

IMMIGRATION AND POLITICS OF REGIONALISM: AN OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN NATIONAL ISSUE IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Assam has been experiencing continued flow of immigration since British colonial rule. It is argued by the Assamese elite that Government of India failed to protect the distinct socio-cultural, economic and political identity of the Assamese people. In spite of the historic six yearlong foreign national movement and signing of Assam Accord to protect the distinct identity of the Assamese people, immigration continues to be an influential and determining factor in Assam's politics. Though immigration started in the pre-independence period, the flow of illegal immigrants continued even after several decades of independence and it has caused a great deal of apprehension in the minds of the Assamese people regarding sustenance of their distinct socio-political identity. Actually, the problem of unabated immigration issue regionalized the politics of Assam and helped in the growth of regionalism in Assam. This paper focuses on the background of foreign national issue along with the public opinion of the indigenous Assamese on the issue. Further, it is an attempt to understand how the issue of immigration has been affecting the federalizing process between the Centre and Assam.

KEYWORDS: *Immigration, Regionalism, Federalism, Assam, Foreign National.*

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