

REVERBERATION OF PANDEMIC MIGRANT FOOTPRINTS AND POLICY MANIFESTATION: A PROGRESSIVE STATE APPROACH OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

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Abstract

This is the defining moment of our generation. We are facing a global health crisis, one that is killing people, spreading human suffering, and upending people's lives. The Covid-19 pandemic and sudden global lockdown across nations has brought migrant livelihoods to a halt. The headlines around Covid-19 are enough to scare us witless. The migrant crisis brought to the fore the unfulfilled obligations of the governments to restore work to its most vulnerable citizens in the era of economic liberalization. The migration debate has become central to political circle which largely involves rehearsing to false dichotomies whereas migrants are in continuous drift. Debate is just not restricted to utility of limited public funds. We have to create an 'island of opportunities' in this 'ocean of distress'. The research poses the questions, namely: 1. How did immigration occur in North-East India? 2) How were the debates relating to migrants from North-East India? 3) How did the government of North-East India respond to the situation of migrants from North-East India during the Covid-19 pandemic? It was found and concluded that growing rural distress with agricultural failing leading to heavy debt burdens was the primary reason of immigration in North-East India. "The Assam Accord" signed between the "Government of India" and the "Leaders of the Assam Movement" in 1985 effectively legitimized all immigrants entering Assam before 24, December 1971. The SHG's under National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) had adopted series of remedial measures during the Covid-19 pandemic for people, including migrants from North-East India.

Keywords: Covid-19 Crisis, Internal Migration, Policy Challenges, North-East India

A. Introduction

Historically various epidemics and diseases have impacted the world over centuries for e.g. The Black Death Bacterium between 6th -8th Century A.D., The Black Death in England 1348, and Spanish Flu-1918, but this pandemic¹ will have an unprecedented impact across globe. The entire world is facing a strange situation where the economic activities have been affected to a large extent probably worse than The Great Depression 1929-33 or The Global Financial Crisis 2008-09. Even after structural adjustments and liberalization of economies in 1990's it's a severe economic disruption in emerging market economies. International Labour Organisation (here in

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¹ John M. Last, *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*, 4th Ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

after ILO) accepts that 50% of the total jobs are paralyzed whereby leading to uncalled global recession. According to the Secretary General of UN Antonio Guterres, this pandemic is a human tragedy, need of hour is ‘*a new social contract for a new era*’ to fight this ‘*pandemic of inequality*’.

The deadly Covid-19 virus enveloped the whole globe and generated new forms of Governmentality and Bio-Legitimizing practices. Amidst the death caused by the pandemic it lead us to explore an opportunity for building new future for global politics which is marked by empathy, fraternity, justice and rights as fidelity to establish novel forms of sources in society. The Covid-19 is universal in nature which has affected us all, though our situations are different but the experience can still be shared. The Covid-19 disaster and the needs in future which will arise has led us to explore under-regulated dangerous trade and environmental practices the under-funding of public health institutions and under-planning for current pandemic of such large scale.

In India we saw ‘reverse migration’ of millions of informal sector workers from cities to villages which is testimony of fact that pandemic had an adverse impact of high scale and intensity. Indeed it was an unplanned lockdown imposed by centre. Due to absence of basic safety net, the livelihoods of daily wage earners, domestic workers, street vendors, construction site workers across the country were severely jeopardised. The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of government/state, with choking health care systems leading to differential ideological debates. Migrants across states in India were calculated at 56 million in the Census-2011. As per 2017- 18, the economic survey there were 11 crores (approx.) migrant laborers in India. But to get accurate figures, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has developed an online dashboard called the National Migrant Information System (NMIS). The online portal (NMIS) would maintain a central repository of migrant workers and help in speedy inter-state communication to facilitate the smooth movement of migrant workers to their native places.

B. Identified Problems

Indian for the first time entered into 21 days national lockdown that kicked in from midnight shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced it to be the sole recourse to stop the spreading of the deadly corona virus. The lockdown affected the ‘reverse migration’ of millions of informal sector workers from cities to villages. The Immigration Debate in North-East: North-East India has been known for immigration and the conflicts arising due to influx of migrants but we have limited research to analyze the migrants flow out of the region. The North-East India consists of seven states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura with each state sharing an international boundary. Hence, the questions are as follows:

1. How did immigration occur in North-East India?

2. What were the debates and solutions relating to migrants from North-East India?
3. How did the government of North-East India respond to the situation of migrants from North-East India during the Covid-19 pandemic?

C. Research Methods

This research adopts a normative legal approach, which primarily uses secondary sources. The authenticated data retrieved from the internet would also be used. It uses a qualitative analysis approach.

D. Research Findings and Discussions

1. The Reasons of Immigration in North-East India

The north-east has been a kaleidoscope of myriad races. It has its genesis in mythological sources also. It is said; Narakasura, the earliest mythological King Kirat brought in Aryans to his kingdom to develop the Aryan culture in ancient the Kamrup. The most significant migration took place in Year-1228 with the coming of a group of Mongoloid people originally from the upper Irrawady Valley who quickly took control of the valley and ruled for six centuries. They came from the ancient Kingdom of Muangman or Pong, which was situated in the Upper portion of Irrawady Valley. The descendants of these migrants, who were known as Ahom, now constitute one of the major population groups of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Buddhist people migrants from the Upper-Burma belonging to the present Khamti, Phakial and other communities also came down to Upper Assam and settled there. The number of these migrants was comparatively small and a new phase of migration started with the annexation by the British.

An attempt has been made here to study the different streams of migrants in Assam since the arrival of the British in A.D. 1826. Altogether there were five large scale streams of migrants, namely: 1. Tea garden labourers; 2. Muslim peasant migrants from then East Bengal; 3. Bengali Hindu; 4. Nepalese migrants, and 5. Migrants from different parts of India.

Table 1. Trend of Population of Assam and India (in lakh)²

Year	Population of Assam in Lakhs	Population of India in Lakhs	% of Decadal Variation in Assam	% of Decadal Variation of India	Density of Population in Assam	Density of Population in India
1901	33	2,383	17%	5.8%		
1921	46	2,512	20.5% (0.4 million migrant)	-0.3		
1951	80	3,610	19.9% (0.5 million migrant)	13.3%		

² Census of India and Fifth Five Year Plan Assam, 1973.

1971	146	5,471	20.4% (1.2 million migrant)	24.8%	186	167
1991	224	8,463	53.2%	23.5%	286	244

Table 2. Density of Population in selected Districts of Assam³

Nowgong	Kamrup	Cachar	Goalpara	Sibsagar	Dibrugarh	Darrang	Dhubri	Lakhimpur	Karbi Anglong
302	289	246	215	204	201	198	470	126	16

The out migration or emigration from Assam is very insignificant, the total number being as small as 45,986 lakh in 1931 against 73,223 lakh in 1951.⁴

- 1) Tea Garden Migrants: The tea garden labours were brought by the British Capitalists mainly from Bihar, Chota-Nagpur from Central Province presently Madhya Pradesh and Orissa consequent upon the development the plantation industry in the state of Assam. Although started as early as in the 1830’s large scale migration of tea garden labourers took place from the 1870’s. It continued till 1937, the number falling low after 1931 by which time the tea garden laborer’s numbered just under 10 lakh in Assam.⁵
- 2) Muslim Peasant Migrants: The second stream of migrants was Muslim peasants from the then East Bengal districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur. Driven apparently by the pressure on the soil at home (East Bengal) and lured by cheap and plentiful supply of both virgin and exceptionally fertile lands in Assam with the freedom of settlement of “ryotwari system,” land hungry peasants began to pour into the state from the beginning of 20th century. The Congress Leaders of Assam withdrew their support to the Britishers in forming a government under the Government of India Act-1919, due to Non-Cooperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi. A new government was formed in 1921 with the support of the other parties like then “Assam Mohammedan Association” and “Tea Planters of Assam” who were mostly influenced by Britishers. From 1921-38 the ruling government (The Muslim League Ministry led by Sir. Mohammed Sadulla) gave implicit support to migration in name of “Grow more Food Campaign” which also tilted religious–ethnic composition of the valley’s population.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Census of India, 1951.

⁵ Census of India, 1961.

- 3) Bengali-Hindu Migrants: These migrants were brought by the Britishers for their office and other professional works. It happened because of the Bengali Hindu's early initiation in English education and the British-India administrative system.
- 4) Nepalese Migrants: The fourth stream of migrants into Assam consisted of Nepalese immigrants. This started with the British occupation of Assam. The recruitment of Nepalese into British army dates back to 1815, when the latter defeated Kazi Amar Singh Thapa and according to the fifth provision of the agreement, the British secured the Right to Recruit Nepalese into Army. Gorkhas of the Indian Army on leave in Nepal were encouraged to smuggle out recruits from Nepal and were rewarded by the British. The British Government encouraged migration of Gorkhas families from Nepal and established Gorkha settlements in certain parts of India including Assam. The immigration of Nepalese migrants still continues as the citizens of Nepal don't require any passport to enter India, under the terms of the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950, the Tripartite Delhi Agreement of 1951 and the 1956 Revised Indo-Nepal Agreement.
- 5) Migrants from different parts of India: The fifth stream of migrants into Assam were from other parts of India seeking opportunities in trading, construction works and white collar jobs, particularly from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab, U.P., Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal. The majority of the migrants from Rajasthan are from Marwar and they are popularly known as Marwaris. Marwari migrants came to Assam in a small number in the pre-British period, but their movement became significant with the establishment of British rule and the subsequent development of the tea industry and other commercial and industrial establishment. Paradigm of rural-urban labour migration, the movement from rural sector to the urban informal sector is perceived as an investment in search for high wage jobs in the formal sector.

Migration is a highly complex phenomenon with significant economic, socio-political, cultural and religious repercussions for the migrant's their native societies and the host societies. There are three types of migrant workers. First is, migrant workers who migrate to host States and settle there. They become their permanent workers or permanent wage earners. Second is, seasonal workers. These workers move to different place only at times of harvest or sowing afterward they go back to their villages. The third is the nomadic people who

work at a certain place and go to a different place when they are done. Based on labour's place of origin and destination, the internal migration can be classified into four types, namely: (i) rural-rural, (ii) rural-urban, (iii) urban-urban and (iv) urban-rural.

Table 3. The Intensity of Migration in North-East by Place of Birth & Place of Last Residence-2011

State	Place of Birth (Total Migration 000's)	Place of Last Residence (Total Migration 000's)
Arunachal Pradesh	612	631
Assam	10,394	10,642
Manipur	655	687
Meghalaya	727	759
Mizoram	376	387
Nagaland	504	549
Tripura	1273	1299
North-east	14,540	14,955
India	446,997	455,409

Source: Table D-1 and D-2 Census of India-2011

One reason behind migration is growing rural distress with agricultural failing to provide sustenance for the majority of cultivators; with small land holdings and dispossessed of land leading to heavy debt burdens. The State policy to support the ailing rural economy is proving to be inadequate and ineffective.

Table 4. Distribution of Migration by Place of Last Residence (in %)

State	Country Bangladesh	Country Nepal
Arunachal Pradesh	36.9	47.8
Assam	58.1	7.9
Manipur	15.0	20.9
Meghalaya	30.4	46.8
Mizoram	5.2	6.4
Nagaland	2.1	72.9
Tripura	96.8	0.1

Source: Computed from Table D-2, Census of India-2011

Table 5. Reasons for Inter-State Outflow from North-East States-2011 (in %)

State	Work	Education	Marriage
Arunachal Pradesh	13.5	10.4	21.9
Assam	27.6	2.3	25.4
Manipur	25.0	12.8	12.4
Meghalaya	17.5	4.2	32.6
Mizoram	8.9	5.6	7.0

Nagaland	16.4	6.0	20.7
Tripura	22.1	3.1	30.2

Source: Computed from Table D-3, Census of India-2011

The geographical movement of the migrant labour can be traced to have moved from eastern to western India. These migrant workers are associated mostly with the agricultural sector or the agri-related sector. But the unfortunate fact is that there is no complete statistical data that is related to migrant labour. The migrant workers are mostly working in the infrastructure, highly invested government projects, etc. But they are also the low wage workers and considered as the cheap labourers of India.

2. The Debates and Solutions Relating to Migrants from North-East India

The demographic growth in Assam over the course of the 20th century is the highest recorded by any region in the Indian sub-continent. This demographic influx has had adverse effects on the delicate ethnic balance within the population. It has, overtime, created a deep sense of social and cultural in-security among the indigenous people and has threatened their political leverage. The availability of surplus wastelands had suddenly disappeared and even the *Chars* (riverine wastelands) were over-populated, migrants have increasingly encroached illegally upon the public lands. The Student led Mass movement against illegal immigration during 1979-84 (The Assam Movement) created a major social and political upheaval and brought the problem in sharp focus.

Migration has played an extremely important role in the process of economic growth in Assam. The tea industry in the 19th Century was critically dependent on migrants from other parts of the country. The migration of western-educated Bengali- Hindu in the 19th Century were working as government employees and professionals and they not only served in the growth of colonial economy but also helped to accelerate the expansion of modern education and creation of modern economic infrastructure. In the 20th century migration of peasants from land scarce East Bengal with advanced knowledge and experience of intensive cultivation had major impact on agricultural output, techniques as well as new crop diversity.

The high spate of immigration after Independence occurred even while land and other resources as well as the limited socio-economic infrastructure were under increasing demographic pressure and in state where the process of economic development was slow, often stagnant. Therefore, the economic cost of immigration on society has gradually outstripped the benefits. “The Assam Accord” signed between the “Government of India” and the “Leaders of the Assam Movement” in 1985 effectively legitimized all immigrants entering Assam before 24, December 1971. Only those entering illegally after that date were

liable for deportation. However, subsequent political dynamics, partly motivated by the fear of harassment by minorities, and the nature of the legal framework adopted for detection of such illegal migrants have effectively ruled out progress in this front beyond the trivial.

3. **The Responses of Government of North-East India to the Situation of Migrants from North-East India during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Indian for the first time entered into 21 days national lockdown that kicked in from midnight shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced it to be the sole recourse to stop the spreading of the deadly corona virus. Along with the normal lives being affected, it hampered the lives and livelihoods of the migrant labourers to such an extent that many had to pay the price by losing their lives. Many of these workers belonged to both organized and unorganized sectors.⁶ Where on one hand it was of prior importance to save the lives of people by calling in action the paramount thing government can do at that time by implementing lockdown all over the country, but on the other, the Centre and State lost its connectivity somewhere in between for the smooth functioning of laws that govern the migrant labours and their agonies, as the State Governments were not receiving proper orders from the Central Government. Thousands of migrants came up to the streets of many cities claiming that they have no money, no food and also no shelter to live and to carry on their livelihood. They cried for the support of the government as they simply wanted to go back to their homes. This is when the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 (hereinafter as ISMW) and The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 comes into the picture. These Act came to suffice the drawbacks of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 as it was falling short in doing justice to the hardships of the contract workers specially the point that it didn't address the issues concerning inter- state movement of the workers. Hence for that reason, the IMSW Act was enacted but on the contrary, it was not implemented all over the country, that is the reason why this Act failed to live up to its desired purpose at the time of COVID- 19. The fact that this Act was not implemented properly affects the actual data pertaining to the residence of the migrant workers; otherwise, the mass migration that has taken place after the lockdown has been declared could have been at least minimized if not controlled completely.

State had a lukewarm response to the issue of migrants due to various constraints as it is evident because large numbers of legislations are on paper with no proper implementation. Probing

⁶ Animesh Upadhyay and Shashank Pandey, "Labour Laws and Migrant Workers during Covid-19," SCC Online Blog, 2020, <https://www.sconline.com/blog/post/2020/04/15/labour-laws-and-migrant-workers-during-covid-19/>.

Question can be raised: What happened to the legal status of migrants under the Act-1970? Informal Sector workers issues were not addressed? It also reflects upon an ‘unholy alliance’ between big capital and state. Recently enactment of Code on Occupation, Health, Safety and Working Conditions replacing 13 prevailing labour laws like: Factories Act-1948, Mines Act-1952, and Dock Workers Act-1986 etc. Will previous laws be operative as Code-2020 is referred to Standing Committee of Parliament? Despite the fallout of these Acts in India as a whole, there are still some States where this Act has shown fruitful colours because of its application, like: Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka and Orissa among a few.

The Census of 2011 estimates the total number of internal migrant workers in India to be 45.36 crores and from Assam alone, there were a total of 10.64 lakh migrants. When the pandemic broke in, the labourers were denied for the payment of their wages. The reason that many of them were daily wage earners, they were out of money to buy food or to even clench the hunger in their children’s stomach. Many petitions were filed in the Supreme Court for uplifting the condition of the migrant workers as they would die of hunger, if not form corona. The legislation governing the labour laws seem to be falling apart where instead it should have the source of providing protection to all the labours. The way that some of these legislations have malformed in the time of such crisis are namely; The Unorganized Worker’s Social Security Act, 2008, Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Payment of Wages Act, 1937, Contract Labour Act, 1940, The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. These Acts have compacted in themselves most of the laws concerning the payment of wages to the workers and the employees. The Ministry of Home Affairs has directed the Central Government of India to guarantee the provision of minimum wages to all the migrant workers along with temporary shelters to stay and food for the ones who has become stranded in different States.

The magnitude of internal migrants is about two and a half times that of International Migration. The internal migrant has faced issues in health services, food, cash transfer and other social programs. They are also vulnerable to the loss of employment and wages during an economic crisis. The lockdowns in labor camps and dormitories would increase the risk of contagion among migrant workers. The State boundaries became the sites of violent migrant police encounters they were beaten for violating the lockdown orders. Thousands of them without any means of transport left to their villages on foot dying of starvation, fatigues and road accidents. On May 01, 2020, Central

Government introduced Shramik Trains⁷ to take urban migrants back to their villages however these special trains brought little relief to urban migrants.

Kerala as early as March-2020 launched a Rs. 20,000/- crore relief packages. In its effort to transfer cash to the hands of the poor, advance social security pensions were distributed and interest-free loans were provided to women members of the Kudumbashree Groups. It also provided free cooked food supporting local government to the urban poor and pavement dwellers. It was possible due to 20,000 camps and 1500 community kitchens. Odisha announced Rs. 17,000/- crore packages under Special Livelihood Intervention Plan. It also started Mission Shakti (SHG) women's self help group in stitching face masks and PPE kits. Through this SHG it was able support with 15 lakh cotton masks and volunteered to feed homeless and destitute. If we are to take an instance of Assam, the lockdown was declared prior to 09 days of the nation-wide lockdown, i.e., from 16th March 2020. The Assam government couldn't think of the migrant workers let alone making any regulations for them to send home, as the main concern was to save the people as a whole for the time being. Scattering of people (sending people home) from one place to another would further mean scattering of the virus with them. Hence the government did what it thought the best to do at that moment. But as a result, it devastated the lives of these migrant workers of not only Assam but nearly of the whole nation. Assam seems to be achieving new heights in corona virus cases; it had reached 17,807 total confirmed cases as on 14th July 2020 where, 7165 cases are from Kamrup Metro District which has increased drastically in a span of three month from 13 confirmed cases, dated 1st April 2020.

Still there are a lot of migrant workers who could not find it through to reach Assam were struck at different parts of the nation. They had to go through a lot of hurdles to reach their homes. Thousands of such workers were seen determining to travel miles by foot taking with them the little essentials they own, not knowing whether they will ever go back to the place that they have left behind. There are yet 04 lakh migrant workers to return to Assam⁸ and are stranded across various parts of the country. Many of them do not even have a single penny left in their pocket. Although some of the migrant workers are kept in quarantine centres, the situation there (in some places) is not at all hygienic. Instances are such that thirty

⁷ The Sentinel, "More than 138 Shramik Special Trains Reach Northeast," The Sentinel, 2020, <https://www.sentinelassam.com/guwahati-city/more-than-138-shramik-special-trains-reach-northeast-487373>.

⁸ Kalyan Deb, "Lockdown: Assam Migrant Workers Stranded in Chennai Await Govt Aid," EastMojo, 2021, <https://www.eastmojo.com/assam/2020/05/21/lockdown-assam-migrant-workers-stranded-in-chennai-await-govt-aid/>.

people were forced to use a single soap and a bucket for bathing and storing drinking water, as per the *Times of India*.⁹

The SHG’s under National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) had adopted series of remedial measures by contributing in this uncertain period. The SHG women members of six districts of Assam (Sonitpur, Nagaon, Morigaon, Tinsukia, Udalguri, and Hailakandi also Tatimara in Chandrapur of Guwahati) have taken to making mask as demand of mask surged. Around 10,659 women members of SHG’s despite severe restrictions of movement and mass gathering have produced a total of 51,23,194 face mask and around 31,71,314 were sold. This was done under the brand name ‘Asomi’, with 84 stalls were opened to sell masks in 33 districts of Assam. A total of Rs. 7.15 crore have been earned by sale of these masks and around 04 lakh mask were distributed free of cost to health workers.

Table 6. Return Migration Amid Covid-19 Pandemic (in North-East)^{10,11,12,13}

State	Number of Returnees	Cut-Off Date	% of Inter-State Out Migration-(As per Census-2011)
Arunachal Pradesh	16,000	02/07/2020	42.8%
Assam	390,189	29/07/2020	59.1%
Manipur	28,000	31/05/2020	37.0%
Meghalaya	24,150	30/07/2020	34.4%
Mizoram	11,541	20/07/2020	38.0%
Nagaland	17,157	07/07/2020	37.5%
Tripura	25,566	18/06/2020	29.8%
North-east	512,603	-	50.1%

India stands at the crossroads with it also the north-east states. If decisive steps are not taken to curb the further migration a significant flow of migration is likely to continue in the future. It is however unclear what state has planned for these reverse migrants. A pandemic preparedness plan is expected to go a long way in preparing the resources from the crunch of hospitals to deliver an efficient response.

⁹ Pathikrit Chakraborty and Ramashankar, “In Quarantine Shelters for Migrants, One Soap for 30 People, Not Enough Food,” *Times of India*, 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/in-quarantine-shelters-for-migrants-one-soap-for-30-people-not-enough-food/articleshows/75138163.cms>.

¹⁰ Eastern Mirror, “Swab Tests, Quarantine Stay No Longer Free for Arunachal Returnees,” *Eastern Mirror*, 2020, <https://easternmirrornagaland.com/swab-tests-quarantine-stay-no-longer-free-for-arunachal-returnees/>.

¹¹ E-Pao, “Lockdown Extended till June 30, COVID-19 Hospital Assured,” *E-Pao*, 2020, <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=2..010620.jun20>.

¹² Pride East Entertainments, “Over 11,500 Migrants Returned to Mizoram Since April,” *Pride East Entertainments*, 2020, <https://newslivetv.com/over-11500-migrants-returned-to-mizoram-since-april/>.

¹³ The Morung Express, “17,157 Returnees Arrived in Nagaland,” *The Morung Express*, 2020, <https://www.morungexpress.com/17157-returnees-arrived-in-nagaland>.

What constitutional courts can and should do to confront this remains a high priority matter for anxious debate and urgent social advice. There appears to be a general consensus on the need for vast executive powers to fight this new menace.

It is time that State should not wait for another pandemic to hit and instead take responsibility to grow an interest in generating a social security scheme especially for the migrant workers in both the organized and unorganized sectors and the difficulties they have to face in other States due to non-availability of the documents as desired by the government and also the political pressure on these poor people. The State should make sure that the law should be open to these people as well. In the life of every society, there are times of prolonged decay and conflict when the only way out is to transcend the burdens of the past, move beyond history and memory, and face the future armed with only awareness of the brutal reality and the power of reason. A transparent database is to be prepared initially at the district level as well as at the Central Level including all aspects of women empowerment, social welfare, road, communication, right to education, medical, control system of population explosion and formulation of schemes to reach the common man.

E. Conclusions

It is obvious that the reason behind migration in North-east India is growing rural distress with agricultural failing to provide sustenance for the majority of cultivators; with small land holdings and dispossessed of land leading to heavy debt burdens.

“The Assam Accord” signed between the “Government of India” and the “Leaders of the Assam Movement” in 1985 effectively legitimized all immigrants entering Assam before 24, December 1971. Only those entering illegally after that date were liable for deportation.

The SHG’s under National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) had adopted series of remedial measures by contributing in this uncertain period. These were also given to migrants from North-east India.

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