

The Role of Students in the Historic Assam Movement

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ABSTRACT

Student community of the whole world has played active role in solving various problems of their society. A good number of examples can be cited about the solving of burning problems in the world only through the interfere of the students. The great role played by the students in India's freedom movement is still inspiring everyone. In India it has been witnessed at present that without the involvement of student, problems whether political, social, economical or specially the problems of the students, can never be solved. In Assam also student community plays the role of watch dog of every problems of Assam. In freedom movement as well as after India's independence, students of Assam involves in every problems to achieve its desired goals. Assam movement is one of the historic movement of the country through which the students tried to throw out the illegal migrants from Assam. In this movement a total 855 student and people of our society sacrificed their lives. In our paper we will try to make a study to highlight the contribution of students in this great movement of Assam.

1. Introduction

The students of Assam had participated actively in all the major movements that had been originated in Assam since Independence. The Oil Refinery Movement, Official Language Movement, Medium of Instruction Movement, Food Crisis movement etc. are some of the great examples of student's movement of Assam. Considering the aims and the objectives, the student community of Assam is never seen lagging behind in this regard if they found that these movements were related with the sole cause of their motherland. History also revealed that most of the movements in Assam had been started by students themselves. Therefore, the whole world has witnessed a great student movement in Assam variously nomenclature 'Assam Movement', 'Foreigner's Movement' etc. during the period 1979-85 which had proved and showed real power of the students of Assam as well as the world.

2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of our paper is to find out the contribution and sacrifices made by the students of Assam to make their mother land free from the illegal migrants, specially the illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

The paper is mainly a descriptive one. To make our study a fruitful one data will mainly be collected from various secondary sources. Data will be collected from various sources of libraries such as books, journals, periodicals, News letter, News papers etc.

4. The Historic Assam Movement

The activities of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) were chiefly related to academic and economic issues until March, 1978. In the month of August, the students engaged themselves to boost their powers through capturing college unions. It was also seen that the coup of Nibaran Bora - a

leading social activist and nationalist leader of Assam, with AASU led the naxalites to form the United Students' Organization, (U.S.O.). The new students' leadership's first mass Satyagraha programme on October 24-27 against the outsiders before the Deputy Commissioners' courts was followed in October 28 by a general strike. Both the programmes were succeeded partially with the helps of the students' participation. By the end of 1978, the AASU as the most effective organization or mobiliser or discontented students and youths, had curbed the heretofore ascendant leftist influence on the latter. The Assam movement on the foreign national issue was started by All Assam Students' Union on 8 June, 1979 with a state-wide *bandh* against the normal rise in the number of voters revealed in the electoral rolls prepared for the Parliamentary by-election in the Mangaldoi constituency to held on March, 1979 due to the death of Hiralal Patowary, MP of Janata Party, before the expiry of his term of office. People had suspected that out of 6 lacs voters included in the voters' list more than seventy thousand names would be of illegal migrants. It was a matter of great shock that finally forty five thousand names of the list were names of illegal migrants. The AASU discussed the serious matter in its annual session held from 7-10 March, 1979. The organization announced a 'Assam Bandh' called on June 8, 1979 demanding the deportation of foreign nationals from Assam. People of Assam greatly responded to the Assam Bandh call and made it a grand success. To solve the problem at the earliest the leadership of the organization handed over a memorandum to the Chief Election Commissioner of India at Dispur on 21 June, 1979. The memorandum mentioned that everybody in Assam is expecting that the CEC to delete the names of foreigners from the voter list. Unfortunately, contrary to his previous statements, the CEC directed authorities to stop deletion of the foreigners names and said, 'a person whose name has been included shall be presumed to be citizen of Indiascrutiny of electoral rolls can be taken after the election is over'. Hearing the statement by the CEC, the people of Assam felt that to save their identity in their own homeland which was in great danger due to tremendous infiltration from

Bangladesh and Nepal, appeal and application would not solve their problem without coming to the street. Hence, the students and the people of Assam got ready for another movement to fight against the injustice of the government with unflinching and unbending determination.

The immigration problem of Assam created a fear psychosis in the minds of Assamese people of losing their identity in Assam seeing a phenomenal growth of voters up to 13.3 in 8 months (March 1977 to November 1977). But it is also to be noted that the problem of migration is not new to Assam and had continued since India was under the British rule. Britishers were the first to encourage the Bangladeshis to come and to settle in the vacant land of Assam for their economic gain. This trend was also continued till India achieved her independence and could not be stopped due to the fact that East Bengal was an integral part of our country but to limit the conflict that had arose between the indigenous people of Assam and the migrant people the government had enacted 'Line System' before independence.

Though India has achieved her independence on the 15th day of August, 1947 but the problem of immigration to Assam continued due to the indifferent attitude of the central government which provides threat to the very existence of the state of Assam. It is pertinent to mention here that realising such a burning problem of Assam before independence Gandhiji replied a letter written to him by Late Krishanath Sarma on the issue on August 18, 1945 - "if you do not work with positive attitude from now onwards destruction of Assam is certain". It is heart rendering that though the people of Assam have continuously pointed out the infiltration problem but the GOI and some Assamese politicians have been

consistently indifferent to the illegal immigration issue. They have also ignored the long-term interests of Assam, the North Eastern region perhaps of India. Power politics have been taking precedence over national security.

Realising the authenticity of the problem lauded by the people of Assam, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then PM of India referred to the infiltration by Pakistan, which have been continuing since 1949 as 'perfectly true,' on June 27, 1962. He said, "I believe that mass of this infiltration took place in the first five years of independence where the borders were not adequately guarded. Probably it will be difficult now to deal with illegal immigrants who came before 1952. We might, therefore, fix 1952 as the date of enquiry.

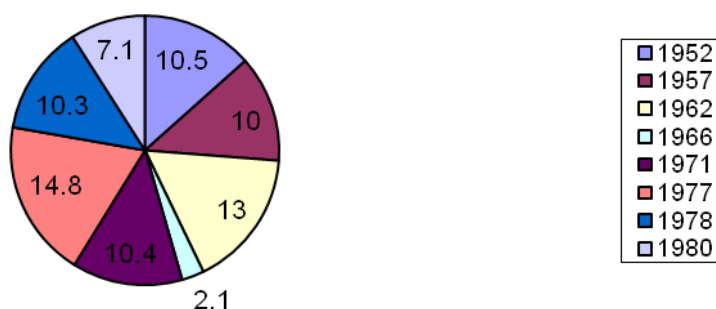
A great awakening was seen among the people of Assam when they found that 10.3% of voters have been increased only in 8 months. This is due to the infiltration in about 1.7 million illegal migrants from across the borders and their inclusion in the voters list by unscrupulous politicians. Golap Borbora became the Chief Minister of Assam of a non-Congress party, for the first time in the history of Assam, after the 1978 election where Janata Party emerged as the single party in the state legislative assembly. The result of the election compelled the Assamese people to think that the newly arrived foreigners had gathered considerable strength. Because, in that election CPI (M) captured 11 seats for the first time and the Muslims captured 28 seats in the 126 members of Legislative Assembly. This election can also be regarded as the eye opener for politically sensitive Assamese people, especially the students. The following table and Pi-diagram shows a phenomenal growth of voter up to 10.3% in 8 months in Assam.

Table: Rapid Growth of Voters

Election Year	No. of Voters	Increase of Voters	% of Voters between elections
1952	4,066,940	---	---
1957	4,496,357	426,417	10.5 (in 6 years)
1962	4,942,816	449,459	10.0 (in 5 years)
1966	5,585,056	642,240	13.0 (in 4 years)
1970	5,701,805	116,749	2.1 (in 4 years)
1971	5,296,198	594,393	10.4 (in 1 year)
1977	7,229,543	933,345	14.8 (in 6 years)
*Mar'1978 - *Nov.'77	7,924,476	744,933	10.3 (in 8 months)
1980 Jan, Sept., 1979*	8,537,497	563,021	7.1 (in 21 months)

Source : ACTA's memorandum to the Home Minister of India, February 23, 1980.

* indicates the months in which Voter Lists were prepared.



Pi-diagram 5.1: Rapid growth of voters.

Again, from 1952 to 1979, in 27 years, the number of voters increased by 110% whereas normal growth would have been 61%. The number of voters further increased by 59% between 1952-1971 and further by 36% between 1971-1979. The conference of AASU held at Jorhat in the month of July, 1978 prepared a memorandum which had included 16 top demands including the demand of identification and deportation of illegal foreign nationals from the state. These demands were submitted to the GOI and the state government and to emphasize their demands the AASU had prepared an agitational plan for throughout the month. As a part of it the organization started picketings on August 8, 1978 in front of Deputy Commissioners' offices throughout Assam, declared Satyagraha from 12-14 August, also declared a hunger strike programme on August 21, Assam Bandh on 22 September, again Satyagraha on 8, 9 and 10 October and a 13-hour Assam Bandh was declared on December 11, 1978. The organization going a step ahead declared a "fast unto death" programme which would be executed by its executive members on 23 December. To take away the students from their agitational path and to show sympathy to their demands the government of Assam invited the leaders of AASU for a talk with the government on December 23, 1978 and sought some time to consider the demands, which AASU agreed.

Though promised the government of Assam could do nothing in the next few months. Up to this point the movement was confined mostly to the student community. As a result, Atal Behari Bajpayee, the then External Affairs Minister and the CEC of India made some strong statements regarding the problem. The comment made by the then CEC, Shyamlal Shakhthar was very dangerous which actually inspired the people of Assam, specially the student community to jump in to the movement to save their state from foreign nationals.

Shyamlal Shakhthar, the then CEC of India in the conference of Chief Electoral Officers of the states held at Ootacamund from October 24 to 26, 1978 commented as follows -

"I would like to refer to the alarming situation in some states, specially North-Eastern region where from disturbing reports are coming regarding large scale inclusion of foreign nationals in the electoral rolls. In one case (Assam), the population in 1971 recorded increase as high as 34.98 percent over the 1961 figures and this increase was attributed to the influx of a very large number of persons from the neighbouring countries. This influx has become a regular feature. I think it may not be a wrong assessment to make on the basis of the increase of 34.98 percent between two census, the increase that is likely to be recorded in the 1971 census would be more than 100 percent over the 1961 census. In other words, a stage would be reached when the state may have to reckon with the foreign nationals who may probably constitute a sizable percentage, if not the majority of the population of the state".

Another disturbing factor in this regard is the demand made by political parties for the inclusion in the electoral rolls

the names of such migrants who are not Indian citizen without even questioning and properly determining their citizenship status. This is a serious state of affairs.

Though the CEC of India had expressed his seriousness about the influx problem of the country, specially the North-Eastern region but his declaration to hold by-election to the Mangaldoi constituency without the deletion of the 45 thousand names of the illegal foreign nationals included in the voter list illegally, was the genesis of the Assam movement of 1979 which has already been mentioned above. On the other hand, the country was prepared for a mid-term election after the ouster of Morarji Desai from the office. Sarat Chandra Singha also could not stay in the office for long. Therefore, it became necessary to hold mid-term election in the month of December, 1979. The people of Assam requested the Election Commission to postpone the election to correct the voter lists prepared full with the names of illegal migrants before the election but the Chief Election Commissioner forgetting all what he commented due to the request made to him by the Congress (I), Congress (U) and CPM ordered as follows which shocked all conscious people of Assam. "The Commission has instructed that no person whose name was included in the electoral rolls shall be eliminated on the grounds on citizenship as the process of establishing citizenship is time consuming. The Commission further advised scrutiny of electoral rolls after the election is over."

Starting the world famous student movement on foreign nationals issue on the ground of the incident cited above, the AASU appealed to all those organizations in their favour to create a broad base of the movement and a 3-day long convention was organised from 25 to 27th August, 1979 at Kanoi College, Dibrugarh. The convention was attended by AASU, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Assam Juba Samaj and the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad (PLP) responding to the appeal made by the student organization. A new organization to lead the movement was formed taking the name All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) on 27th of September. To lead the AAGSP for coordination three convenors were chosen. They were Bhriku Kumar Phukan (AASU), Jatin Goswami (Assam Sahitya Sabha), and Atul Bora (PLP). The Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal, Assam Juba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) and the Assam Juba Samaj also joined the AAGSP later. By the end of December, 1979, the Plain Tribal Council (Progressive), the All Assam Tribal Sangha and the Young Lawyers Forum also joined in the AAGSP. It is seen gradually all the people of Assam involved themselves in the Assam movement led by AASU to save their motherland from the grasp of illegal migrants. Government employees and college teachers also became an integral part of this movement.

The movement was seen started with some soft programme by AASU and the AAGSP in its first stage. The AAGSP called for a state-wide demonstration and sit-ins in front of the government offices and the offices of Deputy Commissioners and the Sub-Divisional Officers on September 6 and 7, 1979. Though the demonstrations were peaceful but some people were arrested. A mass Satyagraha programme

was started on September 10 and there was mass picketing in the government offices from 12 to 14 September, 1979, in the Brahmaputra valley.

The movement gained momentum with the organization of All Assam mass rally on 6th October, 1979 in the Judges Field of Guwahati by the AASU, AAGSP, PLP, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Assam Jatiyatabadi dal and Assam College Teachers Association. The message of the rally was that if the people of Assam want to live with honour without losing their own identity they must win this battle. Otherwise, the Assamese as a sub-nationality might be dead forever.

A week-long Gana Satyagraha programme which continued from 12 to 27 November was carried on the Gandhian principle of non-violence. Responding to the clarion call from all concerns of people such as the Marwari businessmen, Bengali shopkeepers and government employees, the AASU assembled nearly 1,00,000 Satyagrahis on the final day. A 36-hour 'Assam Bandh' was also called and was staged on December 3 and 4, 1979 to protest against the government decision to hold the mid-term election and to protest against it, which paralysed the normal life in the whole state. 'A Gherao programme' (house arrest) was also observed by the members of the AASU and AAGSP to stop the members of the political parties in filling up their nomination papers on December 3 to 10. The programme was successful although with loss of one life, injuries to many and mass arrests. No nomination papers were filed except in the Bengali speaking district of Cachar. Election was held only for two constituencies of Cachar.

The tragic incident took place in the history of Assam movement on the day when the picketers tried to stop Begum Abeda Ahmed, wife of Late F. A. Ahmed on her way to Barpeta to fill up her nomination paper. She was escorted by a company of CRPF on her 80-miles journey to Borpeta on December 9, picketers resisted their movement and many of them were seriously injured including two ex-Principals of the Cotton College. In the small hours of December 10, picketers stopped the police convoy at Bhabanipur. Mrs. Ahmed disguised herself in a police uniform but Khargeswar Talukdar, a student of B.H.B. College of Sarupeta, identified her. The police immediately lathicharged. In the incident the innocent student Khargeswar Talukdar was killed brutally and many others were injured. Police not only killed him but threw his dead body in a road-side ditch which was found later. It is very unfortunate that the government declared the death of Khargeswar occurred due to drowning to cover up the police brutality. Khargeswar Talukdar was declared the first martyr of the world famous student movement of Assam. An Assam Bandh call was given by AASU on December 10 and a week-long mourning followed. It is also to be noted that though Mrs. Ahmed filled up her nomination paper taking life of one innocent student but her nomination was found improper and finally cancelled by the Returning Officer. This evidently followed the peoples' vow for life-long struggle until all the foreigners were removed.

Some others lost their lives in the year 1979 while agitation was going on in full swing. Thanesar Bora, Promod

Kalita and Mukunda Bodo who lost their lives in the hands of Bengali immigrants in 1979. A ten-year old school boy also lost his life when a Bengali restaurant owner mercilessly beat him to death for the pitiful sum of 80 paise.

While the year ended with the observation of a state-wide non-cooperation week, the New Year (January 1, 1980) commenced with a fifty eight hour Assam Bandh and two days later on January 3, the movement claimed its second martyr Dilip Hujuri, a tribal student who became victim of a mob violence. It is to be noted along with parts of Assam, violence also broke out at Barikadanga village (about 10 miles from Nalbari) on January 3, 1980. A small group of students of Baganpara High School went to Barikadanga that day. According to one version, the student went there to collect money for the movement. The village of Barikadanga has mixed Hindu and Muslim Bengali population, most of whom were non-Indians. They attacked the student Dilip Hujuri, a 16-year old student who was an executive member of the Dhamdhama Regional Students' Union was speared to death and some of his friends suffered injuries.

Atrocities on students by CRPF personnels also continued along with other ethnic conflicts occurring in different parts of Assam. It is worth mentioning that to pressurize the GOI and to draw the attention of the press towards the movement, the leaders of the movement realised that oil blockade programme would be very powerful. Therefore they had started the oil blockade programme on December 27, 1979. Though they allowed the functioning of Digboi and Guwahati Refineries but they stopped totally the oil flow to Bongaigaon and Bihar Refineries. CRP personnels had killed picketers like Nagen Deka, Kumud Gogoi and Nripen Bora while they were picketing at an oil installation centre at Duliajan on January 18, 1980.

Raid of Cotton College hostels by CRP could be considered as one of the black chapters of the foreigners' movement of Assam. The CRP personals on November 28 at 4-15 AM surrounded the Cotton College campus and raided seven hostels of the college without prior permission and prior acknowledge of either the Principal or any of the wardens of the college hostels and beaten up brutally the students of the college. The students, cooks and a warden and his family, numbering 500 were loaded into six buses like Sardines and were taken to central police station. About 400 students were released at 4 PM, about 50 were at 6-30 PM and 10 students were released the next day. It is heartening that 5 students were hospitalised for serious injuries. Charges were made against 64 students, and the doctors of Red Cross Society and GMC were barred to provide treatment to the students by the CRP. It is to be noted that the Cotton College Students' Association has sent a nine-page summary letter about the incident to the President of India on November 30, 1980.

Again, Akhendra Talukdar, a college student had been brutally killed by CRP on December 18, 1980.

It is also observed that though the Assam movement was based on Gandhian principle on non-violence and Satyagraha, due to the provocation or instigation made by some miscreants

among the people of different ethnic community misleading or mis-guiding them regarding the aims and objectives of the movement, it resulted in serious clashes between the Assamese and the other ethnic groups in Assam. On the other hand, the government of Assam also started atrocities on the agitators to bring the situation under control without considering the demands of the people of Assam. Therefore, the clashes had taken place between the CRP personals and the police and in sometimes with other ethnic communities. The outbreak of violence on November 8 and 9, 1979 at Naharkatiya, Dumduma and Nagaon can be cited as the best examples in this regard.

It has already been mentioned that the nature of the movement was based on Gandhian principle of non-violence and Satyagraha e.g. peaceful. The non-violent nature of the movement was appreciated by some all-India figures. About the character of the movement said Illustrated Weekly of India in a radio interview: "I am one of those who believe things can be done constitutionally. But if things had to be done, I would rather say that they were done as here (in Assam) now. I see no violence, no buses been burnt. What strikes one most about Assamese people is a certain element of softness and certain element of gentleness... If Gandhiji could not keep his people under control, students leaders are trying to keep everybody under control." K.N. Malik also read in Times of India on the non-violent character of the movement conducted by AASU as follows:

"A remarkable feature of the movement launched by the Students' Union and supported by all sections of society is the spontaneity and discipline displayed by the people. Only such sections of people observed a bandh or participate in the non-cooperation movement as are asked to them by the AASU."

It is seen the movement had relaxed for sometime due to the talks between the central government and the leaders of the movement on February 2, 1980. It is note-worthy that between 2 February, 1980 and January 1983, there were 27 rounds of talk to (twenty two rounds of bi-partite and five rounds of tri-partite, including the national opposition parties) to solve the grim situation of Assam. Talks failed totally. On the very next day, the central government had announced that the election to the Assam Legislative Assembly would be conducted in the month of February, 1983.

The situation of Assam worsened with the declaration of the election by the GOI. Though, the movement continued for three years and the GOI reiterated its commitment to deport the foreigners from Assam considering 1971 as the cut-off year, it also announced that the election would be held in February 1983 on the same voter list prepared in 1979. It's correction and exclusion of the names illegally include in the list the people had been fighting since long. Therefore, due to peoples' strong protest against the declaration of election GOI termed it as unconstitutional and it made the situation grim.

Hundreds had scarified their lives while fighting with government to stop the election. It can also be mentioned here that the situation of Assam worsened due to some other

reasons also. Clashes took place between ethnic groups due to the arrest of the top leaders by the government in the month of January and released them after completion of the election for which the movement lost its proper direction and hence clashes occurred. The protest was tremendous with preparation of the election which resulted finally in the continuation of atrocities of CRP on the agitators or the innocent people of Assam. Ethnic conflicts were also intensified during the 1983 Assembly Election in Assam. Though, Assam was known to be a peace-loving state but the instigation or provocation made by leaders of various political parties or the narrow interests destroyed the good relation they had among them since time immemorial. Noted and famous journalist of India Kuldeep Nayar held Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India and Ganikhan Choudhury, the then Railway Minister of India responsible for provoking people of minority communities against the agitators during election. According to Nayar, Ganikhan Choudhury once provoked the minorities saying that, "the water of the river Brahmaputra would be red if one single minority be compelled to leave Assam."

So the clash between the Assamese community and the minorities had widened. On the other hand, the brutality of the CRP on the innocent people also intensified. Ethnic clashes took place in different parts of Assam such as at Nellie, Gohpur, Chamaria, Malibari, Laletapu (Jamugurihat), Sootea and Mukalmua etc. where hundreds of people including students had lost their lives. For example, miscreants had killed - hacked to death Miss Manju Kalita, a student of Chamaria High School and Ganga Kalita, a student of J. N. College of Boko on February 12, 1983 - attacking their homes, burning their properties. Bhupen Deka, a student of Darrang College and also student leader had been killed by unidentified miscreants at Laletapu Char of Jamugurihat of Sonitpur on March 20, 1983. A total of seven persons had sacrificed their lives on the same day when attacked by unidentified miscreants. A student named Trailokya Bhuyan of Sootea sacrificed his life on February 2, 1983 in a clash with unidentified miscreants while visiting a nearby Tea Estate with his colleagues for organizational works. Dhrubajyoti Nath, a student of class X of Dhing also sacrificed his life in the movement. Another incident of brutal killings of innocent people by CRP which took place at Panka Gaon, a village 25 km away from Golaghat town of the then Sibsagar district is worth mentioning. Seven persons including 4 students and youths had been killed by CRP on the night of April 2, 1983 when they were patrolling in their village. CRP killed them brutally by binding their hands and shot them with their bullets. The students and youths were Jiten Saikia of class X, Maniram Saikia (20), Reba Saikia (23) and Tileswar Saikia (24).

It is important to note that though the government had tried to protect the officers such as Mr. Mohan Raj, the then SP of Sibsagar, Mr. Ramesh Ch. Tayal, the SDPO of Golaghat and Mr. T. K. Nag, Police Inspector involved in the killings of Panka village but recently on 30 September, 2005 or after long 22 years, the court of Golaghat headed by Judicial Magistrate Sima Das ordered to submit all the documents related to the case before November 16, 2005 on the basis of the case which had been registered by the then AGP government on 1987 at

Golaghat Police station bearing No. 87/87. On the same day on September 30, the AASU activists also held a protest programme in the Deputy Commissioner's office at Golaghat and submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Assam through the Deputy Commissioner demanding rigorous punishment of the officers involved in the brutal killings. It is heart rendering that during the period of election in 1983, the situation of Assam was grave and thousands and hundreds of people had died or lost place due to clashes between ethnic groups. Sankar Gupta, noted journalist of Indian Express while visiting the sites (Nellie) of communal clash occurred in Assam during 1983 wrote: "There is no life around, save for the hungry flocks of vultures ... human skeletons totally devoid of flesh".

It is also to be noted that to avoid constitutional crisis before the expiry of the term of President's rule in Assam on March 18, 1983, the central government wanted to hold election on Assam in the month of February 1983. On the other hand, the movement's agitational stance posed a serious constitutional crisis. A second proposal to amend the Constitution by extending the President's rule's term was also scotched by the national opposition parties such as the CPM. The holding of election in such circumstances became therefore a constitutional necessity. At Delhi, however, the movement threatened a bloody violence on the event of the election. Prominent opposition parties like the Janata Dal, BJP and the Loka Dal boycotted the election in Assam. The announcement of the election in Assam turned the nature of the movement violent from non-violent one. The tragic event killed 1700 persons from these minority communities. Seeing the grave situation of Assam that had been created by the election in Assam in 1983, journalists and intellectuals described it as "Assam is burning, ... it is true."

Feeling tremendous pressure from all concerned, the Government of India finally decided to solve the problem of Assam with a positive attitude. Between April 8 to August 15, a total five rounds of talks and nearly four months of sustained efforts to break the stalemate and reach a final settlement with the signing of Assam Accord on 15 August, 1985. From the signing of Assam Accord to the election on December 16, 1985, the movement scored a significant victory over the established political power in the state for the first time in India a government by the regional political party - The Asom Gana Parishad. The December 1985 election which marked a sharp contest with the February 1983 election, brought the student government in power probably with a student leader also for the first time in India as the Chief Minister of a state. This also marked a decisive step towards the political solution of the problem. It is also note-worthy that out of the 21 Cabinet rank Ministers, 10 were student leaders.

5. Conclusion and Observation

We may sum up our discussion with the comment that the historic Assam Movement or the Foreigners' issue movement of Assam is one of the world famous student movement. The movement had been continued for 6 years from June 8, 1979 to 15 August, 1985. It is utmost duty of every state to protect its sovereignty from foreign invasion and to secure its borders well so that illegal migrants should not come and settle in its land freely. It is observed that the Government of India had been

sincerely carried on its task to protect its sovereignty since India achieved her independence from the foreign yoke. But it could also be said that the central government has not sincerely flooded its eyes on the borders, mainly the borders those are in between India and Bangladesh. Therefore, huge migration from Bangladesh and Nepal had been continued to Assam till date which is creating fear psychosis among the Assamese people that they would lost their identity in their own homeland and would be turned into minority within a short span of time. This can be regarded as the genesis of the 6-years long Assam movement. It was also seen that along with the central and the state government of Assam, the other political parties also observed total silence in this serious matter for their narrow political gain. Hence, the people of Assam had decided finally to come to the streets with infliting and unbending determination to solve their own problems declaring agitational programmes against the governments based on Gandhian ideals of non-violence.

On the other hand, both the centre as well as the state government had not given any importance to the movement in its first stage. But finally the student power had compelled the Government of India to bow its head before the justiciable demands of the masses of Assam and the result was that central government had come forward to solve the problem by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) popularly known as **Assam Accord** with the AASU leaders on 15th of August, 1985.

After the successful completion of the movement, a regional political party - "Asom Gana Parishad" was formed as the representative of all sections of people of the society. It also captured political power throwing out the oldest political party, the Cong (I), in the Assembly election held in December 16, 1985. Mr Prafulla Kr. Mahanta, the former President of AASU sworn as the Chief Minister of the state. So, Mr. Mahanta is the first ever Chief Minister of state in the history of India, who captured political powers as a student leader..

Though the people of Assam was jubilant after establishing their own government in Assam and hoped that along with the main migration problem their other problems would be solved. But in reality, the government which came to power with sacrifice of 855 life of the martyrs, had failed totally to fulfill the hopes of the people.

Although, the regional political party's government had failed to fulfill certain issues of the state but in certain other sides it has brought enormous success to the state. The AGP was successful in bringing some changes in the centre-state relationship in the federal structure of India. It is also true that the Cong. government had granted nothing and had given a step-motherly treatment always to Assam while it was in power for long. But the AGP joining as the coalition partner with the 'National Front' and the 'NDA' had enjoyed enormous power in the central level and also had brought certain huge projects to the state for its development. The implementation of the Assam Accord also provide for the all-round development of the state.

Needless to say, due to the Assam movement the people of Assam lost many as compared to gain but it is fair to add, however, that student leadership of the Assam movement have made India as a whole conscious of the fact and dangers of

unmitigated immigration from East Pakistan/Bangladesh to Assam and other states on the border. That is the achievement of the historic student-led Assam movement.

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