter in East Pakistan were returned to Assam, according to the Nehru Liyaqat agreement. It is pointed out from non-government sources that out of eight lakh Muslims more than three lakhs did not come back after the census of 1951 and therefore, their number could not be included in the figures of report. Knowing full well that the 1951 census figures were defective as they did not include lakhs of Muslims, the government of India issued National Reistration Card (NRC) prepared on the basis of incorrect figures of the Census Report of 1951. The question "Why it was done so, has been raised again and again by the Muslims of Assam. Lakhs of Muslims who had been left out of the census report of 1951, were also dropped from the National REGistration Card (N.R.C.) of 1951. Thus lakhs of Muslims were deprived of their citizenship. This lead to uncertainty, dissatisfaction and resentment among the Muslims of Assam.

Later on, they were treated as foreigners and lakhs of Assamese Muslims (Bengali origin) entitled for Indian citizenship were harassed by branding them as foreigners.

2.4.4. Acceptance of Assamese Language by Bengali Muslims

In 1956, reconstruction of states of the Indian Union on the basis of majority's language was a burning question that faced by intellectuals of Assam.

The Assamese Community is a composite community of different castes and its culture is also a composite culture. In the true sense, none of the communities in Assam could claim its absolute majority. However, a dominant class claimed itself as language majority by including tribals, tea-garden

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105. Ibid.
labourers and particularly Muslims to have Assamese as their language. Tea garden workers are neither entirely Bengali nor entirely Assamese in origin. They came from many parts of India, form a group of their own. Their language is a mixture of Bengali and Assamese. If the tea garden workers and tribals are excluded, Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims will attain a majority on the basis of Bengali language in Assam. The Bengali Hindu Intellectuals, therefore, could not hesitate to demand absolute majority in Assam on the basis of the language, because both the Hindu Bengalis and the Muslim Bengalis migrated from the same land and the same climate. Bengali Hindus always thought, that, the Bengali Muslims would support them politically. But practically, the Bengali Muslims instead of supporting Bengali Hindus, supported Assamese Hindus and claimed themselves to be Assamese. In fact, it was true that the Bengali Muslims were directly influenced by Assamese Hindu intellectuals. Their influence was so strong that Bengali Muslims willingly accepted to be registered as Assamese in the census of 1951. Thus, Assamese could claim their absolute majority.

Without the support of Bengali Muslims declaring themselves as Assamese, the local Assamese never could have attained absolute majority in Assam.110

In the same way, without registration of Bengali Muslims as Assamese in the census of 1951, it was impossible for the local Assamese to reconstitute the state of Assam in 1956, on the basis of Assamese language. It would be worthwhile to mention the statements of Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Ex-President of the Assam Sahitya Sabha. According to him, "The same truth applies to the Muslim immigrants who have occupied citizenship on the basis of a linguistic state. It must be said to the credit of the immigrant Muslims that they have been always in the forefront of the struggle of the state to make 'Assamese' the state language and medium of higher education."111

The main reasons for acceptance of Assamese language by Bengali Muslims as their mother tongue in 1951 are as follows:

1. In order to reconstitute Assam as Assamese's state on the basis of Majority's language, the Assamese intellectuals tried to influence Bengali Muslims and their leaders, to accept Assamese language as their mother tongue and the medium of instruction. They argued that the Bengali Muslims as permanent settler of Assam, should cooperate and integrate with the local Assamese, as the earlier Muslims i.e. Goria and Maria had already been integrated with local Assamese. Thus, the Assamese Muslims who had already integrated invited Bengali Muslims to become Assamese. And thereby to strengthen the Assamese community. The Assamese intellectuals gave all kinds of verbal assurances to accept Bengali Muslims as part and parcel of the Assamese community. To allow the rights and privilege to Bengali Muslims as they (Assamese) themselves enjoyed. They were nick-named as 'Na-Asomia' (New Assamese).

2. The Bengali Muslims on the other hand thought that, they are now permanent settlers of Assam and it would be better to cooperate with the majority community. In order to draw the sympathetic attention, the acceptance of Assamese language would be a correct gesture. Moreover, this helped to reduce the communal bitterness, which already existed between the two communities.

3. The consequences of the communal riot of 1950, led to develop a phobia among the Bengali Muslims that if they would not accept Assamese language, they would be driven out from Assam, tortured or killed, so a kind of concealed threat was behind the acceptance of Assamese language.

4. During the communal riot of 1950, the Bengali Hindus conspired with West Bengali Hindus and became against these Bengali Muslims. The local Assamese Hindus also joined with them and

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started to kill and drive Muslims away from Assam. Thus, Bengali Muslims of lower Assam suffered badly at the hands of both the Bengali Hindus and Assamese Hindus. So, Bengali Muslims could not forget these atrocities. As far as religions tolerance is concerned Bengali Hindus are more orthodox and discriminating as compared to Assamese Hindus. Though, both Bengali Hindu and Bengali Muslim Community being the product of the same land and same climate, the Bengali Muslims liked to cooperate with Assamese Hindus rather than the Bengali Hindus. The ultimate result was the acceptance of Assamese language by Bengali Muslims.

Inspite of the strong support of Bengali Muslims to Assamese language the Bengali Hindu intellectuals could not give up the idea of establishment of Bengali language in Assam. They invited Nawabs and Muslim learned men from Dacca to the various meetings held in Assam to influence Bengali Muslims to come back to their origin and to take part in the establishment of Bengali language in Assam. The matured Bengali Hindu intellectuals had foreseen that if Bengali Muslims would support the establishment of Bengali language in Assam, they would easily achieve majority, which might help in their establishment of Bengali language permanently. All these efforts of Bengali Hindus failed in the Brahmaputra Valley, because Bengali Muslims did not support it. Bengali Muslims raised their voice in support of Assamese Hindus saying that "they are now purely Assamese Muslims and all the institutions established in their areas are having Assamese medium."

The repeated efforts on the part of Bengali Hindus for the establishment of Bengali language in Assam made local Assamese Hindus aware of the establishment of a different language

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in their state. Thus, they became conscious to preserve and propagate Assamese language and make it a medium of instruction at the schools as well as language of the state.\textsuperscript{118} In Bengali Hindu areas of Assam, School having Bengali language as Medium of instruction were already existing. Thus, Bengali Hindus raised their voices to keep Bengali as the medium of instruction in their schools in the state of Assam.\textsuperscript{119}

So the language controversy gave rise to 'language movement'. Agitations started in favour of Assamese language by All Assam Students Union in 1960. Their demand was establishment of Assamese as the state language. In this movement the Bengali Muslims were with the Assamese Hindus. They made great sacrifice for this language. At least Eleven Muslims died by police firing at Barak Valley, specially in Hailakandi for the establishment of Assamese language.\textsuperscript{120}

In 1971, all the Muslims including Bengali Muslims stood unitedly with Assamese Hindus to establish Assamese language as the medium of instruction in all educational institutions of Assam. Muslims, in this movement had equal share and sacrificed lives for the 'Assamese Medium'. Muzammel Hoque, a student of Kharupatia died at the hands of Bengali Hindu gangs during this movement.\textsuperscript{121}

All these evidences have proved that Muslims specially immigrant Muslims are very loyal to local Assamese Hindus. They have contributed much in agriculture and Assamese language.

Now, if the Assamese Hindus, forget all the contributions of immigrant Muslims and treat them as foreigners, it is breach of faith.

\textsuperscript{120} Deban Dutta as quoted in 'Agradoot' edited by Kanakshen Deka, Gauhati, June 12, 1983, pp. 5-8.
It is a very rare for a bigger community (Muslim), to give up their mother tongue (Bengali) having international honour and prestige.

2.4.5 Prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan (PIP) Scheme of the Government of India

Nobody can foretell the events to follow. With the passing of time Muslims of Assam specially Bengali Muslims thought themselves to be like local Assamese and also believed that no threat would come from Assamese Hindus to their peaceful living. It is already pointed out earlier that as a part and parcel of the Assamese community, Muslims did not hesitate to sacrifice lives even for the Assamese language in 1960. Events turned against Bengali Muslims after 1960. Some Assamese Chauvinists even forgot the contributions of Bengali Muslims and treated them as Pakistani foreigners. They forced the government to detect the so called Pakistan's which were actually Bengali Muslims living in Assam. No Indian National Hindu or Muslim can support settlement of foreigners in India. Foreigners should be driven out from the state/country. In 1962 due to heavy political pressure of the so called patriotists the then ruling congress government of Assam, atlast was compelled to establish, a tribunal to detect Pakistani nationals under the scheme of "Prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan" (P.I.P) of the Indian government.122 There were many Muslim ministers and M.L.As (Members of Legislative Assembly) in the then Congress government, but they did not say anything about the legal deportation.123 The Government handed over the power to the police to deport the so called Pakistani from Assam.124 In the name of detection of Pakistani, the police started to misuse their powers everywhere in the market, in the towns, in the lanes and even at foot paths. They (police) suddenly, entered Muslim

123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
villages at midnight and seized hundreds of Muslims. This was done without a warrant, notice or warning. Even the people who had citizenship papers were not spared. Such evidences were simply ignored the citizenship. Police did not even care to ask whether a person is Indian? A poor illiterate muslim was invariably branded as a Pakistani by the police. The police was biased so much that for them, Muslim meant Pakistani. So he had to be reported and later deported. Thus P.I.P. scheme became a Tyranny for Indian Muslims. During the entire period of 1962-68 neither they could live peacefully nor could sleep comfortably. Anxiety, tension and frustration gripped the Muslims so much that they could not come forward boldly to protest against this tyranny. Thus, police created a great terror among the Muslims. The Muslims who had already been dropped from the census Report as well as National Registration Card, (N.R.C.) 1951 of the government, were to be detected first as Pakistani. After that, the police started to harass even the Muslims having N.R.C. Thus, Indian Muslims of permanent residents of Assam were also harassed and finally deported to Pakistan. According to non Government Sources almost six lakhs Indian Muslims were forcibly deported from Assam to East Pakistan during the period 1961-66. Anjan Sarmah in his book 'Abahelita Asom' has shown the number of Muslims deported from Assam as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>DEPORTED MUSLIMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) 1964</td>
<td>= 69,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) 1965</td>
<td>= 44,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) 1966</td>
<td>= 14,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>= 1,28,107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

125. Ibid
126. Ibid
127. Ibid
128. Ibid
129. Ibid
According to the government Report more than two lakhs Muslims were deported as Pakistanis during 1961-66. 132 During the entire period of 1951-69, 3,40,000 Muslims were deported as Pakistanis. 133 Whatever, may be the exact number, it was true that the lakhs of Muslims were forcefully deported from Assam to East Pakistan without any sympathetic consideration. From the Census Report of 1971, it was clear that the number of Muslims was greatly reduced during this period (Table No.2.4).

At last, in order to stop the police tyranny on Muslims, several Muslim organisations including Jamiat-ul-Ulema-E-Hind (Assam) had submitted memorandum to the government of Assam. 134 Out of 72 members of the Assam Legislative Assembly 33 Congress M.L.As including the famous leaders, Maimul Haque Chaudhury, Deva Kant Baruah and Sarat Chandra Singh had submitted an urgent 'Memorandum' to the Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam to stop this harassment of Muslims under the implied P.I.P. scheme and to dismiss the Tribunals immediately. 135 The government of Assam, at last admitted the harassment by the police and wrote a letter (No.PLB.70/66/173, dated Shillong, the 11th July 1969) to the President, Jamiat-ul Ulema-E-Hind, Haibargao, Nowgong (Assam). The text of the letter says that "... After careful consideration of the various allegations put forth by the Jamiat, it has since been decided by the government to adopt a revised procedure in the matter of deportation of Pakistani infiltrants from Assam according to which the services of the tribunals would be dispensed with and there would be no fresh reference to the tribunals. Cases of such infiltrants would henceforth be dealt with under the foreigners Act".

"In order to minimise the possibility of alleged harassment resulting from enumerating persons and checking to ascertain who were Pakistanis and also avoid inconvenience to travellers

by checks at Railway Stations, it was further decided to take utmost care not to harass the general public and as far as possible, such investigations should be done under the auspices of responsible officers. Further, there will be no wholesale checking of villages and houses hence forward...". After completing the checking the government of Assam declared that, there were no more Pakistani foreigners residing in Assam. Even the last Pakistani already been deported from Assam. Therefore, there would be no further need of P.I.P. scheme and its tribunals. In 1969 all the tribunals were abolished and thus, the P.I.P. scheme was ended. 

**2.4.6. The Circular for the Protection of Pakistani Hindus:**

Legally, a Pakistani foreign national who may be a Hindu or a Muslim must be deported. But it is a matter of regret that during the deportation of Pakistani, the democratic Indian government had issued a circular dated June 16, 1965 to the State governments of Bengal, Assam and Tripura to treat migrated Hindus specially from East Pakistan as Refugees and lastly, to provide them 'Indian Citizenship'. Bengali Muslims on the other hand should be treated as infiltrators (foreigners) and to be deported. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, one of the member of Nehru Ministry, said openly that, "I shall give each East Bengal Hindu a house in India." The government of India allowed to settle 90,000 Bengalis so-called Hindu Refugees in Assam upto March 1, 1958. Another 12,000 (Bengali Hindus) were allowed to settle in Assam between 1.1.1964 to 1.4.1965. From these evidences it is clear that the Government of India had a dual policy treating Muslims as 'infiltrators' and Hindus as 'refugees'. It

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140. Ibid.
141. Anjan Sarmah, op.cit., p.27.
was evidently discriminating against Muslims. The Secret direction of the government inspired police to take stringent and drastic measure on Muslims even though they were Indians.

2.4.7. **Freedom Movement (1971) of Bangladesh and its Effect on Migration:**

Freedom movement of Bangladesh had started early in 1971, with the full support of the Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her government. Bangladesh was declared as an independent state in March 25, 1971. During the 1971 war, some persons both Hindus and Muslims took shelter in the neighbouring states of Tripura, Assam and West Bengal, due to oppression of Pakistani Military. In a statement, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said in the Parliament on May 27, 1971 that, "About thirty five lakhs have come into India from Bangladesh during the last eight weeks. They belong to every religious community ... They are not refugees. They are victims of war". These people, were kept in camps under keen vigilance of Indian government. According to the government report, nine lakhs Bengali Hindus and only twenty seven thousand Muslims entered in Assam during 1961-1971. After forming secular government in Bangladesh under Mojibur Rahman's Prime Ministership most of them were send back to Bangladesh. There was a commitment of the Indian government to settle Pakistani Hindu refugees and to detect Muslims as infiltrators. As advocated by Hindus that 'Hindustan for Hindus', so the Hindus were allowed to settle in India. All Assam Minority students Union (A.M.S.U.) in their report pointed out that according to the government figures more than one lakh and nine thousand persons were send back from Assam to Bangladesh. Most of them were Muslims. All Assam students Union (AASU) badly


144. Anjan Sarmah, op.cit., p. 31.


146. Ibid

condemned this discriminatory policy of the Indian government. According to AASU. "Secularism, A mere slogan only". According to AASU, "A secular government is willing to identify the foreigners on the basis of religion. AASU can never accept such a condition". Though these statements of AASU were concerned with the foreigners movement of 1980, but the truth is that they have been true from the time of independence in 1947. The Indian government has always been taking discriminatory steps against Muslims specially in case of foreigner's detection. However, Muslims in Assam remained peaceful during the period 1969-1979. During this period, Bengali Muslims who suffered for a long time started to pay attention towards their education and economic development. They were becoming socio-politically aware too. The number of Muslim members of the Legislative Assembly of Assam were increasing term after term. The Bengali Muslims due to their greater numerical strength, thus, tried to keep a strong hold in Assam politics. This was one of the causes of prejudice against Muslims. Assamese chauvinists launched a movement (agitation) against the numerical strength of Muslims. They wanted that Muslims should be branded as foreigners and driven out Assam so that their numerical strength may be reduced to negligible.

2.4.8. Six year Movement Against So-called Foreigners of Assam (1980-85):

After ten years of peaceful living, the fate and fortune of Bengali Muslims of Assam was again turned. The entire community was dragged into the controversy of so-called foreigners. Again agitations started to deport them. The bellicose patrio-

149. Ibid.
tists group of Assamese Hindus launched this agitation in the last part of the year 1979. The agitation grew in strength and force during 1980-83. The misleading and emotionally misguided people advocated in different meetings that there are lakhs of Bangladeshi foreigners, who would participate in the coming election of 1983. If they are allowed to be participated in the election, they (specially Bengali Muslims) legally, would become the citizens of India. Once again the identity and culture of Assamese may be affected due to the increased number of Bengali Muslims.\(^{151}\) This created tension among the Bengali Muslims, because they feared that in the name of so-called foreigners lakhs of Indian Muslims would be harassed and some of them would forcibly be driven out from Assam. Because, Bengali Muslims already had such kind of bitter experiences. In the legal sense Muslims had nothing to say about the detection and deportation of foreigners. But gradually the agitation was directed against the Muslims.\(^{152}\) Some agitators would not fail to say that all the Bengali Muslims are Bangladeshis. Bengali Muslim dominated areas were also indicated as Bangladeshi area.\(^{153}\) Almost all the supporters of agitation shouted in their meetings that there were more than forty lakhs Bangladeshi foreigners in Assam.\(^{154}\) As there was no census in 1981 in Assam so according to the Census Report of 1971, the total number of Muslims (including local Muslims) was about 36 lakhs (Table No.2.4-2.6) only. Apparently it sees as it was claimed by the agitators that the entire Muslim community (including local Muslim) is of foreigners. The All Assam Students Union (ASSU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) threatened the government that if the government failed to delete the names of foreigners from the voters lists of revised electoral roll,

\(^{151}\) The Secretary, The Assam Cultural Association op.cit., p.1.
\(^{153}\) Nazrul Hoque, Ibid; Dr. Nagen Saikia: AGNIGARBHA ASOM, DIBRUGARH BANI MANDI, 1983, PP. 76-80.
### TABLE NO. 2.5.

District Wise total Muslim population of Assam and its percentage (Census 1961 & 1971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Districts</th>
<th>Total Muslim population 1961</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Muslim Population 1971</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>6,68,748</td>
<td>43.32</td>
<td>9,40,090</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>6,05,524</td>
<td>29.36</td>
<td>8,25,658</td>
<td>28.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibrugarh)</td>
<td>88,345</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>97,329</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhimpur)</td>
<td>87,911</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>96,801</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>4,99,320</td>
<td>41.24</td>
<td>6,62,181</td>
<td>29.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibsagar</td>
<td>5,39,457</td>
<td>39.20</td>
<td>6,83,387</td>
<td>39.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>27,38,787</td>
<td>25.94</td>
<td>35,86,840</td>
<td>25.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plains Total</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karbi-Aung-Long</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,926</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.C. Hills</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>658</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hills Total</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,584</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam Total (including Hills)</td>
<td>27,42,287</td>
<td>25.30</td>
<td>35,92,124</td>
<td>24.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE NO. 2.6.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>80,28,856</td>
<td>1,08,37,329</td>
<td>1,46,25,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>57,81,974(72%)</td>
<td>77,30,698(71%)</td>
<td>1,06,04,618 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>19,81,859 (24%)</td>
<td>27,42,287 (25%)</td>
<td>35,92,124 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2,65,023(4%)</td>
<td>3,64,344(4%)</td>
<td>4,28,410(8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid.
they (the so-called majority community) would boycott the coming election of 1983. In fact it was remarkable that almost the entire Muslim community of Assam was the supporter of Congress party since the 35 years of INdependence. Hence, one of the Primary mottos of agitators was to pressure the Chief Election Commissioner to drop names of Lakhs of Muslims, specially in the name of foreigners from the voters lists, so that, they would get the support of their so called majority community and may be voted to power, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minisiter of India had experienced about the agiation that one of its aim directly was to wrest the power from congress, the present ruling party. The masses were made emotionally excited in the name of foreigners, so that, they may get support to come to power in the state. Mr. Kuldip Nayer the renouned journal-
list and reporter had said, "If the Assam situation is to be
analysed without emotion, it seems apparent that the real issue
is to get political power, not foreigners. Foreigners who came
to Assam between 1961-71 period figure at nine lakhs, out of
which a meagre 28,000 are Muslims. Both the Centre and the
Assamese realize that it will not be possible to push back
Hindus to Bangladesh. Whatever, the agreed base year of Assam
agitation rests today without any prospect of immediate break-
through".\footnote{155} ONE may rightly say that, after sacrificing thou-
sands of lives for the independence of Soverian Bangladesh why
should Bangladeshi Muslims come to Assam?\footnote{156} Are the Muslims
economically sound and living peacefully in Assam? ARE there
many job opportunities for the Muslims provided by the government
of Assam? Are there more wastelands for Muslims to settle into?
Are Muslims getting more loan facilities from the government?
Are Muslim students getting scholarships on the grounds of edu-
cational backwardness? Perhaps no one can answer in affairmative.
In fact, there is no substance in saying that lakhs of Bangla-
deshi Muslims are coming Assam after, 1971. There is no truth

\footnote{155} Mr. Kuldip Nayer, as quoted in Sunday. Delhi, December 9,13,
\footnote{156} Proposals of Al- Jamiat (Assam) as quoted in Saptahik Muja-
in it, except an emotional appeal. Hussain Mohammad Ershad, the then President of Bangladesh had made a statement that, not a single Bangladeshi illegally entered in Assam. There is no sufficient ground to motivate illegal migration in to Assam, because the economic condition of Assamese masses is not better than the Bangladeshi masses". The Ministry of Home and External Affairs (Bangladesh) had also made same kind of statement. Hence, illegal migration of Bangladeshi specially Muslims into Assam is doubtful question. Jamat-ul Ulema-E Hind (Assam) argued on the basis of Reports and facts that there are no illegal Bangladeshi foreigners in Assam. All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) on the basis of previous records and facts, also opined that there are no illegal Bangladeshi foreigners in Assam. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, was sure that all the Tribunals' established under P.I.P. scheme were closed for 1969 only because that there were no more Pakistani foreigners in Assam. Even the last Pakistani was deported. During the war, 1971 of Bangladesh, those who entered Assam as 'War victims' were also officially sent back to Independence Bangladesh. Mrs. Gandhi was a leader of international repute and it was impossible for her to raise a baseless issue with the government of Bangladesh. Moreover, international laws, treaties and agreements were also to be honoured in regard to deportation of foreign nationals. Therefore, even the repeated demands and inspite of pressures from the agitators, Mrs.Gandhi did not bow down to the agitators and declared that the election

would be held, as planned in 1983. The biased agitators, then started to damage government properties, made law and order situation to deteriorate. The agitators started dis-obedience of law, began to insult, assault, murder and kill the Bengali origin Muslims along with other election supporters. Hundreds of villages were burnt and valuable properties were damaged. According to non-official sources more than ten thousand Muslims were brutally killed by the agitators on or before Assembly Election, 1983. Nellie the place in Assam where largest massacre of Muslims took. At the cost of Muslim's blood, Congress (I) succeeded in that election. After forming the government, Mrs. Gandhi tried her level best to dominate the agitation. Before her sudden death (1984) the Assam agitation was about to die. After becoming Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the politically immature leader, was basically influenced by RSS and at last he made an agreement on August 15, 1985 with a students organisation without knowing the feelings of religions and linguistic minorities in Assam. The agreement is known as "ASSAM ACCORD" 1985. In which none of the clauses involving minorities was acceptable to them. By doing this agreement Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India indirectly helped to revive the agitation again. So, Muslims were not satisfied with his administrative policy. By making this agreement Mr. Rajiv Gandhi endeavoured to get Majority Community's support in the next Assembly Election of 1985. Meanwhile, the traditional supporters of congress, specially Muslims have withdrawn their support to Rajiv Gandhi. Few months before the Election, AASU and AAGP also formed a regional political party, known as Assam Gana Parishad (AGP). The main aim of this regional party was

166. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
to come to power in the state by defeating congress (I) in the election of 1985. This party assured the Assamese Hindus that after having powers they might deport foreigners from Assam. To save themselves from expected harassment in the name of foreigners, religious and linguistic minorities also formed a parallel regional Political Party known as 'United Minorities Front (UMF) in Assam. This party was formed only fifteen days before the Election and the main aim of this party was to oppose the so-called 'ASSSAM ACCORD' and to establish democratic right of minorities. The end result of the Assam accord was that Congress (I) did not get full support of either Assamese Hindus or Muslims for the Election of 1985. Congress (I) was badly defeated and lost their strength in Assam. The agreement between Rajiv Gandhi and AASU indirectly helped this (AGP) regional party to succeed for the first time in Assam. AT present most of the leaders of agitation are in power in the state and constantly busy pursuing Sectarian interest. It is remarkable that this was the first Ministry in Assam comprising the ministers from local (Assam) party and excluding National ones. Under Prafulla Kumar Mahanta's Chief Ministership there was not a single permanent muslim Minister. Some leaders having secular ideas think that Muslims have been pushed back ten times under this ministry during 1985-90. Muslims specially Bengali Muslims have been deprived almost all kind of facilities including government job opportunities. Sanjoy Hazorika made a statement in Indian Express' that "This ministry (AGP) has not only raised Assamese hopes and aspirations but also aroused the old demons of sectarianism and other fears in the state troubled Bengali speaking Muslim and Hindu communities."


Today the leaders of Assam agitation are incharge of Assam. As per election manifesto, they had to detect and deport lakhs of Bangladeshi foreigners from Assam. The clauses of Assam accord also incite them to deport foreigners from Assam. The five year term of 1985-90 of AGP government has come to an end. During this period the AGP government failed to deport a single foreigner.\textsuperscript{172} It practically proved that there are no foreigners in Assam. Meanwhile the chauvinist group does not hesitate to renew the old agitation demanding "identification of foreigners" once again.

Dis-regarding all International laws, Agreements and appropriate Bilateral Treaties, they want only to drive out the so-called foreigners (Muslims) according to their own whims and fancies.\textsuperscript{173} Their agitation has not yet finished and therefore, the fate of so-called Bangladeshi foreigners is still quite uncertain.

In conclusion it may appropriately be said that "The agitation was nothing but an anti-Muslim campaign which included not only Bengali Muslims but also the local Assamese (Muslims).\textsuperscript{174}

