

SYNOPSIS

Socio-Economic and Political Impact of Illegal Migration in Assam: The Study of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankchar Districts (2005-2024)

**Synopsis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(Ph.D.) in International Relations (Arts)**

At

Jadavpur University

By

Sandip Samanta

Under the Supervision of

Prof. Bijaya Kumar Das

Department of International Relations

Jadavpur University

Kolkata-700032

West Bengal, India

2025

Statement of Problem

People were free to move from one place to another, unlike after the Westphalia Treaty of 1648. The consequence of the Westphalia Treaty was the establishment of a boundary/border state. Individuals are restricted from freely choosing to move from one part of the world to another. Therefore, the concept of citizen or national population emerged. People need proper documents and permits to travel from one country to another. Suppose an individual crosses an international border without proper documents or permits. In that case, he or she will be arrested as an illegal migrant and deported to the country of origin, or sent to jail and fined. Sometimes researchers and academicians use the terms refugee and illegal migration in a similar sense, but there are major differences between refugees and migration. “Refugee is someone who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of (their) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail (themselves) of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of (their) former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (The 1951 Refugee Convention). On the other hand, illegal migration means people who cross the international border illegally and violate the immigration laws and regulations to stay permanently in another country. There are several reasons such people choose illegal ways to migrate, like employment opportunities, better lifestyle, education, health, security, etc. However, in the age of advanced modern technology, everyone can easily forge passports and other identity documents. So, illegal migrants neither lack documents nor they are rarely undocumented. In fact, illegal migrants have possessed more documents than the genuine citizens.

Present-day illegal migration is a significant problem worldwide. The US President Donald Trump reported that more than 15000 illegal Indian migrants were deported from America to India since 2009 (The Hindu, 7 February 2025). Even developed countries enacted strict laws, regulations, and policies to control illegal immigration, with the logic of migrants put pressure on resources and pose security threats. In India, illegal migration is a threat to national security as well as a violation of citizens’ rights. After the partition in 1947 and the Bangladesh liberation movement in 1971, Bangladeshi people illegally entered the Indian northeast and eastern states, namely West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and so on. The picture of Assam is more problematic than the other states of India. The state of Assam unabated influx of illegal migrants

from Bangladesh has not only changed the demographic structure of the state but has also affected the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres negatively. These Bangali immigrants (both Hindus and Muslims), to ensure a prolonged stay in the mentioned State, marry girls from indigenous Assamese communities, thereby diluting their culture and social norms. Apart from this, criminal activities have increased manifold, not to mention overcrowding, environmental pollution, and the sprouting of slums in the area. During 1979-85, the Anti-foreigner movement escalated between native Assamese and immigrants. In 1983, the government of India passed the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983, or IM(D)T Act to control illegal immigrants from the neighbouring Bangladesh. Even leaders of the Assam movement and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed the Assam Accord in 1985 to control illegal immigrants and protect the indigenous people's rights. But there is a huge controversy was placed on the IMDT Act 1983, as the Act is unable to detect illegal immigrants, and in some cases, the government and authorities arrest legal citizens without proper investigation. A writ petition (131 civil) was filed against the IMDT Act 1983 in the Supreme Court by Sarbananda Sonowal in 2000. In 2005, the Supreme Court of India held that the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983, and rules have created the biggest hurdle and are the main impediment or barrier in the identification and deportation of illegal migrants, and struck down the Act (*Sarbananda Sonowal vs Union of India* on 5 December 2006, Judgement of the Supreme Court of India). The judges of the Supreme Court highlighted that under Article 355 of the Indian Constitution, it is the duty of the Centre to protect states from external aggression, and the Apex Court mentioned that illegal immigrants as an external aggression.

However, what is the actual number of illegal migrants who came from Bangladesh to Assam, and is there any serious and scientific attempt to study and even its associated problems in Assam? Still, the exact figure of Bangladeshi immigrants (legal/illegal) in Assam and India is unknown; different scholars and media sources give different figures. Since it has far-reaching socio-economic and political consequences, there is a need to study the different aspects of illegal migration in Assam. For controlling the illegal flow as well as minimizing its adverse consequences and giving security to the indigenous communities, the causes of the illegal migration and the relations between immigrants and local people in a different socio-cultural set-up. It is also important to know different policies, laws, and regulations regarding to control of illegal outflow in India as well as Assam.

Despite the gravity of the illegal migration issue, there is a lack of comprehensive and empirical research that holistically examines the Socio-Economic and Political impact of illegal migration in Assam over the period from 2005 to 2024. In this study, we not only focused on demographic transformation but also examined what and how illegal immigrants change the socio-economic structures, cultural diversity, and patterns of language in Assam. Therefore, there is a need to critically analyze the future impact of illegal migration in Assam, drawing this picture from historical immigrant movements, present realities, and prospects. The researcher has chosen this topic for research to fill the research gap through a comprehensive investigation in the respective area, which helps to understand the ground reality of the illegal migration problem and suggest some effective measures to deal with illegal immigrants, no further continuity and suggest policies on how to protect socio-economic and political rights of the native Assamese origins.

Review of Existing Knowledge:

A review of available literature is important in every branch of social science research. Reviewing the literature means reviewing existing knowledge that helps researchers to find out the gaps in the past research, and it will give clear and concrete ideas/direction about the specific area. So here the researcher will review some of the enriched literature on the topic of “Socio-Economic and Political Impact of Illegal Migration in Assam: The Study of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar Districts From (2005-2024).” The literature review will help to formulate strong research questions and objectives. The section of the literature review has been divided into four parts for better understanding: (a) Concepts of migration, (b) Migration in South Asia, (c) Migration in India, and (d) Migration in Assam. Following the sub-section of the literature review below-

➤ Concepts of Migration

This section starts with Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino & J. Edward Taylor’s research article “*Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal*” (1993). In this article, they emphasized the nature and trends of global migration. According to them, there are several theoretical models on international migration, but not a single coherent theory of international migration properly discusses the issue. They try to analyse from the theoretical angles why people cross international boundaries? The primary

drawbacks of this research are that they had put more focus on the economic factors of global migration rather than on how it impacts the receiving countries and their citizens.

Douglas S. Massey, in his article “*International Migration at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: The Role of the State*” (1999), examines the state’s influence as a key player in global migration. In addition, the author points out that the state’s role in inspiring people to migrate includes the issuance of ‘exit permits’ to prospective migrants, setting up ‘financial activities to encourage remittances,’ and providing support to those looking to ‘find employment abroad.’ A significant aspect of this research paper is the assertion that any government efforts aimed at restricting immigration have largely failed, leading to an increase in undocumented or unwanted migrants. In relation to our study, this research does not adequately address methods for managing migration between developing nations.

In “*The Next Waves: Migration Theory for a Changing World*” (1989), Aristide R. Zolberg has attempted to present a new perspective that migration research is necessary in global studies to address the dynamic changes in socio-political structures. He highlighted that people are migrating from their country of origin, not because of a lack of job opportunities, but due to the wage system and economic conditions between the country of origin and the country of destination. The author also modified two major theories of migration, world-system theory and state theory, to understand the current trends in international migration. The author introduced the concept of the ‘Next Wave’ as a response to the strong anti-foreigner sentiment among the citizens of the receiving countries. Indeed, immigrants, whether economic migrants or refugees, who come from different social customs, languages, ethnicities, cultures, and religious backgrounds, undoubtedly impact the socio-cultural and political landscape of the host countries. This situation is also relevant in the Assam districts of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar. Nevertheless, the author does not discuss any policies related to tackling illegal and undocumented migration in this article.

Friedrich Heekmann, in his article “*Illegal Migration: What Can We Know and What Can We Explain? The Case of Germany*” (2004), discussed the conceptual framework regarding illegal immigrants in Germany from Moldavia and Romania. Both Moldavians and Romanians cross the German-Czech border to work in the shadow economy. The author notes that illegal migrants can be detected through government documents on apprehension, asylum seekers, and criminal activity. In addition, illegal migration is facilitated by the human smuggling process. Social and

technological organisations to encourage and assist undocumented immigration. However, the author fails to consider the influence of migration networks, which also contribute to the promotion of illegal migration.

Another important book on illegal migration is “*Paper Citizens: How Illegal Immigrants Acquire Citizenship in Developing Countries*” (2009), written by Kamal Sadiq. In this book, the author discusses how an illegal immigrant uses forged documents, such as birth certificates, health cards, election cards, national identity cards, or passports, to obtain citizenship and other legal and political rights in a developing nation. He called them “documentary citizenship or paper citizenship,” and they also have access to all the services as legal citizens. The author examines the three case studies of illegal migrants from Bangladesh (Hindu and Muslim) to Indian states, Filipinos and Indonesians in Malaysia, and Afghans and Bangladeshis in Pakistan. To explain the broad content of the present research, this book has provided only a few lines about illegal migration from Bangladesh to Assam.

➤ **Migration in South Asia**

Samir Kumar Das, Sabyasachi Basu Roy Cahudhury, and Tapan K. Bose, in their work “*Forced Migration in South Asia: A Critical Review*” (2000), highlighted that population displacement has become a common event worldwide and is driven by government and non-government agents. In fact, most cases of human displacement are related to policymaking, and people are victims of various government rules and policies. When it comes to South Asia, there is no need to distinguish between people fleeing places with the potential for violence or militarization and those forced to be displaced by their own governments in the name of development. This article also emphasizes the distinction between external and internal forms of forced migration in South Asia. The article has only one significant drawback: these authors focus more on the issues of internal displacement and consciously ignore the external displacement, which forces people to cross the international border. The important thing is that they highlighted the anti-Hindu riots or communal clashes in Bangladesh, which forced people to be displaced or migrate to the northeast and eastern states in India.

Sanjay Barbora, Susan Thieme, Karin Astrid Siegmann, Vineetha Menon, and Ganesh Gurung, in “*Migration Matters in South Asia: Commonalities and Critiques*” (2008), have emphasized to the historical traditions of migration (both legal and illegal) within and beyond of

South Asian countries. The authors had concentrated on the role of globalization and microeconomics in South Asian migration. Although national governments welcome remittances, the contribution of remitters is often overlooked in policy interventions, and they often face movement of restrictions, job insecurity, and harassment by authorities. The main drawback of their analysis is the emphasis on immigrants' rights and their adjustment policies, while neglecting the problems faced by the receiving countries and their citizens, as well as what strategies should be followed to control the outflow of illegal immigrants.

Myron Weiner, in his research article "*Rejected Peoples and Unwanted Migrants in South Asia*" (1993), claims that in South Asia, cross-border population movements not only affect the structure and composition of labour markets or the provision of services to newcomers, but also impact internal security, political stability, and social harmony, and international relations. The Author discovered that political rather than economic factors had driven most of the migration movements across the national boundaries in South Asian. While differences in income, employment opportunities, and accessibility to land play an influential role in migration movement in the region, political situations within the sending states, the porous nature of borders, migrants' connections to ethnic relatives across borders, and the willingness of host countries' governments to accept migrants are significantly more influential. However, the author does not mention any policies related to addressing illegal and undocumented immigration in South Asia in this article.

Beena Kirad in "*Migration and Security in South Asia: Afghan Refugees in Pakistan*" (2016) highlighted that since the 1970s, a large number of Afghan immigrants who entered Pakistan has led to ethnic conflict, economic problems, and the criminalization of society in the host country, creating lasting instability in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Afghan refugees became involved in Pakistani politics, working with military intelligence, Jamiat-i-Islami, and other political organizations, among other Pathans in the NWFP.

Vartika Sharma, Lopamudra Ray Saraswati, Susmita Das, and Avina Sarn, in their work "*Migration in South Asia: A Review*" (2015), discussed the cross-border migration in South Asia countries of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. According to them, cross-border migration has both positive and native roles in receiving countries. If migration is managed properly, it will greatly benefit individuals as well as the receiving countries; on the other hand, mismanagement or poor management will impact socio-cultural, economic, and political sectors. The authors also highlight that poorly managed cross-border migration increases the problems of public health like

HIV/AIDs, TB, Hepatitis, and malaria etc. However, the authors only focused on migration-related health issues in receiving countries.

➤ **Migration in India**

Myron Weiner, in his book “*Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*” (1978), emphasized how migration could have a destabilizing impact on a low-income and multiethnic community in three Indian regions of Assam, Chota Nagpur, and Telangana. It can also threaten the economic and political rights of the ‘Sons of the Soil,’ or the rights of the native people of these regions. Additionally, the continuous movement of socio-culturally or linguistically diverse groups of people can reinforce the concept of ‘nativism,’ which ultimately leads to social unrest and ethnic conflicts. The biggest mistake of this book is that it has nothing to say about the unconstitutional or illegal, or undocumented migration from outside India. Although the author only highlights the problems of the tribes, the migrants have also affected the lifestyle of the local residents of these regions.

Another important book is Ranabir Samaddar’s “*The Marginal Nation: Transborder Migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal*” (1999). In this book author explores the question of illegal cross-border migration issues in India as part of the national security debate, particularly focusing on the Indian state of West Bengal. In this book author analyzes various issues such as ‘marginalised nation’, globalization, and push-pull factors with correlation to illegal and undocumented migration between Bangladesh and West Bengal. In reality, both sending and receiving countries are ultimately marginalized by the transboundary movement of refugees and unwanted migrants. The author emphasizes that illegal migrants exhibit no allegiance to the nations in which they reside, leading to the belief that ‘they deserve periodic beatings, warnings and sometimes even expulsion.’ Nevertheless, the author only superficially addressed the issue of illegal migration into Assam.

Sanjoy Hazarika, in his book “*Rites of Passage: Border Crossings, Imagined Homelands, India’s East and Bangladesh*” (2000), employs a descriptive approach within a research context, differentiating between migrants driven by economic and environmental factors and those seeking asylum refuge from political turmoil. The author highlighted pull factors for Bangladeshi nationals to migrate into India as being similar in language and religious attitude, and push factors as being the desire for land, employment opportunities, population density, and environmental issues.

Similarly, the author suggested granting work permits and temporary residency to unauthorized immigrants, instead of giving them to citizenship status. Nevertheless, the main drawback of this book is the lack of attention paid to the ‘patron-client’ dynamics of political parties supporting illegal immigrants in Assam, as well as the aspirations of the Assamese people fueled by sentiments against immigration.

Chandan Nandy, in his book “*Illegal Migration from Bangladesh to India: The Emerging Conflict*” (2005), discusses the demographic, economic, political, and cultural challenges posed by illegal or undocumented migration from Bangladesh to India, especially in the bordering states of West Bengal and Assam. The author mentioned that after 1971, Muslims fled from Bangladesh to India due to economic reasons, but Hindus were politically forced to emigrate. India is a developing country, although it has received immigrants from relatively less developed neighboring countries. The author claims that the primary reason for illegal immigration was the consolidation of vote banks by political parties (both national and regional) in India, and widespread corruption within the Indian Border Security Force. Despite this, the author is sometimes seen expressing more skepticism towards Hindu political refugees.

In “*Bangladeshi Migrants in India: Foreigners, Refugees or Infiltrators?*” (2017), Rizwana Shamshad has examined the issue of infiltration from Bangladesh into Assam, West Bengal, and Delhi from three distinct angles. The author highlighted that Bangladeshi immigrants were a part of the Indian nationalism and freedom struggle movements against British colonial rulers, but after 1971, those Bangladeshi immigrants were treated as illegal immigrants. According to the author, two types of nationalism have existed in India since historical times— secular and ethnoreligious, and their relationship was complex in nature. The author also expressed that continuous migration from Bangladesh poses a threat to the modern nation-state of India and influences the growth of sub-regional groups. In the case of Assam, the author’s perspective can be seen as stereotypical. She notes that Assamese nationalists resist Bangladeshi nationals due to their Bengali heritage or linguistic ties to Bengali. However, the reality for the Assamese population reflects a more open-minded attitude, as evidenced by the acceptance of numerous Bengali migrants who arrived in Assam before March 25, 1971, from what was then East Pakistan. Likewise, the prevailing sentiment among Assamese nationalists does not extend to accepting Hindu migrants while rejecting Muslims.

➤ Migration in Assam

In “*Planter Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Election Politics in Assam 1826-1947*” (1977), Amalendu Guha discussed the colonial history of Assam. Nonetheless, while it provides insights into the history of Muslim peasant migration from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and the communal approach of Syed Sadullah, it fails to address the impacts of migration on Assamese demographics and society. The author characterized migrants from East Pakistan as ‘toiling peasants, artisans, and labourers,’ who were born or had been living in Assam for more than three decades, effectively considered as naturalised Indian citizens. However, the author neglected to consider how migration has transformed the demographic landscape and social structure of Assam.

D. P. Kumar, in his book “*Challenges to India’s Unity: Assam Student Movement and Government*” (1990), outlines the migration problem in Assam since the British colonial period. The author shows how the large influx of foreigners led to the six-year-long Assam movement, which was spearheaded by the AASU-AAGSP, and ended with the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985 between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and leaders of the Assam agitation. The author also points out that the establishment of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government, formed by students, has failed significantly in identifying and deporting foreigners as stipulated in the Assam Accord. However, the author does not discuss the native Assamese problems faced by foreigners in Assam and subsequent developments related to protecting the socio-economic and political rights of indigenous Assamese. In this book author only focuses on migration-related problems in Upper Assam, but the cross-border migration problem in Lower Assam from Bangladesh is a more concerning issue.

Monirul Hossain examined the Assam Movement (1979-1985) through a sociological lens in his book, *The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Movement* (1993). The author highlighted that the movement of individuals from East Bengal into Assam began during the colonial era and was encouraged by the British administrators to fulfill their colonial economic objectives. The author argues that the influx of Muslim Bangali farmers into the densely populated regions of Assam has improved the financial conditions of the area. Indeed, migration had an impact on Assamese culture and lifestyle, but the author did not mention it in this book.

Another significant book is *Muslims in Assam Politics* (1997), written by Makhanlal Kar. The author highlights how Muslims have influenced Assam’s politics from the early thirteenth

century to the 1990s and how minority politics have developed in the state after the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985. The author emphasizes the transformation of Muslim politics in Assam into minority politics after the signing of the Assam Accord. In this book, the author used terms like ‘migration,’ ‘immigration,’ ‘influx,’ and ‘infiltration’ in a similar sense. He also expressed concern that any anti-immigrant policy enacted and implemented by the authorities was primarily targeted at the entire Muslim community. However, the author failed to address the central grievances of the native Assamese people, who feel that their land is being encroached by Bengali Muslim immigrants and that their society and culture are being threatened by Bengali refugees and immigrants from Bangladesh.

In *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (1999), Sanjib Barua has characterized Assam as the homeland of a ‘multiethnic’ and immigrant communities. Historically, people from Bangladesh entered Assam and drastically altered the demographic structures of the region. Therefore, Assamese people feel that they are losing their rich cultural heritage and dominance in their own area. As a result, a large number of “sub-nationalist” groups, such as Hindu nationalist, emerged and demanded their own identities. The author also highlights that four northeastern states of India: Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland have been affected by the separatist movements. Indeed, the author did not ignore the fact that the massive migration from Bangladesh created a significant threat for ethnic Assamese and contributed to the rise of a separatist type of nationalism, which he referred to as ‘sub-nationalism.’ However, the main drawback of the book is how to control illegal migration from Bangladesh to Assam, especially in the Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts.

The Report of the *Independent Review Committee on The Illegal Migration into Assam* by Lieutenant General (Retd) S. K. Sinha (1998) is still one of the most important policy documents discussing the dark side of cross-border migration from Bangladesh into Assam. The report submitted to the President of India considers migration from historical, political, economic, and strategic perspectives. Sinha argues that British colonial policy encouraged international and interstate migration, which later took the form of communal and political movements. The author emphasized that post-partition migration from East Pakistan and later Bangladesh was presented as more than an economic flow; instead, it was labeled as a “silent demographic invasion” that was perceived to encroach on Assamese identity and culture and security of resources. The author also noted that the main reasons for the failure to control illegal immigration were improper border

management, the inefficacy of the IMDT Act, and the politicization of the migration issue. The report reframes migration as a threat to national security, rather than a regional issue. However, the report showed that Muslim migrants are a threat to Assamese, but it was silent on the issue of Hindu refugees and migrants.

Sanghamitra Sarma in *Immigration Issue in Assam (1947-1957)* has discussed the dialectic of migration as a complex combination of ungovernable factors in Assam in the first ten years after independence. The author proposes that immigration could be effectively restricted by emulating the permit system followed in European countries. Both Gopinath Bardoloi and Bischirum Medhi, the two chief ministers of Assam, had quite different views on immigration issues, but both of them made a common mistake in immigration understanding. Without addressing the issue of a sustainable design to address the dilemma, any thought, the population catastrophe was temporarily overcome in Assam. Despite his best efforts, Bardoloi was unable to give his strategy structure due to a lack of central government support. The central government's apathy and dereliction of duty during these critical years did not help in facing this plight. The lack of a sustainable plan to address the migration and public discontent that arose from the unfulfilled expectations of the Assamese in post-colonial Assam led to ethnic tensions between the indigenous Assamese and the migrant population of the state, which culminated in the Assam Movement in 1979-1985. The main drawback of the article is that the author only discussed the chief minister Gopinath Bardoloi and Bischirum Medhi's standpoints, but at that time, many important leaders communicated and negotiated with the central government on the issue of migration control strategies.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To understand the various concepts and theoretical models on illegal migration.
2. To analyse the historical trends and patterns of migration movement in Assam.
3. To analyse the international and national laws, regulations, and policies on illegal migration.
4. To study the parliamentary and Assam assembly debates on illegal migration control.

5. To analyse the socio-economic impact of illegal migration in Assam, specifically in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts.
6. To analyse the demographic shift and political changes due to illegal migration, specifically in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts in Assam from 2005 to 2024.
7. To analyse major security threats posed by unauthorized Bangladeshi immigrants to Assam, India.

Research Questions:

Considering the above pieces of literature and objectives, it is worth investigating the four research questions;

- Can historical trends and patterns of migration movement in Assam predict future movements? What are the main driving forces behind cross-border movements after March 25, 1971, and how does the Government of India and Assam deal with this illegal movement?
- What are the main laws, regulations, and policies to control illegal migration from the neighboring countries to Assam? What is the legal status of children who were born in Assam but whose parents entered illegally?
- What are the major social and economic challenges that Assamese and indigenous people face from the illegal immigrants, specifically in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts? Are local residents migrating to other districts of Assam or states in India due to the socio-economic challenges posed by illegal immigrants?
- What are the major political impacts of illegal immigration on the democratic rule of Assam? Do illegal migrants pose a security threat to Assamese society and the nation?

Methodology and Data Collection

The choice of methodology depends on the research question and the phenomena being studied. To understand the characteristics of this cross-border movement and illegal migration, the present study examined ideas, attitudes, environment, culture, relationship structures, and beliefs. Methodology, theory, and method combine to form an effective research guideline. Using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) helps in understanding the research issues. This study

employs a qualitative design, utilizing the strategy of constant comparative data analysis (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 1994) to analyze the impact of illegal immigrants on the state of Assam.

The collection of data is based on primary and secondary sources. For this study, both qualitative and demographic data were collected during a field survey visit to Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar Districts in lower Assam. We have collected 210 individual samples from three border villages and municipality wards (10 per cent of the population in each sample area) of each district. We also used the comparative method to analyze the socio-economic and political consequences of illegal migration in these districts.

For the purpose and collection of secondary sources all the available and relevant historical records, reports and published books were consulted in various libraries, especially The Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Salt Lake (Kolkata); National Library of India (Kolkata); Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Cultural Library, Golpark, (Kolkata); District Library, Dhubri (Assam); Survey of India, State Archives, Dispur (Guwahati); Assam Legislative Assembly Debates available in the Assam Secretariat Library, Dispur; special debates on illegal migration held in the Parliament and some confidential documents kept in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and the Home & Political (B) Department, Government of Assam. In some cases, the judgments of the Supreme Court and the Guwahati High Court have been consulted, the District Statistical Handbooks published by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, and newspapers.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

Migration and its effects on citizens of host countries are a significant subject in political science, international relations, and area studies. Migration from neighboring countries to India's northeast poses a security concern for the entire nation. Assam has been heavily impacted by cross-border illegal migration since the British colonial era. It shares international borders with Bhutan to the north and Bangladesh to the west and southwest. The porous border with Bangladesh allows easy crossing for Bangladeshi immigrants. During colonial times, East Bengalis migrated to Assam under British policies to work as laborers in tea gardens. After partition, East Pakistani (now Bangladeshi) people fled to Assam due to political violence. Hindu Bengalis arrived as refugees,

and both the central and Assam governments permitted them to stay on humanitarian grounds. However, the large influx of foreigners created challenges for the Assamese people. This led to the development of anti-foreigner sentiment among the Assamese and other ethnic communities. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Assamese demanded the deportation of all Pakistanis who entered after partition, asserting they had no right to remain in Assam. As a result, the government adopted a resolution setting March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for Indian citizens. The Assam government has declared that any individuals entering after this date would be considered illegal immigrants and deported to their country of origin.

The study on migration issues in Assam in the 21st century is important because, in 2005, in *Sarbananda Sonowal v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court declared the IM(D)T Act of 1983 unconstitutional and struck it down, as it was incapable of identifying and deporting illegal immigrants in Assam. The Apex Court has ordered that if any individuals suspected of being an illegal immigrant are introduced before the Foreign Tribunal under the Foreign Tribunal Act 1946. Therefore, it is important to study the impacts of migration (legal/unlawful) on the socio-economic and political domains of the Assamese and various indigenous communities after the *Sarbananda Sonowal* verdict of 2005.

For this study, we selected Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts in Lower Assam. Typically, these two districts share an international border with Bangladesh and are known to be highly Muslim migration-centric areas. These two districts have recorded the highest population growth rate among the districts of Assam since March 1971. It is also recorded that these two districts had the highest Muslim population growth rate over the decade from 1971 to 2001. The porous nature of the border motivated Bangladeshi immigrants, mainly Muslims, to enter these districts. However, we have also analysed and compared with other parts of Assam for a better understanding and explanation of migration issues.

The period from 2005 to 2025 has been selected for the study of migration and its impact on the socio-economic and political life of the native Assamese. The main consideration of the period is the striking down of the IMDT Act of 1983 by the Supreme Court in the case of *Sarbananda Sonowal vs. Union of India* in 2005. The Supreme Court has directed both the Central and Assam state government that if a person is suspected of being an illegal immigrant, he/she must be handed over to the Foreigners Tribunal under the Foreigners Tribunal Act, 1946. The Tribunal properly investigated and reviewed all documents and records of the suspected person

and their families. But the Apex Court does not give any directions in its judgment to protect the rights of the indigenous and Assamese people. It is also interesting that the Assamese people's demands to expel illegal immigrants from their areas are ignored. AASU-AAGSP leaders launched a protest movement against the verdict and demanded immediate implementation of the 1985 Assam Accord for the identification and deportation of illegal immigrants from Assam. Another important event during this study period was the NRC and CAA 2019. Two controversial issues intensified under the 2019 CAA; on the one hand, there was fear among native Assamese people because they felt that the CAA, which granted citizenship status to six minority communities other than Muslims such as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians who are illegally entered Indian states from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan on and before 31 December 2014, would change their demographic structure and impact their rights. Assamese think that they will become a minority in their own area. These extra people put pressure on their livelihoods and natural resources. Therefore, the growth of ethnic conflicts and the anti-foreign movement intensified. On the other hand, anti-religious sentiments were spread among the Muslim population. The leaders of the Muslim organizations criticized the CAA 2019, saying that it will destroy the secular idea of the Indian constitution. Another significant issue is the Doubtful voter or D-voter, the Assam government has ordered that those voters will not be allowed to cast their vote due to questions about their citizenship credentials. In 2019, many Assam citizens were put on the D-voter list, including indigenous Assamese, because they lacked birth or school-leaving certificates.

The main limitation of this study is the lack of precise data on illegal immigrants residing in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts of Assam. There is no clear information on how many Hindu refugees entered Assam from East Pakistan after the partition and how many of them returned to Bangladesh following independence from Pakistan. For this study, we estimated the number of immigrants (both legal and illegal) using Census data from Bangladesh and India. The issue with the Census database is that it only records foreign nationals who entered India with valid travel documents. It does not address undocumented or illegal migrants who entered India through illegal means or overstayed their visas. In fact, no census has been conducted in India since 2011. Another limitation of the study is that it is difficult to identify who is Assamese or who is an immigrant or who illegal immigrant, because both the districts are Muslim majority, they have a common language, culture, and the same facial look. During the field visit, most of the Muslim respondents recorded that they are Assamese, but they communicate in the Bengali language. The

geographic area chosen for the study is another significant limitation. Both districts are connected to Bangladesh by rivers, and most of the land consists of riverine char islands. This makes field interviews and data collection from residents more difficult. Some government officials refused to provide information and sometimes declined to cooperate during interviews.

Outline of the Theses:

The research thesis is divided into seven chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. Each chapter of this thesis is designed to examine one or more dimensions of the problem of illegal migration in Assam. Each chapter starts with a brief introduction to the subject matter and ends with finding and a conclusive guideline. The chapters are further divided into several sub-sections, each with a distinct objective.

Chapter 1 is the introductory part of the overall discussion. It also includes the area of study, statement of problem, review of existing knowledge, research objectives, research questions, scope and limitations of the study, methodology, Data collection techniques, and overall chapter schemes.

Chapter 2 explores the **Conceptual and Theoretical Background of Migration**, as presented by various scholars and schools of thought. In this chapter, we explored the implications of various theories concerning India in general and specifically on Assam. In this chapter, we analyzed the concepts of Migration, the causes of migration, various types of migration, the concept of refugees, and human trafficking. For this study, we analyzed various leading theories, such as Ravenstein's Law of Migration, Stouffer's Intervening Opportunity Model, Lee's Push-Pull theory, Network theory, Neoclassical Economic theory, and Dual Market or Segmented Labour Market. We analyzed the present research work from this theoretical perspective. Although we have considered some contemporary theories, such as equilibrium and new economic theory, to explain the circumstances of Bangladeshi migrants, we also reinterpret many other theories.

Chapter 3 deals with **Patterns and Trends of Migration in Assam** from the ancient period to the modern day. The earliest migratory peoples were primarily from non-Aryan Mongoloid stocks, and they were referred to as Kiratas in the Puranas and the two epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. During the colonial period, a large number of peasants migrated from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The British administrators encouraged the poor agricultural labourers to migrate from East Bengal to Assam to improve the agricultural land. After India was partitioned

on August 15, 1947, due to communal violence, hundreds of thousands of Hindu Bangali refugees from East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) fled to Assam. Influx of Bangladeshi immigrants into Assam after 25 March 1971. Ultimately, the demographic changes turned into the Assam Movement (1979-1985) that subsequently produced the Assam Accord, a controversial attempt to address the problem of illegal immigration by setting a deadline for citizenship of March 24, 1971. The post-Assam Accord (1985) period represents a turning point in the migration and identity politics in Assam. Violent clashes erupted in the 1990s and again in 2012 and 2014 between Bodos and Bengali-speaking Muslims, frequently described as illegal immigrants.

Chapter 4 discusses **Constitutional and Legislative Responses to Illegal Migration**. In this chapter, we will highlight various international regulations and policies on illegal migration. In 1951, the United Nations established the Refugee Convention. Global, regional, and multi-regional responses to the flow of illegal immigration are discussed in this chapter. In this chapter, we also discussed various laws and policies to control illegal migration in India, such as the Registration of Foreigners Act of 1939, the Foreigners Act of 1946, the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act of 1950, the Citizenship Act of 1955, CAA 2019, NRC, the Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920, Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964, Illegal Migration (Determination by Tribunals) Act or IMDT 1983, etc. At the same time, we analyzed the number of historical judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts on the question of migration (illegal) in Assam.

Chapter 5 deals with **the Socio-Economic Consequences of Migration in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts**. The continuous flow of illegal migration into Assam from neighboring countries poses a major challenge to the political, economic, social, and security aspects of Assamese society. From 1971 to 2025, the population of India increased by 124 per cent, but the population of Assam increased by approximately 152 per cent. This disparity in population growth rates can be largely attributed to the massive migration of people from other sub-continent regions, especially from densely populated neighboring Bangladesh. It is also noted that land encroachment by migrants in tribal areas and blocks, public wastelands, and forest areas has created social and environmental problems. Another impact in Assam, where unemployment and underemployment rates are already very high, is the potential for pressure on the labour market. It is believed that the huge supply of cheap labour from illegal immigrants has affected not only the rural agricultural labour market, but also the urban informal job market; however, in the long run, the formal labor market will also be affected. Therefore, unemployment and poverty

are accelerating among the Assamese or local residents, which leads to social unrest and ethnic conflict. We also highlighted the socio-economic situation of the districts before and after partition, and the nuances associated with it are covered in this chapter through the current situation, like the present population structure, economic trends, and social organization at both local and regional levels between 2005 and 2024. We analyze why native Assamese people/or citizens migrate to other districts or states.

Chapter 6 deals with the **Impact of Migration on Security Dynamics and Political Landscapes of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar**. In this chapter, we will discuss how illegal immigrants impact voter politics in Assam, specifically in the Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts. It is noted that the continuous influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh is posing a threat to India's national security, with some political parties and groups exploiting immigration issues for their political gains and exacerbating ethnic divisions. We also analyzed how illegal immigrants violate the indigenous people's rights. Analyse the conflict between indigenous ethnic communities and illegal immigrants, such as the Bodoland movement, the Riots in Kokrajhar, Chirang in 2012 and 2014, the Nellie massacre in 1983, and the anti-foreigner movement in 1979-1985. Political parties, both national and regional, use illegal migration issues for political gain. In this chapter, we discussed what are the major political and security challenges faced by the native people from the migrants (illegal and legal). We analysed electoral politics and election-related criminal activities, political polarisation, illegal voter enrolment, questions of citizenship, CAA, NRC, D-Voters conflicts, the role of political parties to use immigrants as their vote bank, suppression of native and indigenous, etc.

Chapter 7, entitled **Conclusion**, is a summary of the study. In this part, all the chapters are summarized, and the major findings are articulated. The researcher also recommended some important policies to effectively control illegal migration from Bangladesh to Assam.

Findings:

India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and in Asia. In 2025, India reached a significant milestone as the fourth-largest economy with a GDP of 4 trillion US dollars. As a result, people from neighboring countries are motivated to migrate to India. Sometimes, they (immigrants) resort to illegal means to enter the country. These illegal immigrants are not only

changing demographic patterns but also pose security threats to the nation and its citizens. Assam is one of the states most affected by both legal and illegal immigrants, mainly from Bangladesh. In this thesis, we analyze the socio-economic and political impacts of illegal migration in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts of Assam from 2005 to 2024 across six chapters. The primary findings are;

1. In India, illegal migration is a threat to national security as well as a violation of indigenous people's rights. After the partition of India in 1947 and the Bangladesh liberation movement in 1971, a steady flow of (illegal) Bangladeshi immigrants into the northeastern and eastern states of India, namely West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, etc. The picture of Assam is more problematic than other Indian states. The state of Assam's unabated influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh has not only changed the demographic structure of the state but has also affected the social, cultural, economic, and political spheres negatively. These Bangali immigrants (both Hindus and Muslims), to ensure a prolonged stay in the mentioned State, marry girls from indigenous communities, thereby diluting their cultural heritage. Apart from this, crimes have increased manifold, not to mention overcrowding, environmental pollution, and the sprouting of slums in the area.
2. British policies during the colonial era encouraged large-scale migration to Assam, especially by Adivasi laborers to the tea gardens from Central Indian and Muslim peasants from East Bengal, leading to fundamental changes in the state's demographics. Moreover, these colonial immigrants (economic immigrants) put pressure on the lifestyle and social structure of the indigenous and Assamese people. After the partition of 1947, Assam immediately faced widespread violence and displacement by millions of refugees from East Pakistan. These outbreaks exacerbate concerns about identity, land, and political representation. Ultimately, the demographic changes turned into the Assam Movement (1979-1985) that subsequently produced the Assam Accord, a controversial attempt to address the problem of illegal immigration by setting a deadline for citizenship of March 24, 1971. However, despite such legal and political interventions, the immigration problem remains. Attempts like the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 have triggered new debates on identity, legality, and secularism. While the NRC seeks to identify infiltrators, the CAA frames citizenship from a religious perspective, which creates fears among the citizens of losing cultural identity and autonomy. Overall, the historical trends and patterns of migration in Assam point to

the need for a sensitive, balanced, and inclusive migration policy, which recognizes Assam's pluralistic heritage and protects its indigenous communities and democratic values. Therefore, understanding this history is crucial for establishing just and effective governance in the region.

3. From the colonial period, people migrated from Burma (Myanmar), Tibet, East Bengal (Bangladesh), Nepal, and so on. This migration process continues after independence. In fact, the migration movement reached high during the Bangladesh liberation movement in 1971, specifically in Indian border states such as Assam, West Bengal, and Tripura. The Government of India declared that those who entered India on and after 25 March 1971 are illegal immigrants. The illegal immigrants not only change demographic structures but also threaten to the security of the country. Therefore, to effectively control illegal immigrants, the Indian government enacted several Acts such as the Foreigners Act 1946, the Citizenship Act 1955, the Passport (Entry into India) Act 1920, the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act 1950, the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act 1983, the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order 1964 and Amendment Order 2019, Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA). But the problem is that the nature of migration in India, specifically in Assam, is different than the world. Bangladeshi Hindus illegally migrated to Assam due to religious persecution (See Chapter 3). In 2005, the Supreme Court struck down the IMDT Act 1983 as unconstitutional because it was largely ineffective in detecting and deporting illegal immigrants, particularly in Assam. Thus, any individuals suspected as an illegal migrant should be decided under the Foreigners Act 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order 1964. But there is no legal framework or mechanism to address the problem of children born in India, whose parents entered illegally. Under the Foreigners Act, those children are considered illegal immigrants and all punishments imposed on them as illegal immigrants.
4. The influx of Migration (illegal and legal) from Bangladesh to the border districts in Assam state has both quantitative and qualitative changes in the demographic, socio-cultural, and economic structure. The land-to-people ratio has declined, and the per capita availability of cultivable land has also been decreasing faster than in other parts of the state. Land encroachment by migrants in tribal areas and blocks, public wastelands, and forest areas has created social and environmental problems. The illegal flow of Bangladeshi immigrants has changed the demographic structure of the Dhubri and Salmara-Mankachar

districts. Due to the porous nature of the India-Bangladesh border, Bangladeshis are illegally entering the border villages of these districts. Therefore, the number of people in these villages has changed in a short period of time, and the indigenous-Assamese people became a minority section in the villages as well as in the district. This change has also affected the ethnic composition, religious patterns, linguistic characteristics, and population density, and urban-rural distribution patterns of both districts. The population growth rate and density in both districts had been significantly higher than the state as well as national averages. Such an unnatural population growth has often been shown as indirect evidence of the trans-border infiltration.

5. Muslim population growth in both districts was higher than the state as well as country averages. The growth of the Muslim population is a major threat to other religions, mainly Assamese Hindus. According to the Dhubri Municipality Development Board, ten new mosques were constructed between 2015 to 2020 in Dhubri Municipality, but in the same period, only one Hindu temple and one Guru Dawar were reconstructed.
6. The percentage of the population of indigenous communities, such as Assamese-speaking Hindus, Koch-Rajbangshis, and Bodos, has also declined relatively. The decline in indigenous populations is generally considered a threat to culture, political power, and social harmony. Various government records show that the number of the Muslim population has increased. Still, the number of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations has decreased in both the Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts.
7. The huge supply of cheap labour from illegal immigrants has affected not only the rural agricultural labour market, but also the urban informal job market; however, in the long run, the formal labor market will also be affected. Therefore, unemployment and poverty are accelerating among the Assamese or local residents, which leads to social unrest and ethnic conflict. The native workers will lose their jobs due to the supply of cheap labour by immigrants in general and illegal immigrants in particular, because they (immigrants) compete for lower-paying jobs compared to native workers. They are mainly engaged in semi-skilled or unskilled informal work, such as rickshaw pullers, daily wage laborers, construction workers, and domestic workers. This has resulted in skyrocketing unemployment rates among the native population, forcing them to migrate to other districts of Assam or other parts of the country, as well as abroad in search of work. The lack of job

opportunities in local markets, their family members (mainly male members) migrated abroad for employment. Interestingly, four out of ten respondents from both districts mentioned that at least one member of their household is unemployed.

8. The number of Assamese speakers has decreased, and the small linguistic communities in the region are practically extinct. This linguistic transformation did not happen in isolation but rather created existential anxiety among Assamese speakers, Koch-Rajvanshi, and other indigenous communities. The indigenous people expressed fear of linguistic isolation, that their children were not learning Assamese either at home or in school, because Bengali is the medium of instruction in schools in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts, which threatened to erode cultural identity over time. The language of Bengali was the dominant means of communication between neighborhoods and schools, rather than their mother tongue.
9. Indigenous/native peoples and newcomers (immigrants) have interacted to create complex cultural systems that reflect both assimilatory trends and zones of persistent cultural conflict. Indigenous communities began to feel threatened by the aggressive movement of a foreign culture that was apparently establishing itself in areas historically identified with Assamese heritage. In some such villages of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar, with the dominance of the Bengali-speaking population, the traditional Bihu festivals lost their importance. The native folk music and dance have gradually been replaced and marginalized by the new settlers (immigrants). Even the religious practices have also seen changes, with an increasing trend of opening madrasas and religious institutions outside the Assamese cultural framework. The correlation and pattern of migration and educational backwardness. The student dropout rate is higher in the border village than in the non-border villages and towns. Even in the villages along the border of South Salmara-Mankachar, the dropout rate of students is higher compared to the Dhubri district.
10. Migration has always been one of the key factors in shaping political solidarity, electoral behaviours, electoral outcomes, and identity-based competition in the border districts of Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar. Illegal migration and politics in Assam are intertwined in broader debates about citizenship status, political representation and affiliation, ethnic security, and national identity, making these districts important locations for explaining how demographic structures shift and translate into political change.

11. The Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar are border districts in western Assam that have high concentrations of Bangali Muslim migrants. During each election, clashes between natives and migrants are observed in these border districts. Thus, migration reshaped electoral politics at Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar. The continuous migration and settlement of Bengali-origin migrants (mostly Muslims) over the past five decades have irreversibly changed the voter demographics of these districts, turning them into minority dominated constituencies.
12. The migrant voters become a determining factor in gaining political power in Assam. Both national and regional political parties have mobilised them for electoral gain. The Indian National Congress party, in particular, has been accused of historically benefiting from the inclusion of immigrant voters, which has influenced election results in border districts (Baruah, 1999). The Assamese felt politically isolated in their region due to migration pressure, which led to the Anti-foreigner movement in Assam in the early 1980s. In December 1980, the newly formed Congress government, headed by an Assamese Muslim, Anwara Taimur, in Assam, led to increased tensions between indigenous Assamese Hindus and Bangali Muslims of Bangladeshi origin. Bangali Muslims have emerged as the decisive force in determining the fate of leadership or the rule maker and rule breaker in Assam's politics. In the 2004 General election, Congress candidate Anwar Hussain won by a margin of 13.5 per cent and received 43.6 per cent (376,588 votes) of the total vote polled. The Por-migrants policy of the Congress government has brought huge success in the Lok Sabha election. The AIUDF essentially became the political representation of migrant Muslims from the Char (river) region, who felt marginalised by both the Assamese Nationalist Party (like AGP), communist political parties, and the Congress. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has pursued a counter-strategy of polarization, consolidating indigenous Hindus, ethnic Koch-Rajbongshis, and some tribal communities against migration as a threat to identity, security, and resources. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh (RSS) are actively working to mobilise Assamese Hindus against the question of illegal immigration. The BJP-led alliance won most of the seats in the 2024 general election from upper and central Assam, but lost most of the Muslim-centric constituencies in lower and border regions to the Congress by huge margins. The electoral history shows migration to be not just a demographic challenge, but a structural determinant of political alignments in Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar.

13. In 2019, Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts became political hotspots over the citizenship and CAA-NRC issues. Indigenous Assamese respondents in the Dhubri district were opposed to CAA, fearing population pressure and the decline of Assamese identity. In comparison, Bangali Hindus supported these laws as a safeguard against statelessness. Bangali Muslims opposed the CAA, a higher percentage than in both districts, due to fears of increased Hindu solidarity.
14. The cross-border inflation and increased criminality happened simultaneously, such as terrorism, smuggling, human trafficking, illegal trade of arms and drugs, fake currency, and so on. Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar are the most vulnerable border districts in Assam. The security threats are inextricably linked to socio-political insecurity, making the region a frontier of opportunity for migrants and a risk zone for the Indian state. The residents of Char claim that they cannot differentiate between 'locals' and 'newcomers' because their language and cultural characteristics are similar.
15. Migration had an indirect impact on the communal harmony of Assamese society. In July 2012, a communal riot escalated between Bodo and Bangali Muslims at Kokrajhar and Dhubri districts. On 7 June 2025, a piece of cow meat was found in a Hanuman temple at Dhubri town after the day of Eid al-Adha.

Suggestive Recommendations:

From the above significant findings of the study, the researcher suggests some ways to reduce the existing problems of Assamese society and control the continuous flow of migration (illegal and undocumented) from neighbouring countries. The following recommendations are-

- a) Dhubri and South Salmara-Mankachar districts of Assam are located on the banks of the Brahmaputra River and adjacent to an international border with Bangladesh, which facilitates the illegal entry of Bangladeshi immigrants. Although complete border fencing may not be feasible due to the porous nature of the border, proper lighting arrangements and CCTV should be installed along the river borderline. Additionally, observation towers should be established in the border villages and char regions of these two significant border districts of Lower Assam.
- b) Floating checkpoints should be set up on the Brahmaputra River, and 24×7 speed boat patrols and other water vehicles should be arranged.

- c) Biometrics and other modern identification technologies should be installed in entry points.
- d) All types of boats operated by the county on the river adjacent to the border must be registered, with their registration number clearly displayed, and the crew must have the registration documents with them for verification if necessary.
- e) In border villages, every citizen should be provided a multi-purpose photo identity card with a biometrics upgrade. Voter ID cards and other cards should be verified and updated at least once a year.
- f) Special Intensive Corrections (SIR) should be implemented as soon as possible to identify illegal immigrants and foreigners.
- g) Appropriate institutions must be established to ensure systematic registration of births and deaths.
- h) No census has been conducted since 2011, and a census survey should be arranged as soon as possible.
- i) The Census of India does not implement specific measures to identify illegal migrants. As a result, there should be a dedicated agency responsible for surveying these immigrants, or additional questions should be included in the census schedules and asked to foreign nationals in areas where immigrants reside.

References

1. Acharyya, N. N. (1992). *The History of Medieval Assam: From the Thirteenth to the Seventeenth Century*. Omsons Publications.
2. Ahmed, Abu Naser Syed. (2006). *Nationality Question in Assam*. Akansha Publishing.
3. Ahmed, Kamaluddin. (2011). *Assam's Doubtful Citizens: Fact or Fiction*. Pharos Media & Publishing.
4. Anderson, Benedict. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
5. Barpujari, H.K. (1998). *North East India: Problems, Policies and Prospects*. Spectrum Publication.
6. Barua, B.K. (1951). *A Cultural History of Assam (Early Period) vol. 1*. Gauhati University Press.
7. Barua, K.L. (1966). *Early History of Kamarupa: From the Earliest time to the end of the Sixteenth Century*. Lawyers' Book Stall.

8. Baruah, Apurba Kumar. (1991). *Social Tension in Assam: Middle Class Politics*. Purbanchal Prakash.
9. Baruah, Sagar. (2011). *Migration from East Bengal to Assam: Response, Reaction, and Assimilation*. Jagaran Sahitya Prakashan.
10. Baruah, Sanjib. (2001). *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
11. Baruah, Sanjib. (2020). *In the Name of the Nation: India and its North East*. Stanford University Press.
12. Baubock, R. Eds. (2006). *Migration and Citizenship: Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation*. Amsterdam University Press.
13. Bhatt, Anil. (2009). *Assam: Terrorism and the Demographic Challenge*. K W Publishers.
14. Bhattacharya, Hiranya Kumar. (2001). *The Silent Invasion: Assam versus Infiltration*. Spectrum Publications.
15. Bhuyan, Arun Ch. and De, Sibopada (Eds). (1999). *Political History of Assam, Vol 2*. Publication Board of Assam.
16. Bhuyan, Mahesh Chandra. (1977). *Immigrant Population of Assam: An Analytical-Synthetic Study with a Special Treatment of Darrang District*, (Ph.D. dissertation). Gauhati University.
17. Chakrabarty, B. (2020). *The NRC in Assam: Citizenship and Statelessness in India*. Routledge.
18. Chakravarty, Gorky. (2009). *Assam Hinterland: Society and Economy in the Char Areas*. Akansha Publishing House.
19. Chandra, N. (2006). Illegal Migration from Bangladesh. In B.B. Kumar & Astha Bharati (Eds.), *Illegal Migration from Bangladesh*. Concept Publishing Company.
20. Das, Amiya Kumar. (1982). *Assam's Agony: A Socio-Economic and Political Analysis*. Lancers.
21. Adamson, F. (2006). Crossing borders: international migration and national security. *International Security*, 31 (1), 165-199.
22. Ahsan, Zayadul, and Banavar, Pavitra. (2010) *Who Are the Militants? in Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*, edited by Riaz, Ali and C. Christine Fair, Taylor & Francis e-Library. <http://inflibnet.ac.in>.
23. Baldwin-Edwards, Martin. (2008). Towards a Theory of Illegal Migration: historical and structural components. *Third World Quarter*, 29(7).

24. Banerjee, Paula, Sanjoy Hazarika, Monirul Hassan, and Ranabir Samaddar. (1999). Indo-Bangladesh Cross-Border Migration and Trade. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(36).
25. Banjan, Vanita. (2009). Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants in Mumbai. 70(4), 1007-1020.
26. Baruah, Sanjib. (1986). Immigration, Ethnic Conflict, and Political-Turmoil Assam, 1979-1985. *Asian Survey*, 26(11), 1184-1206.
27. Baruah, Sanjib. (1994). The State and Separatist Militancy in Assam: Winning a Battle and Losing the War? *Asian Survey*, 34(10).
28. Baruah, Sanjib. (2009). Separatist Militants and Contentious Politics in Assam, India: The Limits of Counterinsurgency. *Asian Survey*, 49(6).
29. Bertossi, Christophe, and Milkop, Ashley. (2008). The Regulation of Migration: A Global Challenge. *Politique étrangère*, 73, 189-202.
30. Bhardwaj, S. (2018). Border Security Challenges and Migration in Northeast India. *Indian Journal of Political Science*, 79(4).
31. Borooah, V. K. (2013). The killing fields of Assam: Myth and reality of its Muslim immigration. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(4).
32. Bose, S. (1981). Migration and Identity in Northeast India: A Historical Perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16(4).
33. Brawly, Emila E M, and Zorita, Paz M B. (2014). The Neglect of Network Theory in Practice with Immigrants in the Southwest. *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 41(1).
34. Buragohain, Minakshi. (2025). Contested Belonging: Citizenship, Migration, and Identity Politics in Assam. *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, 23(3).
35. Castles, Stephen. (2010). Why Migration Policies Fail. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27(2), 205-227. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000177306>.
36. Chakrabarty, D. (2005). The Partition of Bengal and Its Impact on Assam. *South Asia Journal*, 28(3).
37. Das, Jogendra Kr. (2005). Assam: The Post-Colonial Political Developments. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 66(4).
38. Das, P. (2016). Cross-border Migration and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Assam. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 24(1).
39. Das, Pushpita. (2016). Illegal Migration from Bangladesh: Deportation, Border Fences, and Work Permits. *Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses: Monograph Series*, 56.
40. Dasgupta, A. (2001-2002). Char' red for a lifetime: Internal Displacement in Assam Plains in India. *SARWATCH*, 3(4).

41. Census of India. (1991). *Assam District Census Handbook, Part IX-A & B: Dhubri District*. Director of Census Operations, Assam.
42. Census of India. (2001). *Assam District Census Handbook, Part A & B: Dhubri District*. Director of Census Operations, Assam.
43. Census of India. (2011). *Assam District Census Handbook, Part VII-A: Dhubri District*. Director of Census Operations, Assam.
44. Government of Assam. (2012). *Statistical Handbook Assam-2011*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.
45. Government of Assam. (2014). *Agricultural Census 2010-11*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.
46. Government of Assam. (2015). *Changes in the Economic Condition of operational Holder since 1970-71 to 2010-11*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.
47. Government of Assam. (2017). *Statistical Handbook Assam-2016*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.
48. Government of Assam. (2025). *Statistical Handbook Assam-2024*. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.
49. Government of India. (2019). *Agriculture Census 2015-16*. Agriculture Census Division Department of Agriculture, Co-Operation & Farmers Welfare.
50. International Organization for Migration and United Nations. (2000). *World Migration Report*. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2000_edited.
51. International Organization for Migration and United Nations. (2024). *World Migration Report*.

.....
 (Prof. Bijaya Kumar Das)
 Supervisor

PROFESSOR
 Dept. of International Relations
 Jadavpur University
 Kolkata - 700 032

.....
 (Sandip Samanta)
 Research Scholar