RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN GOALPARA DISTRICT

By the word "Movement" we generally understand agitation of the people. According to the two noted sociologists - Horton and Hunt defined the movement as "a social movement is a collective effort to promote or resist change." Over and above this, a social movement undoubtedly involve collective action, distinct from individual action. A social movement is generally oriented towards bringing about change, either partial or total, in the existing system or relationships, values and norms; although there are efforts which are oriented towards resisting change and maintaining the status-quo.\(^1\) G. Rocher, another sociologist also defined in his own way that a social movement we mean is "clearly structured and identifiable organisation which has the explicit goal of grouping members of which a view to the defence or promotion of certain precise objective, generally with a connotation."\(^2\)

1. Rao, M.S.A. - Social Movement in India, Vol - I, P. 1,2.

Social movement is of different kinds - Resistance Movement, Revolutionary Movement, Migratory Movement, Religious Movement, Renaissance Movement, Reform Movement and Language and Cultural Movement etc. The movement under study is a "Resistance Movement"* of the people to prevent the separation of Goalpara District from Assam and transfer it to West Bengal on linguistic and cultural basis. The States Reorganisation Commission constituted in 1953, immediately after Independence. The States Reorganisation Movement started in several parts of India. It directly affected the Goalpara District of Assam. In a nutshell, the socio-political accounts of the reorganisation of states of India and the Movement of the people of the Goalpara District traced below:

Demand for Linguistic Province:

Experience shows that the language has a great role in human life. It is very important factor which intimately and inextricably connected with culture it makes close relationship among the people of the same group of language and culture. It is also an important factor of unity and integrity of a region, or a country. India is a multilingual state which has unity among diversity. British Government in India had faced a lot of problem to administer the country, caused by official language issue; but

* Notes - Golapara District Congress Committee termed this Movement as the "People's Movement".
timately English was adopted as official language in running their administration.

(A) The British Approach to Reorganisation of Indian States:

There are India, several major languages. Each of which is spoken by lakhs and crores of people. It is therefore, natural as also desirable that the administration, including that of justice and all education in particular area should be carried on in the language of the area concerned. This alone will enable the people to have the real taste of Swaraj.3

These demand for the reorganisation of States are often equated with the demand for the formation of linguistic Provinces. This is because the movement for redistribution of British India Provinces was, in a large measure, a direct outcome of the phenomenal development of regional languages in the nineteenth century which led to an emotional integration of different language groups and the development amongst them of a consciousness of being distinct cultural units. When progressive public opinion in India therefore, crystalised infavour of rationalisation of administrative units.4

During the British period, territorial changes were governed mainly by imperial interests. However, as an ostensible factor the linguistic principle figured, for the first time, in a letter from Sir Herbert Risely, Home Secretary, Government of India, to the Government of Bengal dated 3rd December, 1903 in which the proposal for the Partition of Bengal was first mooted. Later, in the Partition Resolution of 1905, and in the despatch of Lord Hardings Government to the Secretary of State, dated 25th August, 1911, proposing the annulment of Partition, language was again prominently mentioned. The linguistic principle was, however, pressed into service on this occasions only as measure of administrative convenience, and to the extent it fitted into a general pattern, which was determined by political exigencies. In actual effect, the Partition of Bengal involved a flagrant violation of linguistic affinities. The settlement of 1912 also showed little respect, for the linguistic principle, in that it drew a clear line of distinction between the Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus. Both these Partitions, thus ran counter to the assumption that different linguistic groups constituted distinct units of social feeling with common political and economic interests.5

Twelve years latter, the question of redistribution of Provinces was considered by the Indian Statutes.

Commission, who recognised that the Provincial boundaries as they then existed, embraced, in more than one case, areas and population of no natural affinity and separated those who might under a different scheme be more naturally united. Speaking on the factors which should govern redistribution, the Commission stated:

"If those who speak the same language from a compact and self contained area. So, situated and endowed as to be able to support its existence as a separate Province, there is no doubt that the use of common speech is a strong and natural basis for Provincial individuality. But it is not the only test - race, religion, economic interest, geographical contiguity, a due balance between country and town and between coast line and interior, may all be relevant factors. Most important of all perhaps, for practical purposes, is the largest possible measure of general agreement on the changes opposed, both on the side of the area that is gaining, and on the side of the area that is losing, territory."

The Commission thus gave only qualified support to the linguistic principle. It attached great importance to agreement amongst the people affected by the changes.6

The Indian Statutory Commission's view that the question could not be settled by any single test receipt was supported from the O'Donnell Committee, which was appointed in September, 1931, to examine and report on the administrative, financial and other consequences of setting up a separate administration for "the Oriya speaking people" and to make recommendations regarding its boundaries in the event of separation. In framing their proposals, the Committee took into account all relevant factors such as language, race and the attitude of people, geographical position, economic interests and administrative convenience. But more than these factors, the Committee claimed to attach "great, indeed, primary importance to the wishes of the inhabitants where they can be clearly ascertained." Sind came into existence, along with Orissa, in April, 1936.  

(B) The Approach of the Indian National Congress:

The India National Congress lent indirect support to the linguistic principle as early as 1905 when it backed the demand for annulling the Partition of Bengal which resulted in the division of the Bengali speaking people into two units. Yet another concession to the linguistic principle was the formation of a separate Congress Province of Bihar in 1908, and of the Congress Provinces of Sind and Andhra in 1917. This involved a deliberate departure from...

the normal organisational pattern which had so far followed the boundaries of the existing administrative Provinces. However, at this stage Congress opinion had not clearly crystalised in favour of linguistic Provinces and at the Session of 1917 the principle was strongly opposed by the group led by Dr. Annie Besant.

It was only some thirty-five years ago that the Indian National Congress contributed officially to the view that linguistic Provinces were desirable. It was at its Mid Session at Nagpur that the Congress accepted the linguistic redistribution of Provinces as clear political objective and in the following year the principle was adopted for purposes of its own organisation.8

The Provincial Congress Committees on the basis of language, created organisational divisions, some times different from the administrative divisions. To, illustrate the point an instance might be cited here. The districts of Cachar and Sylhet were at that time administratively within the State of Assam, but organisationally they were within Bengal, these two districts were Bengali speaking districts. These necessitated to maintain the fundamental unity that had sustained the people.

The first Assam Pradesh Congress Committee was formed in 1921 with six Brahmaputra Valley districts under its jurisdiction. The Headquarters of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee was set up at Guwahati. The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee decided to set up District Congress Committees in each Sub-Division with village Committee and Mauza Committees at lower level.

In 1927, following the appointment of Indian Statutory Commission, the Congress adopted a resolution expressing the opinion that "the time has come for the redistribution of Provinces on a linguistic basis" and that a beginning could be made by constituting Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, Sindh and Karnataka into separate Provinces. The question of redistribution of Provinces was also examined by the Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conferences, 1928. The Nehru Committee recommended that the redistribution of Provinces should take place on the basis of the wishes of the population, language and geographical, economic and financial principles. Of all these factors, however, in the opinion of the Committee, "the main consideration must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned."10

Between the years 1928 and 1947, the Congress affirmed its adherence to the linguistic principle on the following occasions:

i) At its Calcutta Session held in October 1937, it reiterated its policy regarding linguistic Provinces and recommended the formulation of the Andhra and Karnataka Provinces;

ii) By a resolution passed at Wardha in July 1938, the Working Committee gave an assurance to the deputation from Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala that linguistic redistribution of the Provinces would be undertaken as soon as the Congress had the power to do so; and

iii) In its election manifesto of 1945-46. 


Suman, Mrs.- National Immigration and the problem of language in India (Article), Seminar on National Integration and Communal Harmony, sponsored by Gandhi Darshan Samiti, Rajghat, New Delhi, 1982, P. 166.
repeated the view that administrative units should be constituted as far as possible on linguistic and cultural basis.11

Immediately after Independence, it was felt necessary to have cultural redistribution of States and to fill the longings and urges of the people for the formation of the linguistic Provinces.

Before 1947, there were politically two Indias: British India governed by the British Crown according to the Statutes of the British Parliament and enactments of the Indian Legislature and the India States under the suzerainty of the British Crown but for the most part under the personal rule of the Provinces. By 1950, when the Constitution of India came into force, this fortuitous division was done away with and the Country was welded into a single political entity. Of the 550 and odd Princely States:

1) 216 States having a population of about 17 lakhs were merged in the neighbouring Provinces which were designated as Part States;

ii) 61 States with a population of about 1 lakh were constituted into Centraly administered areas known as Part C States;

iii) 275 States having a population of about 25 lakhs were integrated to create new administrative units, namely, the Part B States of Rajasthan, Madya Bharat, Travancore Cochin, Saurastra and PEPSU; and

iv) 3 States, namely - Hyderabad, Mysore and Jammu and Kashmir were retained as Far States but their internal structure as also their relationship with the Centre were cast into a new mould so as to fit them into the new constitutional structure.¹²

These arrangements ushered in the first phase of the integration and consolidation of the administrative structure of the union. They were, however, in the nature of transitional expedients necessitated by the varying phase of development in which the States existed at the time of the transfer of power.

¹² INDIA - 1957, A Reference Annual Government of India, 383;

Kapoor, A.C. - Constitutional History of India, P. 380
Along with this revolutionary change in the former India States, the emotional integration of the different linguistic groups brought by a century of vigorous development of the regional languages found vent in the demand for the creation of States interms of linguistically homogeneous unit. On October 1, 1953, the State of Andhra came into existence.  

**Reorganisation Movement in the Country:** The first attempt of reorganisation of States was made in 1948, when a Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of S.K. Dhir, judge of Allahabad High Court to consider the question of reorganisation of States on linguistic basis. It was specially asked to examine the question of formation of the Provinces of Andhra, Karnata, Kerala and Maharastra. Though the Commission admitted the importance of reorganisation of States on linguistic basis, it did not approve the formation of linguistic Provinces. It favoured the reorganisation of the States on the basis of the administrative convenience.

In December, 1948 the Congress appointed the Member Committee consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaraimaiyya popularly known as JVP Committee to examine the Dhar Committee Report. This Committee also did not approve the idea of linguistic reorganisation of the States on the ground that it posed a threat to

13. INDIA - 1957, P. 383;
national unity. However, it conceded that the plebiscite should be re-examined in the light of public demand at some future date.14

The JVP by conceding that "if public sentiment insistant and overwhelming" we have to submit, to it felt the door open for demand for linguistic States. An agitation was started by the Telugu speaking people for creating of Andhra Pradesh. They resorted to open agitation and even took to street fighting to press their demand. The things took serious turn following the death of their leader, Potti Sri Ramulu after a hunger strike of fifty six days. Ultimately the Government agreed to create the State of Andhra Pradesh consisting of Telugu speaking people which was covered out of certain parts taken from the State of Madras. The creation of Andhra Pradesh under pressure, encouraged other linguistic groups to put forward their demand for separate States.15

   Kapoor, A.C. - Ibid, P. 687;
15. Chander, Dr. P. - Ibid, P. 23;
   Report - Ibid, P. 19;
The Constitution of India (Article, 3) empowers Parliament to alter the territory, and thereby its boundaries, along with the alteration of names etc. of the concern States with their consent or concurrent. Does it can form new State; can alter the area, boundaries or name of the existing States by law passed by simple majority in Parliament.

The States Reorganisation Commission: On 22 December, 1955, the Prime Minister made a statement in Parliament that a Commission would be appointed to examine "objectively and dispassionately" the question of the recommendation of the States of the Indian Union "so that the welfare of the people of each constituent unit as well as the nation as a whole is promoted". This was followed by the appointment of this Commission under the Resolution of the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs.16

The Commission would consist of Sayed Fazl Ali, the then Governor of Orissa, Hriday Nath Kunzru, Member of the Council of States and Kavalan Madhaba Panikar, the then Ambassador of India in Egypt, of whom Sayed Fazl Ali made the Chairman of the Commission.17

16. Report - States Reorganisation Commission, 1955 P. 1:
Kapoor A.C. - Ibid, P. 688;
The terms of reference of the Commission were to:
"investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. They were free to consider the proposal relating to such reorganisation."

Under the Resolution of Commission were required to make recommendations to the Government of India by the latter than 30th June, 1955. This period was subsequently extended to 30th September, 1955.

The ultimate creation of new State namely "Andhra State", and the formation of the States Reorganisation Commission, the people of the various linguistic groups of our country started demanding their claims on the basis of their linguistic and cultural identity on their State, whether newly created or to be reorganised or the alteration of the boundaries.

Both Northern, Southern and Eastern Indian peoples launched various forms of movement to be established their.


19. Ibid, P. 689;
legitimate demand. The existing social, political and economich organisations all became active and started mobilising the people. Some new organisations came into being. The States reorganisation Movement shook the entire country.

Creation of Tamil State with Tamil speaking people (Madras), creation of Kerala State including Malayalam speaking people, State Karnataka by exclusively Kannada existence of Hyderabad State, alteration of boundaries of the newly created Andhra, demand of Vidharba by Marathi in Bombay State, creation of Madhya Pradesh State, reorganisation of Uttar Pradesh, inclusion and exclusion of boundaries of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, Statehood of Delhi Andaman and Nocober Islands etc. The common cause of movement of the peoples of the States were language and cultural unity of the same group of the people and administrative convenience.

Public meeting, Demonstrations, Processions, Consultations were held throughout the country, besides other types of mobilisations such as seminars, conventions and study circles. Almost all organisations and institutions actively participated in preparation and submission of memorandum, publication of books, drawing and re-drawing of the maps of the proposed reorganisation of the States. The people of the respective State continuing movement until unless their demand be fulfilled.
Movement in North-East India:

In the North East region, the character of the movement of the other States Indian Union, Assam was the fulfledged State and some administrative units of the Assam State demanded statehood. The States of Manipur and Tripura have always had a very intimate relationship with Assam for centuries past. They are now enjoining the States of C States. The people of Manipur and Tripura also demanded the separate "State" status. The demand of statehood was only confined by submission of memoranda and intellectual efforts, but it was not the demand of mass people in general.

A demand of a separate "Purbachal State" was created during the States Reorganisation Movement. For the fulfilment of the demand, a Commission was formed named the "Cachar State Reorganisation Committee". The proposed Purbachal State comprising of Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, N.E. Hill, Lusai Hills and North-East Frontier Agency. The movement was confined within the papers and the few leaders were engineered by some leaders of West Bengal.20

North-Eastern Frontier Agency, comprising at the

20. Memorandum - "The case for Assam" with this title submitted by the Gauhati Lawyers' Association before the States Reorganisation Commission, the 8th May, 1955, P. 6.
time Sela Sub-Agency, Subansiri, the Abor Hills, the Mishmi Hills, Tirap Frontier and Tuensung, was within the State of Assam according to the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. The administration of these areas was run by the Central Government with the Governor of Assam as the agent. A separate administration for NEFA demanded, keeping aloof from their brethren of the plains.21

There was a demand for the formation of a separate Part A Hills State comprising all the Autonomous Hill Districts and other Tribal areas as specified in Part A and B of the Table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, in order, presumably:

i) to preserve the distinct tribal customs, culture and languages;

ii) to resist any imposition from outside on the tribes; and

iii) to be able to progress and grow "according to their genius and traditions."

The Sixth Schedule did not fully satisfy them. They held it conferred no real autonomy and provided no safeguard for preservation of the identity — racial, linguistic, cultural.  

guistic and cultural .... of the hill people. They objected to the move of certain people to make Assamese – the State language. They claimed that the hill people formed a distinct nationality. The advocates of the new State said they were not happy under the then administration, which feeling, right or wrong, seemed to be the very basis of their demand. They had gone so far as to say that as the Hills had been never belonged to India at any time. They once thought of merging with Burma or forming British Crown Colony, as originally advocated by Prof. Coupland, British Constitution expert.22

To gear-up the demand of the Hill State, the Council of Action of the Hill Leaders have proposed a separate Hill State consisting of five Autonomous Hill Districts of Assam namely (1) Garo Hills, (2) United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, (3) Mikir Hills, (4) North Cachar Hills and (5) Mizo District. These five districts together constitute an area of 22,734 Square Miles, with a population of 9,67,316 out of a total area and population of Assam 37,85,112 Square Miles and 90,43,707 (the figures of Assam include the area and population both of the NEFA and N.H.T.A.). In this connection, the State Government's Memorandum to the States Reorganisation Commission - Part I and also a supplement...

22. Thanliara, R. - The Assam Tribune, March 24, 1955;
Memorandum - Assam Sahitya Sabha, P. 12.
memorandum to the States Reorganisation Commission, submitted in 1955 may be seen, copies of which are placed below these two documents have clearly shown that the demand for separate Hill State is not new thing and does not have its origin in the demand of the tribal people as such, but was carefully prepared by the British administrators in pursuance of a definite policy over a long period of time. The basic assumptions of the policy were that -

(1) The Hill people were not India in any sense of term.

(2) They had no feeling for the plain's people except bitter hatred and animosity.

(3) Maintenace of the Status-quo, namely the rule of the British Imperial.

(4) A negative policy of preservation and protection of hill tribes, by keeping them almost as "human museum", leaving social services like education and medical and to foreign Christian Missionaries, with official patronage, leading to spread by Christian Culture and habits of thoughts, considering their Indian Counter-part as foreign. This was reinforced by regulations for Inner Line protect areas which no outsiders could enter without a permit.

(5) The interest of the largest solid Christian block in India extending from Lushai Hills, Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills to the
Ao, Sema and Lotha tribes in the Naga Hills.

With the recommendation, views and comments of the State Government, the advisory council for Autonomous Districts of Assam, etc. On the proposed amendments of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.23

The three Northern districts of West Bengal, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling had been integral part of Assam from time immemorial. The whole of the North Bengal was included into the ancient Kamrupa, with its Western Boundary of the river Karatoya. Barring the last two hundred years of forced political existence, this tracts were formed parts of Bengal at any period of her history. During the States Reorganisation Movement, the Assam Sahitya Sabha demanded with above view that the three districts should be amalgamated with Assam and the cultural integrity of Assam would be maintained.

The Gauhati Lawyers' Association held the view that the inclusion of the areas in Assam will fit in:

with the natural boundaries of State. It is desirable that the State should have as far as possible natural boundaries. Thus, from every point of view, historical, geographical, linguistic, cultural, economic and administrative - this area should be amalgamated with Assam.

Claims of West Bengal and the Movement in Goalpara: The West Bengal Congress Committee submitted a memorandum to the States Reorganisation Commission, claiming the districts of Goalpara, Garo Hills and Cachar from Assam. The other political and social organisations also claimed on the same lines and the newspapers of West Bengal ignited this demand. They claimed on the ground that -

(a) The majority of the people of this District spoke Bengali and the Bengali people repressed by the Assamese chauvinists.

(b) That there was need of more lands within the State of West Bengal for the rehabilitation of the Bengali Hindu refugees came from East Pakistan, due to the Partition of Bengal.

The Dhubri Unit of All Assam Bangla Parishad also supported the claims of West Bengal and demanded at least the separation and merger of Goalpara District with West Bengal.
Mangovinda Chakravorty submitted a memorandum to the Commission quoted some points raised by West Bengal before the Commission which are reproduced hereafter. The memoranda of West Bengal have sought justification of the claim on the following few grounds which are scarcely tenable:

(1) They said that after the Partition of Bengal a great exodus of the refugees from Pakistan took place and good number of them took shelter in West Bengal; so, this created a necessity of more land for their accommodation and rehabilitation.

(2) That these districts of Assam, namely Goalpara, Garo Hills and Cachar had linguistic and cultural affinities with West Bengal.

(3) That strategic importance, such as the security of the border of India justified the administration of these districts by the West Bengal State.

(4) That the annexation would make a better communication for defence and commerce.

(5) That Goalpara was once a part of Bengal.
The people of Goalpara District, became upset because of this claims of West Bengal. In chapter I and II (Political Entity of Goalpara District & Language Controversy and Social Tension in Goalpara District) explained and devoted clearly the cause of upset by the people of Goalpara. Here we sum-up the same.

Assam Sahitya Sabha presented a memorandum to the States Reorganisation Commission where also included a detailed explanation on the language position of Goalpara District. The Sabha explained that the linguistic position in Goalpara would in no way afford any justification of West Bengal's claim. The interested parties, however, have cited the following figures in attempt to show that the Census figures of 1951 were wrong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population (Number)</th>
<th>Assamese Speakers (Number)</th>
<th>Bengali Speakers (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>6,01,198</td>
<td>1,15,000</td>
<td>3,17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>7,63,052</td>
<td>1,39,000</td>
<td>4,06,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8,83,288</td>
<td>1,61,000</td>
<td>4,06,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Source - Mangovinda Chakravorty, Vice President, District Congress Committee, Dhubri personal
The Assam Census Report draws pointed attention to the rise of percentage of Assamese speakers in 1951, adding: "With the solitary exception by Assamese every single language or language group in Assam shows a decline in percentage of people speaking the same. All this decline in percentage of people speaking Assamese in 1951. The figures do not fail to reflect the aggressive linguistic nationalism now prevailing in Assam."

The last comment seems to arise from a lack of knowledge as to what happened behind the Census figures of 1931 and earlier. Had the superintendent been furnished with adequate information regarding the foul play in the previous Censuses; he would have certainly understood that the figures gave the correct linguistic picture and that...

submitted a memorandum to the Chairman States Reorganisation Commission, Government of India, 4, Kitchnar Road, New Delhi, 1955.
aggressive linguistic nationalism" of Bengali's, rampant in all previous Censuses, has been sufficiently thwarted this time.25

The Census Superintendent of 1911, J. McSw... remarked "A further difficulty arose in Golapara.... From local inquiries during the last cold weather (1911-1912) it would appear that the language of the Hindus in the East... at least Dhubri Sub-Division was shown as Assamese mixed with Bengali in the schedules of 1901; and apparently it was classed as Bengali in the tables, though Sir G.A. Johnson is of opinion that it is Assamese. It appeared then that the return were vitiated, mostly in the direction of showing less Assamese and more Bengali speakers than really existed." The result of the enquiry was to show an increase of Assamese speakers of 30,607 and a decrease of Bengali speakers of 30,907, the difference representing people who should have been shown as speaking Rava (251), Hindi (127), Garo (20), Mech (2), Pashto (1)."

1931: C.S. Mullan also remarks in regard to Golapara, that he could not vouch for complete accuracy of the number of Bengali speakers.

The Census Superintendent of 1951 himself notes

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that the tea garden labourers and Muslim immigrants (numbering 20% in 1921 and raising to 25% in 1931) have adopted Assamese as their language.

It should be sufficiently clear under hot circumstances the Census of 1911, 1921 and 1931 were operated in Golapara, and how the figures for language, returns were vitiated. This would leave no ground whatever for suspicion that the 1951 Census figures could in any way be wrong. The Government of India have accepted these figures to be correct, and their authenticity should no longer be challenged.26

Golapara has contributed a great deal to Assamese literature. The most outstanding among its literary men at that time was Amrita Bhusan Deva Adhikary, the Mahanta of Goalpara Satra, who had written the most authoritative commentary on the Vaishnava treatise "Nam Ghosa", and who was president of the Assam Sahitya Sabha for one Session in 1923, Jorhat. Raja Prabhat Chandra Baruah Bahadur of Golapara met magnificent donations to Assamese writers.27

The following extract from an article, written by Durgeswar Sarma who spent the greater part of his career, is

26. Memorandum - Assam Sahitya Sabha, P. 12
27. Memorandum - Ibid, P. 12
a member of the Assam Civil Service and as the Dewan of the Bicni Estate, in Goalpara, will also throw some light on the issue:

"The 1911 Census provided a god-sent opportunity to some chauvinistically inclined officials in Goalpara to do, what they mistakenly thought, a habit of patriotic work to the benefit of Bengal. I joined services at Dhubri on the 5th of March, 1911, barely four or five weeks after the Census was taken. Hardly was a fortnight out when I had to orders to tour certain localities to ascertain whether the people there recorded as Bengali speakers had really returned their language as Bengali. The had not. That was what I was told by the people. To be on the safe side, I obtained written statements from them. In the Northern Zone, the tribal people complained that the forest officer in charge of the work had put down their language as Bengali without their knowledge. This clearly showed that the tribal people of the area, although they spoke their own dialect, had a definite leaning for Assamese. I visited Chapar and discovered that the inhabitants who are 90% Assamese had been returned as Bengali by the Zamindari officers. In the Goalpara Sub-Division, I found that the people speak the same Assamese as I do. Yet many chaste Assamese speakers, to recollect a few names, Dharani Kanta Das of Fachania, Ram Das of Balijana, Jagabandhu Sarkar of Baittiamari were returned as Bengali speakers. I visited Salkocha and made
necessary enquiries about Chandra Madhab Barua and the Pandit of the locality. I was pointedly told that they had all declared themselves as Assamese. They indeed spoke Assamese and had even matrimonial connection with upper Assam. But they were returned as Bengali. All this was done I ascertained, by the police officers working ion the back ground and the Zamindari officers remaining in the front."

"In 1921 another Census was taken. For one part of it, I was in charge of the operation. The same struggle ensued. There was perceptible pressure from interested groups to inflate the Bengali population. Col. Playfair, who was the Deputy Commissioner at the time could speak chaste Assamese. He had complaints from Bodo leaders like Kalicharan Brahma and others. He personally checked some of these and found that there was indeed and organised attempt to inflate the number of Bengali speakers. He made some corrections, but the distortion was on too large a scale. The result of the Census were, no doubt, highly misleading."

West Bengal's claim for inclusion of the District.

29. Source - The Assam Tribune, April 7, 1955.

of Golapara into West Bengal in consequence of the proposal of the reorganisation of states on the basis of language and culture had evoked a spontaneous Resistance Movement in the District. The leaders were surprised on the claims of West Bengal. They tried their level best to futile their claims with the following main points:

There points of view were clear and logical. The main thrust of their arguments was based mainly on the language and culture of the people of Goalpara District which the Commission was interested. The language of the people was not Bengali as claimed by West Bengal. It was a futile attempt of a section of the expansionists to term Bengali.

In the Linguistic Survey of India, G.A. Ghanta called the language spoken by the people of Golapara - Golapara bonshi Dialect. The expressions of this dialect were found being profusely used in the writings in the times of Malapurush Srimanta Sankardeva, the architect of Assam's language and culture. The people of Coochbehar and neighbouring Golapara and the other districts were all integrated. West Bengal could not claim Goalpara to be included into it. On the contrary Assam could claim Coochbehar and the neighbouring districts to be included into Assam on the basis of language and culture which grew the flourished under the influence of Srimanta Sankardeva's literary works, "Nam.

Historically, Goalpara District was under the ancient Kingdom of Kamrupa and later under the Koch Kingdom. Linguistically and culturally developed into a distinct entity that different from Bengal, but closely akin to Assam. Anthropologically, bu and large, the people of the District of Goalpara have distinct features, Different from Bengal, but similar to Assam.

In every aspect of the cultural life, namely, celebration of popular festivities, songs and dances, wearing apparel and ornaments, social customs and manners, marriage functions and the way of life etc. the people of the District of Goalpara have a distinctive characteristic popularly known as "Goalparia".

It is to be noted that those who migrated into Goalpara from East Bengal, mainly from Mymensing were originally Bengali speaking. They were taught in the schools.

30. Source - Gist of memorandum prepared by the main leader of the Movement - Sarat Chandra Sinha the President of the District Congress Committee. The original memorandum submitted by him to the Secretary of the District Congress Committee to the States Reorganisation Commission on May 19, 1955.
setup by them in Bengali medium. This continued to be till the last part of forties. They were mostly followers of Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, who supported the struggle for Pakistan. After Independence, Bhasani left for Pakistan. The people did not follow him and remained in India and showed their allegiance to India by expressing explicit desire to merge into the main stream of Assam. In the last part of the fourth decade, they started adopting Assamese as the medium of instruction in the primary schools and using Assamese in their communications. In the beginning of the fifth decade, they returned their mother-tongue as Assamese in 1951 Census which was indeed a landmark in cultural history of Assam - a revolution that took place silently. The linguistic homogeneity that existed from the times of Koch King Maharaja Naranarayana and Srimanata Sankardeva was thus consolidated.31

In this circumstances, the immigrants old and new all joined the Movement against the claim of West Bengal to resist or prevent the separation of the land from Assam into which they migrated. The Movement assumed a great momentum. The people of the District of Goalpara participated in the Movement collectively and individually. The dimension of the Movement proved that a vehement protest against and a strong resistance to separation of the District of Goalpara from...
"People's Movement".

Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, prior to the Constitution of the States Reorganisation Committee, constituted a Committee with Sarat Chandra Sinha, Santosh Baruah, both Members of Legislative Assembly and Upani Nath Novis to study the cultural bond of the people of Coochbehar and neighbouring districts with those of Assam. The Committee found their cultural affinity more with Assam than with West Bengal.

The language and culture of ancient Kamrupa that extended from the Dikkarbasini (Dekrang) to the Karatoya, distinctively different from that of West Bengal. Culturally and linguistically Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri have more affinity with Assam than with Bengal. The District of Goalpara is closer to Assam.

Strategically, Goalpara was situated in such a geographical position that it could not be alienated from Assam. It was in the strategic unit of Assam. The integrity of the unit was essential for the security of the Country.

In the previous Chapter (Chapter III), it narrated the language tension and conflicts between the two.
groups. After Independence, the people of the District generated the official language movement by submitting petitions, delegations, discussion, wall-writings, procession, paper focussing etc. At the same time, the claims of West Bengal on Goalpara District ignited the common sentiment of the sons of the soil as well as immigrant Muslims. Both these factors surcharged the will force of the people of the District and launched a great Movement against the separation of Goalpara to retaining the linguistic and cultural unity, integration and the administrative conveniences.

In addition to immigrant Muslim the sons of the soil were Koch-Rajbonshi, Bodo, Kalita, Brahmin, Namassu, Nath, Rava, Garo, Santal, Indigenous Muslims (Deshi Muslims) and the Shil actively participated in the Movement.

The "unity in diversity" practically reflected in the Movement. All the divergent forces integrated into a single force, on account of fulfilling greater purpose and to strengthening the Movement. There was a virtual uprising of the people and shaken the entire District. The forms and dimension of the People's Movement would be explained in the next Chapter.