

Annexure 1

Government Reports about Bangla Deshi Infiltration affecting population growth & other Problems in Assam

Population growth:

As per 1991 population census, the population of Assam, stood at 22.41 million. That is, average density of population per square km is 286 in 1991. According to the Registrar General of India the projected population of Assam stands at 26.37 million as on October 2000.

The state which occupy the thirteenth position in terms of population in India has two distinct natural regions, viz. the Brahmaputra and Barak Valley. While the former constitutes of 18 districts of plain areas and 2 districts of hill areas, the latter is composed of 3 districts with plain areas. For administration and revenue purposes, the 23 districts of the state are divided into 48 sub-division and 149 revenue circles.

Decadal growth of population of Assam is 24.2 per cent during 1981-91 (taking into account the interpolated population in 1981) as against 23.9 per cent for the country as a whole.

It may be noted here that while between 1901 and 1991 population of the country 5 increased by about 3 times, while the same in the case of Assam rose by about 7 times during the said period. As per projected population of Assam and India also the density have been found to be 336 and 310 per sq km respectively as on October 2000. According to the Election Commission, there has been an increase of more than 30 percent in 17 assembly constituencies and more than 20 per cent increase in 40 constituencies between 1994 and 1997. Significantly, the all India average growth for a three year period intervening the two intensive revisions in 1994 and 1997, is 7 percent, the growth in Assam for this period is 16.4 per cent. This increase is mainly due to large scale illegal infiltration from neighbouring Bangladesh.

Annual Average growth rate of population (1971-91);

Districts with high growth rate:

Dhemaji – 3.72

North Cachher Hills – 3.48

Kokrajhar – 2.89

Bongaigaon – 2.52

Kamrup – 2.56

Dhubri – 2.27

Sontipur – 2.29 6

Lakhimpur – 2.26

Golaghat – 2.32

Karbi Anglong – 2.83

Districts with low growth rate:

Jorhat – 1.44

Karimganj – 1.77

Sibsagar – 1.65

Dibrugarh – 1.62

A study of community- wise percentage growth of population in Assam gives a naked picture of rate of illegal infiltration into the stage.

Year	Assam		All India	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
1. 1951-1961	33.71	38.35	20.29	25.61
2. 1961-1971	37.17	30.99	23.72	30.85
3. 1971-1991	41.89	77.42	48.32	55.04 7

(There was no census in Assam in 1981. The figures indicated have been worked out on the basis of 1971-91 growth rate) the statistics above clearly show that rate of growth of Muslim population in the state has been much higher than the all India level. Muslim population has grown by 77.42% in 1991 from what it was in 1971. While growth of Hindu population has been nearly 41.89% in this period. Muslim majority districts as per 1991 census are Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta and Hailakandi. Now the list includes the districts of Nowgaon, Karimganj and Morigaon.

(courtesy: Governor of Assam's report on Illegal Migration into Assam to the

President of India, 1998).

Birth and Death rate:

According to the Sample Registration Bulletin published by the Registrar General of India -

From 1991 to 1999 both birth and death rates were found to be higher in the state than that of the country as a whole.

During the year 1999, the birth rate of Assam was 27.0 per mile while the all India rate was 26.1 per mile. Similarly, death rate of Assam stood at 9.7 per mile while the all India rate was 8.7 per mile. {India rate excludes data for Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland (rural)}.

(courtesy: Economic survey of Assam – 2000-2001).

The Problem of Illegal Immigration:

Political history of Assam since the early 1970's is mostly dominated by the issue of illegal immigration from neighbouring Bangladesh. The unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh has rendered severe demographic changes to the region, thereby threatening to reduce the indigenous Assamese population to a minority.

Movement of population across the border has been a regular practice for over a century now. During the days of British Raj, that is in the late 1860s, migration to this part was encouraged for economic reasons. British initiated tea plantation in upper Assam. But seeing local people's reluctance to leave their agricultural fields and work in tea gardens, the British hired labour from east Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and parts of Orissa and Bihar. Thus came in large number of consumers depending upon the limited agricultural produce. Assamese agriculturists not being very ambitious about increasing productions, stayed contented with cultivating one crop a year. In order to meet the food requirement of additional population of tea garden workers, the British had to hire more such labourer to be employed in agricultural fields. Gradually immigration of labourers from east Pakistan increased. Unlike Assamese people, the migrants were much more industrious, hard working and ready to be employed in any hazardous work. They gradually encroached vast vacant lands suitable for agriculture.

Thus opening up the path of illegal immigration to the north east India.

This immigration took a dangerous turn after independence of the country in 1947, thereby inducing a political perspective to the entire issue. "With constitutional reforms, the country started advancing towards democracy, which is a game of numbers. The Muslim League now came up with its demand for partition, on the basis of religion. This added a new twist to this population movement. During Sir Mohammed Sadulla's Muslim League Ministry, a concerted effort was made to encourage the migration of Bengali Muslims into Assam for political reasons. The Victory Lord Wavell wrote in the Victory's journal, 'the chief political problem is the desire of Muslim ministers to increase this immigration into the uncultivated government lands under the slogan of Grow More Food but what they are really after, is Grow More Muslim..... When the demand for partition was raised, it was visualized that Pakistan would comprise Muslim majority provinces in the West and Bang-e-Islam comprising Bengal and Assam, in the East..... Jinnah confidently declared at Gauhati that Assam was in his pocket. The Cabinet Mission Plan placed Assam in Group C with Bengal. Both the Congress high command and the Muslim League accepted the grouping plan but Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi vehemently opposed it. He was supported by Mahatma Gandhi. The grouping plan was foiled and Assam was saved from becoming part of Pakistan." Report on Illegal Migration into Assam submitted to the President of India (KR Narayanan) by the Governor of Assam, (Lt Gen (RTD) SK Sinha) on November 8, 1998.

After partition of India, it was basically movement of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan. Along with it large number of Muslims crossed the border due to economic reasons. However, Hindu refugee is still continuing in Tripura and West Bengal, immigration is mainly that of Muslims in Assam. "Hindu population in East Pakistan started declining steeply. In 1947 it was 27% by 1971 it got reduced to 14% and by 1991 it was down to 10%", Assam Governor's report of 1998.

There has been a great fall in the percentage of indigenous population from 87 percent of indigenous people in 1901 to 61 percent in 1951 and a further low of 50 percent in

1971. 9

Recent Report on Immigrants:

The Group of Ministers (GoM) in its report on reforming the national security on May 23, 2001, pointed out, 'The law and order problems of the north-east region have staggered from bad to worse with the influx of an estimated 12 million Bangladeshi since 1971. Politically the Bangladeshi migrants are in a position to influence results of the elections in about 32 percent of the constituencies in Assam'.

From 1891 till independence, the state's population grew at around 20 percent each decade. It went up to 35 percent between 1951 and 1971, and has now touched 53 percent.

Political encouragement to this influx of immigrants cannot be ruled out even today.

The ever increasing pool of immigrant population is serving as a substantial vote bank to the political parties. Though demand for restriction of entry of foreigners to the state is made by political parties time and again, yet clandestine patronage and support is visible.

This unabated influx of illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh raised mass discontent to such a level that people from all walks of life moved into agitation in late 1970s under the leadership of All Assam Students Union (AASU), thus bringing into a New era in Assam politics.

For full report, go the following link:

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