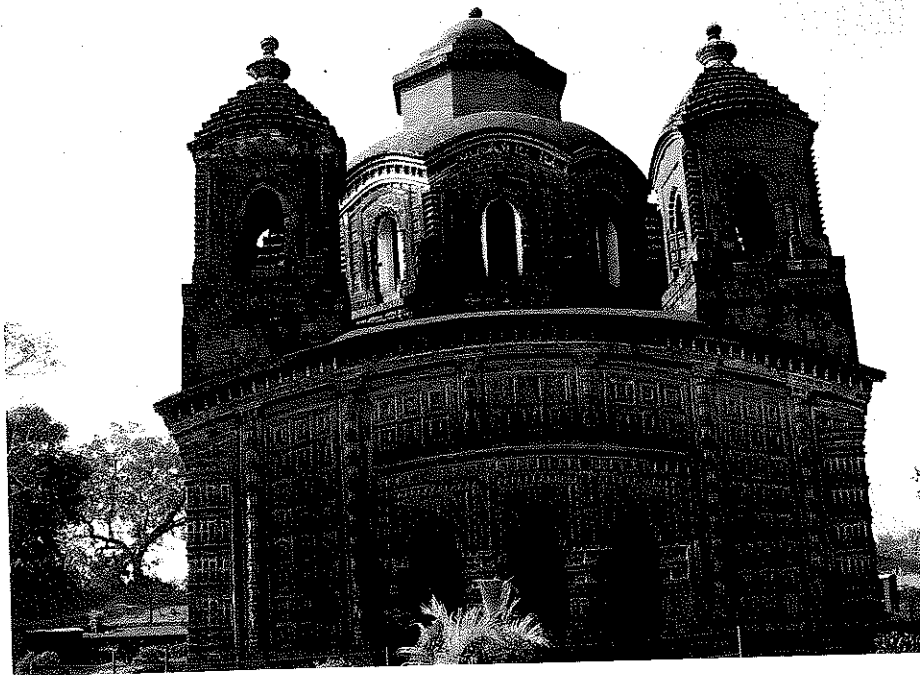


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take the leadership to improve the relationship and both Pakistan and Bangladesh can take the advantage of the opportunity to remove the curse of partitions. Peace among them can lead to a healthier economic growth in the region even without the USA cooperation.

Future Thought - Partitions of both Pakistan and Bangladesh made many millionaires and also created an environment for increasing religious hatred and intolerance including creation of a few self-dignified army generals and religious clerics. They do not realize that India has the largest population of Muslims under the secular constitution and democratic foundation since independence. Preservations of Muslim family laws in India may not be a good idea now for their own good [12], [13]. Religious practice should depend on individual choice not the national mandate. The progress of the country and also to build a relationship of neighboring countries will depend a close cooperation - a coalition of global economy including free movement and independent thought of people coming together irrespective of their religious and social background. Lack of that understanding by leaders and citizens together will be harmful. Given the current state of affairs one question to be asked and answered as follows: Was partition of 1947 necessary?

1. For India, it does not matter now. There are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan. The democratic foundation has been rooted well and Muslims are all well represented politically, socially and culturally.

2. For Pakistan, it is not a different answer but, in contrary, it is an opposite answer. It was not necessary. A country which could not get democratic process working even after 67 years does not have any right to speak of democracy of Kashmiri citizens. In the militarization process, Pakistan eliminated minorities to less than 1% and lost an ally, Bangladesh, and may also be on the verge of losing Baluchistan or North West Frontier Province.

3. For Bangladesh, the answer is not clear. The intention was good and also it started well but could not keep up the pace. The future looks bleak though there is well intended thought prevailing in some secular corners - may need some reinforcement from outside and with positive and constructive outlook from inside. Time will tell, of course.

Notes:

(1) *Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence* - 10 Edition by Jaswant Singh

(2) *A History of Modern India 1480-1950* (South Asian Studies Series) by Claude Markovits, Meggy Hendry (Translator) and Nishi George (Translator)

(3) *The Great Partion The Making of India and Pakistan* by Yasmin Khan

(4) Zainul Abedin Great Master of Bangladesh by Rosa Maria (EDT)/Monsur Falvo

(5) *The Indian Air Force in the 1971 Liberation War - Eagles Over Bangladesh* by P.V.S Jagan Mohan and Samir Chopra

(6) YouTube's Ispad1947 channel, Indian Subcontinent Partition Documents Project Interviews - Study conducted by Prof. Sachi Dastidar and ISPaD

(7) Post-Doctoral Studies at Emory University by Shirin Keen, Spring 1998, Last edited: July 2012

(8) Centre for Imperial and Post Colonial Studies at Southampton University by Profs. David Brown, Hyas Chattha, Claire Eldridge, Stephanie Jones, John McAleer, Jane McDermid, Pritipuspa Mishra, and others

(9) Different Documentaries and Books by Bangladesh Journalist Shariyar Kabir

(10) Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (Internet)

(11) Woodrow Wilson Center's Hosting of Dr. Sharmila Bose, Bangla Genocide Denialist

(12) *India Abroad*, December 29, 2013 Issue and many other Issues before and After this December Issue

(12) *India Abroad*, June 13 Issue, 2014 (Taking Charge By Prime Minister N. Modi)

Bengal's Partition and Assam's Environmental and Cultural Catastrophe

Dr. Richard L. Benkin

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In 1905, the British partitioned Bengal into a western, Hindu sector and an eastern, Muslim sector. They annulled the partition in 1911 due to Bengali unrest over their penchant to redraw Asian and African maps to suit their colonial purposes, leaving Bengalis divided. Hindus largely opposed the partition as a British attempt to subdue the Indian population with a "divide and rule" policy. Muslims largely favored it as a step toward autonomy. These lingering divisions laid the groundwork for Bengal's 1947 re-partitioning that made East Bengal part of Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan (nee East Bengal) won its independence with India's help in a bloody revolution. Its immediate cause was the refusal by West Pakistan's leaders to let Sheikh Mujibar Rahman form a government though his Bengali party won a majority of seats in the Pakistani parliament. That capped an ongoing list of grievances by Pakistan's Bengalis, who represented a majority of Pakistan's population but occupied a second-class status in the country. (1)

The new nation of Bangladesh was small, poor, devoid of significant resources, and incapable of sustaining its large and growing population. Even the partitioners knew that such a polity could not survive on its own: Britain paired it with Assam in 1905 and with West Pakistan (2) Thus the odds against the rump state of Bangladesh's survival were long from the start, and the nation has done little in its 43 year history to suggest otherwise. It is perennially poor, surviving on international donations; without a consistent rule of law;

daily persecution of Hindus and other minorities goes unpunished; and an endemic culture of corruption. (3)

Seven-Sisters



Bangladesh's history is one long tale of political instability with rotating periods of dictatorship or military rule interspersed with a "zero-sum" political war between two political parties (4) whose leaders would rather see the country fail than their rivals succeed.(5) Both have made deals with Islamists in an effort to win elections; and Bangladesh's former dictator, General H. M. Ershad and his Jatiya (National) Party, who has been a part of the country's ruling coalition till 2013, led by the Awami League which ironically postures itself as the liberal party. (6) Jatiya Party is the Official Opposition in BNP-boycotted Bangladesh Parliament.(7) Compounding the problems, Bangladesh is the only country that ranks among the world's ten most populous and the world's ten most densely populated, which is akin to cramming every other American into an area around the size of New York State. Bangladesh's survival has therefore required continual out-migration of Bangladeshis to the contiguous Indian states of West Bengal and Assam.(8)

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed admitted as much on March 4, 2014, at the BIMSTEC (9) summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. She told the assembled audience that Bangladesh was unable to sustain its population and blamed it on "climate change." As a result, she said, neighboring countries can expect more "climate refugees" from her country.(10) It is doubtful she believed Myanmar and its ruling junta would accept them with open arms; neither could she

expect a warm welcome from China/Tibet. Nepal is too small and poor. Bhutan, also too small, is already expelling its "foreigner" Hindus with Nepali roots.(11) The only neighboring country that has been getting these Bangladeshi "infiltrators" and can expect more is India. (12)

Climate change activists handed Hasina that excuse by contending that rising seas and reduced land mass are why Bangladesh cannot support its population. They also provide ideological cover for illegal migration as Hasina's BIMSTEC speech showed. On the contrary, large scale East Bengali immigration to Assam predates the climate change issue by more than a century. Assam's 1931 census report noted that "probably the most important event in the province during the last 25 years, likely to alter permanently the whole structure of the Assamese culture and civilisation, has been the invasion of a vast hoard of land hungry Bengali immigrants... from the districts of Eastern Bengal." (13)

Its author, C. S. Mullan, also predicted that "in another 30 years [i.e. 1961], it was not improbable that Sibsagar (sic) district will be the only part of Assam in which an Assamese will find himself at home." Assam's 2001 census appears to buttress Mullan's warning: Only Sivasagar and other eastern Assam districts not bordering Bangladesh or West Bengal continue to show tribal population dominance. (14)

In 2012, Bhupen Kumar Nath, Dilip C. Nath and Biswanath Bhattacharya published what many consider the definitive study of illegal Bangladeshi immigration: "The migration from Bangladesh to the Northeast region of India has been continuous throughout the twentieth century due to the reason of historical links, geographical and physical proximity." (15)

They note "better employment opportunities and availability of fertile agricultural land in Assam" as pull factors and "poverty, subsistence living, ravages caused by floods and other natural calamities in Bangladesh" as push factors existing throughout the twentieth century. Recognizing the disparity between average annual population growth rates in

Assam and India (an average yearly increase almost 50 percent higher for the entire 20th century); the authors applied the Leslie matrix for population (16) projection to extensive census data that include religion, language, mortality, fecundity, and migration (legal and illegal) for the 1971-1991 and 1991-2001 periods. (17)

They concluded that migration made the difference in Assam's higher population growth; and that the "unusual[ly] high growth of Muslim and Bengali population in Assam may be due to cross border illegal Muslim migrants from Bangladesh to Assam," which they project at 830,755 from 1971-1991 and 534,819 in half that time from 1991-2001; both periods pre-dating attempts to blame Bangladesh's inability to sustain its people on climate change. (18)

The Consequences

In March 2014 at the behest of the All Assamese Students Association and others, this author visited the Assamese capital of Guwahati, the Bodo capital of Kokrajhar, tribal villages, and the Assam/Meghalaya border with Bangladesh.(19) Informants include tribal victims of the 2012 sectarian violence, tribal leaders and activists, Indian border guards, and researchers. This article analyzes the result of those investigations, viz. that the massive influx of illegal Bangladeshi migrants has caused both environmental and cultural catastrophes for Assam's indigenous tribes and will lead to increased violence if not corrected. (This is true for plains as well, but the main focus of this paper is on tribes.)

Members of indigenous Assam tribes believe that unchecked illegal migration poses an existential threat. The increased population pressure from Bangladeshi infiltrators is destroying the forests and its wildlife that are critical to their culture and way of life. Moreover, there is a growing sense of desperation among the tribal populations because they have not seen the Indian or Assamese governments make any serious attempts to stop the illegal migration. Rather, they claim, illegal Bangladeshi migrants are given a favored status for political reasons and soon find themselves embedded with the rest of the population.(20) Moreover, local tribes urged this author to observe conditions on the border and directed me to an area straddling both

Assam and Meghalaya that was said to be secure. Rather, it was porous. Even in broad daylight, my cohorts and I observed Bangladeshis crossing openly. Border fences that had gaping holes, at one point crossing a bridge, but ending in the middle, and picked up on the other side. The area under the bridge was dry and passable with no barrier. At another point, the gate between the two countries was open and unguarded. If members of India's Border Security Force were present, they remained inert and only showed themselves when I began taking pictures and videos. Two armed guards accosted me and wanted to confiscate my camera. I refused, and after some discussion, they left me with two warnings. One, keep what you have but do not take any more pictures. Two, stop bothering about this. "Our hands are tied," they told me. "You will only anger higher ups."

Tribal groups have taken matters into their own hands as a result.(21) There have been frequent clashes between tribal Assamese and illegal Bangladeshi migrants, culminating in the 2012 disturbances that displaced over 400,000 people. Less severe riots in 2014 sent "hundreds" fleeing. Several tribal Assamese told me that they were prepared to act in defense of their homes if the government fails to take action and showed me evidence of their preparations. The only thing holding them back, they said, is the prospect that an Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi will act. If the illegal migration is not stopped, however, expect major violence in the region.(22)

Researchers at the Vivekananda Kendra Institute of Culture (VKIC) in Guwahati, Assam, claim that the massive influx of Bangladeshi refugees has degraded Assam's environment. They have severely taxed natural resources, with several consequences.

Decreased Food Production: As the amount of arable land continues to decrease so does rice production. About a fourth of Assam's annual rice production was lost between 2001 and 2007, going from over 40 metric tons to under 30. Since then, in order to stabilize rice production, the Assamese have experimented with hybrids and other artificial methods; something that in the past was not needed for adequate production. Rice is the staple of the Assamese diet and ac-

counts for about two-thirds of the land area under cultivation. Its decline is foreboding, as is a decline in rice varieties reported by local farmers.(23)

De-Forestation: Numerous informants report that migrants use a "slash and burn" method for clearing large amounts of land for their personal use. This author observed previously forested area with large swathes of recent clearing. (24) The Indian government also noted that "population pressure has led to encroachment of the forestland. Since the coming of the immigrants and their settlement in the forests... the result is the gradual destruction of the forest land." This has had an impact on increased temperatures, rainfall and flooding, arable land and its productivity, and the destruction of many "precious flora and fauna, including medicinal plants."(25) A credentialed organization that visited Assam in 2013 confirmed the de-forestation and attributed it to "unscrupulous people... active in large-scale tree felling and poaching of wildlife with [help from] political leaders and higher officials of the Forest Department."(26)

Elephant and Rhino Extinction: According to several tribal informants, migrants engage in large scale poaching, especially of Assam's unique one-horned rhinoceros, which faces extinction as a result.(27) Additionally, the Indian government reports "herds of wild elephants coming inside human habitation in search of food, and damaging paddy fields and properties, trampling huts and even killing people. Lack of food in their natural habitat must have driven the pachyderms to human locality. Unless the depletion of forest area is checked, this problem will grow in future, and ultimately it will cause extinction of this great wild species."(28)

Violence and Insecurity: I interviewed three elderly individuals whose spouses were killed by rioting migrants in 2012. All three couples were non-threatening and in their homes only because age and infirmity made flight along with their neighbors impossible. One elderly widow described how migrants hacked her bedridden husband to death leaving her with no alternative but to run. Another elderly couple was sitting under a tree in front of their home when migrants attacked them. All in-

formants told a consistent but not identical story that comported with other verified facts and indicated a high degree of reliability. No one of any age with whom I spoke believed that the violence and consequent insecurity will end soon. (29)

An end to Assam's Tribal Cultures?

Before coming to Assam, I met with several Assamese students at Delhi University and elsewhere in the city. While some are determined to return to Assam after their studies, others admit that the lack of opportunity there likely will cause them to remain in Delhi. Inside Assam, there was a pattern of parents sending their children out of the area for schooling knowing some will not return. Away from the social and cultural supports for their tribal culture, they lose touch with their heritage and soon their families. When I asked one parent if he thought his son would return, he told me that if he were in his son's shoes he would not, adding that so long as the future remains uncertain, he does not really want him to return.

Tribal leaders point to their close ties with the forest and its inhabitants and claim that by destroying the forests and killing its creatures, they are destroying the basis of their way of life. "This is our land," one Bodo leader told me. "If the [illegal Bangladeshi] migrant population continues to increase day by day, where will we live?" (30)

Notes:

- (1) Hussain, Hamid, "Demons of December — Road from East Pakistan to Bangladesh," *Defence Journal*, December 2002. Available at <http://www.defencejournal.com/2002/dec/demons.htm>
- (2) Pakistan was originally composed of two, non-contiguous parts. East Pakistan is now Bangladesh. West Pakistan is the current nation of Pakistan.
- (3) In 2013, the World Bank ranked Bangladesh 164 out of 189 nations in per capita GDP, second lowest in South Asia (beating out 176th Nepal), and only 7.9 percent of per capita GDP for the planet. The World Bank,

http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD/countries?order=wbapi_data_value_2013%20wbapi_data_value%20wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc&display=default. On Bangladesh and corruption, see Transparency International ranks Bangladesh the 136 out of 177 countries on its corruption scale, which is an improvement after spending some years at dead last. <http://www.transparency.org/country#BGD>. For information on the persecution of Hindus and the rule of law, see Benkin, Richard, *A Quiet Case of Ethnic Cleansing: the Murder of Bangladesh's Hindus*, Akshaya Prakashan, Delhi, 2012.

- (4) The Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)
- (5) Christine Fair and Kerem Levitas, "Bangladesh: Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Crisis?" United States Institute of Peace, May 2005. <http://www.interfaithstrength.com/ZeroSum.htm>.
- (6) General Hussain Muhammed Ershad was Bangladesh's virtual dictator and President from 1983 to 1990
- (7) "Ershad 'thanks' Hasina," *bdnews24.com*, January 14, 2014; <http://bdnews24.com/politics/2014/01/14/ershad-thanks-hasina>
- (8) Op. cit., Benkin, 160-168
- (9) Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, which includes the nations of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.
- (10) Kalyan Barooah, "Climate change to trigger Bangla exodus: Hasina." *Assam Tribune*, March 4, 2014.
- (11) Op. cit., Benkin, pp.123-125. Also I. P. Adhikari and Raju Thapa, "Human Rights & Justice in Bhutan: Shadow Report on First Universal Periodic Review of Bhutan," *Human Rights without Frontiers, Nepal & Association of Press Freedom Activists*, Bhutan, December 2009.
- (12) The vast majority of Assamese with whom I spoke refer to these illegal Bangladeshi immigrants as "infiltrators." Doing so emphasizes their illegal and unwanted status among native Assamese, and suggests a measure of intentionality behind their influx; specifically to change Assam's dominant cultural and demographic landscape
- (13) Census Superintendent C. S. Mullan, *Census Report of 1931*, quoted by D. N. Bez-

boruah, Editor, *The Sentinel*, at a seminar and public meeting, November 13, 2004, Guwahati, Assam. Also cited in "The Truth of Illegal Migration in Assam & the Northeast," Confederation of North Eastern People, Guwahati, 2012.

- (14) Op. cit., Mullan. I was told by members of the All Assam Students Association in a direct interview, March 5, 2014, Delhi, India. The material also appears in former ILO and UNICEF consultant Hilary Pais's web site, <http://hilarypais.org/ASSAM.html>. Population figures from the 2001 Indian census are reported in *The Truth about Illegal Migration in Assam & the Northeast*, Confederation of North Eastern People, Guwahati 2012.
- (15) Bhupen Kumar Nath, Dilip C. Nath and Late Biswanath Bhattacharya, 2012. *Undocumented Migration in the State of Assam in Northeast India Estimates Since 1971 to 2001*. *Asian Journal of Applied Sciences*, 5: 164-173.
- (16) For more detail on the Leslie matrix, see Montshiwa, Mosimanegape Irvin, "Leslie Matrix Model in Population Dynamics," *University of Witwatersrand*, June 7, 2007.
- (17) Space here does not allow for a detailed statistical and demographic analysis, to interested readers are referred to the original article and calculations by Nath et. al. cited here.
- (18) Op. cit. Nath et. al. p. 173.
- (19) First hand material gathered during that time in Assam will be cited as "Benkin, Assam."
- (20) Benkin, Assam. Also see "Deforestation to blame for rising temperatures," *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, June 18, 2013.
- (21) Contrary to what some interested parties have claimed, tribal attacks are not directed against Muslims but migrant Bangladeshis. They have not been directed at native Muslims who have been living in Assam for years and even at times have made common cause with Hindu Assamese to challenge the government. See Tehelka http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne300808backtothefuture.asp
- (22) Benkin, Assam. Some people close to the situation have suggested that the smaller 2014 disturbances were more a warning to the new Indian government than to the Bangladeshi infiltrators.
- (23) "Rice Production in Assam Declining," *I Assam*, June 14, 2009. Also on effects of reduced rainfall and other environmental changes resulting from increased migration, see Samudra Gupta Kashyap, "Floods, Urbanization eat into Assam's Rice Fields," *Sinlung*, January 29, 2010. <http://www.sinlung.com/2010/01/floods-urbanization-eat-into-assams.html>.
- (24) Benkin, Assam.
- (25) "Hazards," ENVIS Centre: Assam Status of Environment and Related Issues. Hosted by Assam Science, Technology and Environment Council; Sponsored by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India; http://asmenvis.nic.in/Database/Hazards_840.aspx.
- (26) "Deforestation to blame for rising temperatures," *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, June 18, 2013
- (27) Benkin, Assam; also see "Assam: 39 rhinos killed in 10 months in Kaziranga." *Press trust of India, IBN Live*, October 5, 2013. <http://m.ibnlive.com/news/assam-39-rhinos-killed-in-10-months-in-kaziranga/298052-13.html>; "Bangladeshi Infiltrators increasing in Assam; Vanishing One-horned rhinos," *News Bharati*, September 27, 2012. <http://www.news Bharati.com/Encyc/2012/9/27/Bangladeshi-Infiltrators-increasing-in-Assam-Vanishing-One-horned-rhinos.aspx#U8KAorEYXTo>; "Wildlife management hits a low in Assam in 2012," *The Shillong Times*, December 30, 2012. <http://www.theshillongtimes.com/2012/12/30/wildlife-management-hits-a-low-in-assam-in-2012/#J1RZRG6QU60h2Jh.99>
- (28) Op. cit., ENVIS
- (29) Benkin, Assam
- (30) Benkin, Assam. Interview in Kokrajhar, Assam.

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Migrant Settlers in India's Assam

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For decades now, the people of Assam have been threatened by the incoming amounts of illegal immigrants into their region. The migration most heavily comes from Bangladesh. The large-scale illegal migration is posing such an issue to the Assamese that they are currently becoming the minorities within their own region; the demographic complexion of Assam has been altered. (1) Illegal immigration is, in fact, a political key issue in the nation itself. In Assam, "Governments are made and unmade on the issue of illegal settlers from Bangladesh." (2) As the governor of Assam has stated, this "poses a grave threat to both the identity of the Assamese people and to our national security." (3) The Assamese are beginning to not feel secure within their own region; it is as if they are now the "unwanted immigrants."

Bangladesh is the world's most densely populated country having a population density of 969 per square kilometers. (4) The growth rate of population in Bangladesh is 2.2%, approximately 2.8 million people per year. (5) Living conditions are also extremely subpar in Bangladesh. They frequently have flooding, 60% of their population is below the poverty line and the per capita income is only 170 dollars per year. (6) Due to these factors (along with many others), and a "very porous" border, the migration from Bangladesh into Assam is practically inevitable. (7)

Community-wise growth rate for Assam vs. All of India:

Year	Assam		All India	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
1951-1961	33.71	38.35	20.29	25.61
1961-1971	37.17	30.99	23.72	30.85
1971-1991	41.89	77.42	43.38	55.04

Large-scale movement from Bengal, East Pakistan and more recently, Bangladesh, has been an ongoing issue for well over a century now. (8) The primary reason for this large-scale movement, initially, was for economic reasons and largely began occurring after the British annexed Assam. (9) The British had

developed a tea industry in Assam; however, the Assamese people showed no interest towards this industry and had no desire to have any type of involvement. (10) Therefore, the British encouraged peasants from, present-day Bangladesh, to move into Assam to work on the land for their tea production. (11) This was the first major instance of the illegal movement into Assam.

Another reason for the movement into Assam dealt with some political and religious reasons. During Sir Mohammad Sadulla's Muslim League Ministry, an encouraging effort was made in attempt to push for migration of Bengali Muslims into Assam. (12) Lord Wavell wrote in the Viceroy's Journal, "The chief political problem is the desire of the 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 Muslims." (13) Ergo, there was a great promotion for migration into Assam. They sought to expand the Muslim religion and culture into other areas.

The Muslim League came up with the idea for a Partition in 1947, in order to continue the increase of the Muslim religion. This partition brought about significant amounts of change and an international border separated Assam and East Pakistan. (14) This partition would also eventually lead to much violence, wars and chaos between the Hindus and Muslims in Assam. Much of the population movement consisted of Hindu refugees fleeing persecution from East Pakistan and seeking refuge in Assam. (15) Assam has a 262-kilometer border with Bangladesh out of which 92-kilometers is riverine and with the emergence of the two dominions on the Sub-Continent, this became an international border. (16) There was much movement of Hindus and Muslims between regions, but most specifically into Assam. This caused much resentment amongst the Assamese.

Attempts to reverse this movement have been made, but not many were too successful. Especially considering the fact that the migration has yet to subside. At the initial start of this large-scale migration, State Police patrolled the borders, however they could not conquer the trans-border movement. (17) In 1964, the government of India created the Prevention of Infiltration from Pakistan

scheme, which had various types of posts set up to keep guard against the massive illegal movement. (18) There were many officers who were involved in this organization and involved in depleting the illegal immigrants out of Assam, however, it is extremely difficult to deport these people. In 1987, the organization was enlarged from 1914 officers, to 1280 officers, as well as hundreds of personnel provided by the government of India and Assam, which totaled to approximately 4000 personnel. (19) Even with the large amount of officers and personnel on duty, deportation is extremely difficult and it is not easy to overcome and it is hard to overcome this illegal migration.

Although there have been many procedures taken towards expelling the illegal immigrants out of Assam, it has not fully been accomplished and there has been much chaos along the process. There is much violence and conflict between people in Assam. The violence within Assam peaked in the early 1980's. (20) In 1979, a group called the All Assam Students' Union was organized and began to campaign under the idea that the "Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam were changing their state's demographics and gaining political influence." (21) Which absolutely appeared to be factual. In 1983, the All Assam Students' Union demanded that all illegal immigrants associated with this election be removed from the electorate and immediately deported. (22) Approximately 7,000 people died in total around that election and more than 1,600 bridges were burned with hopes to prevent election officials from arriving. (23) Than in February of 1983, fights broke out between the Nelli villagers and the illegals. An estimated 2,000 people lost their lives. (24) Many people have died in the process of the Assamese struggling to gain back dominance over their land, and to feel secure and as the majority again.

Ultimately, the Assam Accord was signed in 1985, which was a step towards another attempt to deport the illegal immigrants out of Assam. The Assam Accord was signed on August 15, 1985 and says "Foreigners, who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971 shall continue to be