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PROBLEMS IN THE SPREAD of Adult Education AMONG RURAL WOMEN OF ASSAM.

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Education is an instrument of social change and development. In a society based on technology and science, it is education that determines the means of prosperity and the level of growth to which it can be achieved. In this context, education should be re-evaluated and re-oriented to that segment of the society which did not benefit from formal schooling. Hence the need for adult education.

The educational scene of 1978 was dominated by number of features, the first of which was the

National Adult Education programme (NAEP). The National Adult Education programme was inaugurated on 2nd October, 1978 in Assam on a nation wide basis and under this programme 25 lakhs of illiterate persons would be made literate in the State within the period upto 1983-84. During the current year 65,000 illiterate persons would be made literate and for this a vigorous campaign has been started almost in all places under the management of State Social Education Department in collaboration with the Vol-

untary non-official social organisation. The estimated cost during the year 1978-79 would be Rs. 57.38 lakhs. The Government of India has earmarked about Rs. 15 crores for the adult education programme in Assam during the sixth plan period.

Assam is lagging far behind in the field of women education in comparison with the other states of the country. In 1947 the percentage of male literacy in Assam was 28.9 and female 18.9. Now there are 190 Girls' High Schools, 310 Girls' M. E. Schools, 630 Girls' primary schools and 10 Girls' colleges in Assam. Moreover, girls are studying in different educational institutions meant for boys. The number of females reading in educational institutions are lesser than that of the male. The percentage of women employment also is not most satisfactory. Any way, the number of illiterate women is higher than the number of males in Assam. The progress of Socio-economic conditions of the country mainly depends upon the removal of illiteracy. The women must know the different schemes undertaken

for the progress of socialism of the country. The women must fight along with man against the removal of poverty and illiteracy for the development of the country for which they must have education. And for these reasons Vivekananda said "If the women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country, then will culture, knowledge power & devotion awaken in the country.

Assam observed the International women's year in 1975 along with the rest of the country, but the suffering of 307. women has not gone as yet. The constitution of India has conferred on women equal rights with men, but in practice it is not so. Assamese women are very much dependent on their husbands or parents and others for which their share of burden grows heavier and they are subjected to greater strains. Their straitened Economic condition is the main root of all troubles. The women in Assam in the rural areas are denied the minimum facilities of modern development

and are completely kept unaware of the possibilities that science has opened up. Generally women were not allowed to come out of the campus and as a result they were deprived of having any knowledge or information of the outside world. Women are engaged in cooking, household works, in taking care of children weaving, spinning and similar household activities. They work both physically and mentally and hardly they get time to study. After performing the routine works from morn till night it is not at all possible for them to devote time in study. It is generally seen that Assamese house-wives do not take meal in time as because they can have their meal only after serving to all the members of the family including domestic servants also. Most of rural women are engaged in poultry and animal husbandry, agriculture servant, parttime labour, fishing, marketing in addition to household work for which they do not get time for recreation, merriment and enjoyment. The housewives in some cases are treated

as born-servants by their husbands. With the advancement of civilisation early marriage torture on widows polygamy, prohibition of inter caste marriage have been abolished to some extent in Assam. However, some conservative minded people are dominating in some interior places in uneducated societies. Primary education is not made compulsory as yet and this is one of the main hurdles in the progress of women's education. Moreover, there are no primary schools in over 2000 villages in Assam not to speak of higher education. Communication in the rural areas is still in a deplorable condition which is another problem in the development of education. The women belonging to labour class, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, O.B.C, tribal are generally getting no scope at all for education. The Mahila Semities organised at different levels for the welfare of women are also not much active for various reasons. Generally it is seen, a vast majority of women are not willing to learn mainly due to three reasons. (1) a large majority

of them felt that they are over-burdened with agricultural and domestic works (2) about one thirds lack personal interest to learn (3) most of them feel that they have no interest and feel shy to learn in the advanced age.

One obvious defect of adult womens education is that there is no evaluation and follow up work on the programmes undertaken by adult education centres. The other major factor contributing to the indifference in the society is the fact that we donot have sufficient number of trained adult educators with social commitments and individual competence. It is true that some of the national institutes of adult education offer training courses to train adult educators, but such institutes are limited in number and hence there is need for establishing more centres to train and employ adult educators.

In short, adult womens education as an agency of social development cannot afford to stay in isolation and away from the society which it is supposed to serve. Besides, it cannot receive appreciation and apprehension from the society as

long as it organises academic and routine courses without practical utility. But the aim of educating the large population of illiterates is an uphill task which adult educators cannot achieve without the cooperation and coordination of other social agencies like voluntary organisations, social welfare departments, agricultural extension departments, mass media net-work etc. There should be sufficient number of schools specially in interior places with female educators providing facilities for women education. Mahila Samities at all levels should be formed to remove illiteracy and these organisations should receive financial grants either from the Government or from the voluntary organisations. An atmosphere should be created to make mass people interested for education and the communications the rural areas should be improved. The society should come forward with new out look to honour women equally with men to make them educated and to implement the different schemes undertaken by the Government for this purpose successfully.

Read out in the seminar on Adult Education for rural women held in the Gauhati University (23-25 April, 1979)

Socio Economic Aspect of family WELFARE SCHEME

Prof. Harendra Kr. Das.

The need for family welfare which depends upon the process of family control methods has become a world issue and in our country it must be a step for man power planning so far as the economy is concerned.

If we consider the land area of the world. India possesses only 2.4% of its total area and she has to feed 14 percent of the world population inhabiting in the land. According to 1971 census India's total population stood at 548 crores and now it is more than 60 crores. It is recorded that in India there has been a rapid rise of population since 1921 due to high birth rate and decline of death rate. The rising population has become a great threat to India in the form of 'po-

pulation explosion' The rising trend of population is seriously affecting the socio-economic life of the country. The population of a country is a wealth if it can be productively utilised. But it becomes a curse when the growing population retards the economic development of a country.

The percapita income of India is very low and it is feared that it will burther decline due to the rising population trend. A large number of people are still below the poverty line. We cannot consider anyt standard of living of these people worth its name. The picthre is very gloomy specially in rural life.

It is recorded that between 1921 and 1971 the cultirated area perecapit a declined from 1.11 aeres

to 0.62 acres. Even the intensive cultivation for raising productivity will fail to meet the demand for food grains for the entire population. The census report shows that percapita availability of food grains declined from 453 grams in 1974 to 418 grams in 1975. The population of India will rise up to 100 crores by 2000 A.D. Therefore the demand for food grains is very likely to out grow the increase in production of food grains.

Another problem is the increase of unproductive consumers in our country as a result of rising population. In 1961 census, unproductive consumers were about 251 million and in 1971 census the number rose up to 368. These unproductive consumers are now the unbearable burden of the country. They also need nutritious food, medical care, education public health etc.

The expert committee of unemployment has revealed that the problem of unemployment is accelerating due to rising population. The total number of the unemployed in this country was 18.7 million in 1971.

In each five-year plan we have seen a backlog of unemployment. So this problem will be very serious in near future. The social and political unrest is certainly due to this the unemployment problem.

The rising population has created problems in education and medical care as well. It has caused the rising trend of expenditure in education and medical facilities. Moreover the state has to consider the case of providing housing facilities to the citizens.

It is also recorded that the percentage rate of growth of population in India 25 per annum. To obtain a constant percapita real income, national income must rise at the rate of 25 percent per annum. To achieve this investment of capital is essential. But there is no formation of capital which can be accelerated for investment. Since there is a high propensity to consume the fruits of developmental works of the country cannot reach the people of India.

Through several schemes of savings have been introduced the

significant result of saving has not yet been found in this country. Saving is always necessary for the formation of capital. India is still depending upon foreign countries so far as the import and investment of capital are concerned.

In order to accelerate the social and economic upliftment, the only solution is to check the rising population growth. It must be stabilised. The ideal of achieving a zero growth of population should be true aim of India and measures of birth control as such should have to be made a "must" by her people. As has been revealed by Khushwant Singh in "Illustrated weekly of India," October (9-15) 1977, it is a fact that prime minister Nehru gave it less priority." As a socialist he believed that the population explosion was a bogey by white capitalist countries to frighten the coloured peoples to restrict their birthrate and that India had plenty of land and expanding industries to absorb the additional population. By 1961 population had risen to 442 million. By then even Nehru had come

round to believe that the rate of birth had to be checked. He did not live to see the present situation of population problems. The next prime Minister his daughter Indira Gandhi started with the same reservation of family planning. Khushwant Singh had an interview with her and suggested to make family planning compulsory, she replied. "It is important but not that important." She replied in a snort. "What in a democracy?" However it must be conceded that it was during her regime that propaganda in favour of two or three children was made through all mass communication media all over the country. The family planning Minister Chandra Sekhar became very keen in the implementation of the family planning policy. Different methods of contraception were introduced. India was producing its own condom, the 'Nirodh' and a factory of pill was also set up. A bill to legalise abortion on demand was circulated for public opinion. Chandra Sekhar admitted that the programme needed more punch. He wrote 'India's

population is likely to increase to 1,000 million by 1990 if the present slow pace of family planning programme continues. If, however, government's policy of reducing the birthrate by one percent per year is achieved, the one million mark may be put off by another ten years. Only a bold policy like compulsory sterilisation can achieve this target and save the country from economic disaster. "He pointed a grim picture for the next generation of India. The parliament passed the Medical Termination of pregnancy Act in 1971. During the fifth five year plan outlay for central Government's family planning was fixed at over Rupees 65 crores (for 1975-76). The actual expenditure exceeded this target. During the last period of Emergency the methods of family planning were to be implemented on war footing. The chief minister and officials were very anxious and busy in the programme of sterilisation. Doctors were ordered to meet the targets of sterilization cases fixed by the government, we remember

the fact as revealed by Kushwant Singh. All the government servants were ordered to produce a required number of cases for sterilisation or their salaries would be withheld had done so. Renewals of motor driving licenses and gun licenses were made conditional to the production of sterilisation certificate. The police was instructed to help bring in 'volenters for strilisation. The resistance was met by Mathicharges and even firing. There were many ugly incidents in Haryana, Delhi and western uttarpradesh. Sterilisation was recklessly done in some states. It is reported that in Bihar 30 unmarried persons and 50 old persons were sterilised. Over 10 million people were sterilised during Emergency after lifting of emergency the implementation of this programme also has been a bit slackedge.

Family planning has been now converted into the family welfare. The present government of India is also trying to uplift the economic condition of the country. This is possible only when her people come forward to limit the size of their

family voluntarily. A target of million voluntary sterilisation has been fixed for 1977-78.

Now let us review some aspects of the family planning devices which have been popular in our society. Before the introduction of the devices there was to a great extent a sense of fear on sexual matters. These devices have removed the fears since there is safety in the use of these devices for checking conception. On the other hand sexual corruptions have been found to be increased. The publicity of these devices should not be so open as it is seen to-day. The subject should be restricted to the married couples only. After abolition has been legalised there have been instances that unmarried young girls have gone to hospitals for medical termination. So this moral side of our life must be considered when we go to implement the programme of family welfare.

The marriageable age for boys and girls has been increased to reduce the fertility period. Some people even now are of opinion that

if marriageable age is increased in case of girls there will be sex corruptions in our society. Those who are unemployed, unread and un-schooled will select the dark ways of their life. But there is no justifications of this argument. If the status of women is improved, employment opportunity is created and right type of education is imparted they would be able to contribute to the society.

Many people think that the issues born in the later part of life become brilliant. This idea is quite unscientific. There are thousands of issues who are born in later part of their parent's life. But how many of them have become greatmen? Rather, it is a fact that in Europe, Russia and Germany almost all the greatmen were born in the early part of their father's and mothers life.

It is seen that only the enlightened class of people come forward to control the number of their family. But the uneducated and poor classes which have generally no idea of restrictions of the size

of their family are not coming so voluntarily due to their ignorance. They think that it is God who gives birth. Thus they have become fatalists. The Muslims and Catholics are seen opposing family planning devices. They should be motivated and the spread of education will give a good result in this respect.

It is also a fact that some people are not coming to accept birth control devices due to some false fear. They think that the use of different contraceptives and other devices cause some diseases like cancer blood pressure mental defects etc. The present family welfare scheme must see that the devices are most scientific and there is no danger in their use.

There is also a traditional system in our society and this has become a hurdle for birth control. We depend in our old age upon our sons. This is due to the feelings of insecurity in the last part of our life. If old age pension along with other social security is sufficiently guaranteed this traditional

idea of the people will be reformed automatically and present government in its family welfare schemes must improve the social security conditions.

In Assam, the pressure of population is seriously felt. Not only that the rate of birth is increasing there is the increasing rate of infiltration in this country. The economy of Assam is very weak. The Agricultural production is not sufficient to meet the demand of her people, there is no industrial enterprises too. The infiltration should be checked and the schemes of family welfare should be implemented properly.

Perhaps a day will come when the population growth will be checked. But we must look into the matter that the country needs healthy brilliant and brave children for happiness and prosperity. Ignorance of parents is responsible for the birth of bad children. Knowledge of sex is essential for every couple. That should be discriminated through family welfare schemes.

The application of science, according to our view is not sufficient for family welfare. There is

a need for spiritualism also for family welfare. Both science and spiritualism should be confined to achieve the good results of birth control. Many greatmen taught their teachings on religion. They say that the individuals should not be always guided or motivated by their instincts or "Ripus" recklessly. The control of life gives strength and valour and thus a man becomes

happy and prosperous without any disease. The relation of husband and wife and their conduct should be noble and ideal. A man or woman should not be motivated by lust alone for sexual intercourse recklessly. If the Gita is the way of our life it also forbids the unnecessary spoiling of semen which causes the destruction of life.

Let us be happy and prosperous.

BERTOLT BRECHT, THE MAN

Kabindra Nath Deka.
B. A 2nd year

There are few writers who have managed to reflect the contradictions of the historical process in so exemplary a fashion as has the German poet and dramatist Brecht. He was born in February, 1898, and at the age of 58 years he saw the collapse of the old Germany,

the First World War, the abortive German revolution of 1919 the Republic of Weimar and the growth of the German working class movement, the economic crisis of the twenties, the rise of fascism and its ultimate defeat, and finally, the attempts to construct socialism in the

German Democratic Republic. A rich period of history in which the contradictions that still characterise our epoch were sharply chiselled out.

Emigrant for 14 years :

The fascist onslaught forced Brecht to leave Berlin in 1933 and spend 14 long years as an emigrant in the Scandinavian countries, and finally in the united states of America where in 1947 he had to appear before the committee for un-american Activities as a suspected communist. He returned via Switzerland to Berlin (G.D.R) in 1948. In the last 6 years of his life, he found the great theatre "Berliner Ensemble," creating thus an instrument which not only enabled him to bring out exemplary performances of his plays but has also influenced theatrical production of our times.

Brecht's great achievement consists in consciously bringing in the Marxist scientific understanding of society into his literary production in order to make it a weapon for change. His importance lies in the fact that the example set by him

can be learnt easily. The Marxist writer cannot rest content with registering merely the surface phenomena of society. His scientific understanding enables him to penetrate into the essential contradiction underlying the movement of history which he seeks to reflect in his writing. This is the basis for realism as method in literature. But Brecht added a new qualitative dimension to this insight by trying to change the means of production in the literary sphere. This is the basis of his experimentation with theatre forms, his use of new media like film and radio as new techniques like Montequieu. With this was coupled an attempt to revolutionise the apparatus of literary and theatre production so that it could really fulfil the aim of becoming part of the complicated process of changing the world.

Basic Marxist insight :

The Uniqueness of Brecht lies in the fact that in addition to being a poet and playwright he was also an educator, theoretician, organiser,

politician and theatre producer.

Brecht's theatre makes the spectator an observer but awakens his capacity to act and demands decisions from him. Brecht wished his spectators to confront and study what he sees. In traditional theatre, man is assumed to be known and unalterable, whereas for Brecht, man is an object of investigation and is alterable and ever altering.

For him man is a process and his social being determines his thoughts. Instead of the category of feeling dominating traditional theatre, Brecht operated with the category of reason. Brecht thus introduced the basic Marxist insight that man produces himself, makes his history although in conditions not of his choosing - into theatre. This theatre was, of course, not an abstract product but a concrete answer to the political struggles he witnessed. Of these the most significant was the anti-fascist struggle. In common with other progressive writers Brecht threw his energies into the anti fascist front and looked upon his literary activity as an integral part

of it. Brecht's anti-fascist position made it necessary for him to leave Germany and go into exile.

The conscious politicalisation of literature as an instrument of battles against fascism resulted in the great plays of this period - Round Heads and pointed Heads, in which the essence of fascism is grasped, The private life of the Master Race, Mother courage and Her children, The life of Galileo, The Good women of Sezuon.

Plays Remain Topical :

Brecht's plays remain topical. This is not surprising. An understanding of the contradictions of epoch has been crystallised in them and as long as the epoch does not change, the topicality will remain. One of Brecht's major plays written in exile, is "The Life of Galileo (1938). It deals with truth reason and tactfulness required to ensure their ultimate victory of truth over falsehood. It also deals with the responsibility of science towards human existence. In a world in which neutron bombs are possible

and the battles for the victory of reason against obscurantism are still being fought, a play like this is like a signal of the times. With the emergency still fresh in our minds, Brecht's attack on intellectual sycophancy in 'Turandot or the congress of white Washers' or in the 'Tui' fragment, and his analysis of fascism in 'The Resistable, Rise of Arturolli' read as though they have been addressed to us.

In addition to the model of his plays Brecht characteristically sober assessment of his position in the revolutionary struggle has lessons for our intelligentsia. Brecht never made the infantile error of forgetting his class origins. He considered himself as a bourgeois writer who had consciously chosen the side of the proletariat because it was only from this perspective that the concrete victory of socialism was possible. The apologists the legitimisers are demarcated from those who are

genuine progressives precisely by the perspective adopted. This point is brought out in one of his famous poems written during exile 'Literature will be searched through' in which writers are divided into those who sit on golden chairs and become apologists of the mechanism of repression. On the other side are those who sit on the naked earth writing about suffering of the downtrodden and the deeds of the fighters against oppression. This basic division finds repeated expression in his writings.

In his speech on the occasion of being awarded the Lenin prize for peace in 1951, Brecht said that "the most important of the teachings he had understood was that mankind's future is visible only from down below, from the point of view of the oppressed and the exploited. Fighting with them one fights for humanity.

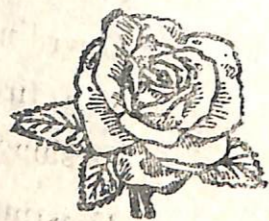
TO OUR DEAR COMRADE TITO

Hareswar Baro
B.A. 1st Yr.

Creating whirlpools in the sky,
The wireless cry,
"Alass, the giant Yugosluv Tito dies"
Stunned and gazed sit I,
Collecting my feet to stand
And thunder that
It is a cruel lie.
For our dashing comrade
Can never die
From the war field of rights
I see our dear Marshall,
Sit on Tankers high.
No, Please do not lie.
Though never met,
I know well
Our robust comrade
Can never die
I feel consoling,
Wiping the warm course of tears
of my Yugosluv sisters;

Patting on the tall shoulders
of my Yugosluv brothers;
"Hey, why do you cry?
How can our dear comrade die?
It is nothing but a petey lie.
Tito the Marshall
Of so many wars.
Has gone only for a rest"
It is not death
But I shall call it a rest.
Rest my leader and comrade
For your life was marathon fight
Guarding democracy's barricade
You fired the Nazis.
Dashing and Sweating
Hoisting the hopes of
Mao and Lenin,
You materialised the
Yugosluv worker's 'dream.
Come along, Comrades

Kiss those faded lips
By doing so
It is the human race
That you Kiss
For these are the lips
Those have gone tired
After preaching and teaching
The civilisation harmonious lessons of
World peace.
No for heaven's sake
Do not call it Tito's death
But call it,
After a struggling life
Tito goes for a rest.



Comrade,
Good night
With peace
You may go to sleep
For the red flag, you have hoisted
We promise
Everflying the red flag
We shall keep
Staining it ever redder
From our hearts deep,
Untarnished, unassaulted
The red flag
We shall keep,
Comrade,
Good night.

THE AGONY OF ASSAM.

Ramjee Singh

"The cloth woven by the weaver has covered the whole world and yet the weaver goes bare-bodied" (tatire kapore jagat khan jurib tathapi tatir ga udi) This Assamese folk ballad expresses the agony of Assam. Assam is a region of neglected potentialities and unrealized opportunities. This resource-rich region is the worst victim of colonial pattern of exploitation. Out of its 2.371 million hectares of total cropped area, only 0.30 million hectares have been brought under irrigation when this is a land of rivers and water.

Then there is sub-subsistence agriculture where more than 70 percent of cultivable area has average size of ownership holding of 3.10

acres lowest in the country. About 75 percent of the people are living below the poverty line. There is industrial lag and simply false hopes of industrialisation. Between 1970-71 and 1977-78, the per capita income of Assam rose by 2.6 percent while that of the country as a whole rose by 8.6 percent. The per capita income of Assam in 1977-78 was Rs. 866 against Rs. 1,163 for the country as a whole.

Assam gives about Rs. 3,000 crores worth of its products to the nation but Assam gets almost nothing. Almost all the head offices of the tea gardens, plywood, petroleum, and fertiliser concerns are situated outside Assam, depriving the State of its rightful and just

benefits. Assam has been a cruel and constant victim of the worst floods but we leave it at the mercy of nature. In its major industries, more than 60 percent managers and senior officers (staff) are recruited from outside the State. The hydel potential of this region is one third of the country's total, but ironically it occupies a bottom position in both per capita production and consumption of electricity, while the consumers pay the highest power-tariff in the country. Only one percent of its power potential has been tapped as yet!

Notwithstanding the 36th Report of the Lok Sabha Committee on Public Undertakings, a refinery was located at Barauni where the per ton cost was Rs. 37.93 and not at Gauhati at Rs. 21 only! It is only after a hard struggle that Assam got a refinery - a toy refinery of 75 million ton per annum. This region which represents over 8 percent of the country's area has only 3.2 percent of the country's total rail track kilometerage. The North-eastern region has 23.6 kilometres

of roads per 100 square kilometres against the national average of 34.4 kilometres. This is the reason of worst transport bottlenecks in such a sensitive area. This is why, when the Chinese marched through the Northeast region, Assam was virtually abandoned by the then custodians of this great and glorious India for a cake-walk victory.

And to-day, when Assam cries in agony, it is branded as 'antinational' and 'foreign-inspired'! We hear sermons like: 'Who lives if India dies?' Cannot they ask: 'If Assam dies; how can India survive?' A simple folk song in Assamese says. When the king dies the people themselves die, who will remain? (Swargadeo morib raig khan thakiba raj mori job thabiba kon) So let us say "Save Assam to save India." Acharya Vinoba Bhave has rightly said that "It is not a regional problem, but a national problem, Justice H.R. Khana therefore has pleaded for a "national consensus." Assam deserves greater understanding and not police bandobust or some sort of counter movement.

The land that wakes up with

the first glimpse of the morning sun, this wonderland of India; is not at ease today. A land of courtesy, friendliness and hospitality has been a land of turmoil. No where in history, have we seen such a mass movement, by and large peaceful sustaining for so long a duration. This shows the stamina of the organisers as well as the deep involvement of the cross section of the people. There is cause behind this struggle which sustains their nerve.

Instances of depriving Assam of her due and her criminal neglect may be multiplied. Hence it

	1901-11	1911-21	1921-31	1931-41	1941-51	1951-61	1971-80
Assam	16.8	20.2	20.5	20.5	20.1	35.00	34.7
India	5.7	0.3	11.0	14.2	13.3	21.6	24.6

explosion in East Bengal the flood-gates for immigration were burst open and human swarms started sneaking in as early as 1901. The process got a boost in the thirties and immigration of peasants from the adjoining districts of Bengal gradually engulfed vast areas. The hunger for land was so great that

is natural that the younger generation of Assam is being gripped by a feeling of psychological alienation from the rest of the country. Hence, it is in this background that the present problem of 'foreigners' has assumed such a vast magnitude.

Foreign immigration to Assam is not a fiction but a fact. However it has historical backdrop of the last seventy years. The decennial variations of population growth in India as a whole and in Assam make the picture clear:-

Due mainly to the population

they not only encroached upon Government reserves but also upon lands belonging to the local inhabitants resulting in occasional conflicts with the indigenous people. This led to the famous "line system," which classified land into exclusively occupied by immigrants, exclusively reserved for the Assamese, and mixed

This happened in 1916-20. But this law was often violated by the immigrants by driving away the local inhabitants.

Madhav Sharma raised this issue of illegal occupation of lands by the immigrants in the Legislative Council and demanded the appointment of a committee to go into the entire question but unfortunately the demand was turned down. The Government instead, convened an 'all party' conference in 1928, which liberalized the "line system" and adopted the "colonisation system." It is on record that Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India in 1946) said; "The chief political problem is the desire of the Muslim ministers to increase the immigration into the uncultivated government lands under the slogan "Grow More Food" but what they are really after is "Grow More Muslims." Mr. C. S. Mullan, the Census Commissioner, in the Census Report of 1931 said, "In fact the way in which they have seized upon the vacant areas in the Assam Valley seems almost uncanny. Without

tumult, without fuss, without trouble to the district revenue a population which must account to over half a million has transplanted itself from Bengal to the Assam valley during the last years... an event which is likely to alter permanently the whole future of Assam and to destroy more surely than the Burmese invaders of 1820, the whole structure of Assamese culture and civilisation."

Later S. P. Desai the Government's Special Officer in charge Examining Government Revenue reported "The Assam Land Revenue Regulation is so far as the immigrant encroachments are concerned virtually non-existent. The Government which is the custodian and trustee of their interests has failed them. All sections of the local population are greatly perturbed and their talk exhibits deep-rooted bitterness." After partition, Desai, the Chief Secretary to the Government, urged the Central Government not to flush refugees on a massive scale as it was already

overcrowded. But he was rewarded with a quick transfer order. Under severe pressure, the Assam Government constituted, in 1937; a "Line System Committee," which held that it was undesirable to relax restrictions on the immigrants. Meanwhile the first national government of Gopinath Bardoloi realising the very grave situation arising out of the large scale influx, adopted a land policy resolution on April 21, 1940 according to which the immigrants coming to Assam from East Bengal after March 1, 1938 would not be given land in Assam. However, this was nullified by the minority Muslim League Ministry which was installed after Bardoloi resigned to take part in the Quit India Movement, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. in his book India Divided says, "This policy of colonization of Assam by the Muslims of Bengal was continued under the joint auspices of the Muslim League Ministry of Sir Saadulla in Assam and Sir Nazimuddin in Bengal" This was a part of a plan to convert Assam into a province of Pakistan.

However, Mahatma Gandhi understood this combined conspiracy of the British and the Muslim League and he observed: "If the unbridled immigration to a small province like Assam went on and if as a result the province felt that its inhabitants were likely to be reduced to minority, then it had the right to Satyagraha" He did not stop there. He rejected the the Cripps Mission bracketing Assam along with Bengal and when the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission were going on and Assam's fate hung in balance; Gandhi advised the Assamese to rebel even against the Congress to save its identity. He said; "My mind is made up. Assam must not lose its soul. It must uphold it against the whole world. Else, I will say that Assam had only manikins and no men. It is an impertinent suggestion that Bengal should dominate Assam in any way. Tell the people that even if Gandhiji tries to dissuade us, we won't listen"

After India became free and adopted its own Constitution on January 26, 1950, there were special

provisions with regard to the conferment of citizenship under Articles 5 and 6 taking due note of the large scale immigration of people from Pakistan to India and vice versa. The cut off date was accepted before July 19, 1948 in the Constitution itself. Likewise, the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 made it clear that a person who belonged to undivided India could come back to India, if he chose to do so, within December 31, 1950. This is why 1951 is proposed as the base year for detection and identification of foreigners staying illegally in India.

Then Sections 3 to 7 of Indian Citizenship Act, 1955 are clear as to who is a citizen and who is not. The term 'foreigner' according to the definition given in the Foreigners Act 1946 and the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1949 means a person who is not a citizen of India as defined in the Citizenship Act 1955 and who had not acquired Indian citizenship under the Naturalization Act, 1926 as amended up. The Election Commissioner found the population of Assam 'alarming'

to-date including a person who had acquired citizenship under the Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1957.

To face the serious problem of large-scale immigration into Assam, Immigration (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 was passed by the Indian Parliament on February 13, 1950. The objective of the Act was to remove the immigrant persons whose stay in Assam was detrimental to the general public of India or to any scheduled tribe in Assam. In the statement of or not for being reported under the law. But these tribunals were wound up all of a sudden under the pressure of the foreigners' lobby in the ruling party.

We have shown that the increase in the percentage of population of Assam in 1951 was 20.12% in 1961—34.97% and in 1971—34.95%, while the all India percentage was 13.3%, 21.6% and 24.6% respectively. The increase in the number of voters in the electoral rolls of Assam for March 1977 of Assam found the abnormal increase in the population

objects and reasons of the Act it was said. "During the last few months a serious situation has arisen from the immigration of a large number of East Bengal residents to Assam. Such large scale migration is disturbing the economy of the Province, besides giving rise to a serious law and order problem." However, this Act was never seriously applied and the foreigners' influx remained unabated. The Census Report of 1961 gives a gloomy picture and accepts the "Movement of foreign nationals into Indian territory." The Government of Assam, besides adopting measures to check the inflow of foreigners, decided to set up tribunals to determine the question of whether a person is a foreigner was 72,29,543 and for November 1977 it was 79,74,476—an increase of 10.40%. The rise in the number of voters from 1971 to 1979 amounts to 28,35,692 which means an annual increase of 3,15,077. This abnormal rise in the number of voters was also "alarming" to Shri S. L. Shakhder, the Chief Election Commissioner. He observed on October 24-

26, 1978, "In one case (Assam) the population in 1971 recorded an increase as high as 34.98% over 1961. A stage would be reached when the State may have to reckon with the foreign nationals who may probably constitute a sizeable percentage, if not the majority."

Another disturbing factor is the demand for the inclusion in the electoral rolls of the names of such migrants who are not Indian citizens without even questioning and properly determining their citizenship status. On August 21, 1978 and, on November 27, 1978 Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, the then External Affairs Minister; said that "infiltration can jeopardise the security of the whole nation." He assured that the Intelligence Department had been instructed to check on the electoral rolls. However, Shri Shakhder stayed the intensive scrutiny on September 11, 1979 under the pressure of some political parties. There were no less than 13 lakhs names of foreigners on the electoral rolls of 1977. The increase in Assam was 18% against the all-India average of 12%.

The case of Assam is clear. Assam tops the list of States which registered more than 50% increase during 1911-61. All this leads to the following conclusions.

1. The influx of foreign nationals can account for the abnormal high percentage of increase in population.

2. Growth in the size of electorate is also due to the influx of immigrants.

3. India is definitely exposed to dangerous moves by foreign nationals in the northeastern region.

The harmful effects of continuous immigration are evident in every sphere of life. Tensions in the social, political economic and cultural fields have already surfaced. Immigrants have created pressure unprecedented in modern world history. On every resource of the region. If dignity of the Constitution and the Central Acts have to be upheld, foreign nationals cannot be allowed to participate in Indian politics. Such a sensitive area should not be exposed to dangers of foreign conspiracies to carve out a separate State.

Naga and Mizo rebels are being trained in China or/and Bangladesh. They operate even from Burma. The separatist leaders are often found to talk of a united independent Bengal including Assam Nagaland etc. The West always looks for a foothold here to carry on their plan to build a second Vietnam. Hence it is a political necessity to strengthen Assam.

There are apprehensions in the minds of Bengalis in India. According to them, Assam has periodically seen anti "outsider" riots, localized or State-wide—in 1948, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1968, 1971, 1972 and now in 1979-80. They think that the Assam movement is against all Indian citizens other than the Assamese-speaking especially the Bengali-speaking people.

It is a matter of psychological research as to why there is bitterness against the Bengalis in Assam. The Assamese normally called any foreigner a Bangali. They even called the Britishers as "Baga Bangal" (fair skinned Bengalis). The Assamese had a natural suspicion about

whoever came from the West, because all the invading incursions into the State, save for the Burmese in the 1820s, had been through Bengal. Even the Britishers came through Bengal with local Bengali recruits to man their administration. The Bengali Hindus who were in the administration succeeded in persuading the British power to replace Assamese with Bengali in the administration and in the schools. This was done in 1836.

The labourers in the tea gardens also came in good number but they have become part and parcel of the Assamese society. But the Bengali Hindu settlers in Assam have been living with separate identity and most of them always try to establish linguistic and cultural domination and a "big brotherly" attitude. When the Bengali-dominated Sylhet was in Assam, the Bengalis always tried to put obstacles before such a move of the Assamese to get a separate college or to have a University.

When Assam demanded that Assamese should be declared the State language according to the commitment of freedom movement and linguistic distribution of States, the Bengali immigrants (from Sylhet) in Cachar raised voices of protest. In 1972 Assamese was demanded as the medium of instruction in collegiate education in Assam. This time also the opposition came from *even Gandhiji's non-cooperation* place in Assam.

Bengali-speaking people of Cachar. At the time of State reorganisation, Bengali-speaking people of Cachar fought along with the West Bengal Government for its inclusion in West Bengal, but failed. Even this movement for the detection and deportation of foreign nationals from Assam is being opposed by Bengali speaking people of Cachar and other Bengali pockets for they think that the axe will fall upon them and they will lose their numerical strength.

The Assamese are apprehensive of "Greater Bengal" or "Amra Bengal" chauvinism. Even now the

Calcutta Press and the West Bangali leaders are up in arms against this movement. Hence, there is natural bitterness against the Bengalis. Gandhiji, perceiving the problem long before, had opposed Assam to be included in the same group along with Bengal at the time of transfer of power. He said, "It is an impertinent suggestion that Bengal should dominate Assam in any way... If I bring Gujarati manners into Bengal I would expect the Bengalis to expel me" It is a fact that the language of a minority was imposed upon Assam and Assam had to fight several times for the use of its language in schools and courts.

It is also alleged that the movement is not non-violent and peaceful, although they "condemn all types of violence and stand by our chosen path." The editor of the Illustrated Weekly of India has testified on it. "I see no violence, no buses being burnt what strikes me most about Assamese people is a certain element of softness and a certain element of gentleness..."

If Gandhiji could not keep his people under control, student leaders are trying to keep everybody under control." In such a mass movement lasting for nine months, the element of violence is negligible and even that has been started by the provocative violent mood and temper of All India Minorities Students Union, with secret encouragement from the administration and some political parties with vested interests I shudder to think that in spite of such provocation, the movement could remain so peaceful. There is no parallel in history, not even Gandhi's non-cooperation or JP's movement, which had such a massive popular involvement. Only Sheikh Mujeeb's non-cooperation (in Bangladesh) could compare with it, but even he had to resort to armed struggle after some time. Assam is facing virtual martial law non-violently.

I think the time is running fast. If the Government can start parleys with China, Pakistan, Phizo and Laldenga, is it wrong to enter into sincere, wideranging negotiations

with the patriotic non-political leaders in Assam? Is it wise to promulgate the Assam Armed Forces Act and place Assam under the control of Armed Forces and on top of it to enact legislation to give special powers to the President to make any law with regard to Assam without reference to Parliament? Are we not pushing Assamese to the wall?

There is a limit to one's patience. We must have the courage to face the hard facts in Assam. The agitators have law and justice on their side. Hence they should be persuaded to come to terms even on humanitarian grounds. Let politics not spoil the game. No clause of the 1972 Treaty of Friendship Cooperation and Peace between India and Bangladesh deals with this problem. Hence there is no international commitment in the way. Let us not be a party to national disintegration. Let us all share the burden of Assam if at all we wish to give shelter to the foreigners' according to our history and culture! Why Assam alone with a population of 1,46,25,152

should bear the burden of nearly 46 lakh immigrants, when West Bengal drove away only a few thousand of their kith and kin to Dandakaranya in the most questionable manner. Let there be a Bharat Tirtha as Tagore said, everywhere, not only in Assam, so that streams of people should melt into our ocean of humanity

Assam gave more lands to the foreigners than its share. If we send more people, it would be asking for disaster. I hope, the patriots of Bengal shall rise to the occasion and understand the feeling of psychological alienation of the Assamese youth. The agony of Assam is the agony of Bengal, the agony of India. Let us share it together and halt the future flow of foreigners to save our country from the international conspiracy to carve out another Pakistan. Let the youth and the people of Assam understand that they are not alone in their struggle for justice and truth. And let them never forget that Truth always triumphs — Satyameva Jayate.

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