

NRC 2019: A worthy document

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The Census Paper of 2018 (Language) gives the details of people on the basis of languages for the country, States and Union Territories. As per this report, the Assamese-speaking people along with Bengali, Hindi, Bodo and other scheduled and non-scheduled languages add up to 307 lakhs or so in 2011 which when projected up to 2015 add up to 334 lakhs or so of persons who are eligible for inclusion in the NRC as Indian citizens. But, the population growth of one linguistic group since 1951 is in excess of normal growth indicating infiltration by some post-1971 Bangladeshis through this slot and 17.50 lakhs of such people have been detected as per the final NRC result (19 lakh names are struck down of which about 1.5 lakhs being indigenous).

In this context, Assam's eligible population for inclusion in the NRC based on languages is (in lakh) $334 - 17.5 = 317$ lakhs in 2015. In the NRC 2019, 311 lakhs have been included which means about six lakhs Indigenous/Indians are left out and need to be included.

Population census of Assam: Our census collects data on 'household' basis and does not ask the question of nationality – it was recorded in 1872 and during the 1951 and 1961 censuses, but the question of nationality was dropped from the 1971 census onwards, which means our population as per the census is 'inclusive' of foreigners. But, our 2011 census population of 312 lakhs does not stand up to scrutiny based on the population growth pattern from 1971 and other relevant data.

Population of Assam based on language: Without a correct population of Assam as per the Census in 2011, we may take a correct approach to examine the population of Assam based on our population on the basis of language and through various scenarios of illegal migrant population of Assam – 65 lakhs, 80 lakhs, etc., by adding it to the eligible Indian population of Assam of 317 lakhs in 2015 through language.

(a) If we consider 65 lakhs or so as foreigners in Assam in 2015 (50 lakhs in 2004 as disclosed in Parliament), then Assam's resident population in 2015 is: 317 lakhs + 65 lakhs = 382 lakhs.

This resident population of 382 lakhs of Assam in 2015 is taken care in the NRC 2019 as below: 311 lakhs eligible in NRC, 1.5 lakh indigenous people deleted, 17.5 lakhs detected as illegal, 47.5 lakhs of illegal foreigners who did not apply, 4.5 lakhs indigenous people to be included – a

total of 382 lakhs of resident population of Assam in 2015. Total 47.5 lakh foreigners did not apply and hence their names are excluded from the NRC automatically ensuring a correct NRC.

b) If the number of Bangladeshi population in 2015 is, say, 80 lakhs, then the total resident population of Assam in 2015 would be (317 lakhs + 80 lakhs) = 397 lakhs. This resident population of 397 lakhs is taken care of in NRC 2019 as below: 311 lakhs eligible in NRC, 1.5 lakhs

indigenous detected, 17.5 lakhs detected as illegal, 62.5 lakhs foreigners did not apply, 4.5 lakhs indigenous did not apply and, hence, a total of 397 lakhs of resident population of Assam in 2015; 62.5 lakhs did not apply and hence their names are excluded from NRC automatically which means $(17.5 + 62.5) = 80$ lakh Bangladeshi are excluded from the NRC 2019, if the foreigner population in Assam is 80 lakhs.

In actuality, the number of illegal

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foreigners can be anything – 65, 80, 100 lakhs – but all are out of the NRC 2019 because they didn't apply. A newspaper report of July 26, 2018 reported that the Central Government agencies believe that 100 lakhs people did not apply to be included in the NRC 2019.

This miracle where the NRC 2019 is free of foreigners has happened because most Bangladeshi illegal migrants did not apply to be included in the NRC 2019 for fear of detection as a foreigner, albeit at the

dictate of their leaders, thus ensuring a correct NRC 2019.

The census population of 2011 of 312 lakhs is based on the population growth from the census population in 1971. It indicates an average decadal growth of 20.76% between 1971 and 2011 which is even lower than the all-India growth rate of 22% decadal for that period, but such low growth rate for Assam is not possible when Assam was flooded by lakhs of illegal migrants during this period. Assam's population growth between 1951 and 1971 was 34.96% (say 35%). This growth rate suddenly plummeted to 23.36% during 1971-81 inexplicably whereas the voter's growth during 1971-2011 is more than 35%. There has to be a correlation between the voter's growth pattern and the population growth pattern which is not there.

These facts based on data clearly indicate that Assam's population figure of 2011 of 312 lakhs is grossly depressed and is not acceptable. The census operation of India is well respected but has faced peculiar challenges in enumerating the population of Assam.

But the population of Assam on the basis of languages is based on nationality. The two major linguistic groups are rooted to the 1951, 1961 census populations, which give a solid basis to project the resident population of Assam based on various scenarios of Bangladeshi illegal population.

These facts also clearly indicate

that the NRC 2019 is a worthy document for Assam. The talk of re-verification, etc., if actually undertaken, will only touch some of the 329 lakh applicants, but will have no clue about the large illegal population of Assam who did not 'apply' to be included in the NRC, thus helping indirectly for compilation of a foreigner-free NRC. Also, nothing will be known of about 4.5 lakhs or so of indigenous/Indian people who did not apply. The number of people embedded in the NRC from a linguistic group after 17.5 lakhs have been detected, will be very small and certainly doesn't justify re-verification when we see the broad picture of the NRC 2019. Re-verification, etc., will only create a furore which will be exploited by vested groups who will not explain the broad picture of the NRC 2019. Based on these facts, the NRC 2019 must be accepted wholeheartedly.

The indigenous people who are rejected and some others who may not have applied should be included in the NRC through 'application' in an easy way. A small number of illegal Bangladeshis in the NRC should be investigated based on 'objections'. The NRC 2019 must be a continuous process, like the electoral roll and must be updated regularly, deaths to be deleted, newborns amongst the NRC group of 2019 to be added and 'objections' verified and corrected as needed.

The NRC 2019 gives us a golden opportunity to purge our voter's list of all post-71 Bangladeshis. It is a gospel truth that all post-71 Bangladeshis who are of voting age are enrolled in the voter's list of Assam. If we fritter away this golden opportunity for lack of pragmatism or whatever other reasons, posterity will not forgive us.