CHAPTER – IV

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We have seen how students all over the world play a significant role in any social movement. In India’s freedom movement students were a very important component. Each state had its strength of students along with other groups. They were very active. Assam being under-developed had its first college set up by the initiative of the British in 1901. Prior to this, students had to go to Calcutta for higher education. Therefore, Calcutta remained the centre of activities of the Assamese students. It is also to be noted that colonial policy for establishment of educational institution was to fulfill their own objective. They wanted a group of English educated youth to run the companies. Hence, limited number of schools was established

The students in Assam have a long history of active participation in politics. In fact, with the formation of “Asomiya Bhasa Unnati Sadhini Sabha” in 1885 in Calcutta students began to play an important role in the Assamese social life. The Sabha was dedicated itself to the development of the Assamese language and culture and established its branches in almost all important towns of Assam. Branch was also opened at Kohima of Nagaland. The Sabha was re-christened “Assamese Students Literature Club” although in place like Tezpur the same name was maintained. The main pillars under the establishment of this organisation were doyens of Assamese literature like Padmanath Gohian Baruah, Lakshiminath Bezbarua, Laksheswar Sarma, Hem Chandra Goswami, Tirthanath Kakoti, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, Ghanasyam Baruah, Kanaklal Baruah etc. of Assam. These writers had contributed a lot to the development of literary treasure

1 Singh, A.C. (ed): Youth Movement in North East India, p182.
of Assam as well as contributed to the growth of national awakening among the people of Assam through their writings. “Jonaki” was published by the organisation on January 13, 1889 as its mouth piece. In its first issue it stated that it would be non-political in character, and as such did not include reports on the peasants revolt that took place at that time.5 ‘Jonaki’ was followed by ‘Bijuli’, another Assamese journal published from Calcutta in 1890. A magazine named ‘Mou’ was published on December, 1886 and the editor was Bolinarayan Bora, an engineering student of Assam who studied in London. The appearance of ‘Manu’ an Assamese Journal published from Calcutta was significant. Although, it was short lived, nevertheless it expressed progressive views on current problems of the day. In 1888, two other journals appeared, “The Assam Tara” and “Lara Bandhu”, the later being the first children’s magazine in Assam.6

Newspapers are important media in formation of political consciousness in Assam. Following the models of Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s ‘Sangbad Koumodi’, Eswarchandra Gupta’s ‘prabhakar’ and ‘Hindu patriot’ of Sisir Kr. Ghosh, many newspapers were published from Assam. It is important to note that some Bengali papers also published the news of Assam. Among these ‘Samachar Darpan’, ‘Samachar Chandrika’ and ‘Sanjibani’ are worth mentioning. ‘Samachar Darpan’ got intensified popularity in Assam.7 In the last part of the 19th century, some popular newspapers and magazines were published in Assam. These were ‘Assam Bilasini’ (1871), ‘Assam Mihir’ (1872), ‘Assam Darpan’ (1877), ‘Goalpara Hit Sadhini’ (1876) ‘Assam News’ (1882), ‘Assam Bandhu’ and ‘Times of Assam’ (1885). Along with these, ‘Advocate of Assam’ edited by Mathura Mohan Baruah (1904-09), and ‘Asomiya’ edited by Maheswar Baruah contributed a lot to the formation of political consciousness of Assamese people.8 It is to be noted that ‘Asomiya’ was the mouth-piece of the Congress. Although many newspapers and magazines were published in Assam ‘Oronodoi’ edited by Nathan Brown (1846) can be regarded as the path maker of Assamese news papers and journals. In

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5 Ibid, p41
6 Dutta. A. Assam in the Freedom Movement, p37
7 Barua. Sagar; Vol-1, pp7-8.
8 Ibid. p8.
September, 1894 ‘Assam’ an Assamese weekly was published from Guwahati. It was considered to be ‘National in tone’, meaning thereby that it contributed to the cause of national consciousness of the day. “Assam Banti” (1899), an anglo-Assamese, assumed a moderate tone in dealing with political matters. Be that as it might be, the literary ferment cum journalistic exercises of the 19th century left a rich legacy for the next century. Along with the above mentioned newspapers and journals, some short-lived newspapers and journals also published in Assam which also contributed to the growth of political consciousness in Assam. ‘The Eastern Herald’ (1898), ‘The citizen’ (1905), ‘The Assam Herald’ (1912), ‘Usha’ (1907) and ‘Banti’ were some notable ones. As like Brahmaputra valley some newspapers and journals of Barak valley also contributed to the growth of political consciousness among the people of Assam. ‘Desh Barta’, ‘Jana Shakti’ ‘Paridarshak,’ ‘Sri Hattramihir’, ‘Silchar’ and ‘Siri Hatta Darpan,’ are worth mentioning.

Though the students of Calcutta remained outside the purview of direct political activities and had no quarrels with the British imperialist policies, therefore they dreamt of a developed Assam within the British Empire. Training in liberal English education initiated them to the policies of petitions. Hence, Calcutta took the initial step for the cause of Assam as a part of student activism. On May 21, 1871, under the leadership of students of Presidency College, Manik Baruah and Jaganath Baruah a memorandum was submitted to the newly appointed Viceroy of India, Lord Northbrook on behalf of the Asomiya Chatrar Sahitya Sabha (Literary Club of the Assamese Student). The memorandum reads: When occupied with multifarious affairs of the more important provinces, we pray that your Lordship will occasionally cast your eyes on the conditions of the frontier provinces of Assam to which we belong and which bids fare with all her natural resources obtain a high position, in competition with her sister provinces. And the most effectual means, we submit of developing those resources, would undoubtedly be to connect the province with Bengal by a Railway line.

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9 Dutta, A; Op cit, p38
10 Kalita, R.C., p7.
proposal already brought to your Lordship’s consideration in England.\textsuperscript{11} It is worth mentioning that prior to this the first step towards the Assamese student activism may be found in the memorandum submitted by Assamese students led by Anandaram Dhekial Phukan to A.J. Moffat on his visit to Assam in 1853, to report on the administration of the province, giving their observation of the state. The memorandum reads “That the people, especially the higher classes, are still anxious to instruct their children in the knowledge of European sciences and literature, has been amply proved from the circumstances that several native gentlemen have sent their youth to the government college in the presidency for the express purpose of giving them an English education.”\textsuperscript{12}

Assam was the last to be annexed to the British India only in 1826 by the Treaty of Yandaboo. Though the Britishers came to Assam as ‘saver’ from the Burmese aggression and devastation, they established their Raj as like that of the other parts of India. In the very beginning a section of Assamese people heartily welcomed the British but gradually they began to express their dissatisfaction for the loss of their independence in the hands of the foreign rulers which the people had enjoyed throughout the centuries in the past.

In the very inception of the foreign rule in Assam, Gomdhar Konwar, an Ahom prince on October 1828 first declared revolution against the British. Khamtis and Singphos (1830) and also the Khasis declared revolution against the British in 1829-33. Again the impact of Sepoy Mutiny was also tremendous in Assam. Inspiring with this movement greatly, Moniram Dewan in conspiration with the Charing Raja, planned the seizer of power from the British in Assam with the help of sepoys from the British India troops stationed at Dibrugarh and Golaghat. The plan was foiled which resulted in the public hanging of Moniram Dewan and Piyali Baruah at Jorhat in 1858.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, p7.
\textsuperscript{12} Mills Report on the Province of Assam - 1954, Appendix, J.P. XII.
Peasants of Assam also raised their voice against the exploitation and oppressive rule of the British through the organised Raij Mels. Phulaguri (1861), Rangia and Patharughat are best examples in this. Though, the new awakening touched the heart of the people of Assam and the representatives of different organisations and Associations attended the conferences held at different times in different places but prior to the establishment of Assam Association in 1903 there was no student organisation in Assam. It was seen that a total 8 (eight) duly elected representatives attended the second conference of the INC at Calcutta in 1886 and delivered a speech on the Jury system representing different parts of Assam. For instance, Devi Charan Baruah and Gopinath Bordoloi represented the upper Assam Association, Satyanath Bora from Nagaon Rayat Sabha, Kalikanta Borkakoti - the Shillong Association, Bipin Ch. Pal from the Syhlet Association and Joy Ch. Shome and Kamini Kumar Chanda represented the Habiganj People's Association. In the third session of the INC held at Madras (1887) - the following representatives were represented. Radhanth Changkakoti from upper Assam Association, Lakshmi Kanta Borkakoti from the Assam Conferences and Bipin Ch. Pal as the editor of the 'Tribune'. It is important to note here that most of the representatives of Assam were youths.

Assam Association helped the students of Assam to organise for various problems of Assam. Leaders of this organisation were Manik Ch Baruah, Ghanasyam Baruah, Faiznur Ali and others. For the first two decades of the twentieth century, this provincial organisation served as the only organ for expressing the needs and grievances of the Assamese people. An Association by this name was formed in 1882 at Sibsagar town, which was strictly local. It was therefore, with the formation of this new and somewhat broad-based 'Assam Association' that the growing national consciousness in the province gained momentum.

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15 Deka, Meeta, Op. cit, p43
The beginning of the new century can be regarded as the beginning of the student movement in Assam. The partition scheme of Lord Curzon had drawn the students of Assam into the political field, as the other parts of India with this the birth of a new environment for student activism in Assam. The Britishers, mainly, Lord Curzon wanted to partition Bengal in the name of 'administrative efficiency' and proposed creation of the province of East Bengal and Assam. The rulers were dead-set on the partition of Bengal, yet, as a matter of formality, they pretended to seek the opinion of Assam on the issue. Thus, the Assam Association called upon by the Chief Commissioner of Assam, vide his letter no.-32 for 62-74p. dated 8 January 1904, to offer its view on the proposed 'extension of territorial jurisdiction of Assam by the incorporation of certain district of Eastern Bengal'.

Having studied the pros and cons of the proposal within the limits of its moderate politics, the Association, however, made bold to declare through its resolution dated 14 February, 1904, that the 'cause of Assam and the interest of her people will greatly suffer,' if the annexations were gone through because of the uneven nature of development in the areas to be joined together. Further, the Association apprehended that by the proposed territorial change the historic name of Assam will be obliterated forever, her language will suffer, and the removal of the seat of government to place outside Assam proper and further away from the geographical centre will necessarily make her lose the amount of care and attention which it at present receives from the government.

A general meeting of Assam Association was held on 14 February, 1904 which strongly refused the partition plan of the government. Several branches of the Association, namely, Goalpara, Gauhati, Borpeta, Tezpur, Nowgong, Golaghat and Dibrugarh had already discussed the matter and forwarded their view to the Association. It is noteworthy that only two branches of the Association viz. Dibrugarh and Goalpara (Gouripur) were ready to accept territorial change, but in a limited scale. Finally, the Association strongly refuted the plea that the scheme was in the interest of Assam. Public opinion was against the partition plan of Lord Curzon, though, the Assam Association was in favour for the separate entity of Assam but it did not

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17 Ibid. p53.
oppose the partition scheme of Bengal. And the moderate politicians of Assam urged the government the adequate safeguards for the rights of Assam and Assamese. Thus, the Association extended conditional support to the Curzon plan of partition. But sections of public opinion were opposed to the partition. Media played an important role in this regard. Two leading newspapers of Assam ‘The Advocate of Assam’ edited by Mathura Mohan Bora and ‘Assam Banti’ edited by Padmanath Gohian Baruah took active role in organising public opinion against the plan of partition.

The British administration finally declared the partition of Bengal plan on 16 October, 1905. The partition of Bengal was considered as a ‘grave national disaster’ and the people of Bengal vowed with grim determination to meet the challenge. The day of announcement of the plan was observed as a day of National mourning all over Bengal and the sentiment of the people against the government’s cruel intentions in the form of Swadeshi and boycott quickly spread throughout India which later took the form of Indian National Movement against the British Raj.

The reaction to the scheme was also sharp in Assam as in Bengal. Responding to the clarion call of the leaders of Bengal, protest meetings were held at different parts of Assam such as Dhubri, Goalpara Gouripur, Guwahati and Dibrugarh. National songs were sung and processions were taken out accompanied by shouts of Bandemataram. In some places mass prayers and Rakhi Bandhan were performed symbolising the solidarity among the different communities.

Ambika Giri Roychoudhary stated that the anti-partition agitation did not affect other places of Assam except Gauhati because it was the only place connected to Calcutta by a river way and a railway. Carrying on the Swadeshi movement, some member of ‘seva sangha’ worked in the steamghat & Railway station as porter or coolie every Sunday and being students the European travellers paid them four

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or five times higher than they did the porters and this collection went to the treasury.\(^{19}\)

In Surma valley also meeting were organised at Sylhet, Habiganj, Maulavi Bazar, Silchar, Karimganj and Badarpur. In both the valleys Hindus and Muslims were joint partners of the agitation. The anniversary of the partition day was duly observed on October 16, 1906 at several places in the Assam valley. At Dhubri there was Sankirton in the morning which was heartily joined by all communities - Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammedans. This was followed by tying of Rakhis and a meeting where speeches were delivered even by a lady of the town. A public meeting was held in the same day at Goalpara presided over by Abdol Aziz Saheb, resolutions renewing Swadeshi vow for carrying on the agitation till partition was withdrawn or modified were passed and the first being moved by a Muhammedan. Rakhi Bandhan ceremony was also observed at Dibrugrah. A grand procession was organised in the evening at Dibrugrah passed through the streets singing National Anthem and shouting Bandemataram and Alla-ho-Akbar. In Gauhati also there was a huge procession on the principal streets with flags bearing Bandemataram, singing National songs in Assamese and Bengali. In a meeting in the afternoon, a Muslim youth implored his co-religionists to join the Hindus for political regeneration of India.

Students of Assam were very active in popularising the Swadeshi and boycottt issues. At Tezpur and Borpeta, students and local shopkeepers co-operated to make the indigenous goods popular.\(^{20}\) Rejecting foreign goods, the enlightened Bengali and Assamese people were using Kurkutch for liver pool salt, Benaras sugar instead of foreign sugar and Deshi cloth instead of Manchester cloth. Swadeshi shops were opened at various places of Assam. Among these the majority were opened at Guwahati namely Munshi Taibali, B N. Dey and Co., Brajanath Pandit and Assam Valley Trading Company. The most important of

\(^{19}\) Roychoudhury, A, G Mor Jibanar Dhunuhar Echati, Guwahati-1973, p18

these was the Assam Valley Trading Company, the majority of its share holders were local pleaders.

In Surma valley, which is a Bengali dominated area too, students were very active. They were much influenced by the Bengal partition movement. Responding greatly to the clarion call of Bipin Ch. Pal to boycott government schools forty students came out from their schools. Syhlet National School was established on October 1907 to cater to the needs of the students on voluntary contributions. Same schools were also established at Habiganj, Srimangal, Baniachang and Lakhoi when government issued circulars debarring teachers and students from participating in the anti-British agitation.

These institutions were looked upon by the official circles as the 'hot bed of seditions' exercised in their views, the most pervicious influence over the students. Teachers and students openly took part in organising meetings, processions and picketing of shops selling foreign goods. Political leaflets and pamphlets like 'Swadhin Bharat' and 'Bandemataram' were widely and regularly circulated among the students who were also required to commit to memory the patriotic songs of Bankim Chandra's Anandamath. The national schools were used, like those of East Bengal, as the centres of spreading the agitation, 'students and children from the bulk of the audience at anti-partition meetings and were organised into noisy processions that paraded the streets of moffosil towns shouting Bandematram and interfering with trade. Being alarmed at the increasing anti-British activities of the students, the government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, R.W. Carlyle, the officiating Chief Secretary to the government of Bengal, sent a confidential circular to the district magistrates and collectors directing them to take stern action against educational institutions if their managements did not prevent their students from participating in anti-

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21 PHA. Vol-1, p187  
22 Ibid, p188  
23 Ibid, p188  
24 Ibid, p189
governmental agitations. Disciplinary actions against the teachers and management of educational institutions were taken, many students were jailed, fined and expelled from their institutions. When the movement took a serious turn in certain areas of Eastern Bengal, the government smelt seditions everywhere. Meetings and processions were banned, editors of newspapers were imprisoned and political leaders were deported.

The anti-partition movement of Bengal took a violent turn with the establishment of some terrorist groups with political assassination as motto, these groups published some political leaflets, pamphlets and newspapers like Swadhin Bharat, Bandemataram and Jugantar among which Jugantor worked as the mouthpiece of the revolutionary agitation. In Assam, such revolutionary activities began and the copies of such papers reached Sibsagar, Tezpur and Dhubri and were distributed among the students. Office of Jugantor was found on the notice board of the Cotton College. The voluntary organisations ‘Seva Sangha’ founded by Ambikagiri Roychoudhury turned into a terrorist organisation on the lines of Anusilan Samiti of Bengal. They were said to have collected arms and ammunitions to overthrow the police and higher officials of the government including Bamfylde Fuller, the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Ambikagiri Roychoudhury, Bishnuram Medhi, Triguna Baruah, Raktim Bora and some other young men then, seem to have come under the spell of anarchism for sometimes.

Though, the impact of anti-partition movement in Assam was too limited, but the people and mainly the students got the taste of political involvement. They moved from individualistic achievement like of school and career to the expressive community oriented activity of national movement. Again, due to this movement of Bengal, the notions of Swadeshi, boycott, Swaraj and national education got nation-wide significance. The alien government declared the Minto-Morley

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27 PHA. Vol-1, pp195-196
reforms in 1909 to take away the Indians from the agitational path but could not succeed. Hence, in 1911 the government modified the partition of Bengal but reuniting West and East into the province of Bengal. In 1912, the partition of Bengal annulled and Assam was reconstituted into a Chief Commissioner’s Province which included the Assam valley districts, the Bengal districts of Syhlet, Cachar and Goalpara, and the hill districts of Garo hills, Khasi and Jayantia hills, Naga hills and Lushai (Mizo) hills.

The first provincial level student organisation was founded in Assam in 1916 with the name “Assam Chatra Sanmilan”, the second of its kind in India, the Bihar Chatra Sanmilan being the first. It is to be noted that as like that of the previous students’ organisations, Assam Chatra Sanmilan was also non-political in nature. This was clearly indicated in the speech delivered by Lakshminath Bezbaruah as President in the first session of the Sanmilan held at Guwahati on December 25, 1916. In his speech he stated that the conference had nothing to do with any political propaganda or with political movement of any sort. Therefore, Assam Chatra Sanmilan as an organisation did not formally participate or associate itself with the political nationalist programmes although students of Assam played active roles in different nationalist movements, whether non-cooperation, civil disobedience, boycott of Simon Commission or the Quit India movement.

Assam Chatra Sanmilan took the initiative arousing political consciousness among the students of Assam when neither the National Congress nor the Sahitya Sabha came into existence in the state. Hem Ch. Barua, Omeo Kr. Das, Kuladhar Chaliha, Chandradhar Sarma and other stalwarts of national politics, from Assam attracted attention initially as student leaders. The Congress had no base in Assam till 1920, hence it was the student community which was instrumental in arousing political consciousness amongst the people of the province. Though the Assam Chatra Sanmilan was non-political nature in its first stage, but later presidents of various sessions of the organisation often advocated the idea of active political participation of students in politics. In the wake of proposed reforms of

29 Bhuyan, A.C., Nationalists Upsurge in Assam, p217.
30 Deka, Meeta, Op cit, p63.
Montague-Chelmsford, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, presiding over the session of the Sanmilan at Dibrugarh, questioned the propriety of that part of the constitution of Assam Chatra Sanmilan which debared students from holding political discussion. He argued that such a step would deprive the students of vital aspects of education in their student life.\(^{31}\)

The situation of India became worse after 1919 and the Indians were ready to fight against the alien government for its dictatorial deeds. The Montague-Chelmsford Reform Scheme as embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919 did not satisfy Indian political aspirations. The passing of Rowlatt Act by the British government add fury to the flame as this act characterised the nationalists as “criminals”, “enemies of civilisation”, etc. Indian people strongly opposed the Rowlatt Act declaring it as ‘black law’. Then came the Jaliwanwalbagh tragedy on 13 April, 1919. The Khilafat movement made also a plot for the Indians to fight against the mighty British. Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the Khilafat movement in that he saw in it “an opportunity of uniting Hindu and Muslims” as would not arise in a hundred years. The All India Khilafat Committee adopted Gandhiji’s non-cooperation programme in May, 1920. The historic special session of INC held at Calcutta from 4-9 September, 1920, with Lala Lajpat Rai as president, decided to launch the great non-cooperation movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi against the British Raj. This was a momentous decision which was later confirmed by the Nagpur session of the INC in December, 1920 and which formed a turning point in the history of India’s freedom struggle. I am analyzing the legacy of the freedom movement in detail to establish that pre-independence political participation of students were very active. It is a universal phenomenon.

4.1 Khilafat Movement in Assam:

The impact of All India Khilafat Movement was visible in Assam too. This is an ideal example of attempt towards Hindu-Muslim unity. There are many examples in which this ideology was proved.

Along with the rest of the country, meetings and processions were also taken out in different parts of Assam largely attended by people of both the communities. On October 25, 1919, the Khilafat Day was observed in Kamrup, Darrang, Goalpara and Cachar districts. On that day, Hindus along with their Muslim brethren fasted and prayed for the Khilafat and Islam. On October 19, 1919, there was a hartal and fast all over the town of Dhubri. At Goalpara also a protest meeting was held which was largely attended by people of both the communities. The meeting warned the British Premier not to sign any treaty against the interest of Turkey. 19 March, 1920, was observed as a day of national mourning all over Assam. At Guwahati, Nabin Ch. Bordoloi, Tarun Ram Phookan, Chandranath Sarma, Gopinath Bordoloi, Bishnuram Medhi and Md. Sadulla evinced keen interest in the Khilafat movement. On March 19, 1919, Guwahati observed hartal and it was followed by a public meeting addressed by Tarun Ram Phookan. There were hartals and public meetings at Goalpara, Jorhat, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. A Khilafat meeting was held at Dhubri on 14 November, 1920 where Swadeshi was preached and the audience was asked to boycott foreign goods.

4.2 Role of Students in the Non-Cooperation Movement:

The historic decision of non-cooperation of Mahatma Gandhi after duly approved by the Nagpur session of the INC in December, 1920, had spread throughout the country like the fire of the forest. Eminent leaders of Assam also participated in the historic conference of the INC. After their return from Nagpur they launched the non-cooperation movement in Assam. Among the leaders of the conference,

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32 Bhattacharjee, Arun, Assam in the Indian Independence, p49
Nabin Ch Bordoloi vehemently opposed the non-cooperation programme of Gandhiji as Chittaranjan Das, the great leader of Bengal, who also opposed the same at Calcutta. Bordoloi wrote an article in the Amrit Bazar Patrika denouncing the possibility of the non-cooperation in Assam. But Bordoloi failed to gather support in this sensitive matter from the younger leaders of the representatives like Chandranath Sarma. Hence, B K. Bhattacharjee rightly commented that Chandranath Sarma was 'the torch bearer of the non-cooperation movement in Assam'.

Chandranath Sarma also attended the All India College Students' Conference at Nagpur which was presided by Lala Lajpat Rai, along with Umesh Ch. Das, Bidyanath Sarma, Dibaram Talukdar and other students. There also resolutions were adopted to support non-cooperation movement and call for the immediate and unconditional boycott of government and government aided colleges.

It is to be noted that though the younger leaders like Chandranath Sarma, Ambikagiri Raichoudhury and Triguna Charan Baruah demanded the immediate withdrawal of students from schools which was strongly opposed by the elder leaders like Nabin Ch. Bordoloi and Tarun Ram Phookan.

Influenced by the activities of the students of Calcutta, students of Cotton College like Bidyadhar Sarma, Tarun Bhattacharya, Beda Borthakur, Jagadish Medhi, Sukhdev Goswami and Gunja Barua boycotted the Cotton College. Most probably Bidyadhar Sarma, Tarun Bhattacharya and Bednath Borthakur were the first students in Assam, to leave college. Interestingly some students of Tezpur left Cotton College in support of the non-cooperation movement by putting a notice in the notice-board. Among these students, Kumud Ch. Sarma, a student of 4th year, who received scholarship due to his poverty, showed his patriotic sense by boycotting college before his final examination, is worth-mentioning. Tilak Sarma, another student of the college, who was also the General Secretary

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34 Bhattacharjee. B.K., Chandranath Sarmar Smriti Grantha, p88.
36 Bhuyan, A.C., (ed): Nationalist Upsurge in Assam, p222
of the Cotton College Students’ Union Society, under whose leadership, the students had left the college. The other students of Tezpur who left the Cotton College were - Daksharam Barua, Bogiram Saikia, Joiram Saikia, Kaliram Hazarika, Ramakanta Sarma and Phatik Sarma. Following the footstep of the students of Tezpur, Purna Ch. Sarma of Nagaon, Akshoy Kr. Das and Biswanath Das of Borpeta, Rameswar Bhattacharya of Jorhat and Kabi Ch. Mahanta of Guwahati boycotted the college. Gradually, the students of all over Assam boycotted educational institutions and took active participation in the non-cooperation movement. In a conference held on 17 January, Chandranath Sarma, the steering wheel of the non-cooperation movement in Assam, announced his decision to suspend his practice in the bar. To start a national fund for the maintenance and education of the college students who might not be supported by their guardians for boycotting the colleges against their will.

A trend of boycott emerged among the school students along with their college counterparts in Assam. Bijoy Ch. Bhagawati left the school and joined the movement whole-heartedly. He wrote many students of Tezpur to join in the movement by boycotting their schools. In 1921, students of Mangaldoi boycotted their schools. A national school was opened at Mangaldoi for those students. Rajanikanta Barua, Sitanath Barua, Santiram Bora, Padma Bhagawati, Dharmakanta Deka, Bharalu Deka, Judheswar Deka, Bhumidhar Deka, Banikanta Deka, Champaram Deka were the students who left their schools at Mangaldoi. Praneswar Sarma, Golap Ch. Sarma Doloi, Taranikanta Sarma of Rangia left their schools. Amit Ch. Sarma, Rajani Kanta Bhattacharya, Dharmakanta Sarma, Muhidhar Sarma, Lakhikanta Barman, Prabhat Ch. Sarma, Ghanashyam Goswami, Dharmeswar Goswami, Biswanath Sarma and Rajeswarlal Maskara left school in Nalbari. In Nagaon also, students left schools in a large way. The school students inspired by Purna Ch. Sarma, Phul Sing Chetry, Mehboob Ali

38 Das, O.K., Ashahayog Andolanat Assam, p.13.
42 Souvenir, 43rd Assam Sahitya Sabha, Rangia. 1973. p.73.
43 Barna, Sagar, Vol-1, p53.
Narendranath Hazarika, Islam Khan, Mohan Ch. Guha who already left college, left their school. Among them were Sarada Kanta Borkakati, Dambarudhar Hazarika, Hansha Nath, Surendra Singh, Abdul Munnaf, Dhanbor Pator, Mahendra Hazarika and others who joined actively in the movement. All students of P.R. Govt. High School of Goalpara boycotted their school and joined in the movement on 1 March, 1921. Students of Jorhat also boycotted schools protesting against the brutality shown by Deputy Commissioner Mr. Phil, who had beaten three students mercilessly. Students of Dibrugarh, after listening to the speech delivered by Chandranath Sarma in a student meeting finalised to leave schools. Listening to his lecture, 50 students of Judge School left school.

The boycotting of educational institutions by students in large scale in every corner of Assam made it inevitable to open up national schools. The impact of Gandhiji’s call to boycott educational institutions run or managed by British was also tremendous in this regard.

The Congress workers established a fund for accommodating the students who boycotted their schools and colleges. Gopinath Bordoloi promised a donation of Rs 250/- and Chandranath offered all his valuables for the fund. ‘The Assam Club’ and the residence of Manik Ch. Baruah at Uzan Bazar acquired for the purpose. The residence of Dr. Harekrishna Das of Pan Bazar and the Kumar Bhaskar Natya Mandir were also required for the same purpose. Again, when news reached Assam about the establishment of national universities, colleges and schools in different parts of the country, the leaders of Assam too engaged themselves in establishment of national educational institutions in Assam. Guwahati was the first among others to establish a national school. Tarun Ram Phookan, Kamakhya Baruah, Bishnu Ram Medhi and others organised a meeting to discuss the subject of establishment of a national college which was then

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44 Sarma, Purna Chandra, Mor Oiti Suwarani aru Nagao Jilat Mukti Sangram, Vol-1, p81
46 Bhattacharjee, B.K., Chandranath Sarmar Smriti Grantha, p221.
47 Barua, Sagar, Vol-1, p51
48 Dutta, Nanu, Swadhinata Andolanat Asom, p20.
thought to be a matter of great importance. A historic decision had been taken in this meeting to turn the Sonaram High School into a national college. Students of Sonaram High School heartily responded to the decision for setting up a national college, they even threatened the school authority with leaving the school en masse if the school was not converted into a national school.49

It is to be noted that along with the Brahmaputra valley, the students of Surma valley of Assam played an active role in the non-cooperation movement. Following immediately the Calcutta special session, the Surma Valley Association also summoned session of the Surma Valley Political Conference on 19-20 September, 1920 under the chairmanship of Abdul Karim, in the Ratan Mandir Loknath Town Hall of Sylhet, to discuss the Congress programme of non-cooperation and had adopted an unanimous resolution resulting to an immediate total boycott of schools instead of a gradual boycott.50 On 22 September, 1920, Bipin Ch. Pal delivered a rousing speech on national education at a crowded meeting.

Gradually it spread throughout Assam and the students acted as the volunteers of the Congress. On the basis of the instruction issued by the Congress Working Committee, the APCC held a meeting on 27 November, 1921 where it had decided to form the Assam National Volunteer Corps. As thousands of students enrolled as volunteers, the national schools soon appeared to have become Swaraj camps from which volunteers were sent out to every village in the district to enroll workers and collect funds for Mr. Gandhi’s army and treasury, ‘the avowed object of which was to overthrow the government as by law established.’51

The volunteers of the Congress worked for the popularisation of Khadi and to ban the sell of opium in every corner of Assam to give a tremendous blow on the revenue system of the government. Pointing out the popularity of Assamese Endi,

50 Home Deptt., Poll-Deposit, Dec., 1920, No.-84, FR. Ending 2nd Half of September, 1920, NAI.
Muga and Paat throughout the world, P C. Roy in his presidential address in 4th session of Assam Chatra Sanmilan held at Tezpur in 1919, urged the women-folk not to abandon the art of weaving. Highly influenced in his speech, Omeo Kr Das, on behalf of the student community, called upon the people of Assam to be self-reliant. A resolution was also adopted for the boycott of all foreign goods and for the promotion of Swadeshi or Indian goods. It is to the great credit of the students of Assam that they could inspire the people with the idea of self-reliance even before the Congress had passed a resolution to this effect in 1920 at a special session held in Calcutta. Again, it was a matter of great concern that, Lakhi Das, a science student, invented a small spinning wheel and organised a girls' volunteer corps for spinning and weaving. While young girls spun yarn on this machines, their mothers sang the heart-rending song, 'maye diya dhariya kaporu murot tuli lobi aai murot tuli lobi'. Khadi got tremendous popularity in Assam, therefore, during his visit to Assam in August, 1921, Gandhi was so impressed that, 'he expressed hope that with a loom in every house Assam could take Swadeshi earlier than provinces in India'. The volunteers of the Congress launched a strong campaign all over the province against the use and sell of opium. Since Assam had a large number of opium addicts, the APCC decided to devote a good part of its campaign towards the eradication of the menace of opium smoking. Students of national schools at Tezpur, the Jatiya School, toured the villages under the leadership of the teachers, gathered facts about the incidence of opium smoking, explained the harmful effects of the opium habit and thus popularise the cause of non-cooperation. Bijoy Ch. Bhagawati engaged himself in the picketting in front of the opium shops at Sootea. The students of Raha National High School in Nagaon succeeded in organising a big movement against the opium habit in the villages of the district. Borpujia, Charaibahi, Jaluguti, Morigaon, Baghara, kumai, Bhakatgaon, Manaha, Sildubi, Hiloikhunda, Kajolicuk, Nakhola, Lalmati were the villages that the students had visited and

52 Kalita, Samir. Lokanyay Omeo Kumar Das, p56.
55 Ibid. p43
arranged several meetings and explained the harmful effects of the opium habit, drinking liquor etc. They also requested the villagers to boycott foreign goods to become self-reliant.

In the Surma valley also, students were mainly engaged in picketing liquor and ganja shops and they also boycotted shops selling foreign cloths. These were carried out by the instruction given by the college boycotting students. Another programme of non-cooperation movement was for national volunteers corps which had also succeeded tremendously in Assam. The APCC held a meeting on 27 November, 1921 and decided to form Assam National Volunteers Corps. The response was prompt and positive and thousands of common people enrolled themselves as volunteers. Needless to say, students formed the bulk of the corps.

It is note-worthy that the activities of the students caused a great deal of concern to the alien administration, which reported with alarm that, “the gist of the scheme is that colonies of students should be planted all over the country to take up social service as well as propaganda, the idea being clearly stated that, if these colonies of young men earn the good will of the masses by their services, they may easily induce masses to suspend the payment of taxes so as to paralyse the administration.”

Seeing the tremendous works done by the volunteers in the field of social works which alarmed the government and which compelled the government to declare these acts as unlawful. Government officers were vested with special powers to deal with these organisations, under the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

It was observed that the non-cooperation movement in Assam was complete success in establishing national schools and developed an opium prohibition movement. Omeo Kr. Das, one of the prominent student leaders of Assam, reconcluded that as a result of the non-cooperation movement, the sell of opium dropped from 1800 mounds to 900 mounds. And the sale of cigarettes dwindled.

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appropriately; the smokers were forced with the necessity of smoking in secret.\textsuperscript{59}

It was found that the big drop in opium consumption in Assam from 1640 mounds (262 seers per 10,000) in 1919-20 to 840 mounds (110 seers per 10,000) in 1924-25.\textsuperscript{60}

Though the students of Assam was playing their role actively in the movement but Gandhiji’s visit to Assam in August 1921, had further boosted their strength. Gandhiji’s visit to Assam had a very strong impact on the freedom movement of Assam. Faced with a new urge and urgency, the APCC decided to implement the Swadeshi programme before 30 September of the year as Gandhi said only then Swaraj could be attained.

Assam also responded to the hartal call whole-heartedly. Guwahati observed a complete hartal on the day Prince of Wales landed in India with the rest of the country. Along with others, students also boycotted their schools and colleges on that day. A big gathering was held in front of the residence of T.R. Phookan in the afternoon. Addressing it, Phookan hailed the enthusiastic responses from the people as the “visible sign of approaching Swaraj.” Hartal was also observed in other towns of Assam.

Finally, Gandhi suspended the non-cooperation movement following the tragic incident that took place at Chauri Choura in Gorokhpur district of Uttar Pradesh on 5 February, 1922. A total 22 policemen were killed brutally in the incident. As Gandhi was a firm believer of Ahimsa, hence hearing about the incident he decided to withdraw the movement.

It can be said that Chandranath Sarma was the main pillar of non-cooperation movement in Assam, who convinced the student community of the province to join in the movement actively. Hence, it can be said that the student was the soul force of the non-cooperation movement of Assam as like that of the other parts of

\textsuperscript{60} Deka, Meeta, Op.cit, p78
the country and their inflicting, unbending determination to throw out the foreign rule from India made the movement a successful one.

4.3 Simon Commission and the Students of Assam:

A new era in the freedom struggle had begun with the visit of Simon commission to India. A great patriotic enthusiasm had again been seen which originated among the students when the Commission first landed in India on February 3, 1928, headed by John Simon.

The wave of students' opposition to the Commission was clearly visible among the students of Assam along with the rest of the country. It is worth-mentioning that though the 1920s saw a definite desire on the part of the students of Assam to play a progressive role in the changing political situation of the country but till 1928 there was no change in the constitution of Assam Chatra Sanmilan prohibiting political discussions. Addressing the 13th conference of Assam Chatra Sanmilan, T. R. Phookan spoke in favour of a system of education aimed at preparing the students for the practical world enabling them to serve the nation better.61 But the imperialist government fearing its future impact on the students did not approve his presidential address. The report said: 'The president in his address also declared that students should attend political meetings and discussions, past and present politics, and if necessary, join armless war against the government for Swaraj'.62 A debate also originated in the conference that whether students of Assam would participate in the Simon Commission’s visit or not. Some strongly protested students’ participation mentioning that it would surely violate the provision of the constitution of the Sanmilan. But a final decision had been arrived on the matter of participation while R.K. Goswami, the General Secretary of the Sanmilan, argued that it was not from any political consideration that students should participate in the boycott movement, but that they ought to participate on the grounds that the exclusion of the Indians in the

62 Ibid. p55.
Commission was an affront to Indian as a whole. It was mainly on the ground that the Student Conference decided to participate in the boycott movement. 

Protest against the all-white Simon Commission was also spontaneous in the Surma valley. Students of Sylhet and Karimganj stayed out of their classes on the day. On 3rd February, 1928, fifteen percent students of the Government High school and thirty percent of the Nilomoni High School did not attend their schools. The Headmaster of the Government High school expelled thirteen students but he was subsequently compelled to revoke his orders.

It is to be noted that during this period, the development of Indian youth movement and the leftward orientations of Indian politics since 1928 was remarkable. In Assam also, during the early period of National struggle T R Phookan urged the students to join the youth Association. Students like Bijoy Ch. Bhagowati, Mahendra Mohan Choudhary and others from Cotton College joined the Association and played active role in raising fund for the organisation after the successful completion of the first session of youth Association at Golaghat on 15-16 October, 1929, with T.R. Phookan in the chair. According to official reports, this Association was 'an attempt to unite the several young men's associations in the villages under the control of a provincial committee.' By the end of 1929, numerous youth organisations had come to be established including the setting up an All-Assam Volunteer Crops for social service. On November 3, 1929, a meeting of the Youth League was held at the Debidol compound at Sibsagar. Realising the danger of the students raising the imperialist government wanted to put brake on it. Mr. Small, the Director of Education, warned the students' conference that discussions of politics in its forums would be tantamount to losing all government help and sympathy in future.

65 Delhi Records, 1 Home Poll, File 1, F.R. for the month of Feb, 1928, NAI.
It was observed that though the protest against the visit of Simon Commission, the students of Assam had succeeded in awakening an intense spirit of nationalism engulfing the whole Province, a nationalism to which all patriotic people of Assam could adhere to without questioning. Again, the heroic role played by the student community of Assam in this period laid the foundation for the eventful coming years of the 1930s.

4.4 Role of Students in the Civil Disobedience Movement in Assam:

It was a matter of great concern that though most of the decisions of the Lahore Congress were to be implemented or welcomed but difference of opinions among the eight delegates of Assam who returned from the Lahore Congress on the matter of resignation and council boycott, was a matter of great disappointment for the students of Assam. But there was a great response of the students to the call for observing 26th January as Independence Day caused serious concern to the authorities of the educational institutions. Preparations were made by Gauhati District Congress Committee and Assam Youth League to hoisting tricolour at the Jubilee Garden at Guwahati. Students of Cotton College decided to join in the programme and they put up notices in the notice board urging participation in the programme. The national tri-colour was hoisted by T.R. Phookan, the President of APCC. The function closed with mass singing of Bandemataram.

Independence Day was also observed throughout Surma valley with great enthusiasm. The national tri-colour was unfurled not only on private houses or business firms but also on motor vans. A meeting was also held with Brajendranarayan Choudhury in the chair where independence manifestation was

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72 PHA, Vol-2, p143
A procession was also taken out in the evening with the due permission of the authorities and paraded all the main streets of the town. In Silchar, Independence Day was also observed with great enthusiasm.

In Gandhiji’s historic Dandi March, Liladhar Baruah from Assam participated. Baruah was successful to create immense patriotic sense in the students of Assam and his message had the electric effect of drawing out those who were sitting on the bench. There was thus a clear call for the youth to part away with the leaders and work on their initiatives. A meeting was held at Nagaon Jubilee Field in the presence of Liladhar Baruah. It was the meeting that Haladhar Bhuyan, a local leader, agreed to conduct the movement in the Nagaon district. It is to be noted that in Nagaon, the students distributed salt from house to house on that day the meeting was held. After successful completion of the programme at Nagaon, a procession was also taken out at Tezpur led by Liladhar Baruah where the tri-colour was carried by Bedanta Sarma, a student of class VIII of Tezpur Govt. High School. A public meeting was held refusing the orders of the DC and SP Liladhar Baruah was arrested and sentenced to four months imprisonment while Bedanta Sarma had to be released for want of evidence. However, he was later punished with the rustication from the school for the rest of his life. The mass people of Assam again showed their spirit with the arrest of Jawahar Lal Nehru on 14th April, 1930. A hartal was organised by school children on that day and public meetings were organised in different parts of Assam valley. On 11 April all but three student of Bebejia Minor School, Nagaon, observed hartal with great spirit and were joined by about ten students of Demow Minor School. The students had taken out a procession, singing National songs, and thereafter held a meeting at the Bebejia station field. The students memorized the life history or contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru and strongly condemned the repressive acts of the colonial government.

73 Ibid, p142
75 Ibid, p78.
77 Asomtaka. April. 27. 1930.
4.5 Role of Students against Cunnigham Circular :

A new wave of patriotism had been created by Cunningham Circular among the students of Assam with the help of which Congress leaders like Hem Ch. Baruah and Omeo Kr. Das turned the wave into a mass movement. Picketing against the circular had began at Guwahati with the re-opening of Cotton College after the summer vacation on July 10, 1930. A huge public meeting was held at Curzon Hall on 9th July to decide the further course of action in this regard. Hem Ch Baruah appealed to the student community to join in the freedom struggle, in the meeting. Responding to the prominent leaders of Assam, Bijoy Ch. Bhagowati, Baliram Das, Chandra Kr. Sarma, Girindra Kr. Choudhary, Bhabani Prasad Baruah, Dwijendra Nath Bhuyan, Robin Kakati, Nagendra Nath Gogoi, Deben Choudhary, Jitendra Malla Baruah, Birija Choudhary and Trithanath Sarma left Cotton College and join the movement.78 Rajani Kanta Goswami, Secretary of Assam Chatra Sanmilon, Radhika Ram Das and Naranarayan Goswami also gave up their education from Earle Law College of Guwahati.79 Picketing was also started at Cotton Collegiate School on July 29, 1930.80 Students of Sonaram High School also started picketing. But here neither the heads of the institutions nor the civil authorities took any action against the picketeers. Due to the efforts of Omeo Kr. Das and Hem Ch. Baruah, a special session of Assam Chatra Sanmilon was held at Guwahati in the mid-July in the premises of Hari Sabha of Pan Bazar. Presiding over the session, Omeo Kr. Das said : Mr. Cunningham is a puppet in the hands of British imperialism. The student movement is not directed against him. The aim of the student movement must be to expel British imperialism from the soil of India. So long as British imperialism was not expelled from the soil of India, not one, but thousands of Cunningham will emerge. Therefore, the aim of the student movement must be complete removal of British imperialism.81 Mohendra Mohan Choudhary reflected that the presidential speech of Omeo Kr. Das greatly

78 Barua, Sagar, Vol-2, p82.
80 Asonuya, Aug, 1930.
81 Kalita, Samin, Op.cit, p23
influenced the students to join in the freedom struggle of India. In the meeting where at least 3000 students were attended, resolutions were also adopted to boycott schools and colleges by the students as a marked protest against the Cunningham Circular. An Action Committee was formed with Bishnuram Medhi as president and Bijoy Ch. Bhagowati as Secretary in the meeting, which would look after the smooth conduct of the movement. The student community of Assam, after this special session practically involved in the Cunningham Circular agitation, e.g., the freedom movement of the country. The leaders of the movement decided to spread the Civil Disobedience movement into the rural areas through their students. Therefore, they sent some of their selected students to their own home district to spread the message of the Civil Disobedience movement among the rural masses. About the leading role played by the students prominent leftist leader Gouri Shankar Bhattacharya commented, "In reality the vanguard of the non-cooperation of 1921 and the Civil Disobedience movement was constituted by student community, the rural youth and the Assamese peasantry, particularly the tribal peasantry.

Gradually, students protest against the Cunningham Circular intensified in every corner of Assam, in turn helped the Congress to conduct the Civil Disobedience movement. Rohini Kr. Choudhary said in the Assam Legislative Assembly "The Congress in Assam valley division, as far as I know, was poor of funds. They were unable to provide for volunteers. But the Cunningham Circular enable them to find some volunteers to help the Congress movement

Protest against the Cunningham Circular was intensified at Surma valley. It was observed that widespread protest against it often took violent form.

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82 Ibid, p.24
83 Barua, Sagar, Vol-2, p.83.
84 Ibid. p.83.
Government repressive measures against the students were intensified till the end of the first week of August 1930, innumerable arrests were made and twenty six boys were convicted at Guwahati. It was observed that the fighting of the students against the Cunningham order was tremendous after the re-opening of their schools closed for summer holidays. The students of Borpeta High School decided not to attend the school on July 14, the day of re-opening of their school, till the circular was withdrawn. Out of 450 students, a total 350 had decided the same. They stayed away from the class for 5 or 6 days. With no directives coming from the Congress or any other quarter, a section of the students started picketings all the eight gates of the school. On 29 July, Brajendranath Das, Dinabandhu Ozah, Madhab Ch. Das and Nagendranath Ghosh were arrested for picketing and immediately thereafter 144 was imposed in Barpeta forbidding processions and meetings. But a crowd of about 1000 students and guardians attended a meeting addressed by Chandra Prabha Saikia on the occasion of Tilak Memorial Day on August 1, 1930, who had come at the request of the students. She, in her speech, urged the student community to take a positive role in the dire situation of the country. Though, section 144 was imposed in Barpeta but defying to this, a procession was taken out participating more than thousands of young boys and marched in front of the offices of Deputy Commissioner and the S.D O. As the air rang with the slogans ‘Bandemataram’ the procession marched ahead carried national flag, a large portrait of Tilak and play cards bearing such slogans as ‘Banish foreign goods and intoxicating drinks, and use khadi’. The authorities of the government, perturbed by these developments made all efforts to re-open the school. The Deputy Commissioner announced that if picketing was not lifted within 7 days all the boys would be arrested and force would be used to open the school. All the efforts of the authorities became futile and schools had to remain closed till 9 of August. Four students were arrested at Sibsagar for picketing in front of the local high school, and convicted and awarded three months imprisonment. On 26 July, the buildings of the Sibsagar Govt. High School were

87 PHA. vol-2. p158.
88 Bora. Sheila, Op cit, p79.
burnt down. The students of Jhanji School were also decided to boycott the school by organising a meeting on 4 August by opposing to Cunningham Circular. The result was the curtailment of all the government aids to the school. At Jorhat the students held a meeting with Harinarayan Baruah in the chair and took the decision to oppose the circular. As the circular was not received at the Bezbaruah School of Jorhat, the students of this school decided to join the mass movement by picketing at the Govt. High School. Sarbeswar Bordoloi and some other students of Govt. School were arrested and remanded to custody. Meeting was also held at Dibrugarh on July 26 where two representatives who had returned attending the meeting of a Assam Chatra Sammilon had addressed the gathering. The students of Dibrugarh decided to oppose the Cunningham Circular in this meeting when the Govt. and government aided schools were re-opened on July 28, the student started their picketings. Picketing was also started at Dergaon and Abhayapuri. It is a matter of great condemnation that name of the candidates could not appear for the final Law Examination at the Earle Law College, Guwahati, due to the picketing of the college from 4 August. The Commissioner, Assam Valley Division who was the President of the college asked the University to treat all those students who did not appear in the examination as having failed. It was observed that the alien government took intensified repressive measures to stop the student community of Assam to take part in the processions and picketing but these became futile. On the contrary, they participated actively in all the programmes of the Congress to make the movement a grand success.

4.6 The Issue of National Schools:

National schools were set up in different parts of Assam during the period of civil-disobedience movement, specially resulted by the issue of Cunningham circular. Kamrup Academy, a purely non-government school was established at Guwahati.

89 PHA, vol-2, pp158-59
92 Asomiya, 10 Aug, 1930
The students and their guardians, who refused to sign the undertaking as ordered by Mr. Cunningham, could be regarded as the main spirit in the establishment of the school. Kesavanarayan Dutta was the first Headmaster of the school and the school was affiliated to the Calcutta University on June 25, 1931.\(^{94}\) By July 19, eight teachers were appointed and more than two hundred students enrolled.\(^{95}\) The number of the students rose to three hundred and fifty two in March 1931, five hundred and four in March 1932 and four hundred and seventy nine in March 1933. Regarding Kamrup Academy, The Assam Tribune commented, “The Kamrup Academy was a real centre of integration to teachers, students and guardians belonging to various linguistic and ethnic groups of Guwahati and outside.”\(^{96}\) ‘Tezpur Academy,’ a new English School was started at Tezpur in a meeting held under the presidentship of Padmanath Gohain Baruah as a mark protest to the Cuningham Circular.\(^{97}\) With the leading role played by local personalities like Jadav Ch. Das, Janaki Nath Sarma, Dhani Ram Talukdar, Banamali Das and others, Barpeta Vidapeeth was established at Barpeta. The school started with Jagadish Medhi as the first Headmaster with 199 students from August 1931. At Sibsagar also, Bhaban Ch Gogoi established a school to cater the educational needs of the students refusing to comply with the terms of the Cunningham Circular. An English school was also set up by Sonaram Dutta. Some other institutions were set up in different parts of Assam. The best examples in this regard were Public High School at Dibrugarh, Karinganj and Cachar High Schools, National Schools in Moulvi Bazar and Habiganj.\(^{98}\)

It is observed that some of these institutions are playing immense role in the field of education imparting knowledge even today and earning the reputation for them as the excellent centres of learning competing with the modern educational institutions

\(^{94}\) PHA, vol-2, p232.
\(^{95}\) Bora, Sheila, Op.cit, p76.
\(^{96}\) Barua, Sagar, vol-2, p95.
\(^{97}\) Dutta, A. Op.cit, p171
\(^{98}\) Ibid. pp172-73
In Golaghat, Shankar Baruah and Bhoia Baruah joined the movement following the footsteps of the Congress leaders. The enthusiastic students established Golaghat Students’ Union and Golaghat Union Library at this time. The newly established library became the centre of the student activities.

It can be said that after observing a whole scenario of the Civil Disobedience movement in India and specially in Assam that the student community of Assam had played a tremendous role with great thrill to throw out the Britishers from India but the movement had failed to achieve its utmost desired goal ‘The complete Independence or Purna Swaraj’ like non-cooperation movement. It can again be said that the Cunningham Circular was the sole issue which brought the student community to the fold of the Civil Disobedience movement though they were not interested fully in the beginning. Krishnanath Sarma was right when he commented on Cunningham Circular as “out civil cometh good”.

Students of Assam also followed the same. Seeing the active, energetic and enthusiastic role played by the students of Assam in the civil disobedience movement, K.N. Dutt rightly commented: The 1930 movement in Assam was however more or less a student movement. The student movement merged in the civil disobedience movement and hundreds of students participated in hartals, strikes and picketings and courted arrest and imprisonment both in 1930 and 1932.

4.7 Role of Students of in the Assam in the Quit India Movement:

The role of Assam was remarkable in the Quit India movement which was chalked out by the Indian National Congress to fight against the British with the aim to throw out the British Raj from India. The failure of the Cripps Mission had nipped all the hopes of the Indians in the bud and finally the AICC in its Bombay session had adopted the historic Quit India movement resolution on 8 August.
1942 which said, "immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity".\textsuperscript{102} Gandhiji was arrested on 9 August. When the news of arrest of Gandhiji and other top leaders of the Congress spread throughout India like wildfire, the people of India came out from their homes to fight against the British the battle with utmost determination 'Do or Die'. The top leaders of APCC were also arrested on the same day of Gandhiji's arrest. Among student leaders Gauri Shankar Bhattacharyya and Rameswar Talukdar were arrested and kept in Guwahati jail and after some screening, were released.\textsuperscript{103}

By another resolution the working committee called upon the students of Assam to resort to an indefinite strike in the schools and colleges and join the movement under the leadership of the Congress, which strengthened the students power in Assam in the Quit India movement.

Gradually, the students of Assam came out to the streets forgetting their ideological differences to fight the last battle of freedom movement against the British government. The students of Darrang district, along with the rest of the Province played a heroic role with inflicting and unbending determination to free their country from the foreign yoke. It was observed that the district could be regarded as the only district where several organised attacks were made to hoist national tri-colour in the government offices such as police station, Railway stations and court buildings. The hoisting of Tri-colour at Dhekiajuli and Gohpur police station by unarmed people, mostly students, with utmost determination and with following the non-violent principle of Gandhiji taking bullets into their hearts and bearing atrocities and brutality of the colonial force can be cited as the notable example in the history of Quit-India movement. Flags were hoisted in the Behali and Sootea police stations. Golok Saikia, a fifteen year student of Sootea High school and Golok. Ch. Kakoti hoisted the Congress flag in the compound of Sootea police station at 5 A.M. in spite of the presence of armed police.\textsuperscript{104} It is to

\textsuperscript{102} Barua, Sagar, vol-2, p129.
\textsuperscript{103} Home deptt., File No. 3/31/42, Poll.(9) & K.W., NAI
\textsuperscript{104} Bora, Sheila, Op.cit, p165.
be noted that after the arrest of senior leaders in Darrang district, the movement was conducted by the young leaders like Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla, Gohan Ch. Goswami and others, who organised resistance movement throughout the district. The Quit-India movement was intensified in all the places of Darrang district such as Kalabari, Barangabari, Gohpur, Bihali, Chariali, Sootea and Jamuguri besides the town of Tezpur. Participating in the Quit-India movement actively, the leaders mostly students organized peaceful processions and demonstrations throughout the district to avoid unnecessary clashes with the authorities but atrocities on the masses through provocation was made in different times, from different sections of people. On 9 September, 1942, a procession of about two hundred people, including school boys marched through the streets of Mangaldoi town raising congress slogans and distributing a congress leaflet entitled "Nikhil Bharat Congress Committee Nirdeshawali" (Directives of the APCC). Though the congress leaders followed the principle of Gandhi while organising processions and picketings but they faced tremendous atrocities of the armed police of the colonial administration. At Dhekiajuli on 20 September, about 5000 people led by Kamala Kanta Das proceeded to hoist the national Tri-colour in the Dhekiajuli police station were meted with severe brutality of the armed police. This incident deserves to be written in gold in the history of Freedom movement of India. A total eight innocent and unarmed people proceeding to the thana with Gandhi’s non-violence mantra killed on the spot, including three women. Though it was mentioned in the government report that only 8 people had been killed in the incident but according to another source a total twenty people had died and hundreds were injured at Dhekiajuli. Similar incident was occurred at Gohpur when police opened fire to an unarmed procession at about 5000 people who tried to hoist the national flag in the Gohpur police station. Kanaklata Baruah, a sixteen year old girl who led the procession was gunned down. Mukunda Kakoti and Hemakanta Baruah also met the same fate

105 Bora, Sheila, Op cit, p363.
106 Tamuli, Lakshmmath, Bharatar Swadhinata Sabgramat Asomor Avadan Sanghat Aru Sohoyogor Etihash, p269.
The movement touched the heart of the people of North Lakhimpur district where picketings and procession were the main tools of the Quit-India movement. On August 9, a bandh was observed protesting the arrest of the leaders of the country. A fund was raised up by the students to conduct the movement. Special examples can be cited in this regard mentioning the incident that took place on 10 September, the day on which Lakshmi Sarma, a young student, lay down in front of the school requesting the teachers and the students not to attend the school. The officer in-charge of the local police station beat him brutally till he started bleeding from his mouth. The other students such as Tilak Dutta, Khargeswar Sarma and Hari also met with a similar atrocities for picketing in front of the court.

The Quit-India movement was also intensified in Sibsagar and “the orthodox congress campaign to seize authority” began from the first week of September 1942.

It is also to be noted that during the period Quit-India movement the student community of Assam played another important role in the critical situation of war volunteer crops known as Shanti-Sena. The Shanti-Sena were organised in Assam for maintaining the peace and order. The purpose of this volunteer corps was not to come into the conflict with any other authority but to render all possible services to the people. They also undertook relief operation volunteers of Shanti Sena could be sent at almost all important railway station in Assam distributing food and medicine to the distress evacuees and disposing the dead. Again defence parties were organized Shanti-Sena through out the country and regular vigilance were maintained throughout hundreds of villages in the province resulting in an appreciable fall in crimes in the villages. Towns were linked with villages by a system of daily dak-runners. Medicine units were organised in every nook and corner of the province and training centres were opened from May 1942.

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108 APCC Report on Atrocities Committed in 1942, OEHM.
109 Home Deptt., Poll-I, K.W. to File No. 15/9/42 Poll. NAI.
110 Bora, Sheila, Op.cit, p145
not only for physical training but also for training in first aid, spinning and agriculture.\footnote{111}

Though, the members of the Sena were the students but they had done notable work in the districts in Assam. The Sena unit of Sibsagar by keeping a close watch on all illegal transactions of basic commodities done by the local traders and the mill-owners to create a scarcity in the local market. When a few cases were detected by the Senas and handed over to the police, it is interesting that the S P passed an order to the effect stoppage of any cart or lorry or any other loads by the Shanti Sena would be considered a violation of the govt. rules.\footnote{112} A leading role played by Parag Chaliha, a college student, and captain of the unit of Shanti Sena who apprehended black marketeers in mustard oil. Due to the raid done in a few godowns a large quantity of hoarded salt, sugar and cloth were seized. The commodities were later sold to the public at fair price at the Kaliprasad Memorial Mandir.\footnote{113} At Tezpur, Shanti-Sena, Mitru Bahini and student volunteers were organised by Biswa Sarma.\footnote{114} In the Nagaon district, over 2000 volunteers were in a state of preparedness to answer the call of the nation.\footnote{115} At Golaghat, Congress Seva Dal was transferred in to Shanti Sena organisation to organise provincial camp at Golaghat for the training of Shanti Sena units.\footnote{116}

The organisation of Shanti Sena was so disciplined that once Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who attended a Sena's rally at Boko during his visit to Assam in 1941, had commented, 'I would not forget easily the sight I have seen here.\footnote{117}"

It is worth-mentioning that a group of students and youths also participated in the Quit-India movement following the path of violence and revolution known as

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\item \footnote{111}{J N. Collections. Part-V, S.No.-72, NML.}
\item \footnote{112}{The Student. Aug. 1942, vol-2, No -8, NML.}
\item \footnote{113}{Barua. H.N. , (ed). Op.cit, p130}
\item \footnote{114}{Ibid. p131}
\item \footnote{115}{Ibid. p373}
\item \footnote{116}{Tamuli. Lakshminath, p270.}
\item \footnote{117}{Dutt, K.N., Op.cit. p99}
\end{itemize}
'Agusteers'. The contribution of the Augusteers were also remarkable which would be discussed in a separate sub-chapter later.

The Quit-India movement in Assam was a predominantly student's movement, joined by the middle class men and women in the city and the peasants in the villages. By January, 1943, the August movement had subsided and the students started returning to their educational institution. But some of them did not go back at all. Other students could not appear in the selection examination as they were just out of the jail. These students were also debarred from joining any government post because of their participation in the political movement. In the year 1943, not a single student of Naduar High School was allowed to appear in the matriculation examination of the University. The great student uprising in Assam left behind a galaxy of student martyrs who similarly laid down their lives for the cause of an independent India. They had tried their utmost to carry out Gandhiji's command 'Do or die'. Students of all ages ranging from little school children to the college students participated in a massive display of solidarity. The number of girls was not less and often young Assamese girls displayed more heroism, courage and capacity for suffering and sacrifice than students and shown by the shining example of Kanaklata Baruah. The sacrifice of all young girls in Assam proves the truth of remark made by a sympathetic English observer who had commented, 'Give Indian women a cause to fight for and see how she responds.' In December, 1944, the AISF held its Annual Conference at Calcutta, in which 68 delegates from Assam headed by Charu Goswami of Jorhat, President of Jorhat A.S.F., attended. At this conference also, Assam has been described as 'the strong-hold of the student movement for the last 15 years.' The heroic role played by the students was accepted, acknowledged even by the Prime Minister who told the House of Commons very grudgingly that it was a children's uprising.

119 HFM Papers, R.I., File No 53/3, NAI.
120 Amrit Bazar Patrika, 12 June, 1946.
121 Deka, Meeta, Op cit, pl25.
Though, the Quit-India movement was totally suspended in the first week of 1943, but the role played by the students of Assam continued till India achieved her supreme desired goal 'Independence or Swaraj' on 15 August, 1947 and beyond

4.8 Revolutionary Activities and the Students' Involvement in Assam in Freedom Movement:

The role of revolutionaries or the extremists were notable in the freedom struggle of India. The growth and development of the extremist activities in the freedom struggle of India can be traced back to the Swadeshi movement of 1905. The extremists did not believe in the methods which were applied by the moderates for reform in the administrative system in India. They believed that the British government would not give any importance to the appeal and application method which were used by the moderates of the Congress. The suspicion of the extremists was broadened on the methods of the moderates when the British government announced the 'partition of Bengal plan' in the name of administrative convenience in 1905. They believed that moderates would not be successful to stop the implementation of the plan. Further, due to their ideological differences in the time of Swadeshi movement the INC split in December, 1907. Almost at the same time, revolutionary terrorism made its appearance in Bengal. The two events were not unconnected. It is specially to be noted that though the terrorist activities were started during the time of partition movement of Bengal but it was continued till the end of the freedom movement of India and contributed a lot for its success.

The revolutionary activities had also influenced some young men and students of Assam during the freedom movement of India along with the rest of the country. It is to be noted that young men and students were involved in extremist activities during the Swadeshi movement but in a limited way. Govind Lahiri advised Ambikagiri Roychoudhary to establish an organization on the same line of the
revolutionary organizations of Bengal. Roy with his colleagues Binanda Baruah, Triguna Baruah, Raktim Bora, Pitamber Chakravatry and Balek Lahkar worked to form such an organization with the aim to throw out the Britishers from Assam and to fight against the decision of attachment of East Bengal with Assam, though they were advised by many not to do so. Keshabanarayan Dutta wrote, “Ambikagiri Roychoudhary, Bishnuram Medhi, Triguna Baruah, Raktim Bora and some other young men then, seen to have come under the spell of anarchism for some time."

Another dangerous work was undertaken by Ambikagiri Roy Choudhary to kill lieutenant Governor of Assam and Eastern Bengal, J.B. Fuller by installing dynamites at Jorabat of Guwahati road. During the Civil Disobedience movement a section of youth and students of Assam gradually involved with the terrorist activities giving up non-violence principles of Gandhiji, specially after the supreme sacrifices that had been made by Bhagat Singh and other comrades. They were also influenced when Congress leaders like Lakhidhar Sarma and Mahadev Sarma asserted that if needed violent path would be taken to achieve Swaraj or Independence of India. Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla condemning the killing of Bhagat Singh and other by colonial-British government declared in a conference of youth league at Naduar of Darrang (now at Sonitpur) on 19 April, 1931 that “The Assamese youth should follow Bhagat Singh and obtain Purna Swaraj through theft, dacoity or any other means” These revolutionary activities were identified in letters written in red ink by the youths of Dhubri to the D.C. and S.P. of Goalpara as well as to CID Sub-Inspector of Dhubri, threatening the officials with the loss of their lives and property if they were not sympathetic towards them. The letters were signed by the Secretary of Indian Republican Army of the Dhubri Branch in 1932. Lakhimpur District was also not outside the purview of revolutionary activities. Swades Sen, a terrorist from Bengal,
organized the ‘Prabhat Samity’ of Lakhimpur as a local revolutionary organization and a meeting was held on 9 August, 1935. At this meeting he declared that they would make Dibrugarh a cremation ground as memorable in India as Chittagong, and called upon any member who was not prepared to sacrifice his life to leave the Samity. He also announced that they had searched materials for making explosives, and that he had written for a supply of aluminum bombshells. The members were commanded to get ready to prepare to proceed to Decca, Mymen Sing, Camulla, Chittagong and Calcutta before the puja vacation, apparently to escort Bengal party members to Dibrugrah and Lakhimpur. The Byam Sanghas at various places in the Kamrup district were suspected by the police to be terrorist centres where physical training, including lathi and sword play, were imparted to the local youths.

It is worth mentioning that along with youth, women of Assam were also involved in the terrorist activities. Puspalata Das, eminent activist of freedom movement of India also started a revolutionary organization together with Sarala Saxena and Jyotsna Mojumdar, General Secretary of Panbazar Girls’ High School named ‘Mukti Sangha’. Mrs. Das started its works from the premises of Kamrup Mahila Samity with the motto to overthrow the Britishers from India. But she was expelled from the school when the news of the formation of the Mukti Sanga was leaked out. Some teachers of the Panbazar Girl’s High School, hailing from Calcutta, namely Prakriti Sengupta, Renu Dasgupta, Sukriti Dasgupta, Ilia Dasgupta and Dooly Dasgupta used to bring revolutionary literatures which also influenced some girls of the school.

Revolutionary activities were also intensified during the quit India movement. Along with the rest of the country, the students of Assam were influenced by revolutionary activities because ‘underground network’ were being consolidated in various parts of the country. The underground activities in the Brahmaputra
valley were more spectacular in the districts of Kamrup, Nagaon, Darrang and Sibsagar Attempts were made at Borpeta sub-division to destroy the houses belonging to Mauzadars, govt pleaders, Military contractors and mandals. At Sarbhog the aerodrome under construction was raided and Military camps, MES office etc were destroyed. At Guwahati students like Ajit Baruah, Gopal Goswami, Nilomoni Das, Robin Goswami and Biswajeet Baruah, belonging to a revolutionary group, set fire to the office of the Sub-Deputy Collector. They made an unsuccessful attempt on the residence of the Commissioner.

Nagaon was another centre of mass rebellion. The government took all possible measures to stop the sabotage activities. In most of the cases Military stores and installations were the targets. Military stores and dumps at Silghat and boats belonging to the Military and the government were damaged, isolated police personal interfered with and there were attempts to burn Military petrol depots. The Mauzadar’s camp at Barhampur was burnt down on the night of 1st February, 1943. Sabotage activities were continued with the burning of several excise shops along with Kathiatoli I.B. and Raha Circle Office in the second half of the August 1942. It is to be noted specially that the first incident of bloodshed in the quit India movement in Assam occurred at Nagaon district. It was disclosed officially that the situation and sacrifices made by the people of Nagaon inspired the people of Assam to follow the path of revolution. Seeing the heroic role played by the people of Nagaon district and the atrocities and brutality they beared for the cause of their motherland, Shiela Bora, in her book entitled ‘Students Revolution in Assam’ described Nagaon as the Midnapur or Sitara of Assam.

Sabotage activities were also active in places like Phulaguri, Kathiatoli, Jajori, Kaliabor and Barhampur.

135 PHA, vol-3, p68.
136 APAI, File No.-76/14.
Kamrup was also regarded as one of the main centres of revolutionary activities. The underground works also carried out on a vigorous no-tax campaign and encouraged the people to arms against the British. The Radical Institute of Guwahati supported the use of indigenous arms. In many places of Kamrup, country bombs were manufactured. In December 1942, there were reports of bomb explosion in different parts of Kamrup such as Guwahati, Nalbari, Pathshala Rail station, Guwahati telephone exchange including in a classroom in the Cotton College and in a Nalbari school causing little damage to the class room. The Assam Students Terrorist Party and the Radical Party were suspected to be behind these activities.

The movement was quite intensive in Borpetta, Bajali and Tihu region where guns were stolen, bombs were hurled, railway sabotage was attempted, and large scale arson restored. By the end of 1942, the underground revolutionary activities in the Nalbari areas was further intensified. During this time rumours of mass action on a large scale particularly in North Kamrup, were rife. Officially it was admitted that Patacharkuchi of Kamrup won notoriety in 1942. In North Kamrup, students of Borkurhi village destroyed motorable roads. The Dak Bunglow of local board, along with a newly established high school, near Gangapukhuri, were burnt down. On 31st December, the Bordoul Middle Vernacular School, under Police Station, by some persons. It is to be noted that due to the devastating works done by the revolutionary innocent people had harassed, causes of police excesses committed in North Kamrup and other areas figured even in the Assembly discussion in March, 1943.

Gahan Ch. Goswami and other, after the arrest of senior leaders, who organized resistance movement throughout the district. They shifted their underground offices from Tezpur to other places of the district such as Ketekibari, Jamuguri, and Patalorchuk. They also took command of Shanti-Sena organization. Military personal and their camps were the main targets of the revolutionaries. To hamper the war efforts, on 22 August, a group of people set fire to 500 bundles of thatch stored at a construction site of the Saloni airstrip. Like Nagaon, the underground activities here collected five shotguns and planned to demolish all government buildings between 5 December 1942. According to a source a large number of government building were set on fire from January to March 1943 at Tezpur, Biswanath Chariali, Sootea, Bihaguri, Mangaldoi etc. Revolutionary activities were also active in Lakhimpur district. Several cases of arson was reported in the district. Attempts were made by the activists to burn down the residence of the sub-divisional officer and the Lilabari airdrome at North Lakhimpur. People looted an aeroplane which was landed at Dhalpur for technical defect.

Terrorist activities were common among the people of upper Assam. In Sibsagar district, the Sibsagar Courthouse, the Govt. High school, Jhanji Dak Banglow, Gauri Sagar Dak Banglow and Amguri M.E. School were burnt down. The number 142 Sialkhati Local Board L.P. school of Dakhin Hengra mouza under Golaghat P.S. was also burnt down on 17 December, 1942 causing damage Rs.100. The following day the Ekrani L.P. School in the Silakuti Mouza, under Nazira was burnt down causing damage to the tone of Rs.140. Students of Sibsagar district also involved in the terrorist activities but in a limited way. Durgadhar Baruah, a Congress leader of the district invited a few students to form a revolutionary group. Paragdhar Chaliha, a college student, was entrusted the job Satyanarayan Bhattacharyya, a formerly terrorist party member of Chittagong who

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147 Das, Puspalata, 42 Chanor Gana Biplabat Dhekiajulir Bhumika, pp5-12.
149 Home Poll. File. 18/2/43, F.R. Feb, 1943.
151 Ibid, p168.
152 APAL. File No. 19, 1942/43.
was also an expert of bomb preparing, explosives and dynamites, imparted training of sabotage activities to this group. Though, not all the plans became successful but the group had done tremendous job by derailing a train, by removing the fishplates although the boys had no training for this kind of sabotage work. Applying common senses they had removed the fishplates from the rail joints and opened up the joints by means of piece of a bamboo.153

A special train was derailed in Sarupathar in Sibsagar district, just a few yards of the Sarupathar Railway station on 10 October 1942, killing three American officers and a sizeable number of soldiers. This accident was regarded as one of the greatest incident of terrorist activities in Assam during the period of Quit India movement. A list of forty two suspects had been prepared by the police where the name of Kushal Konwar also included. Though, all forty two were arrested, no clear evidence could be found regarding the involvement of Kushal Konwar in this incident. Violating the English Criminal Code, which clearly laid down that a person could not be held guilty unless proved so by sufficient evidence, beyond reasonable doubt, the administration declared to arrest Kushal Konwar merely because he was the President of Sarupathar Congress Committee.154 He was trialed, and the jury found him as the main brain behind the incident and ordered sentenced to death. He was executed at Jorhat jail on 15 June, 1943 at 4 30 A M at the age of 37. Another major incident of train derailment, in the district, was reported on 10 October 1942 from Kakojan, near Titabar.155 It is to be noted that there were some other train derailment cases reported in the district Revolutionary activities were also intensified in Goalpara district. In the district two Telegraph lines were cut, Telegraph posts were uprooted, mail vans were attacked and looted. A branch of Post Office at North Salmara was looted. The Dhubari Railway station and a way side station at Pulildaha were attacked and damaged. Road communications were disrupted by damaging or destroying bridges. Some arson cases were also reported and the Executive Engineer office at

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155 PHA, vol-3, p78.
Dhubri, Inspection Bunglows and one boarding home of Goalpara H.E. school were burnt. An attempt was also made to burn the petrol dump at Rupshi aerodrome. Terrorist activities were also intensified in the Surma valley. Sabotage activities were also started by a group of youths in Syhlet district. Telephone lines were destructed in different places and Post and Tax Offices were being attacked by youths. Within a span of two months, 96 Telegraph and Telephone line were cut, two bridges were destroyed and at least in three places rails were removed from railway track. Two trains were derailed at Itakhola and Karimganj on 11th November, 1942. A total 10 killed and 36 were injured in the train derailment accident at Itakhola. Malkhana of Sunamganj, Lala, Badarpur and police station of Biswanath were attacked on September 2. All these sabotage activities were carried out so secretly and carefully that the police could not detect even a single case.

4.9 Repressive Measures of the Government:

With the beginning of the August movement, the government tried to control the activities of the organizations which were being involved. It tried to stop the terrorist activities at the earliest, along with the workings of Shanti-Sena and others, what they thought was dangerous to the continuation of British rule in India. To stop the students participation in the movement, assault on students, arrest and imprisonment for participating in the movement occupy a distinct place in the record of repression in the Assam. According to government record in the Quit India movement, a total 1028 won martyrdom and 3200 were sustained serious injuries. But according to unofficial sources it could be 25000. Nehru wrote it could be 10000. In Assam a total 29 had won martyrdom. Sabotage and arson activities of the revolutionaries also took a good position in the government record book. As there were 39 train derailment incident, 29 cases of

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159 Nehru, J., Bharat Sangbad, Boar of Publication Assam, 1965, p500.
arson, 4 thanas, 64 government buildings, 66 other public Bhawan and 61 private residences were burnt. Property worth Rs. 5 lacs had been destroyed, bomb exploded for 20 times, Rs. 2,94,727 had been collected as fines imposing 98 cases, from starting to 31 December 1943. A total 1679 persons had been imprisoned out of the arrest of 3531 and the arrested 3364 under Defence of India Act out of whom 2448 had been imprisoned.160

Summing up the Report on atrocities of the Quit India movement, Gopinath Bordoloi said-

"These deaths, injuries, humiliation and also atrocities are the price of liberty, a price a country is asked to pay for its desire to be free. Our people know that and therefore, they are determined as never before to 'do or die.' Untold miseries may be heaped on our people but the caravan of India goes on to its destined goal - Independence full and undiluted.161

The extremist nationalist contributed a lot along with their moderate counterpart towards the achievement of India's independence. A section of youth and students of the country seemed to be the main force behind the terrorist activities in India. They mostly joined in the group thinking that Gandhiji's principle of non-violence became impracticable and only using non-violence principle it would be difficult to throw out the Britishers from India. Unfortunately, they did not also succeed in their mission. Their failure too were numerous. They lacked faith in the common people, did not work among them and consequently failed to acquire any roots among them. Even their propaganda did not reach them. Nor did they organize any all India campaigns and when, during 1905-07, such an all-India campaign did come up in the form Swadeshi and Boycott movement, they were not its leader (though the Bengal moderates did play an active role in their own province). Their politics were based on the belief that they would be able to persuade the rulers and make them think that it would be difficult for them to continue their rule in India due to the dangerous activities of the revolutionary

161 Dutt, K.N., Op.cit, p106
activities in India. But their believe became futile. Lack of proper planning and training of the cadres, and finally the strong British administration and their well-equipped armed forces controlled the extremist activities in India within a short span of time and completely destroyed the hopes and aspirations of the revolutionaries in India. But it could be said that without the help of the terrorist activities it would be difficult to throw out the Britishers from India. Their unflitching and unbending determination to throw out the foreign yoke from India helped a lot to achieve India's goal - the complete Independence.

The question arises how are the students of present Assam influenced by these legacies. This is definitely an indicator that in spite of communication progress students of Assam were never isolated even during the freedom movement. Therefore it is natural that student community will be involved in different movements. They were part of the freedom movement. In post-independence era, they carried on some of these values.