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MOVEMENT AGAINST CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019 AND ISSUE OF ASSAMESE IDENTITY

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Abstract: Migration is a constant phenomena in Assam. The Massive numbers of illegal immigrants have triggered deep anxieties including fears of demographic change, losses of livelihood opportunities and threaten of the indigenous cultures. During the Bangladesh war, millionsof people came into Assam. Before enactment of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, an illegal migrant is not eligible to apply for acquiring citizenship. The foreigners act and the passport act debar such a person and provide for putting illegal migrants into jail or deportation. But Citizenship (Amendment) act, 2019 grants Indian citizenship if illegal migrants belongs to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian community from three neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. People from these communities who had come to India till December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution in these countries will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

Keywords: anxieties, migrant, deportation, persecution.

Introduction: The citizenship Amendment bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on December 9, 2019 and by the Rajya Sabha on December 11, 2019 and assented by the president of India on December 12, 2019. The citizenship (Amendment) act, 2019 provided Indian citizenship who belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, who entered into India on or before the 31st day of December, 2014 (Citizenship Amendment act, 2019). In Assam, The people didn't accept the citizenship amendment act, 2019. The large scale protest against the CAB was begun by the people of Assam. The citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on 9 December and protests

broke out in the North-Eastern states of Assam, Manipur and Tripura against CAB. The people of Assam alleged that the citizenship Amendment Act goes against the Assam Accord. The Assam accord was signed to protect the interest of the native people of Assam. Assam accord was signed after six years (1979-1985) long Assam movement. According to clause (5.8) of Assam accord mandated that foreigners who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971 shall continue to be detected, deleted and expelledin accordance with law. Immediate and practical steps shall be taken to expel such foreigners (Assam Accord). But Citizenship amendment act gives Indian citizenship who entered into India on or before the 31stDecember of 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Assam is already filled with Bangladeshi illegal migrants. Citizenship amendment act will make very easy to illegal migrants to get an Indian citizenship. It will harm the identity and culture of Indigenous people of Assam.

Objectives:

- 1. To discuss about the various streams of Movement against Citizenship amendment Act, 2019.
- 2. To examine the various impacts of CAA on Assam.

<u>Methodology</u>: This paper is based on qualitative research and descriptive in nature. The date and informations were collected from secondary information. Secondary informations were collected from books, journal, newspaper, article, website etc.

History of CAA and stream of protest:

Before became an Act, The citizenship amendment bill was amid protest by the people of north east India. In the 2014 Loksabha election campaign, Amit Shah convinced the people of Assam that The BJP would get rid of Bangladeshi infiltrators (The Economics Times, 3 Jan, 2019). The CAB was introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 19, 2016. CAB (2016) was entrusted to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) which submitted its report on January 7, 2019(The wire, 2019). The members of Joint parliamentary committee had visited Gujarat, Rajasthan and Assam where they faced major opposition to the bill. In Assam, It is more critical issues. During the Assam visit, the committee faced demonstration (The Hindu, 2019). Several groups of Assam observed black day in protest against the move of the Joint parliamentary committee on the bill to table its reports to the Lok Sabha. KrishakMuktiSangramSamiti(SMSS) hoisted black flags in different parts of the state. All Assam Students union (AASU) and 30 other outfits burnt copies of the bill in towns and villages of Assam to register their protest. One AJYCP member stood a nude protest in Tinsukiatown shouting slogans against the bill and JPC's move to table the report (outlook India, 7 jan, 2019). The citizenship

(amendment) bill, 2016 was passed in Lok Sabha on 8 january, 2019 but with Rajya Sabha adjourned sine die. The citizenship (amendment) bill, 2016 became lapsed.

The citizenship (Amendment) bill, 2019 was introduced in Parliament on December 9, 2019. The CAB seeks to provide citizenship to Non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who came to India on or before December 31, 2014. The citizenship(Amendment) bill, 2019 was passed by both of house of the Parliament of India on 11 December, 2019. The CAB was signed by the president of India on 12 December, 2019 and after the president signed, the CAB became citizenship amendment act, 2019.

CAA and its challenges on Assamese Identity:

The influxes of large scale of immigrations into Assam have created a major identical problem in Assam. During the British Rule, the large scale of people came into Assam from the Bihar, Odisha and other provinces of Assam. The British Government imported large scale of people's into Assam to work in tea garden. In 1971, around 10 million east Bengali refugees entered India. Assam movement was started against the illegalimmigrants who came from Bangladesh. Illegal Migration has changed the demographic pattern of the country, In 1978, re-election was going to be held in the MangoldoiLoksabha constituency to fill the seat of HiralalPatowari after his death. During the process of the election, an abrupt and dramatic increases in the number of registered voters. All Assam students union (AASU) demanded that the election be postponed till the names of foreign national were deleted from the electoral rolls and they demanded permanent sealing of the India-Bangladesh Border. The Assam movement started there(AAI Asomi). In 1985, Rajiv Gandhi government entered into negotiations with AASU and All Assam GanaSangramParishad and signed an accord in 1985 known as Assam accord. Assam Accordhas defined illegal migrations as those who came to Assam after 24 December, 1971. However, the stream that infiltrated legality between 1 January 1966 and 24 December 1971 was not to be deported and was to be given Indian citizenship after a lapse of ten years.

Unlike Assam Accord, The Citizenship amendment act grants citizenship to Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist, Jain and Parsis from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who had arrived in India before December, 31, 2014. Citizenship amendment act also against the provision of the Assam accord. Impacts of CAA in Assam, discussed in below:

 NRC: The National Register of Citizens is the list of Indian citizen's. The process of NRC update was taken up in Assam as per Supreme Court order in 2013. In order to wean out illegal migration from Bangladesh and other adjoining areas. NRC updating was carried out under the citizenship act, 1955 and according to rules framed in the Assam accord. Citizenship amendment act, 2019 made NRC redundant and bestow citizenship on illegal migrants.

- 2. The influx of large scale of immigration has posed a serious identity threat to the indigenous people of Assam. The Assamese culture will be insecurity threatenedemployment of local people diminished by illegal Migrants. The citizenship amendment act, 2019 relaxes the requirement of naturalization from 11 years to 5 years as specific conditions for applicants belonging to these Six religions. So, illegal migrants will have to live 5 years to gets an Indian citizenship.
- 3. It also threatens to the political rights of the people of Assam. Migration has been a burning issue in Assam. If Illegal migrants who will eventually become legitimate citizens under the citizenship amendment act, 2019, then it will be changed the political pattern of the state.
- 4. If millions of Bangladeshi illegal migrants gets legitimate Indian citizenship and staying legally in Assam, the first pressure will show in the principal economic resources-Land.

Conclusion:

So, we can say that huge protests were raised in Assam against the Citizenship Amendment Act. CAA creates a great threat to the Assamese Identity, language and cultural heritage of the indigenous people of Assam. In Assam, protest were taken out across the state by the organisation including KrishakMuktiSangramSamiti(KMSS), All Assam students Union (AASU), AsomJatiyatabadi Yuba Chatraparishad(AJYCP), LachitSena. The protesters were demanding that the act be rolled back. They started dharna, gherao, demonstrations, and hunger strikes for the repealing of this citizenship amendment act. Founder of KrishakMuktiSangramsamiti, AkhilGogoi was arrested on December 12, 2019 for allegedly fanning violent anti-CAA protests and continues to remain in Jail. The anti CAA protests led to curfew across the state and suspension of Mobile internet services for 10 days. But thousands defied restrictions and came out to voice opposition to the legislation (The Hindustan times, 2020). However; these massive protests against the bill caused the death of five persons in Assam. Also the protesters resulted in hundreds of arrests in Assam.

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