CHAPTER-III

REASONS FOR INSURGENCY
It is necessary for us to know the significance of the term 'insurgency' in relation to NE India and Assam in particular. The political movements in the North-East took place during the British period and are still taking place ever since India's Independence. The question is whether the leaders of these movements call themselves as insurgents.

Prof B. Pakem says that he had no occasion to hear the word 'insurgent' or insurgency from them. He had met Mr. Th. Muivah of the then Naga Nationalist Council, in Guwahati during 1961-63 when he was 'underground' Member of Parliament (MP) and in 1964 when he was the 'underground' Information Secretary. He met Laldenga in 1972 in New Delhi before the Mizoram Accord. All of them did not regard themselves as 'insurgents'. They all talked about their country, nation, identity, faith and culture in the sense of being a Naga, a Manipuri, or a Mizo. An attempt to preserve one's identity does not necessarily mean that he is an insurgent nor does an attempt to preserve one's independence, from the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) point of view, amounts to insurgency. It, therefore, depends on how the concerned parties took at the problem.

**Meaning & Definition**

The Oxford English Dictionary (1993), Random House Dictionary of English Language (1996), and Readers Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary (1984) read 'insurgency' as 'The quality or state of being insurgent'. The Random House also adds: 'Insurrection against an existing government by a group not recognised as having the status of a belligerent' or 'rebellion without a revolutionary government'. But who is an insurgent? Here again, the three dictionaries agree on a person (noun) or an act of (adjective) 'rising in revolt' against an established civil authority. From a reading of these dictionaries the word 'insurgency' is also equated with 'insurrection'.
In point of fact, the word 'insurrection' was first used in 1459 in the Rolls of Parliament V when Jack Cade 'wrote letters to many cities ... to have made a common insurrection, and the word 'insurgency' much later in 1803 in Edwin III: 'The internal insurgency he feared not putting a speedy termination to by the vigour of his proceedings'. These are the facts on the uses of the words, but regarding the act itself it could have taken place a thousand of years ago.

**Definition:** Major General (Maj Gen) S G Gomtatkere calls insurgency as a 'reciprocal violence' in which both the establishment and its challenger require the support and sympathy of sizeable section of society. Many faces of insurgency are secessionism, super-national and ethnic movements. It involves violation of human rights on both sides. It requires a moral force rather than military strength to curb insurgency.

Prafulla Mishra defines insurgency as "an open revolt against the established authority." 1

The most acceptable definition given by VK Anand in his book Insurgency and Counter Insurgency: A study of Modern Guerrilla Warfare (1981) is that:

"Insurgency is an extra-constitutional, compositively progressive and variegated struggle launched against the incumbent authority by the consciously mobilised sections of indigenous masses for the fulfilment of certain conceptual goals, manifesting emancipation". 2

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, insurgency means rising in active revolt. Literally speaking insurgency is rebellion. Every rebellion has to be against an order or authority. An insurgent, therefore, is one who is seen so by an authority.
**Pre-requisites for Successful Conflict**

As per Lt Gen D B Shekatkar, a cause to fight for, popular support, bases/favourable terrain, leadership and organization, intelligence & mobility, outside support and propaganda are the pre-requisites for a successful conflict.

**In relation to Assam**

The basic causes for insurgency in Assam are broadly dealt with under the following:

- Pulse of the people
- Economic neglect
- Lack of good governance
- Illegal migration
- Unemployment
- Rampant corruption
- Federal system and regionalism
- Situation at the Union Government
- Smuggling
- Language issue
- Exploitation by neighbours - Countries/States
- Lack of Leadership and Enterpreneurship

Now, let us analyse them one by one in more detail.
Pulse of the People

As per Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam,

"Insurgency thrives when local population has a feeling of separate identity in terms of ethnicity, culture and history. It gets compounded when it is combined with a feeling of neglect and being discriminated against. And it is aggravated when there is lack of good governance and economic backwardness, particularly large-scale unemployment. The availability of outside support from across the border adds fuel to the fire. All these factors which contribute to eruption of insurgency have been present in Assam to a marked degree". 4

Educationists still quote the statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made during the 1962 Chinese aggression. He said 'we may have to shed tears to the North-East' meaning that we may even have to lose North-East to the Chinese. On the pretext of the Chinese threat, the oil refinery scheduled to be established in Assam was shifted to Barauni in Bihar during the time when Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of India.

The people of Assam feel that the region has traditionally received a step-motherly treatment from the Indian administrators. It was only after the 1962 debacle that developmental aid started trickling in. Even today, administration of Assam to include the Bodos are the outcome of heightened feelings of deprivation and injustice to the society.

Insurgency in Assam is symptom of a disease to be properly diagnosed and treated with utmost imagination and human care. "The people of Assam never felt secure about their identity and political dominance in their own land in the post-independence era. It is this threat perception, the threat of loosing one's political rights, linguistic pre-eminence and
cultural rights that lies at the root of emergence of serious secessionist insurgency movements from a mainstream State like Assam". 5

**Economic Neglect**

Root of insurgency in this region lies in the economic backwardness. This stems from the unexploited natural resources, inadequate infrastructure, absence of development in tertiary and secondary sectors etc. Besides, physiographic constraints, peripheral location, neglect of the region from the very beginning, Government apathy towards this region both during pre and post-independence period and the worst of economic exploitation of the tribals by non-tribals are the reasons behind revolutionary warfare in this pocket of India.

The Assamese economy is one of the most backward economy and it is one of the impoverished region of India. On most economic indicators, its performance is less than that of all-India average. This gives rise to apprehension among the local people that they may not get any gainful employment unless the economy exhibits structural change. The per capita net State domestic product in 1992-93 was Rs. 5,056/- while the per capita net National product was Rs. 6,234/-. The per capita income accruing to persons ordinarily resident in the State, would be somewhat less than income originating in the State, on account of relatively large income transferred out of the State.

The transport isolation had become major constraint for Assam's development. Had economic development proceeded at a steady rate, frustrations and anxiety created by outside migration, could have been nipped in bud. As a remedial measure Assamese should be tried for all unskilled jobs. Its implementation should be foolproof. The language of instructions and examinations in all State colleges and Universities should be in regional language to restrict interstate mobility among students.
Till the discovery of oil in the Cambay region in 1958, Assam was the only State in independent India which produced oil and natural gas. Oil was struck in the jungles of Upper Assam in 1825 and the raising of oil at Digboi started in 1888. The discovery of the Digboi oilfield and the establishment of the Digboi refinery in 1901 marked the first phase of oil mining activities in the State.
Assam possesses forest reserves and natural resources, enough to attract Indian private business houses to invest. Despite being potentially one of the richest provinces in the Indian Union, Assam found herself economically backward. The Assamese elite called it "A rich province with the poor people".

As a cause of backwardness the Assamese elite thought that the Union Government was taking too much revenue away from Assam; while the Government of Assam, on the other hand did not get what they called its 'legitimate share' of the duties on tea, oil, jute, coal, etc. In addition to this, the Assamese elite felt a sense of insecurity from the point of view of what they called, 'economic exploitation' by the outsiders. The modern sinews of life such as employment, trade, business, etc. were largely in the hands of the non-Assamese residents of Assam. The scope for Government jobs was limited, the economic infrastructure for industrialisation was grossly inadequate and land and forest were not adequately used for the economic development of Assam. Whatever employment opportunities were available, the educated Assamese middle class elite had to face keen competition with the non-Assamese. The non-Assamese were having their earning from this area by engaging themselves in industry, trade and commerce which they did not fully reinvest in the area as could have been done, a considerable part of which they sent to their native homes. They might have considered it a security risk to reinvest. The result was that the economic growth of this region was slowed down and fresh employment opportunities were not created. The tea companies which were largely in the hands of the foreigners did not give any direct benefit to much greater earnings, but their style of living stood in sharp contrast to that of the native people of the province; which in turn only helped to increase bitterness. The partition of the country made the rail and road link circuitous. This seriously affected the agriculture and the consequent prevalence of widespread poverty provided ideal breeding ground for the development of secessionist feelings.
Lack of Good Governance

Though there is so much of fund allocated for developmental works, there is no improvement for the common man. The grass root level working and progress are lacking. There are no good roads. I have travelled in Bongaigaon district. There are many pot holes in the roads, the bridge blown off by the Bodo militants. The repair works were not undertaken. The electric lamps of the streetlights are broken in many places. These are not repaired. The electric bills are not regularly paid.

If we take of a place like Guwahati, it is in a state of pity. Travelling in the road six mile junction to Narangi Cantonment is a nightmare. Basic things of a metro like good roads, traffic regulation, underground drainage system, flyovers to regulate traffic are lacking. The first flyover has recently come up in the year 2001 at Guwahati. This city is no comparison to any of the metros in our country. All these things can be attributed only to bad governance. Till recently, the Brahmaputra could be crossed at only one place. Now, it can be crossed in three places. In upper Assam, even now, the crossing in many places is still by ferry.

P.A. Sangma a renowned MP from the North-East regretted that "The State Planning Board had become a rehabilitation centre for the politicians... Development should precede peace and not the other way round as was being demanded... It has come to such a sorry pass now that it does not have a single economist". 6

One of the correspondent writes under the article 'AMENITIES STILL A FAR CRY FOR BORDER PEOPLE' - are the age of science and technology where people of the country, mainly urban citizens having been enjoying a comfortable life, people of Assam - Nagaland border in 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' sectors within Golaghat district have been living without any amenities like health, electricity, drinking water, motorable roads, veterinary, agriculture, post and telegraphs etc. This dismal state of affairs has been the people's lot since 1979.
On November 27 and 28, 1999 newsmen of Golaghat district visited 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' sectors under the aegis of the District Co-ordination Committee of the ABSU and AASU. The newsmen went on an extensive tour of Chungajan, Madhabpur, Nababashti, Hezari, Santipur, Padum plikhuri, Mikir Basti in 'B' sector where during the last 40 years no Government schemes were introduced for betterment of society. There was no provision for drinking water, electricity, post office and health & hygiene. In the name of medical facilities, only a few pharmacists and nurses have been offering service to the rural people.

The NSCN had begun to run a parallel Government and have been regularly collecting taxes from the non-Naga people at the following rates:

- Grocery shop - Rs 30,000/- as quarterly instalment
- Truck drivers - Rs 30,000/- -do-
- Saloon - Rs 250/- per month
- Cycle shop - Rs 500/- per quarter

The administration is nothing but oppression and extortion.

**Illegal Migration**

Bangladesh is the most populated country in the world. Economically this country is highly backward. Even Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had mentioned in his book about the future grandeur design of exploitation of the population to the neighbouring country especially Assam State. This has been aggravated by giving settlements to the Muslims by the Hiteshwar Saikia government for the vote bank. Now that they already have their names in the voters list, it is difficult to revert them back to their country.
Lt Gen (Retd) SK Sinha, PVSM Governor of Assam had submitted a report to The President of India on 08 Nov 1998 on the subject titled 'Illegal Migration in to Assam'. He had also brought out this point in Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture 2000 delivered at United Service Institution, New Delhi on 29 September 2000 under the title, 'Trans-Regional Movements of Populations : Implications for India's Security'.

This will be dealt as under :-

Background

Migration in to Assam

Preventing Infiltration

Detection and Deportation

Recommendation

**Background** : In the concluding remarks of Col Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture the Governor of Assam has said "The trans-regional movement of population in to Assam must be viewed against the back drop of the past 100 years of history, throughout which three trends have remained constant - the fear of indigenous people of being swamped by immigrants, the desire of foreign elements to somehow acquire Assam and the efforts of some politicians to take advantage of the situation for their own purpose. After Independence this movement acquired a National Security dimension. Today this is compounded by growing international Islamic fundamentalism and the desperate efforts of forces hostile to India to destabilise our country. Assam is now emerging out of a long period of violence but dangers still lurk to its
internal and external security". In the letter addressed to the President of India dated November 8, 1998 the Governor of Assam had written as under:

"As Governor of Assam, I feel it is my bounden duty, both to the Nation and the State I have sworn to serve, to place before you this report on the dangers arising from the continuing silent demographic invasion. I have also formulated my recommendations for dealing with this issue of vital importance. I earnestly hope that this matter will receive due consideration and suitable action taken to avert the grave danger that has been building up for some time". 10

Some of the crux issues are that the illegal migration threatens to reduce the Assamese people into a minority in their own State. This was the main issue for Assam student movement and outbreak of insurgency. It is a matter concerning National Security and not regional issue.

**Migration in to Assam** : From the dawn of history migration was taking place in Assam. From annexation of Assam by British till Independence a lot of migration took place. Migration from south i.e. Bengal, East Pakistan and now Bangladesh has been continuous for over 100 years. British developed tea industry which involved imported labours from Bihar since the locals were not prepared to work in the tea garden. British also encouraged Bengali Muslim peasants from Bangladesh. This was to cultivate the virgin lands of lower Assam. The Bengali Muslims were hardworking who occupied vacant land and put virgin areas under cultivation. During Sir Mohammed Sadulla's Muslim League Ministry a concerted effort was made to encourage the migration of Bengali Muslims into Assam for political reasons. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell wrote in the Viceroy's journal,
"The chief political problem is the desire of the Muslim Ministers to increase this immigration into the uncultivated Government lands under the slogan of Grow More Food but what they are really after, is Grow More Muslims".

Mr, Moinul Haque Chowdhary the Private Secretary of Jinnah, who after Independence become a Minister in Assam and later at Delhi, told Jinnah that he would present Assam to him on a 'silver platter'. Jinnah confidently declared at Guwahati that Assam was in his pocket. Assam was saved from becoming part of Pakistan by Bharat Ratna Lok-Priya Gopinath Bordoloi. Mahatma Gandhi supported him.

During partition again the movement of population was there in a big way. To begin with this was the Hindus who feared the religious persecution. In the west the mass movement was for a short period where as in east it continued for long time and is still continuing. The 1971 war was fought for resolving the problem of 10 million Bangladesh refugees. The statistics of Hindu population of Bangladesh is as under:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>27% Hindus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>14% Hindus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>10% Hindus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with Hindu refugees, Muslim infiltrators continued migrating into Assam for economic reasons. At present, the illegal migrants to Assam is only Muslims.
Failure to get Assam included in East Pakistan remained as a sour point with Pakistani leaders. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his book, Myths of Independence wrote,

"It would be wrong to think that Kashmir is the only dispute that divides India and Pakistan, though undoubtedly the most significant. One at least is nearly as important as the Kashmir dispute, that of Assam and some districts of India adjacent to East Pakistan. To these Pakistan has very good claims".11

Even a pro-Indian leader like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his book, Eastern Pakistan: Its population and Economics, observed:

"Because Eastern Pakistan must have sufficient land for its expansion and because Assam has abundant forests and mineral resources, coal, petroleum etc. East Pakistan must include Assam to be financially and economically strong".12

Leading intellectuals in Bangladesh have been advocating on "Lebensraum" (living space). Sadeq Khan, a former diplomat wrote in holiday of October 1991,

"All projections, however, clearly indicate that by the next decade, that is to say by the first decade of 21st Century, Bangladesh will face a serious crisis of Lebensraum".

Abdul Momin, former Foreign Secretary and Bangladesh's first Ambassador to China writing in the same magazine in its issue of November 22, 1991 stated

"If we in Bangladesh ingratiate ourselves with the hill tribes within our borders, our bulging population might find a welcome in adjacent lands inhabited by kindred peoples".
The views of all these leaders have a common thread running through them. In spite of our good relations with Bangladesh we can ill afford to ignore the dangers inherent in demographic invasion from that country.

**Contributory Factors** : The major reason for illegal migration is the economic factor. As already brought out, the most densely populated country in the world is Bangladesh. The density is 969 per sq km. Growth rate of population is 2.2 percent which is 2.8 million per year. Every year one third of Bangladesh gets inundated by floods. This displaces 19 million people. 70 million people constituting 60 percent of the population live below poverty line. The per capita income is 170 dollars per year. This is much less than India. The border with India is porous. In these circumstances, large scale movement of population seems inevitable unless effective steps are taken to check them. The ethnic, linguistic and religious commonality between the illegal migrants and many people on Indian side enables them to find a shelter. Some political parties have encouraged this for vote banks. They are hard working and available for cheap labour. Corrupt officials are bribed to provide help. Bangladesh have made no attempt to prevent it and in fact may be welcoming it. Prime Minister Sheikh Haseena has asserted that no Bangladeshi is illegally living in India.

**Illegal Migrants** : Assam is the mother State of the North-East. Even after balkanisation, it has more than double the population of the remaining six States. 71% of the population of NE India live in Assam. The economic resources far out space those of other States. Illegal migrants have been defined in Assam Accord as those who infiltrated illegally after 24 December 1971. However, the stream that infiltrated illegally between 1 January 1966 and 24 December 1971 was to be given Indian citizenship after a lapse of ten years. Though Hindus deserve special consideration post 1971 Hindu Illegal Migrants cannot justifiably claim refugee status. No census has been carried out to determine the number of illegal migrants. Precise and authentic figures are not available but on the basis of estimates, extrapolations and various indicators, their number runs into millions.
The peasant population coming into Assam was largely from areas around Mymensingh in East Bengal and was called Mymensighias in lower Assam which then had only three districts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Nagaon. Between 1911 and 1931, the Muslim population in Assam increased from 5% to 30%. SC Mullan, was the Director of Census in Assam in 1931. He was a far-sighted British ICS Officer. He analysed the impact of what he called, "The invasion of vast horde of land hungry Bengali immigrants, mostly Muslims from the districts of Eastern Bengal and in particular Mymensingh. By 1921 the first Army Corps had passed in to Assam and had practically conquered the district of Goalpara... Where there is waste thither flock the Mymensinghias ... A population which must amount to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to Assam valley during the last twenty five years... The only thing that I can compare it to is the mass movement of a large body of ants ... It is sad but by no means improbable that in another thirty years Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam in which an Assamese will find himself at home".13 This was an amazing forecast made by Mullan, over 70 years ago. It has become the main cause of unrest in Assam in recent times.

The figure on page No 112 amply justifies the above statement.

Indrajit Gupta, the then Home Minister of India stated in the Parliament on 06 May 1997 that there were 10 million illegal migrants residing in India. Quoting Home Ministry/Intelligence Bureau sources, the 10th August 1998 issue of India Today has given the breakdown of these illegal migrants by States -
Table 3.1

Illegal Migrants - State wise details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>5.4 Millions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report on Illegal Migration into Assam submitted to the President of India by the Governor of Assam, November 08, 1998 P 10.
On 10 April 1992, Hiteshwar Saikia, the then CM of Assam stated that there were 3 million Bangladeshi illegal migrants in Assam. Two days later, he denied the same report and said there are no illegal migrants in Assam. The indicators of illegal migration in Assam are as under :-

(a) Bangladesh census records indicate a reduction of 39 lakhs Hindus between 1971 and 1981 and another 36 lakhs between 1981 and 1989. These 75 lakhs (39+36) Hindus have obviously come in to India. Perhaps most of them have come into States other than Assam.

(b) There were 7.5 lakhs Bihari Muslims in refugee camps in Bangladesh in 1971. At the persuasion of Saudi Arabia, the erstwhile East Pakistan accepted 33,000 Bihari Muslims. There are at present only 2 lakh Bihari Muslims in refugee camps in Bangladesh. The unaccounted for 5.17 lakhs must have infiltrated into India, as there is little possibility or evidence of their having merged into Bangladesh society.

(c) In 1970 the total population of East Pakistan was 7.5 crores but in 1974 it had come down to 7.14 crores. On the basis of 3.1% of annual growth rate of population of that period, the population in 1974 should have been 7.7 crores. The short fall of 6 million people can be explained only by large scale migration.

Assam specific figures of illegal migrants have been worked out from available statistics as follows :-

(a) Recent electors list in Assam by the Election Commission shows more than 30% increase in 17 Assembly constituencies and more than 20% increase in 40 constituencies between 1994 and 1997. Whereas the All India average growth for a
three year period intervening the two intensive revisions in 1994 and 1997, is 7%, the growth in Assam for this period is 16.4%.

(b) Relative decadal percentage growth of population of Assam, All India and Bangladesh is as follows: -

**Table 3.2**

**Growth rate of population: Assam, India, Bangladesh**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assam</th>
<th>All India</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>1901-1911</td>
<td>16.99</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>1911-1921</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>1921-1931</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>1931-1941</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>17.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>1941-1951</td>
<td>34.98</td>
<td>21.51</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi)</td>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>34.95</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td>29.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii)</td>
<td>1971-1981</td>
<td>23.80</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>31.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii)</td>
<td>1981-1991</td>
<td>23.80</td>
<td>23.85</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.3

**Communities-wise growth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assam</th>
<th>All India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>1951-1961</td>
<td>33.71</td>
<td>38.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>1961-1971</td>
<td>37.17</td>
<td>30.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>1971-1991</td>
<td>41.89</td>
<td>77.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Muslim population of Assam has shown a rise of 77.42% in 1991 from what it was in 1971. Hindu population was risen by nearly 41.89% in this period.

(d) Muslim population in Assam has risen from 24.68% in 1951 to 28.42% in 1991. As per 1991 census, four districts (Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta and Hailakandi) have become Muslim majority districts. Two more districts (Nagaon and Karimganj) should have become so by 1998 and one district (Marigaon) is fast approaching this position.

Source: Ibid table 3.1, P 16.

The illegal migrants coming to India after 1971 have been almost exclusively Muslims.
**Consequences:** A large indigenous Assamese people are being reduced to a minority in their own home State. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined. This may result in loss of the geostrategically vital districts of Lower Assam. The influx of these illegal migrants is turning these districts into a Muslim majority region. Then the merger with Bangladesh would be made. The Islamic fundamentalism may provide a driving force for this demand. Bangladesh has long discarded secularism and has chosen to become an Islamic State. Loss of Lower Assam will sever the entire land mass of the North East, from the rest of India and the rich natural resources of the region will be lost to the Nation.

**Preventing Infiltration (After Independence):** Assam has 262 km border with Bangladesh out of which 92 km are riverine. 1947 gave birth to India and Pakistan. For the first few years there has been unrestricted trans-border movements. Bengali Hindu refugees poured into India for asylum. Along with them the Bengali Muslims also continued to come and the reason was economic. There were also some movement of Muslims from Assam into East Pakistan. In the west, the transborder movement of refugees lasted only for a few months. In the east this is still continuing. This has created a lot of resentment among the Assamese people. There had been instances of anti-Bengali riots.

To start with, the policing of the border was the responsibility of State Police. In 1964, the Government introduced the Prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan (PIP) scheme. 159 watch posts, 15 Patrol Posts and 6 Passport Check Posts were set up. A Police force of 1914 personnel under a DIG was deployed to check infiltration. After the 1965 war, the BSF came into being. Responsibility for guarding the border was taken over by that force. In 1987, this organisation was augmented by 1280 Officers and men provided by Government of India and 806 by Government of Assam, making a total of 4000. At present it is functioning under an Additional DG Police of Assam. The border is very porous and the illegal migrants enjoyed a political patronage. In the first flush as per JIC paper No 04/95 of 03 January 1995,
1.5 lakhs illegal migrants were pushed back but many managed to re-enter from different points on the border. There were reports of Police excesses and high-handedness, as also allegation of harassment of genuine Muslims.

The Chief Election Commissioner, SL Shakdher told a conference of State Chief Electoral Officers in 1978, "In one State (Assam), the population in 1971 recorded an increase as high as 34.98 percent, over the 1961 figures and this increase was attributed to the influx of a very large number of persons from the neighbouring countries... the increase likely to be recorded in 1991 census would be more than 100 percent over the 1961 census. In other words, a stage would be reached when the State would have to reckon with the foreign nationals who may probably constitute a sizeable percentage; if not the majority of the population of the State. The political parties are demanding inclusion of the names of these persons in the voters list. A few months later in the by election held at Mangaldoi there were complaints about 70,000 illegal migrants in the voters list. The people got convinced that illegal migration on a colossal scale had been taking place and this sparked the anti-foreigner's movement in Assam. In 1983, election was forced in Assam by the Government of India. It was done on the plea that there was not enough time to revise the electoral rolls before election. There was wide spread violence and the infamous massacre of 1700 Bengali Muslims at Nellie by the Lalung tribe. The agitators reached a settlement with Government of India and the Assam Accord was signed in 1985. Other major issue stipulated in the Accord was fencing of the border with Bangladesh. This was to prevent infiltration.

**Border Fencing**: Bangladesh shares approximately 4,155 km border with India which includes patches of marshy and riverine areas. Fencing of the border and improvement of border roads is planned by the Government.
The details are as below :-

**Table 3.4**

**Details of NE border fencing & roads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Roads planned in kms</th>
<th>Fencing planned in kms</th>
<th>Expenditure Rupees in crores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>264.5</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | 797    | 2429.5               | 1331                    |

Source: (a) The Sentinel 24 May 2000 - 'Entire Indo-Bangla border to be fenced off'.

(b) Assam Tribune 24 May 2000 - -do-
This is not a foolproof method. To be effective vigorous patrolling and other measures are required. If the motivating factor behind infiltration is arrested, permanent solution can be found. It should be on the lines as in Punjab. This is shown as a comparative form.

Table 3.5

Border Management: Punjab & Assam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Point for Consideration</th>
<th>Punjab</th>
<th>Assam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Quality of fencing</td>
<td>Superior: Two feet taller than of Assam</td>
<td>Comparatively inferior. Height of fence to be same as in Punjab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observation towers constructed</td>
<td>Only in Dhubri Sector observation towers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>No lighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Density of Troops</td>
<td>30 kms frontage for one BSF Bn.</td>
<td>In Dhubri 70 kms and Cachar 40 kms frontage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Assam Governor's report to the President of India on "Illegal Migration into Assam" dated 08 November 1998.
Additional BSF bns should be provided to hold a frontage of only 30 km. 16 bns of BSF are employed in counter-insurgency tasks. The shortage should be made up by new raising. The speed boats and country boats are inadequate. Floating BOPs should be deployed with four to five speed boats. A proposal for nine medium crafts has been put up by DG BSF. This should be sanctioned soon. The boat should be registered and registration number marked.

**Other measures**: Providing multi-purpose photo identity cards for the whole State, effective arrangement for registration of births and deaths, updating of 1950 National Register of Citizens, a separate register for illegal migrants ( Stateless Citizens) will help a long way in this.

**Chars**: The Brahmaputra is normally 5 to 7 km wide. During floods it has only one water channel. In lean season there are two, three or even more water channels throwing up chars (river islands). Due to changing river configuration, it is difficult to survey the chars. The Bangladeshi Muslims settle on these chars. It gets submerged in floods three to four times in a season. Chickens are put on roofs, cattle herded on platforms above water level. In emergent situations, men and cattle live in boats. They are occupying the chars from Dhubri to Lakhimpur. Trees which can withstand 1 to 3 feet water during flood should be planted on them by the forest department.

**Developments in Bangladesh**: The permanent solution for this trans-border migration lies in economically improving Bangladesh. This will remove the motivation behind migration. There are signs of economy picking up in Bangladesh through the Grameen Bank supported by a large amount of international funding and the efforts of the Government and other NGOs. Out of the 2 million membership of Grameen Bank 98% are women. They are providing micro-credit loans without any collateral. The record of recovery rate is 98%. Targeting women for economic development provides multi-benefits. It increases income of
the family, encourages gender justice, promotes women's education, which acts as a curb on population growth. The liberated women become a bulwark against the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. All these benefits suit the interests of India. India should assist in socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

**Detection and Deportation**: Secular parties and minorities do not see any danger from illegal migration. They believe they are Bengali speaking Indian Muslims. They feel, in the garb of deporting foreigners they will be harassed. They are for continuance of Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) IM (DT) Act in its present form. The majority community of Assam and political parties other than secularists have exactly the opposite view. They want the IM (DT) Act repealed forthwith. There is a requirement to find a workable solution acceptable to people of Assam and entire Nation.

The furore raised over the attempt by Maharashtra Government to deport 34 Bangladeshis from Mumbai in accordance with the due process of law, underscored the sharp divide in the country over this issue. In the past four years, many illegal migrants from different States including Maharashtra, were being pushed back in to Bangladesh -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>5782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>4222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deportation should be effected by a Central Agency, the BSF. This received a sharp criticism in the Bangladesh press. PM Sheikh Hasena issued a statement that no Bangladeshi was illegally living in India.
**Deportation**: International law does not provide for unilateral deportation in defiance of the views of the country to which the deportation is to take place. With the stand now being taken by Bangladesh, it will not be possible for India to deport millions of illegal migrants to Bangladesh. From 1993 to September 1998, the BSF tried to hand over 39,746 illegal migrants to Bangladesh Rifles. The latter accepted only 9253 and refused to accept 30,493. The acceptance figure by Bangladesh declined from 5799 in 1993 to only 55 in 1998 (up to 30 September). The bursting population of Bangladesh creates a Malthusian nightmare and is not conducive to the country accepting them. Further, our capability to identify and deport over ten million such people is questionable. In these circumstances, deportation of these illegal migrants is not now a practical proposition.

**Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal Act-IM(DT) Act**: It was enacted at the height of anti-foreigner's movement in Assam. Formulated for protecting genuine Indian citizens. In practice has been found to serve the interests of illegal migrants. The Act provided for two individuals living within a radius of 3 km of a suspected illegal migrant to file a complaint accompanied with a deposit sum of Rs 25/-. The 3 km restriction was modified and now the complainant can be from the same Police Station area as the individual being complained against. The deposit fee has been reduced from Rs 25/- to Rs 10/-. The Police can also sue motto initiate action. Elaborate time consuming procedures have been laid down for screening, for examination by District Tribunals and for appeal to the Appellate Tribunal. In the IM(DT) Act it is the country which has to prove that an individual is an illegal migrant to deny him the citizenship. Under the Foreigner's Act it is for the foreigner to prove that he is an Indian national to claim Indian citizenship. Therefore, the IM(DT) Act shifts the burden of proof on the complainant or the Police, to establish that the person complained against is a foreigner.
This Act caters for an Appellant Tribunal of two retired High Court Judges, sixteen district Judges with supporting staff. The Border organisation of 4,000 Policemen process the cases of alleged illegal migrants. These are maintained at a cost of three hundred crores to the exchequer, extending over a period of 15 years, has lead to the identification of only 9599 illegal migrants. Out of these only 1,454 could be deported. These statistics amply establish the futility of continuing with the IM(DT) Act in its present form. Apart from this, the person responsible for executing it had been facing problems like the Tribunals have been starved of funds and resources. Out of 16 District Tribunals only 5 are functioning. The rest have only one person each on bench and as such are non-functional. Salaries and TA bills of staff are not paid in time. Essential facilities like transport and telephone are lacking and funds are often not available to buy even postage stamps. The border organisation required to process these cases has been encountering difficulties at every step. The individual keeps missing, Police does not have powers to arrest, no provision to pay TA for prosecution witness.

Any move to repeal the IM(DT) Act is likely to encounter strong opposition from the minorities and their supporters, for vested and opportunistic reasons. As IM(DT) Act is not practical should be repealed. Should be replaced by a more just, workable and fair enactment.

**Replacing IM(DT) Act**: The IM(DT) Act does not exclusively apply to any religious community. Those migrants irrespective of community who came to Assam up to 24 March 1971 have been given Indian citizenship. Of late almost all the illegal migrants coming in to Assam are Muslims. The minorities should be assured that the new Act after repeal of IM(DT) Act will be fair, just and transparent leading to expeditious disposal of cases. The aspects to be noted are as under :-

(a) Any Hindu migrant coming to India after 24 March 1971 without valid papers should be classified as illegal migrant.
(b) All who came from East Pakistan between 15 August 1947 and 24 March 1971, with special provision that those who came between 1 January 1966 and 24 March 1971 would be eligible for this, only after a lapse of 10 years of being identified as foreigners.

(c) All Illegal Migrants, who came in after 24 March 1971 will not be deported, they must be identified and after identification denied voting rights and certain other facilities like acquisition of immovable property. A suitable process for this should be evolved. Barpujari, noted historian is of the opinion that such a step would not solve the problem. Rather, it would accelerate the process of illegal migration for lure of jobs under contractors and as domestic servants of the Assamese. He further adds, "what is the guarantee that demands will not be made in future for fresh cut off dates?" 14

(d) Ground Survey teams each under a Magistrate assisted by the border organisation, should extensively tour the areas allotted to them, to identify the illegal migrants. Magistrates from outside Assam be deputed for this task. This should be done in a fixed time frame.

(e) Individuals identified as illegal migrants should be allowed the right of appeal before Foreigners Tribunal set up under the Foreigner's Act. This will provide necessary judicial sanctity to this exercise.

(f) Foreigners identified as illegal migrants should be denied voting rights and their children born in India should not automatically become eligible for Indian citizenship. Over 1 lakh Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Pakistan, who settled in Jammu in 1947, have to this day, after a lapse of over 50 years not been given voting rights.
The minority communities in Assam now comprises nearly 30% of the population and have a tendency to vote as a bloc. They should appreciate that the repeal of IM(DT) Act and its replacement by a just, fair, transparent and expeditious act will provide adequate safeguards against harassment and victimisation.

**Present Position** : The Government of Assam has recommended its repeal and Government of India is examining it. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) want this act to be repealed. The Congress, some alliance partners of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and parties of minorities want this Act retained. A Public Interest Litigation from Bengal has challenged the validity of IM(DT) Act in the Supreme Court. Affidavits have been filed by Government of India and all the State Governments bordering Bangladesh. The Supreme Court has directed Government of India to resolve this issue by January 2001. Given the political arithmetic in the Parliament, it may not be possible for the Government of India to find a legislative solution. The Supreme Court will then have to consider what should be done about the IM(DT) Act.

**The Other Side of the Story** : A controversy was centering round the IM(DT) Act, recently following the announcement by central leaders like L. K. Advani that there are 1 to 1.2 million foreigners in the country and their assurance from various platforms that the IM(DT) Act would be repealed. The view of four senior citizens revealed in North-East Times daily on 04 Jan 2000 is as under:-

**Repeal of IM (DT) Act ; Views of the other side** :- The resolution adopted recently by the steering committee of the AGP asking for repeal of IM(DT) Act has sent even the AGP into uproar. Already it is a bone of contention between different political parties primarily because it arouses strong passions among different sections of the population. However, intemperate excitement does not help in arriving at sensible decisions. The matter must be considered objectively.
In order to find Muslim reactions to the proposed scrapping of the Act we contacted a number of leading Muslim citizens. First in this series appear below:-

**Safiqul Haque**: Former acting Chief Justice of the Guwahati High Court, Justice Safiqul Haque, without going into the aspect whether the IM(DT) Act be repealed or not, said that procedures and provisions as laid in the IM(DT) Act are sufficient to establish a person's nationality. He, however, mentioned that if the authority as well as trial courts/IM(DT) Tribunals are of the view that the provisions and procedures (as enshrined in the IM(DT) Act) are lacking to establish the nationality of detected person then amendments to the relevant provisions relating to the issue in question should be made. Such amendments will facilitate the issues which are controversial and become political in between parties in politics. Justice Haque said that as political parties are very much interested in this issue so repeal of the controversial Act must require unanimous political consensus.

**Dr Aftab Hussain**: The Principal of the Gauhati University Law College, Dr Aftab Hussain, does not agree with the view that the IM(DT) Act instead of safeguarding the indigenous people protects the illegal infiltrators. He said that the IM(DT) Act was passed by Parliament and promulgated in Assam to save the people of Indian origin from administrative harassment. Dr Hussain, considering the previous experience, does not rule out the possibility of harassment of genuine Muslim citizens in absence of the IM(DT) Act. The IM(DT) Act brings judiciary in between the executive and accused foreigners. Hence there is possibility of justice to the accused. But the political parties have politicised the IM(DT) Act issue to an extreme level and created misunderstanding, he added. Favouring detection and deportation of illegal foreigners at any cost, Dr Hussain was of the opinion that IM(DT) Act cannot be a hurdle in detection of foreigners if all the political parties and other organisations including the ASSU make a co-ordinated effort to amend any loophole in the Act. But unfortunately both the sections favouring repeal of the IM(DT) Act as well as opposing the repeal are not interested to amend the Act as it will not serve their narrow political interests.
"The problem of illegal infiltrators will not be solved till the minority communities are taken into confidence", Dr Hussain said.

Prof A. Mannan: The reader in the department of statistics of the Gauhati University, Abdul Mannan, termed the issue a short-cut for the political parties to the throne of power. Mr Mannan favoured a National Citizens Register (mentioning the names of Indian citizens) taking 1971 as the cut-off year. He said that the IM(DT) Act will prove redundant as soon as the National Citizens Register is prepared. He said that there is no cause for worry and apprehension for the minority communities in case of repeal of the IM(DT) Act provided the assurance from the authorities that no genuine citizen will be harassed.

Prof Khurshid Alam: Noted economist and former member of the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC), Prof Khurshid Alam, viewed that political parties and other organizations should make an assessment why the IM(DT) Act has failed (as reported) to detect the illegal infiltrators. Favouring amendment to the Act, he said that the Act should be a balanced one both for detection of foreigners as well as protection of genuine citizens.

Prof M. H. Zahangir of Goalpara points out the following:

(a) Nobody welcomes an illegal migrant or a foreigner in Assam and nobody raises any objections to his detection or deportation. But the controversy centres round the number of foreigners and the process to be followed to arrive at that number.

(b) The crux of the problem is—which a foreigner is to be ascertained through administrative electoral process or should be detected and deported through a judicial process. The administrative or electoral process will show a large no of foreigners and would expedite the issue. But will lead to uncalled harassment of the
minorities. The judicial process would slow down the issue. The IM(DT) Act may be suitably amended, repealed or replaced by another Act safeguarding the basic rights of a citizen even when he is suspected to be a foreigner or illegal migrant.

(c) The AASU and BJP are in favour of immediate repeal of IM(DT) Act. The Congress and minority communities (both religious and linguistic) who constitute about 40 percent of State population feel that the repeal of the Act may lead in to fresh fractional confrontation and conflicts which may lead to a civil war.

(d) The increase of Muslim population is not due to Bangladesh Muslim infiltration. The reason lies somewhere else. The fact is that the territorial areas of Assam of 1971 and that of 1991 was not the same, the greater Assam of 1971 was reduced to a mini Assam in 1991, separating many parts with population (e.g. Meghalaya, Arunachal, Mizoram etc. With this eventful separation of Assam the number of total population of Assam was affected and reduced, but this did not affect the Muslim population of Assam; it remained unaffected as before, because there were very little No of Muslims or no Muslims living in those parts. So, because of creation of new States, the Muslim population of Assam remained undisturbed, as it was in 1971, but the number of total population of other communities was reduced. Hence, there is an increase of 3% of Muslims, though the actual numbers of Muslims remain the same.

(e) The bogey of foreign influx is more emotional than the real and that it does no longer hold good as it used to do at the initial stage of the Assam movement.

It appears that the solution to the problem is now the State has to live with all the people who came from Bangladesh.
Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam had forwarded his recommendations on illegal migration to K. R. Narayanan, President of India. This is att as appx 'B' page No 343 of the thesis.

Unemployment

After talking to a large number of surrendered ULFA personnel it is found that most of them joined the organization because they did not get any gainful employment after their studies. An article published in The North-East Times dated February 12, 2000 'Depressed unemployed youths taking path of extremism' reads :-

"The day to day increasing number of jobless youths has reached a strong threat to the new generation in the Nalbari district as a section of such unemployed depressed youths do not even hesitate to mix-up with the anti-social elements. ... Though there are a number of both large and small scale industries, all are now lying without ringing a sound. Now Nalbari district is a paradise of various extremists group like ULFA, BLT, NDFB, ATF (Adivasi Tiger Force) ACM (Adivasi Cobra Militants) etc".

Even after fifty years of Independence, planning employment opportunities have become an illusion to the Assamese people. Unemployment has become a real problem due to the growth of population, lack of growth of industries, lack of entrepreneurship among the local population. The increase in the population is though the result of increase in the birth rate and decrease in the death rate, but the illegal immigrants is the main factor and this illegal immigration is the deep-rooted malaise in Assam. Schemes on self-employment are expected to bring ray of hope to the young talents who are now in turmoil in Assam. There are thousands of unemployed people in Assam, where the first oil refinery of the world was set up. The result is the growing discontentment among the employable educated youth, anger, frustration and damage has already been done to the psychological fabric of the
Assamese youth. Programmes of employment service is the joint responsibility of the Union and the State Government.

In India, during December 1984 to July 1989 the number of registered job seekers alone increased from 23.5 million to 31.6 million i.e. by 34 percent. The first Five Year Plan began with a live register figure of only 3.29 lakhs of unemployed persons registered with employment exchanges. The figures gradually rose to 18.35 lakhs in 1961, 51 lakhs in 1971 and 165.54 lakhs in 1981.

"India has the best organised employment service in the Asian region. It has well established institutional arrangements with the working group on the national employment service at the apex level and similar advisory bodies down to district level. The growth of the employment service from about 70 exchanges at the time of Independence to about 900 employment exchanges in 40 years is quite significant". On an average throughout India the employment exchanges register about 60 lakhs job seekers in a year. Economic growth alone cannot create enough employment. Modernisation of enterprises is essential and long term unemployment is a socially and economically unacceptable phenomenon.

In Assam, only one out of hundred registered job seekers is annually placed in job. According to the Seventh Plan document, the backlog of unemployment in March 1985 was 9.20 million. Further the number of unemployed persons registered with employment exchanges is a fraction of the total number of unemployed and under employed persons. The employment situation in Assam remained more or less static during the past few years. At present, there are 53 employment exchanges including 3 University Employment Information and Assistance Bureau are functioning in Assam.
The performance of the employment exchanges during 1988 and 1989 was as follows:

**Table No 3.6**

Performance of Employment Exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registration (in thousand)</th>
<th>Vacancies Notified (in thousand)</th>
<th>Placement (in thousand)</th>
<th>Application on live register at the end of the year (in thousand)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>155.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>843.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>160.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>903.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Employment, Assam.

Only 3.5 percent of the registrants get a chance of placement every year. The high level of unemployment is mainly due to high growth of population and low growth of economy.

As per the data available in the employment exchanges in Assam, the total number of unemployed in the live register as on 31 December 1989 is 9,77,126 as against 3,73,035 in 1981 i.e. during last seven years the number of unemployed increased in Assam to more than double. The picture of the unemployed in the year 1988 as per the liver register of the unemployment exchange is shown in table No 3.7 :-
Table No 3.7

**Number of Applicants on the live Register as on 31-12-89**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Total no. on live Register</td>
<td>9,77,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Total no. of Educated Applicants</td>
<td>5,52,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Matriculate/HSLC passed</td>
<td>3,51,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>HSSLC/P.U./I.A.</td>
<td>1,17,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>61,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Post-Graduates</td>
<td>4,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pass out I.T.I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>Engineering trade</td>
<td>12,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Non-Engineering trade</td>
<td>1,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Agricultural Graduates</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Medical Graduates</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Engineering Graduates</td>
<td>1,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Case Study of Nalbari District: This explosive situation of unemployment is creating frustration amongst the coming generation, which is leading the entire State into social tension. According to the latest information received from the Nalbari district-employment exchange authority about 75,999 educated unemployed youths registered their name in the exchange. The total number of unemployed include 34,516 High School Leaving Certificate Examination passed, 6,500 Arts graduates, 965 Science graduates, 465 Commerce graduates, 720 diploma holders, 1,000 post graduates, while 17,310 below HSLC level. The sources also informed that more than 17,000 educated youths are yet to register their names in the said
office. It is also reported that due to poor financial condition a lot of MA degree holders have
to serve in the post of lower primary school teacher and fourth grade jobs.

According to report received from the Statistical Department, out of the total
population of 10,16,390, the district has 6,79,648 jobless people. Thirty three percent of the
employed includes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>farmers</td>
<td>1,34,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agricultural labourers</td>
<td>49,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing, processing and repairing workers</td>
<td>5,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining and quarry workers</td>
<td>17,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>animal rearers and fishermen</td>
<td>9,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction workers</td>
<td>4,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men engaged in transport and communication</td>
<td>6,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>household servants</td>
<td>7,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and marginal workers</td>
<td>67,415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conscious citizens of the district urged the concerned authority to minimise the
unemployment problem by setting up new industries and renovating the old industries to run
in the district otherwise the extremist group may take advantage of the situation and pose
serious threat to the society.

**Self-Employment**: The total number of small scale industries (SSI) units is only 20,035
constituting less than one percent of the all-India figure. A majority of these units are sick
and are dying out. Such an atmosphere does not foster entrepreneurship. That is why self-
employment in the industrial sector is not at all picking up although the number of unemployed is large as shown in the live registers of Employment Exchanges. In 1998 there were 15,94,644 people on these register out of which as many as 13,92,960 were matriculates and above. There were many with technical and post-graduate degrees. (North-East Times "Poverty Alleviation in Assam-II" - H. N. Das dated 22 February 2000).

The lack of industrialisation in the Lower Assam district has been one of the main reasons for the rise in the rate of unemployment. Barring few industries like the Wimco (in the verge of closure) in Dhubri and the Bongaigaon Refinery and Petrochemical Limited and the Ashok Paper Mill (presently closed) in Bongaigaon, Manas Textiles in Barpeta and the Assam State Weaving Society Limited in Nalbari, there are no industries worth the name which can create large number of jobs. Most of the big industries are located in Central or Upper Assam. People here often complain the lack of interest of Dispur for the region.

Rampant Corruption

As a Nation, corruption has become a part and parcel of us. As per one statistics, India is ranking among the first few Nations in the world in corruption. Amongst the Indian States Assam is ranking fourth place. Corruption and gross misuse of public fund and not the Union Government's apathy were some of the primary reasons found responsible for the backwardness of the North-East. In fact, PM Atal Behari Vajpayee himself led the assault on the North-Eastern States for lack of transparency in spending funds accusing the States of massive corruption. In our country, each of the fundamental right is restricted de facto day in and day out in our country because of the very real social evil of corruption. If the citizen is empowered with the power of corruption free service then it will act as automatic check against misuse of authority. An Indian citizen cannot go to any public organization or office today and get the services which they are supposed to get without either paying bribe or
bringing influence by way of recommendations or references from VIPs. Corruption free service is a basic necessity for good governance.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - says the Chinese proverb. Perhaps as we begin the journey as a Republic in the 21st century articulating the right step towards making India a well governed country. A "national bribe index" compiled by popular weekly magazine, Outlook, revealed, that bribes have to be paid for birth certificates, admission to schools and universities and even to get bank loans. Bribes also have to be paid for passports, ration cards, driving licenses, electricity, water and telephone connections, for housing plans to be cleared and even for bank loans and menial jobs. Lucrative police precints are 'auctioned' and beat constables have to be bribed by courting couples to prevent harassment. So also must those who carryout cremations to ensure a plentiful supply of dry wood to burn dead bodies. The Governor of Assam in his address during Lachit Borphukan Memorial Lecture 2000 pointed out that in China last year 2000 people were hanged for charges of corruption.

**Federal System and Regionalism**

At the time of Independence various States were formed on linguistic basis. The regional parties slowly started creeping in. Some of the early States where the regional parties came to power at comparatively early stages are as under:

- Kerala - Communist Party
- Tamil Nadu - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Party
- Karnataka - Janata Party
- West Bengal - Communist Party (Marxist)
- Assam - Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) Party
The regional parties had a lot of difference of opinion with the Union Government which was in the hands of the Congress Party. This federalism and regionalism had not helped to resolve the insurgency issue since the political parties placed their petty party interest above the national interest.

**Situation in the Union Government**

After the demise of the 'uncrowned monarch of India' Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri became the PM. This was for one year. Then in the subsequent power struggle Indira Gandhi emerged as the PM supported by King maker K. Kamaraj. The breaking point in Congress came when the election for President of India was to be decided. V.V. Giri supported by Indira Gandhi and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy supported by the older faction of Congress were the candidates. This gave birth to Cong (O) comprising of old stalwarts and Cong (I) supporters of Indira Gandhi. Ultimately V.V. Giri won the election.

Mid 1970 saw declaration of emergency in our country. This brought down Indira Gandhi from power. Dr Jayaprakash Narayan of Bihar was the driving force behind it. The unexpected assassination of Indira Gandhi brought Rajiv Gandhi, a pilot by profession to politics. Then there was a series of unstable Governments for short periods headed by V.P. Singh, Chandrasekhar and Charan Singh. There was some stability when PV Narasimha Rao became the PM. After that again there were short lived PMs like H. D. Deva Gowda & Dr I. K. Gujral. The coalition led by Atal Behari Vajpayee again had to go in for re-election within a short period and then the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Vajpayee was formed.

All these developments within a period of half a century had affected the country very badly. Coupled with this 11 wars/actions fought after Independence have marred economy and peace in the country. There had been an increased level of militancy in the border States
and with the change of so many Governments, the insurgency was not handled properly by our policy markers.

**Smuggling**

It is an open secret that very often insurgency movements have been encouraged and funded by narcotics traffickers in the North-East as they remain as the best and safest courier to India. Of the 110 Metric tons of opium produced in the Golden Triangle area (where borders of Burma, Laos and Thailand meet) Burma alone produces 800 to 900 tons. Actually nearly 30 percent of the heroin consumed in the USA is processed from the opium produced in Burma.

South East Asia's 'Golden Triangle' has now become the centre of a thriving opium economy and one of the world's key source of narcotics. The Golden Triangle is an area about 1,50,000 sq miles extending from Burma's Chin hills in the west, north to China's Yunan Province, east in to Laos and Thailand's north-western Provinces and south in to Burma's Kayah State. This produces high grade number 4 heroin for the American markets.

Heroin refined in Burma is smuggled into India through Manipur and Nagaland via insurgent organizations which has become a reception point for the entire eastern region of the country. Laboratories have been set up at the Burmese side near the Indian border for manufacturing heroin with the help of acetic anhydride smuggled out of India. The insurgent groups operating in the Golden Triangle are:-

- The Shan State Army (SSA) of Shan State Progress Party (SSPP)
- Karen National Progress Party (KNPP)
- Kachin Independence Army (KIA)
Today Manipur has got the highest number of AIDS cases in the country and mostly due to the sharing of intra venous injections. "Assam has become the main transit route for drug traffickers in the North-Eastern region. Rising numbers of seizure of contraband substances is a pointer to the fact that the State is not lagging far behind other notorious drug smuggling routes".17

**Language Issue**

Assam has been a land of controversy over language. A group of Assamese intellectuals articulated the idea of sovereign independent political status for Assam from the point of view of language and culture. People outside Assam particularly in Bengal have felt that Assam is multilingual, and hence there is no question of a particular regional language for Assam. In Assam, there are indigenous languages other than Assamese. Each tribe in Assam is entitled to develop its own medium of instruction which in turn can be used for civil administration of their own areas. At the same time, the rightful place of Assamese language should not be denied.

The Government of Assam, while promoting the cause of Assamese, must ensure that the other languages also enjoy equal rights among communities which use them as their mother-tongue. From the time of Independence the language issue was tinkered both by the Union and State Governments and have not adopted a scientific approach. In the case of Assam, no steps were taken to restore the rightful place of the Assamese language at the proper time. In the same way nothing was done for the use of such indigenous languages as Bodo, Karbi, Mishing, Dimasa, Tiwa etc. as media of instruction for the students of those language groups. This aroused discontent in the minds of people who speak these languages.
"For six years since the commencement of the constitution Article 350 helped the people speaking languages mentioned in the Eight Schedule, Articles 350 A and 350 B were added only in 1956, but Bodos, Mishings, Karbis, Dimasa etc. were not helped. In the case of the Bodo language the Bodo Sahitya Sabha established on November 16, 1952 had to take up the question of introducing the Bodo language in the primary schools of Bodo students. The Annual Session of the Sabha passed a resolution on 25th January, 1953 demanding the immediate introduction of the Bodo language in the primary stage, but the Government of Assam remained indifferent. It was only in 1956 the Government arranged the publication of the first Bodo primer written by Bandhuram Kachari, Bimala Prasad Chaliha. CM of Assam ultimately decided to introduce in the primary schools of Kokrajhar sub-division as a medium of instruction, and since May 18, 1963 the Bodo students in this sub-division have been able to learn through the medium of Bodo in the primary stage. At the same time they have been able to learn Assamese as an associate language. But the Government was not serious about the publication of Bodo text books. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha movement for the introduction of Roman script ............ Ultimately the Government of India intervened and the Bodos accepted the Devnagari script for their language. The Government of Assam formed itself helpless, and the Asom Sahitya Sabha too had to tolerate the embarrassment". 18

In regards to Mishing and the Karbi languages also the Assam Government did not take timely action. Now it is resolved. Funds should be made available for promoting the language and District Autonomous Council should be made responsible for accounting of these funds. For streamlining the script, in confirmity with the three language formula, any of the three scripts prevailing in the State of Assam should preferably be adopted. If some chose the Roman script that should not be an objection.
Lack of Leadership and Entrepreneurship

Leadership has been defined in many ways by the management thinkers but, perhaps, the most practical way of looking at it is as "A projection of personality - that combination of persuasion, compulsion and example that makes people do what you want them to do". It is difficult to find an organisation as an example of excellence. Success or excellence is achieved by a measurement of outputs of the organization and its quality in relation to its costs and wherever applicable its profitability. It is to be noted, that, the region does have a few exception to the general rule but unfortunately almost all such organizations are from the business - for - profit segment and none in the social, educational, Governmental or public sphere. This scarcity of excellent organizations is reflected in the current state of affairs in our socio-cultural political life with its gradual decadence and debasement. Practically in all Public and Government organizations in short, leadership failure is at its zenith. Prakasa, a non-Assamese Governor of Assam stated that: -

"For twelve years, I was member of the Central Legislative Assembly, but I do not remember during that period, any representatives of Assam herself asking even one question relating to this province or dealing with any problem pertaining to it. They seemed to be more interested in all India questions than in themselves". 20

It does not matter whether these remarks were accurate or not but such remarks made so very often by the non-Assamese were bound to evoke considerable resentment among a section of the Assamese people about the role of their leadership.

Basically, Assamese is an inward looking society. Jokingly it is said that a person from Lower Assam posted to Upper Assam may leave his job but may not leave his native place. If this is the attitude of the people the society is not likely to flourish.
REFERENCES

1. B. Pakem, *Insurgency in North-East India*. 


3. Lt Gen D B Shekatkar, Lecture delivered for Junior Officers 'On Conflict', 2000 - 
   Unpublished.

4. Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, Governor of Assam, excerpted from the text of the 
   talk on "Insurgency in Assam" at the USI New Delhi on 29 July 1998, Journal of the 
   USI of India Vol C XXVIII No 533, July - September, 1998.

   P 293.

6. Rajib Choudhury, "Development before Peace" *North-East Sun*, December 1-14, 
   1999.

7. Newsmen of Golaghat, "Amenities still a far cry for our border areas people" 

8. Ibid.

9. Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, Governor of Assam, Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial 
   Lecture 2000 on "Trans - Regional Movements of Populations : Implications for 
   India's Security" delivered at USI New Delhi September 29, 2000 
   P 31.
10. Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, Governor of Assam report to the President of India on "Illegal Migration in Assam" November 08, 1998.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


21. Explanatory notes to table 3.2 :-

(i) There was no census in Assam in 1981. The figures indicated have been worked out on the basis of 1971-91 growth rate.

(ii) There was no census in Bangladesh in 1971. It was carried out in 1974. The population grew by 40.4% between 1961-74 and another 21.9% during 1974-81.

(iii) The much higher percentage of growth rate in Assam from 1911 to 1971 over the All India and Bangladesh figures indicate migration in to Assam. The All India growth rate for 1921 should be treated as an aberration but even in that decade Assam's growth rate was higher than neighbouring Bengal districts which now constitute Bangladesh.

(iv) The reduced percentage of growth rates for Assam in 1971-91 presents a distorted picture unless one relates it to community-wise percentage of growth in Assam as compared to All India figures. This is shown at the table 3.3.

22. Explanatory notes to table 3.3 :- The decadal growth rate for both Hindus and Muslims for the periods 1951-61 and 1961-71 was higher than their respective All India growth rate, indicating migration of both communities into Assam. However, during the period 1971-91 Hindu growth rate in Assam was much less than the All India figure. Possibly, this was due to large scale population movement of non-Assamese Hindus out of Assam during the students movements and subsequently militancy in the State. In the case of Muslims the Assam growth rate was much higher than the All India rate. This suggests continued large scale Muslim illegal migration into Assam.