CHAPTER-VIII

STUDENT ACTIVISM AND POLITICS MIGRATION

For quite some time student unrest or agitation or activism has been a fascinating topic of discussion among both social scientists and laymen about North-East.

Student activism is considered as irresponsible and aimless behaviour of immature youth. It has remained a perverted behaviour of students which is capable of doing nothing but creating disorder in the society.

Student unrest or student agitation has been mainly branded as deviant behaviour, student activism after independence has been branded as deviant behaviour or purely anomic without ideological content.

Every society wants to maintain its equilibrium or stability and possess various mechanisms for this purpose. There are always disturbances of the equilibrium. One of the factors that is disruptive of social equilibrium is deviant behaviour. Deviant behaviour is one that is not in conformity with the prescribed pattern in conformity the prescribed pattern in society. In every society, however stable it may be there is always deviance. As disruptive of social order deviance is often considered dysfunctional. At the same time deviance as a precursor of social change is acclaimed as functional to the social system in the long run. Deviance leads
to either anomie or social change. The direction of deviance – either to anomie or to change depends on how far it is legitimized when it is backed by ideology, then it gives rise to social change to a desired direction. Deviance in this respect is an attempt to transform the social order in accordance with an utopian model. In other words; deviance in this case is not free floating but has a target.

According to Allabach “Student unrest or student agitation or what we term as student activism has been mainly branded as deviant behaviour. Is it merely anomie? Or is it utopian in the sense of having an ideological goal? As far as the Indian situation is concerned, the general view is that after independence student activism has been purely anomic and has not had any ideological content”. He further distinguished student movement into value oriented and norm oriented. He has classified” Indian student movement as norm oriented that lacked ideological orientation” (Allabach, 1967).

Shils branded student activism as irresponsible blind, senseless and a result of sexual frustration. “A mind which cannot attach itself to intellectual objects a spirit which resents the burden of student discipline and resists incorporation into modern impersonal adult institutions. What direction can it take except rebellion, blind, causeless rebellion” (Shils, 1967).

There is no doubt that there must be ideology behind deviance, if it is not to be purely deviant behaviour contributing to anomie. When there is ideology, deviance is legitimized by it. Ideology is not a sufficient
condition of social movement. By itself ideology cannot ensure appropriate action without a suitable organization. It is through the organizational channel that an ideology attains its realization. Where there is ideological orientation and organizational orientation and organizational structure produces ideological oriented social movement.

The parents of students of the sample felt that student activism is a purely reflex action of senseless students. The parents bemoan that the irresponsible and senseless behaviour of students created untold misery to the family.

North-East states in India has towering political consciousness. It is a strong hold communism and radical ideology. There is a well developed organizational structure among the students (ULFA, GNLF, NSCN etc.). All the major political parties are having their own student wings (ex: ABVP, youth congress at the national level).

Deviance is geared to some ideological goal which is legitimised by ideology, organizational structure provides goal oriented deviance. Ideology is always dynamic. This is specially true of revolutionary ideology. The essence of revolution is change. The change means the destruction or removal of something and the introduction of something else. To have Revolutionary ideology, (1) there should be in the society sufficient intense, widely spread and properly distributed alternative motivational elements. (2) Organization – The social control within the society fail to check it, it will give rise to a deviant sub-cultural group or
movement. This subgroup acquires influence in the wider society and claims legitimacy.

Student movement become possible because there are organization that are channels of ideological orientations. The student activists involved in the student movement or activism because they are imbued with revolutionary ideology and supported by political parties which are guardians of such an ideology. It is presumed that the ideological activists are small in number and the parents of the respondents tried to keep their wards away from these movements by sending them to far off places like PUNE for their education. This is borne out in our study wherein the parents wanted to protect their children from indulging in student activism.

In India student unrest had its beginning in the political demonstrations which were organized during the struggle for Independence. Gandhiji’s non-violent demonstrations and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose violent demonstrations and killings of British dignitaries were two models of unrest against British for getting Independence to India.

Over the last fifty eight years after political freedom and establishment of a relatively stable government, the student protests processions, strikes, roits and gheroes are often and perhaps usually for both political and non-political reasons. Student unrest has now come to assume such disturbing proportions that is causing a great concern among the educational authorities, political leaders and infact the entire public in the country generally and specially in North-East states.
Causes of Student Unrest:

A variety of causes has been suggested for student unrest since independence in India. Some of these are historical and are related with the events preceding independence. It is difficult to assign any one key cause to student agitation in the post Independent period. An analysis of some 200 strikes and demonstrations which took place in 1964 gives some indications of the causes of student unrest. About 100 strikes were stimulated by demands relating to examinations and the administration of educational institutions. Another 60 had their origin in protests against the police or the government functionaries; miscellaneous causes account for the rest. It has also been noted that political parties were responsible for instigating student agitations.

The cause of indiscipline discovered by the survey of the world Brotherhood all India committee are:

1) too much leisure time
2) political participation
3) poor-student teacher relations
4) lack of facilities for representation of complaints
5) anxiety over examination
6) anxiety over future employment in the scenario after liberalization, globalization and no government recruitment.

According to Margaret Cormack in her research analysis mentioned following factors responsible for student unrest in India.
1) Political structure
2) Professional
3) Socio-Psychological

A recent report on student unrest states the following four main causes for the student unrest (1) lack of respect for authority – parental, educational and governmental, (2) absence of proper academic atmosphere, (3) Political interference.

Humayun Kabir’s analysis of the causes of student unrest is as follows:

1) Loss of leadership by teachers, the first and foremost cause of the present state of unrest among students is to be found in the role the teacher’s play. Teachers today do not command the respect and affection of their pupils to the extent they did in the past.

2) Growth of economic difficulties
3) Defects in the existing system of education

Eminent educationalist and others have opined that lack of proper library facilities are greatly responsible for the students indiscipline.

According to Jafar “Library is an integral part of any educational institution. No educational institution thrives without proper library facilities. So the educationists firstly consider the library as the heart of the institution. It is the library that really stimulates and inspires the students and the teachers to do their jobs in their respective spheres. The library
supplements the class room education and thus raises the standard of the
students. The teachers use the library to maintain the teaching efficiency”. 
Student unrest in India – S.M.Jafar (1984, P-14 to 17).

These above mentioned facilities are sadly lacking in North-East 
educational institutions and are available in plenty in PUNE University and 
College. So this factor pushed people from North-East and pulled the to 
PUNE.

The factors enumerated earlier are quite common factors of student 
unrest. These phenomena are temporary once the problem is solved the 
student unrest disappears. We found all the factors mentioned earlier in 
almost all the educational institutions in the North-East. However the 
decades of unrest among students in the north is due to persistent 
insurgency; terrorism and participation of students in the terror outfits.

Let us look at some of the studies of insurgency to make a proper 
analysis of the present day situation in North-East student activism.

Recently insurgency in North-East has increased which should be a 
cause of concern for all because. Inter service intelligence ISI) of Pakistan 
is deeply involved to ferment insurgency with the sole aim to destabilize 
India. The government should not take these incidents-massacre of innocent 
people, extortions and sabotage as a routine matter, but take them seriously, 
especially when Hindi speaking people are being eliminated in Assam, 
Manipur, Tripura and other states. The insurgents seem to have taken this
case from Kashmiri militants who are trying to eliminate minorities systematically.

The details of the active insurgent outfits in North-East are given below:

**Assam:**

1) United Liberation front of Assam (ULFA)
3) Assam Tigers force (ATF) which police claims is ULFA’S red herring Police also has dossiers on 25 Islamic militant outfits formed mostly by criminals and ISI backed fanatics. The Bengal tiger force (BTF) was floated to protect Bengali Hindus.

**Meghalaya:**

1) Achik National Volunteers Council
2) Hymientrip Achik Liberation Council (HALC). Both the outfits have been banned in December, 2000 (Tripura).
3) National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)
4) All Tripura Tigers Force (ATTF)
Arunachal Pradesh:

It is a safe heaven for Assami and Naga militants. They have their training camps and protected hideouts.

1) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN 1-M) banned but has declared truce with government since 1997, cease five does not extend to Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

2) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplong) banned and is the arch rival of (NSCN 1-M).

Mizoram: Himor Peoples Convention (HPC)

Manipur:

The state has 12 frontlines militant groups. The top six of these are:

1) National Socialist Council of Nagaland (1-M)
2) Peoples Liberation Army (PLA)
3) People’s revolutionary Party of Kongleipok
4) United National Liberation Front (UNLF)
5) Kuki National Front (KNF)
6) Himor People’s convention (HPC)

We are giving below the defence analysis and commentary given by Col. P.K. Vasudeva to show the operations of insurgent groups in Assam. According to his analysis Assam is considered as the gateway to the North-East is connected to the main land India by a narrow patch of land measuring 25 KMS on its western side. It is connected to six other North-
Eastern states and has a long border with the neighbouring countries namely Banagaldesh and Bhutan. In many respects, Assam is a mini – India with different national, ethnic, religious linguistic and tribal groups living together in the region since centuries. The population of Assam is a broad intermixture of Mongolian, Indo-Myanmarese, Indo-Iranian and Aryan races.

By provoking national and ethnic identities, the Assam agitation has prepared the ground for the rise of militancy in Assam. The birth of ULFA in 1979 showed the way for the other ethnic groups to float their own militant outfits to realize their own demands. Today in addition to ULFA many other militant organizations like National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NAFA), Karbi National Volunteer (KNU), Rabha National Security Force (RNSF), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), Dina Halons Daogo (DND), United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Muslim United Liberation Tigers Association (MULTA), and so on are active in Assam. All these groups especially the ULFA have their bases in Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh from where they operate to carry out killings and other sabotage activities.

Recently a worst massaive took place on December 7,2000 when as many as 28 Bihari Labourers (non Assamiese speaking persons) were killed in Kukermara forest in Tinsukhia district. It is confirmed from the reliable sources that (ISI) has a big hand to play in the killings of these innocent people. ISI is training and supplying sophisticated arms and ammunition to ULFA cadres and helping them to carry out insurgency similar to Jammu and Kashmir. So for most of the attacks had been on the tea planters,
businessmen and security forces, but they have started eliminating non-Assamese people also. In the past three years (1996-1999) there had been a disarray of the united command. However the insurgency has been reactivated in the North-East with the abetment of the ISI.

So far the state government has not been able to control the massacres because of which the violence in the region has increased. It is surprising that the unified command is also not allowed to carry out its insurgency operations consistently. The moment there are a few surrenders by the militant outfits and some temporary peace is established in the state the unified command is withdrawn resultantly the violence erupts again. The government must take violence and massacres of the non-ethnic groups seriously and make sure that the insurgency completely wiped out with the help of the unified command.

The centre is in favour of declaring the militant infested areas of Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur and other adjoining states as disturbed for some time until the situation improves. The militants take refuge in their secured hideouts in Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The Indian government has a recent tacit agreement and understanding with the Myanmar government for acting against the militant groups. There is no similar understanding with Bangladesh which is harbouring maximum North-East insurgents from where they operate and carry out hit and run tactics. It is believed that the insurgents get support from Chinese outfits also ULFA taps teenagers for fire power 2006 July Gauhati. “It appears that teenagers are the new fighting machines of the outlawed ULFA. According to intelligence officials leaders of the militant outfit have, under the cover
of the peace process initiated in October last year, began a massive recruitment drive to carry anti-national activities. The ULFA which had some 1200 cadres feared to have doubled its strength mainly with the recruitment of 'under 15 years solders'.

What is worry some for the security forces is that ULFA used fresh teenage faces for a series of subversive attacks from August 1 to 7 in which five persons were killed and more than a score were injured. For instance any young boy aged about 15 years hurled a grenade at a CRPF lorry stationed at the Bhojo railway station at Sonari police station in eastern Assam’s sib-sagar district last week. In that attack one CRPF constable was killed and four others were seriously hurt.

Similarly two young boys were behind the attack on an army convoy in eastern Assam’s Tinsukhia town in which two solders were killed. The grenade attack on CRPF at Digboi a day later was also executed by two young ULFA cadres. Again two ULFA militants killed near the Army’s 4th corps headquarters in Tezpur white carrying explosives were teenagers, one aged 14 and the other 15. Intelligence agencies believed that the outfit has been employing these young recruits in recent attacks in order to safeguard senior leaders who run the risk of being recognized, caught or killed.

In western Assam’s Nalbari district, six ULFA cadres killed in encounter with the CRPF and police were all young boys, four of whom could not be identified. According to Assam IGP (Special branch) Khagen Sarma, the ULFA has launched a large scale recruitment drive as it suffered
heavy losses in recent months with many seniors surrendering or being arrested.

**Call for I – Day boycott again:**

In what has become a ritual the ULFA along with four other militant outfits of the region has called for boycott of the forth coming Independence Day celebrations in the state. The other outfits are the Kamatapur Liberation Front, National Liberation Front of Twipra and Tripura peoples democratic Front what is new, however is the general strike pegged on to the boycott call. Khasi student Union to launch agitation from Friday (Express News Service, Shillong, November 22, 2006).

Peeved over government's in action to tackle influx in the state; Khasi Students Union (KSU) has decided to launch an agitation from Friday in Shillong.

Yesterday the KSU had organized a public rally in west Khasi hills district over influx issue that turned violent as six of its members were attacked by the West Khasi Hills Students Association (WKHSA), West Khasi Hill Deputy Commissioner K.L. Tariang had prohibited holding of the rally and imposed rection 144 CPC. Despite the prohibition the KSU went ahead with the rally and one of the WKHSA members pulled down KSU flag that was hoisted on the ground.

There after WKHSA members pelted at the KSU and injured six of them KSU Samel Jytuva said that the disruption of its rally in west Khasi
Hill was the handiwork of the government. The WKHSU was against the public rally but KSU went ahead Jurwa rued the role of the district administration in stopping its members from Khasi Jantia Hills from attending the rally. There was road blocks. The agitation is against the influx of migrants and will increase the agitation, (Nov. 2005). This shows that the students agitate against Govt. even though it has nothing to do with education or their problems.

PCG threatens to pull out of talks with centre. (2nd August, 2006).

Following the killing of five ULFA members by security forces in Assam, the Peoples Consultative Group (PCG) nominated by the banned group threatened to pull out of the negotiations with the centre.

PCG member Lachit Bordoi Said in Gauhati that “the PCG will meet within a day or two and are top of the agenda is a discussion on the view that the group which was formed to bring the ULFA to the negotiating table, should pull out from the talks with the centre”.

Noted author Indira Goswami a key mediator between ULFA and the Government said “she had informed National Security Advisor M.K.Narayanan about the PCG’S ‘unhappiness’ over recent developments in Assam where several ULFA members have been killed by security forces”.

ULFA demanded for the release of five jailed ULFA leaders which the government agreed to consider sympathetically but it has not acted.
Considering the operations against ULFA and the killing of its members, according to Bordoloi the government was against the spirit of talks between PCG and the centre.

**Free Our Leaders Before Talks Says ULFA:**

After Indira Goswami’s message to realize the prisoners as a precondition for talks, New Delhi accused ULFA as imposing preconditions and trying to scuttle the peace process.

ULFA pressed for the inclusion of issue of Sovereignty in the agenda, while the government is opposed to it. They wanted the release of the ULFA five leaders, so that they could be part of the executive committee.

The ULFA called upon the people of Assam to boycott the independence day celebrations but also called for down to dusk road blocks on August 15.

According to ULFA Commander in Chief Paresh Barua, 'The outfit was not in favour of any tactical and temporary settlement like Kashmir, Mizoram, Tripura or Nagaland. According to ULFA “the government is grossly wrong if it thinks that it can be controlled or wiped out by gunning down its cadres. The ULFA proposes to fight till the last drop of blood.'
Assam Minister Counters Pranab’s Statement in Parliament:

Pranab Mukherjee gave a clean chit to Bangladesh in the Lok Sabha vis-à-vis the Tarun Gogoi governments land grab allegation against Bangladesh.

According to Assam state minister Bhumidhar Barnzan that the land records and ground reality facts it is clear that Bangladesh has encroached on 499.83 acres of Assam land and other states illegally occupied 2,12,206 acres of land – the internal encrochers are Nagaland, (1,62,471 acres) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (25,331 acres) Mizoram (12,744 acres) and Meghalaya (11,659 acres).

Mukherjee’s flip-flop, in parliament in July 27, 2006, that encroachment by Bangladesh is serious and the next day he denied it saying that BSF personnel seriously man the international border ably.

The Bangladesh, secretary in change of border B.S. Lalli had serious discussion with state govt., BSF officials and All India Assam students Union, and MNA officials they agreed for border fencing and putting flood lights in the thickly populated areas on the international border. This shows the insincerity of Central Govt. to broker lasting peace.

In the month of October, 2006, ULFA and the Government of India MCA had discussions on the peace process in Amsterdam, which broke after three days of consultations. The External Affairs Minister treatened to
strictly put the insurgency with an iron hand which led to the Assam human bombs.

Some violent activities and action by students are given in the Appendix II we also tried to highlight the atrocities committed in North-East by militant groups. By experiencing and seeing the gruesome activities the parents with Good economic capacity tried to protect their children from violence by sending them to far off PUNE for studies.

Even some of the sincere hard working students wanted to migrate to PUNE which was an excellent educational centre sans violence and unrest.

**Student Movement in Assam:**

The first step towards Assamese student’s activism can be attributed to a memorandum subsicitted by some students led by Anandavam Dekhial Phookau to A.J.Moffat Mills on his visit to Assam in 1853 which failed to elicit a response.

The second concerted effort on the part of the Assamese students of Calcutta was the submission of a petition to viceroy of India Lord North brook on May 21, 1871 on behalf of the Asomiya Chatrar Sahitya Sabha about the conditions of Assam and its natural resources which could be developed only by a railway line to Bengal and generating political consciousness. In 1889 they claimed to be a political group and wanted to publish book in Assamese, fight for Assamese as a medium of instruction
and improve the language and translate Sanskrit books into Assamese and compile socio-political and religious histories of Assam.

In 1903 Ekata Sabha was formed by students for pursuing literary Sammelans. In 1916 under the Presidentship of Lakshminath Bezbaurah the activities included formation of brotherhood and patriotism besides improvement of literacy.

By 1940s in India in general and Assam in particular saw the students force beginning to play second fiddle to party politics.

Before 1947, it was the political leaders who led the struggle for Independence backed by the students, the post 1947 Assam saw the students fighting it all alone in ensuring and securing for its people what they deserved – socially, politically and economically.

**Formation of the AASU:**

Soon after independence, the language issue came into prominence in Assam which led the students into the politics of the language problem. Student organizations from time to time appealed to Bengali students to accept Assamese as the state language. However these appeals had no impact on them and they continued to oppose Assamese language. The language issue was the precursor of the problem of the socio-political identity of Assam and its people which had dogged state politics in myriad form till date.
Students’ activism took a new form with the refinery issue on August 1, 1956 representatives of different institutions of Gauhati met and decided to carry on a vigorous campaign for the location of an oil refinery in Assam instead of Calcutta.

Nearly 800 students criticized the centers policy towards industrial development of Assam and organized on August 11, 1956 organized All Assam Students’ protest day Later on a general strike, students abstained from classes, and took out processions about oil refinery location. Massive spate of activities including hartals, protest marches were intensified which resulted in the government agreeing to establish a small refinery in Gauhati which did not satisfy the students. On March 26, 1960 the students submitted a memorandum for declaration of Assamese as state language which was ignored by government. This ignited one of the biggest controversies in Assam politics – the language controversy.

There were demands for and against Assamese as state language and Tension was palpably visible and sporadic disturbances. The Bhasa Andolan resulted in the death of 11 students in police firing at Hailakandi in June 1961. MLA’s from Cachar district resigned in protest.

Some concession were given by Lal Bahadur Shastri formula which gave autonomous hill districts continue English, while in state level both English and Assamese would be continued with protection to minorities.
It was this backdrop that the All Assam Student’s Union was born in 1967, a logical conclusion of the glorious tradition of student’s movements throughout the world in general and Assam in particular.

The AASU has been able to find a special niche for itself not only in terms of the causes it has espoused but also the fact that it went on to catapult University students to the seat of power. At the initiative of the AASU a regional political party i.e. the Assam Ganga Parishad (AGP) was formed under the presidency of Prafulla Kumar Mahanta for the first time in the political history of Assam, a regional political party formed the Government and Prafulla Kumar Mahanta former President of AASU became the Chief Minister of Assam.

The AASU demanded that the incessant flow of outsiders should be stopped. All foreign nationals illegally staying in Assam should be deported from Assam.

It is a general perception that a students’ movement is generally evaluated on the basis of its contribution towards the uplift of the educational scenario in the geographical area it represents. But the AASU, since its inception in 1967, has found itself beset by problems in the social, economic, educational and cultural space of the Assamese society. Therefore, it was inevitable that the AASU was destined to play a key role in all these inter-related spheres which matter to the society.

Since its inception the AASU never made bones of the fact that it was not primarily an organization formed to work in the educational
scenario of the state. Starting with the language issue, the food crisis, the opposition to the Federal Plan of the center, the refinery movement, the medium movement and the 21 points character of demands leading finally to the agitation against the foreign nationals formed the various activities of the AASU. However successive AASU leaders were aware of the fact that unless economic and social uplift of the society was achieved social amelioration would be a far cry.

**Educational Activities of the AASU:**

AASU played a prominent role in ensuring that Assamese is used exclusively in schools and colleges including the University as a medium of instruction. AASU insisted on no political influence on educational system.

The school teachers were given the status of government employees’ in 1970 and the managing committee were stripped of their power and government influence increased in the school appointment which AASU opposed creation of new posts for new subjects language issue, medium of instruction and free permission to establish new educational institutions, student – teacher ratio improvement, and the improvement of examination were the main issues AASU fought for justice vocational education was the neglected area in North which AASU wanted to be improved and also +2 stage introduction as terminal vocational training.

Since independence to present day all the North-East state have only 13 Universities which they want to be increased and establishment of technical institutes.

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Nobody can deny this truth that most of the problems ailing the educational system in the states are created by the ruling parties because there was no clear cut policy and interference of government in the management of institutions.

Establishment at Kokrajhar an alternate campus of Gauhati University, teaching of Bodo language was their demand. The AASU had constituted an Educational advisory board to look after the affairs of the state and to suggest measures for solution to the problems in the field.

On March 16, 2000 AASU forced the controller of Examinations, Board of Secondary Education to step down for anomalies in question papers. AASU demanded judicial probe in medical colleges in the state on August 23, 2003, and also succeeded in taking away the discretion powers of chief minister in allotting seats.

AASU advocated a cess of money on the tea produced in the state for the development of education. It has stressed the importance of ayurvedic, homeopathic, Polytechnic, Vector–navy as well as studies relevant to the natural resources of the states.

AASU prepared a calendar for the educational institutions. It is clear AASU has taken a proactive role in educational improvement by agitations, strikes, gheros and much more militant activity.
Economic Activities of the AASU:

Right from 1979 the AASU resorted to life and death struggle against the influx of Bangladesh and Nepali immigrants which made the socio-economic fabric poor.

Political Activities of the AASU:

Assam politics forced the AASU to play a key role. The Federal Plan of the center; the food crisis the refinery issue called for the intervention of the students of Assam. The AASU activism rallied against emergency. The original idea of staying apolitical did not work so they felt it necessary to play a bigger role in state politics against centers injustice towards Assam. They took a stand against congress Government in the 1978 Assembly elections and facilitated the formation of Janta Dal led coalition Government in the state headed by Golap Borbosa.

AASU’S role in state politics assumed a new role with the formation of Assam Gana Parishad in 1985 and helped it to capture power in the state. Since AGP’S assumption of power the AASU has played the role of the sentinel of the people of Assam.

In 1992 the AASU opposed the growing centralization of political and economic power in India, which it said, poses as the biggest stumbling block to any healthy, natural and real development of national unity even 45 years after the exit of British colonialism from the Indian Society.
AASU prepared a paper on Restructuring of Indian Constitution to provide for a true federalism.

In the matter related to reorganization of the state boundaries, the AASU wanted modification of Article 3, which provides for referring the Bill by the President to the legislature of the affecting states for expressing their views thereon with a stipulated time limit, pertaining to the formation of a state boundary and wanted the president to be legally bound to act according to the views of the state legislature. Most of the interstate conflicts are due to the state demarcation.

The AASU wanted for safeguard to the interest of the Assamese people who have born the brunt of migration from Bangladesh. It also called for limited applicability of 249, 258A, 347 articles of constitution with the expressed concurrence and approval of the majority 2/3 of the Assembly members.

The AASU believed that massive migration had defeated the very provision of 42nd amendment and sought waiver in Assam’s case. The AASU sought amendment to section 3 of the Indian Citizenship by birth act to the children born to illegal migrants. The AASU wanted 100% reservation of seats in Parliament, State legislature and Panchayats for indigenous people only.

The key area of AASU’s political action has been on the issue of repeal of the IM (DT) Act 1983. They used all conceivable means to arose
people of the state against this in-just piece of legislation by boycott of politicians to organizing national seminars.

The AASU has played a key role in trying to defuse domestic boundary disputes between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh and also between Assam and Nagaland. It has been proactive in holding talks at the students level between. All Arunachal Pradesh students Union and the Naga students Federation and then leading a joint delegation to the chief ministers of the three states. They held talks with other student organizations like Karbi Students Association, All Bodo Students Union, Assam Tea Tribes Students Union, and prepared a 20 point charter for socio-economic and educational improvements.

AASU severely castigated the 1983 polls in the state, the imposition of Presidents’ rule, atrocities of the Army, dissolution of state government. It has also sought Governments’ interference on key issues of the state, the sealing of Bangladesh border and wanted to act as mediator between ULFA and Government in the peace process.

The AASU protested the centre’s decision to extend its truce with the NSCN to Assam staged sit in demonstration and opposed the move to promulgate PO TO. AASU expressed displeasure on boundaries of the councils not being demarcated. It even expressed its displeasure against BJP about the nomination of Bhupen Hazarika for Rajya Sabha seat. This in short shows the AASU was active in all affairs of the state and took proactive role in center state relations.
In this backdrop the parents of our respondents anxiety to send the children away from North-West so that they will not be dragged into student activism and political participation. The parents further opined that some students who were unhappy with the slow progress of AASU joined the ULFA. To Prevent the students respondents to join ULFA majority of the respondents parents wanted to send them as far as possible so that even the shadow of ULFA or AASU falls on their wards.

Now in the next session we will give some reported violence by the various militant organizations which had drop out students or students studying in the educational institutions of North-East.

**The AASU, the ULFA and Assam Politics:**

An issue that has occupied centre stage has been the rise of a secessionist organization comprising youths frustrated by the way, governments has been run at Dispur. The organization was the ULFA composed mostly of ethnic Assamese youth, with an avowed belief in the established scientific socialism.

Even though ULFA was established in 1979 at Sibsagar, it became active only in the mid-eighties especially after the coming to power of the newly formed AGP Government. The AGP’s rule was a disashous non rule beset with corruption all round, and the failure of implementation of Assam accord sown the seeds for the rise of ULFA were sown.
Ethnic tensions between Assamese and non-Assamese minorities and between tribals and non-tribals and the intra-party fighting and the split of AGP exacerbated the problems. The congress won the 1991 polls by neglecting the AASU’s and AGP’s rule. The AASU had a problem to maintain the ideological distance from AGP and ULFA.

ULFA’s popularity increased among the people especially the students and younger generation. All the political parties could be criticized by ULFA and their excesses.

When congress tried to crack the ULFA it lost its power in the 1996 polls. AGP in fact demanded a call to withdraw Army at the height of relanching of operation Rhino, AGP won elections in 1996 and Prafulla Kumar Mahanta came to Power and in 1998 parliamentary polls failed because he tried to crack ULFA.

The rise of the ULFA brought a sort of love hate relationship with neighbouring countries especially Bhutan and Bangladesh and the political parties who were against ULFA were considered by people as they are pro-Bangladesh.

A section of ULFA militants and, some AASU leaders had sympathy with each other only on individual basics. Ideologically the AASU maintained distance to ULFA and attached them about their abductions and extortions creating an atmosphere of terror. They claimed ULFA had no moral compunction in using the guns and indulged in political killings of congress, UMF leaders and even the AGP. ULFA was in total command of 373
the Brahmaputra valley. Not a leaf stirred without its approval in the Assamese Hindu dominated areas.

AASU had never kept quiet when injustice has been perpetrated by the state or by insurgents. The AASU had been critical of the congress and AGP government because of their incapacity to control ULFA.

The internecine rivalry between the ULFA and their surrendered colleagues has resulted in the AASU playing the role of a peace agent appealing both the sides for peace.

In Assam student movement has a history of more than 150 years. This movement was not contained towards the educational sphere but was involved in all most all spheres – economic, social, educational and political one can understand the anxiety of the parents of our respondent and very serious students to be away from Assam because of the fear of AASU and ULFA cross fire.

The AASU took up the issue of foreign infiltrators with the foreign national movement. This romance of youths of Assam with politics has not only given new meaning to student. Activism but also metamorphosed the meaning of politics in the state.

The unprecedented success of University students all in their mid and late 20’s in the Assam movement and their consequent march to Dispur was no less than a legend for the next generation of students. No wonder, today we see not only youth political leaders, but greater and greater
emphasis on youth based issues. Assam always witnessed a major emphasis by all political parties on their students’ wing. The state has a number of political leaders in their 30’s on the flip side, this has to some extent also eroded political values, as these young leaders devoid of political experience are laid astray by the power and passion of politics.

According to R.N. Baroah the former editor of the Assam Tribune sums sp, “The AASU may be a jumping board for future politicians. In the past, students associations were the cradle of party politicians, AASU may therefore, be regarded as a school for the regional party politicians. This assessment according to the parents of our respondents were also made them decide on sending their wards outside North-East for studies.

**Students and Politics:**

Students involvement in politics is considered to be an important variable in student activism. There is no doubt that the interest of students in North-East in activism is increasing. Now a days the politicians even openly proclaim the view that students should not involve themselves in politics is outmoded. A few years ago there was at Bombay an All India conference of students organized by the National Congress in order to promote political participation of students. The Congress leaders told that students could no more be aloof from politics and be confined to books. The increasing political participation of students is the result of the high politicization of students and the educational institutions. All over India student elections are supported by political parties and huge amount of money is spent by the parties to capture power in student associations.
**Politicization:**

Politicization involves the appropriation of educational structures and resources and the displacement of educational goals by organized political and community, religion, caste, locality interests.

We find a kind of encroachment in the educational system by political system. Politicians enjoy at the expense of students and student activism.

The youth all over the world are the guinea pigs who are sacrificed in experimental or real trial of strength whether there are wars between nations or beneficience are the old, the inevitable sufferers are the young.

Anti Hindi agitation in south, steel plant agitation in South, steel plant agitation in Andhra Pradesh, the students were drawn into agitation by politicians which resulted in students loosing one year of their studies. All the north East state students suffer because of agitations, the teaching is not completed and exams are not held in time and invariably the students take three years to complete 2 years courses since the results are not declared in time students loose out on competitive examinations and getting admission in other Universities.

Some of the respondents opined that most of the non-ideological Activist student agitations are merely a way of showing students dissatisfaction with the college authorities, strikes for reducing fees and
examinations to be held in time and also for the revision of syllabus in order to make them competitive in the all India labour market.

**Political Orientation:**

By investigating into the respondents interest in their home states current political situation, we were able to find out what is the respondents interest in their home state's current political situation, we were able to find out the respondents' position is in the political arena.

Most of the respondents read news papers; magazines or tune the radio or TV to get news about current political situation in India and home state. The reasons given for not using media for political news are given below:

1) Most of the respondents who did not use media for news expressed that they have no interest in finding out about the political situation as they are feed up with insurgency and unrest.
2) They felt the media is biased against their state and sensationalize the news.
3) They have no time to spare for pursing political happenings.

On the other hand the respondents who used mass media often gave the following reasons for this:
1) Most of them do read or hear news regularly because they are interested to know what is happening in their State and are worried about the safety and security of their people.

2) Most of them time in listening to radio and TV because they have access to them only as news papers from their state do not reach them in time.

3) Most of them depend on letters and magazines sent from their homes to get correct information.

We tried to find out the impact of the franchise given to people who are eighteen years. Earlier in India persons who are 21 years only are allowed to vote and select the representatives for the proper functioning of the democracy.

Table –1 : Shows whether franchise at 18 years makes the people politisized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66 (22%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>234 (78%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two generations responses show a great degree of divergence. The students felt that the younger generation has a role to play in electing the representatives to govern the country while the parents felt that by giving them right to franchise to the children are getting politicized and it is not good for them.
It was found necessary to know whether the respondents participated in political activity at home.

Table –2 : Showing the participation of respondents in Political activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 69 (23%) of the respondents agreed that they participated in political activity at home, while majority expressed that they did not participate in the same.

Further, we inquired about the political activity of the respondents.

Table –3 : Showing political participation of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended Political meeting</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in Processions</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Political Parties</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stood for Election</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non of the above</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multi Purpose response
Nearly 120 (40%) of the respondents attended political meeting to know about the ideology of the parties and candidates, while 96 (32%) participated in political processions and canvassing for the candidates. It was also noticed that 84 (28%) supported candidates and none of them stood for elections.

Some respondents from Nagaland expressed that the agitations by Nagaland is for their independence and equated it to freedom struggle in India before independence. Some respondents from Assam felt that Indian government treats North-East by step motherly treatment, so they felt that students should participate in political activity to get justice for their state. They were unhappy with the increase in Bangladesh migrants, Bengali settlers and unemployment, no proper facilities for higher education. They also feel that the rich minerals of North-East are expropriated by Indian Government and they do not get any economic development. These are some of the grouses the respondents expressed and due to their frustration even felt like supporting student activism.

However the migrant students are studious and want to make better careers after their higher education hence do not support student activism or support violence, insurgency and terrorism.

Even though majority are not in favour of political participation we still wanted to find out whether the respondents participate in political discussions.
Table – 4: Shows whether franchise the respondents join friends and family member in political discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of Respondents with Friends</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>170 (56.68%)</td>
<td>120 (40.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>130 (43.32%)</td>
<td>180 (60.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority 170 (56.68%) of the respondents participate in political discussion with their friends, shows that even though they do not participate in political activities, but they are intellectually, academically interested in knowing about the political activities in their states.

The reasons for non participation in political discussions are as follows:

1) Lack of interest and want to concentrate on studies.
2) Avoid such discussions because some times discussion lead to misunderstanding and hard feelings.
3) These discussion may lead to violence.

Political discussions are the leisure time activities of Indian people. Nearly 40% of the respondents had discussions with the family members while majority 60% of respondents did not discuss politics with family members.
The parents did not want any discussion with children about politics as they are afraid of children join the insurgent groups if an interest is created in politics through discussion.

Majority of parents or their family members are active in politics. However 10% of the parents or their relatives are in politics still they do not want their children to join politics. They want them to finish their higher education before taking a decision of political career. These parents expressed that they are kidnap, extortion and even killing of children of political leaders. They said the reason for sending their children so far off PUNE is due to this fear only.

It was felt necessary to find out the professional choices of the respondents.

**Table –5 : What profession would you prefer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Job</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join Family Business</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Service seems to be the major preference of the respondents. A good number 118 (39.3%) and 36 (12%) of the respondents want to join government job and private sector job respectively.

Nearly 47 (15.7%) of the respondents prefer business, because they feel it is very lucrative only 36 (12%) of the respondent prefer to join politics which is lucrative and gives power.

This shows that the parents aim of sending to far off place for studies succeeded in preventing from participation in politics.

The student respondents want to pursue their studies and not get involved in politics.

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