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A Study on Socio-Economic impact of National Register of Citizenship (NRC) in Assam

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Abstract: *The NRC is till date the largest drive to verify citizenship in India. It is a list of Indian citizens living in the state which sets out to identify foreign nationals residing in Assam. More than 1.9 crore people were excluded from a total of 3.29 crore who registered for NRC in the final list. The registration process distressed the people of Assam especially the poor and illiterate as they were unable to provide original documents that were deemed essential to prove their citizenship. This paper aims to sketch the overall impact of NRC in Assam, to analyze and to understand the public opinion on social and economic changes that took place in Assam after implementation of NRC. The paper attempts to discuss the historical background of NRC, various events that took place around the country as a consequence of this process, the impact of internet shutdown on the economy and the expenditure incurred by the government on the detention centers in which the illegal immigrants who have been excluded from the list are kept. With the help of various economic and social variables, the changes have been analysed and the conclusion has been drawn. NRC faced criticism from all the stakeholders as it excluded many genuine Indians while including a large number of illegal immigrants. By analyzing the public opinion we found that the majority of them are happy with this step maybe because of their personal reasons but the reality is not the same. But if we consider public opinion we can say that this mission may become successful in the near future. This research will help the general public to analyze and understand the impact of NRC beforehand as the BJP government has proposed the idea of implementing it nationally.*

Keywords: Assam, Citizenship, NRC, Social, Economic

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of updating NRC has always been a major concern for the state of Assam which has witnessed repeated resentment by the locals. It was first created way back in 1951 which identified around 15 lakh refugees from East Pakistan which settled in Assam after partition. But in 1971 when independent Bangladesh came into existence, it led to a fresh influx of refugees into Assam. So demands were raised once again to update the NRC by various indigenous organizations. A petition was filed by Assam Public Works in regard to which the Supreme Court passed an order to update NRC. Finally the process of updating the list started in 2015 and the final list was released on August 31, 2019. But there were sparking protests against the list as it included a large number of illegal immigrants while excluding the genuine citizens of Assam. The ones excluded from the list could file an appeal before the Foreign Tribunal (FT) within 120 days but if they are declared non-citizens by the FT then they were detained in the detention camps on construction of which the government is spending crores of rupees. The introduction of Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) in 2016 by the Modi government was also welcomed by massive protests in the state which completely nullified the purpose of conducting NRC in Assam.

In a country like India which is one of the most corrupt countries, it's very easy to prepare fake documents so the migrants who are wealthy could attain citizenship easily whereas poor people who lost their documents but are originally the citizens of India became victims of this move. The research shows that the overall impact of NRC has been negative for the state both socially and economically and critically analyses the government's decision on implementing it in Assam.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

RESEARCH	REVIEW
Dipendra Kumar Khanal (2018) conducted a research under the title “Issue of Bangladeshi Immigrants and the Importance of NRC in Assam” which focuses on the issue of illegal Bangladeshi Immigration in Assam which led to serious demographic changes in the state. The main objective of the study is to highlight the significance of NRC upgradation in resolving this issue of Bangladeshi immigrants	It can be concluded from the paper that the process of NRC updating is very crucial for the society and politics of Assam. The citizens of the state are facing serious problems due to the illegal immigrants but due to political motives the issue has never been paid due attention. People are demanding an error free NRC update to identify and deport these immigrants. But there is no bilateral talk on this issue between India and Bangladesh and deportation of the immigrants is still a dream for the Assamese people. This paper suggests that the process of NRC may have a negative impact on the people of Assam.
RESEARCH	REVIEW
Roli Misra and Shipra Srivastava (2018) in their paper titled as - “Identity Crisis and National Register for Citizens in Assam” have highlighted the fate of the 40 lakh people who were excluded from the draft list of NRC in the background of the anxiety and concern over updating of the NRC list.	The paper concludes that migration is a natural phenomenon and we need to understand its economic aspect. The identity expedition of the migrants needs to be resolved in a socially acceptable manner so that they are not seen as a threat to the socio- economic and political ethics of the nation. The process of updating NRC has added to the suffering of the members of this community. Also it is a matter of serious concern that what possible solution the government has to offer to those whose struggle to prove their Indian citizenship continues. So according to this paper the after effect of NRC would be against many of them especially the poor who either don't possess or have lost their documents in floods.
RESEARCH	REVIEW
John Das & Dipakshi Talukdar (2016) conducted a research under the title “Socio-economic and political consequence of illegal immigration into Assam from Bangladesh”. The paper attempts to discuss the problem of illegal migration of Bangladeshis into Assam and indicates that necessary steps need to be taken immediately else Assam would lose its identity very soon from the map of India.	The paper shows that illegal immigration from Bangladesh into Assam is no longer a regional problem but has become a national issue. These migrants have now spread in several other states like Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra and so on. So the overall impact of this migration on Assam has turned out to be negative both socially and economically.
RESEARCH	REVIEW
The paper titled “Contextualizing Statelessness in the Indian Legal Framework: Illegal Immigration in Assam” (2019) by Anushka Sharma raises question regarding the legal status of those who would be excluded from the final version of NRC. The paper attempts to argue that the present legal framework fails to address the issue of statelessness effectively and needs to be restructured.	The paper suggests that a compassionate approach needs to be adopted by the government of India towards the rights and status of these stateless people. The approach of the Supreme Court in dealing with this issue has always been favoring government which demands deportation of those declared as illegal immigrants. But a legal solution has to be found for this crisis so that no people are left without the right to have rights at the end of the NRC process. So according to this paper the impact of NRC has been negative for those declared as stateless.

III. METHODOLOGY

Type of research	Descriptive research as it is investigative in nature.
Population	India
Sample-	13 different states and union territories from North, South, East, West
Nature of data	Primary Data, Secondary Data
Sample size	239
Sampling method	Non- Random Sampling
Sampling tool	Structured Questionnaire through Google forms.
Organizing tool	Pie chart
Analysis	Frequency, comparative study
Variables of the study	Economic Social

A. Objectives Of The Study

The study focuses on the verification of following objectives:

- 1) To overview the impact of NRC updating process on Assam.
- 2) To analyze the socio economic changes that took place in Assam after NRC.
- 3) To understand the public opinion on social and economic changes that will take place due to implementation of NRC in Assam.

B. Limitations

- 1) *Lack of prior Research Studies on the Topic:* As the study here is a primary research and there is destitution of previous studies on the subject, there was hindrance in studying the matter in detail and the subject matter provided here is true to some extent only.
- 2) *Lack of Responses from Different Cultures:* As the matter has a religious angle but the researcher is not able to identify the religion of the respondent which can give a different approach to analysis.

C. Research Gap

NRC has become an issue of great significance nowadays as on November 20, 2019, the Home Minister of India announced to extend it to the entire country. There are very few research papers written on this topic .The paper helps to get an overview of NRC in Assam and to analyze its impact on the lives of the people.

D. Research Question

How does implementation of NRC in Assam impact Socio – Economic conditions of Assam?

E. Hypothesis

- 1) *H0-* Implementation of NRC in Assam has no impact on social and Economic variables of the state.
- 2) *H1-* Implementation of NRC in Assam has positive or negative impact on social and Economic variables of the state.

IV. VERIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

Objective 1 - To overview the impact of NRC in Assam.

The influx of refugees from then East Pakistan now Bangladesh into Assam after partition led to creation of The Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 on March 1. It was then NRC was created for the first time in Assam on the basis of Census Report of 1951 to identify the illegal immigrants. The list included those who lived in India on January 26, 1950 or were born in India or had parents who were born in India for at least five years before the January 26, 1950 cut-off. It identified nearly 15 lakh illegal immigrants which was 1/6th of Assam's population at that time. In 1955 the Citizenship Act came into existence which codified rules for citizenship in India. On 24 October, 1960, The Assam official language Act was enacted due to the fears that influx of people from Bangladesh might undermine the local language. Foreign Tribunals were set up by the Central Government to provide judicial remedy to those who were considered illegal immigrants before any action was taken by the State against them. The widespread riots in East Pakistan 1964-65 led to further inflow of refugees from that country. Then 1965-71 border tensions started rising and India-Pakistan war broke out leading to unabated infiltration of immigrants.

Assam Agitation or Assam Movement was initiated in 1979 demanding detention, disenfranchisement and deportation of illegal immigrants from Assam. This is the longest student movement ever in the history of India led by All Assam Student's Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) which lasted for a span of 6 years (1979-1985). On January 18, 1980 AASU filed its first memorandum to the Centre demanding updating of NRC. Then The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act was passed by the government under Indira Gandhi in 1983 under an act of Parliament in order to identify and deport the illegal immigrants from Assam. In order to culminate the six yearlong agitation finally Assam Accord was signed by the Centre, State and leaders of Assam Movement in the presence of then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi on the midnight of August 14, 1985 which stated that anyone who came to Assam on or after 24 March, 1971 would not be considered citizen of India and shall be expelled. In 1997 the Election Commission of India decided to add a tag 'D' (doubtful) against the name of voters whose citizenship was considered doubtful by the state government due to lack of proper documents. The Citizenship Act of 1955 was amended in 2003 which stated that anyone born in India on or after 26th January, 1950 but before 1st July, 1987 ; on or after 1st July, 1987 but before the onset of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 provided either of whose parents is citizen of India at the time of his birth ; on or after the onset of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 provided both the parents are Indian or one of the parent is Indian and the other is not an illegal immigrant at that time are all citizens of India. A tripartite meeting among the Centre, State and AASU in the presence of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh decided to update the 1951 NRC. But no development took place beyond the meeting. On July 12, 2005 the IMDT Act was struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional and it failed to effectively identify and deport illegal immigrants. So in 2006 the Central Government issued the Foreigners (Tribunal) Amendment Order. On 12 July, 2009 Assam Public Works (APW), an NGO filed a petition in Supreme Court demanding exclusion of names of foreigners from electoral rolls of Assam. This led to the updating of NRC by the Centre on orders of Supreme Court so that electoral rolls containing names of genuine Indian citizens can be prepared based on updated NRC. In 2010 a pilot project was launched to update NRC in Chaygaon and Barpeta. The project was successful in Chaygaon but violence in Barpeta claimed 4 lives which made the government shelve the entire project. But AASU and many other organizations started a joint movement for updating NRC. The process to update NRC finally started in 2015 and took place after the Supreme Court asked the government to accelerate the process.

The first draft of NRC was published on midnight of 31st December with names of 1.9 crore people out of 3.29 crore applicants. The next draft was published on 30 July, 2018 in which 40 lakh of 2.9 crore people were excluded. The Supreme Court ordered re-verification of 10% sample data of NRC from each district. On June 26, 2019 an additional draft exclusion list of 102462 was released. The final list was published on 31st August, 2019 with 19 lakh people being excluded from a total of 3.29 crore.

- 1) After the final list of NRC was released there was anger and frustration in the minds of people as they had to face many problems during the process and over 19 lakh people were excluded from the final list as compared to the draft list which was published in 2018 which excluded over 40 lakh people from the list. UN experts expressed great concern over the updating process of the National Register of Citizens in Assam, and its potential of harming lakhs of people especially the minorities. Warnings were issued by experts on the increasing rate of hate speech that was directed against these minorities in social media, and the potential undermining effects of the marginalization and uncertainties facing millions in Assam state of India. The experts warned previously that this process may aggravate the xenophobic climate while fuelling religious intolerance and discrimination in the country. The experts said they are seriously concerned over the implementation of the NRC updating process in Assam and its potentially far-reaching results for millions of people, especially persons belonging to minorities who risk statelessness, deportation or detention for a long time. The experts suggested that in the process of nationality determination, the burden of proof should lie with the State and not with the individual, considering the discriminative and arbitrary nature of the current legal system. There was lack of clarity in the link between the NRC process, electoral roll information and the separate judicial processes of citizenship determination before the Assam Foreigners' Tribunals, the experts highlighted. Which brought more complexity to the whole process and opened the door to arbitrariness and bias. Serious concerns were also shown over the reported intention of the Indian authorities to implement NRC model in other parts of the country, in particular following the adoption by the Mizoram state legislature, a bill aiming at creating separate registers for "residents" and "non-residents". The experts said that the Indian Government had not responded over their concerns and repeated calls for clarification on the NRC process. The experts highlighted that they will call on the Indian authorities to take resolute action to review the implementation of the NRC and other similar processes in Assam and in other states, and to ensure that they do not result in statelessness, discriminatory or arbitrary deprivation or denial of nationality, mass expulsion, and arbitrary detention.

- 2) Internet shutdown is one of the side effects of implementation of NRC in Assam. The shutdown of the internet in Assam, is the newest example of a worrying worldwide trend employed by various governments: preventing people from communicating on the web and accessing information. Telecom providers were the primary to chop service on Wednesday, 11 December 2019 as corroborated by multiple local reports. Technical data indicate a drop on the 11th potentially consistent with those reports. The shutdown was fully effective by the evening of the 12th, with only a quick restoration on the 14th and on the 16th, up until a more significant restoration began on the 17th and normal levels were reached on the 19th. Network data from the Net Blocks internet observatory provide evidence of the extent and impact of a web shutdown affecting India's north-east regions including Assam. As of 12th december, the disruptions have extended to cover many fixed-line networks manifesting in an information blackout in affected regions following a mobile data shutdown the previous day.

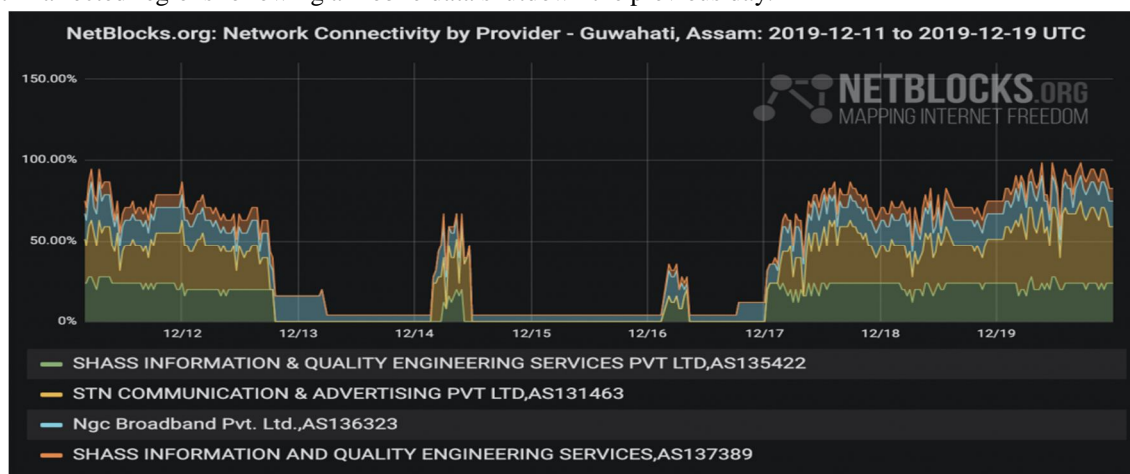


Figure 1

Source: Network connectivity data from Guwahati, Assam indicate the duration of the regional internet shutdown implemented by local providers between 13 to 17 December, GMT+5:30 (note: chart updated to hide full outage duration and reflect new autonomous system names)

Thousands of residents protesting the bill came down on the streets of Assam on Wednesday confronting police and triggering agitation. Authorities have responded by ordering internet operators to discontinue their subscribers while imposing a regional curfew. Technical data validate reports that network operators have complied with orders by authorities to shutdown telecommunications in Assam, leaving the state within the midst of a telecommunication blackout. The ongoing internet shutdown presents a transparent threat to independent media coverage, restricting rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly at a time when residents most need to be involved in shaping public policy.

- 3) Anger bursted out and the people spilled onto the roads and railway tracks of the neighboring state of West Bengal when around four million people were excluded from the final draft list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The Matua community members waylaid the trains at over a dozen spots in the North 24 Parganas and Nadia districts. They also occlude the national highway-6 connecting Kolkata and Mumbai at Chandrapur in Howrah district, about 55 km from Kolkata. Slogans were also raised by them against BJP leaders and also against the state party President Dilip Ghosh, as he promised to carry out the exercise in Bengal too if he gets elected to power. Leaders of the Namasudra community of which Matua is a part told the people that this was just a small part of agitation. They threatened to scale it up. The protesters beat drums and waved their community's red triangular flags in some places. Banners that were held up by them blamed the BJP of conspiring to expel Bengalis from Assam. 'No NRC Movement' started its formation on Facebook and it organised various protests on the ground across Bengal. Members have been appointed for campaigns against the NRC and NPR (National Population Register).
- 4) The final draft list of NRC aroused political anger with the parties in opposition and targeted the government as it left out over 40 lakh people. Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee blamed the ruling BJP for identifying and isolating people who didn't vote for the party. She was of the view that they are turning Indian people into refugees in their own country. And also remarked that it is a strategic plan to oust humanity and human beings forcibly and an attempt to isolate them in order to do vote politics and added that we do not believe in divide and rule policy.

- 5) The introduction of Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) by the BJP –led government became a source of serious contention in the northeastern states. The provisions of the bill provide citizenship of India to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014 and were facing religious persecution there. This bill nullified the provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985 in which March 24, 1971 was set as the cut - off date for identifying and deporting the illegal immigrants irrespective of their religion. The bill was initially introduced in Lok Sabha in 2016 which was strongly opposed by the native people of Assam with a number of groups burning the effigies of PM Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. They were afraid that if these immigrants from Bangladesh or any country are provided citizenship of India, they would become a minority in their own state. It would also reduce employment opportunities for the indigenous people and burden the resources. They took out marches blocking rail and road traffic. People called out slogans denying to take the ‘burden of foreigners’ and described the bill as a “destroyer of their ethnicity, culture and language. Many of the MLAs of the ruling BJP were also against the bill. They were of the opinion that granting citizenship to Hindu Bangladeshis would pose a threat to the identity of people of Assam.
- 6) Student forces like All Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) have strongly criticized the bill. The AAMSU also said that NRC which was recently updated would become meaningless if the bill was passed as the illegal immigrants who were excluded from the list would get citizenship through CAA, majority of them being Hindu Bangladeshis. Many other organizations such as All Assam Students Union (AASU), Asom Jatiyotabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad and Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) were also strongly opposing the bill. A lot of rallies and marches such as Sankalp Shikha Jatra were taken out by them. Public meetings were organized in various parts of states such as Barpeta, Dhubri, Guwahati, and Dhemaji to protest against the Bill.
- 7) At the first attempt Modi government failed to get it passed in Rajya Sabha and thus the bill was terminated. But the BJP was committed to passing the bill and finally it was passed by Rajya Sabha on December 11, 2019 and signed by President Ram Nath Kovind on December 12. The Act once again triggered widespread protests by the northeastern states and Guwahati became the epicenter of anti- CAB protests. Protesters went on burning vehicles and public property. They even threw stones on the convoy of the state’s new Director General of Police. Police force had to thus open fire to suppress the violence. The protests were once again spearheaded by AASU and other indigenous organizations.
- 8) Due to such large- scale protests in the Northeast especially Assam, the Centre provided safeguards for these states. It said, “Nothing in this section shall apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and the area covered under the ‘Inner Line Permit’ notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.” These exemptions calmed down some of the northeastern states but massive protests are still operative in Assam particularly in Brahmaputra Valley who alleged that Centre has isolated them by not exempting the area from the scope of this controversial Act.
- 9) One of the most important questions in the process in NRC is what to do with the 19 lakh people who are excluded from the final list of NRC? Answer to this question is very ambiguous. Government is not helping people to get citizenship in any of the countries, instead putting them in detention centres and spending crores of rupees in construction of such detention centers. The focus of the government is on constructing more and more detention centers in Assam to confine the stateless people. At present there are 6 detention centers in Assam being run from jail premises in districts of Dibrugarh, Silcher, Tezpur, Kokrajhar and Goalpara where around 900 foreigners are lodged. Crores of rupees are being spent by the government in building such detention centers. The country's first and largest stand-alone detention center is being constructed with a budget of Rs 46.41 crores near Guwahati which has the capacity to accommodate nearly 3000 illegal immigrants. The project was started in December 2018 and is on verge of completion. So this suggests that to house all the 19 lakh people excluded from the list nearly 27000 crore of rupees would be required which is really a huge amount and thus outweighs the purpose of constructing such centers. Also the condition of these camps is so pathetic that people are being forced to death. Around 50-55 people are being kept in a single room with poor health and hygiene conditions. Almost 29 cases of deaths have been reported in these centers in the past 3 years. Moreover as per the orders of Supreme Court in May 2019, all those who are detained in these centers would be released after 3 years of detention with a bond and surety that they will report to the nearest police station every week and maintain a clean record. So what is the purpose of constructing such centers and flooding such a huge amount of money? The government instead of spending on those who are the citizens of India is spending on the livelihood of these immigrants as they are not allowed to work inside the detention camps.

A. Documents Required prove Citizenship and get name in the list of NRC

The exercise mandated and monitored by the Supreme Court in the state of Assam caused widespread disruption. The process was as follows:

Firstly one had to produce documentary proof issued before March 24, 1971 – like the 1951 NRC or electoral rolls up to March 24, 1971 – to prove that one's ancestors were residing in India before that date. Then next the people had to produce documents for oneself so as to establish a relationship with their ancestors. And in a country where there is a bad documentation culture and lack of financial resources, this turned out to be a difficult task.

To prove their citizenship and get their name in the list of NRC an applicant had to pick any one of the documents listed under the two heads — list A and list B. The list A included the following 14 documents:

- 1) 1951 NRC
- 2) Permanent residential certificate
- 3) Citizenship certificate
- 4) Land and tenancy records
- 5) Electoral roll(s) up to 24 March (midnight), 1971
- 6) Government service/employment certificate
- 7) State educational board or university educational certificate
- 8) Refugee registration certificate
- 9) Court records/processes
- 10) Any LIC policy
- 11) Any government issued license/certificate
- 12) Bank or post office accounts
- 13) Passport
- 14) Birth certificate

The above documents should be from the cut-off date of March 24, 1971 (Midnight) or before. Those who did not have any 1971 documents that mention their name can show any one of the documents named in this list if it mentions their parents/grandparents. Along with that one more document from List B which included 8 options was required to establish a connection.

B. List B Included the following Documents

- 1) Ration card
- 2) Circle officer/gaon panchayat secretary certificate in case of married women
- 3) Any other legally acceptable document
- 4) Electoral roll
- 5) Land document
- 6) Bank/LIC/post office records
- 7) Birth certificate
- 8) Board/university certificate

For women who were married to other places and don't possess any document from list B to establish a family link, the state allowed

- a) Circle officer or gaon panchayat secretary certificate that need not be on or before the 1971 date.
- b) A ration card issued on or before the 1971 date.

Objective 2- To analyze the socio economic changes that took place in Assam after NRC.

V. SOCIAL IMPACT

A. Partial Inclusion and Partial Exclusion

Various reports depicted hundreds of cases where some members of a family were included but others were not included in the final list, even when they presented the same legacy data or documents required to prove citizenship. The list lacked accuracy and spelling mistakes were found in the names of the persons. A small mistake on the part of the makers of the NRC can snatch the citizenship of a genuine Indian citizen so it shows that there were loopholes in the updating process which could be improved by the government but I think no one took it seriously.

B. The Poor Made Poorer

The process of updating NRC was so troublesome for all the people of Assam but it brought more hardships for the poor people. To seek help and establish legacy data of their parents and grandparents from NRC Seva Kendras they had to travel to other districts multiple times for which they lacked resources. Also if somebody's name was not in the list then they were given a chance to appeal against it in the Foreign Tribunals - a quasi-judicial court and then in the High court or the Supreme Court for which people had to spend a lot of money. So this was the main drawback for the poor people as they had no option other than to remain excluded from the list. Some people sold all their lands and property to file the case. Thus this was a loss for both the people as they became homeless and for the state as the living standard of the people degraded.

C. Miserable Health and Deaths in the Detention Camps

We could find a series of harrowing stories that took place in the detention camp. Many genuine Indian citizens were sent to detention camps for at least three years. At least 1043 people were housed in the detention camp. More than 35-40 people lived in a room with half open toilets attached to the dormitories which led to a foul smell throughout the day and fear of disease. Living in the detention camps caused hearing problems, vision problems and not only this even a pregnant woman was forcibly taken to the centre and she lost her fetus in 8 Months. Till November 2019, 28 people had died in the detention camps which should be a cause of shame and stress for the government and the general public.

D. Voting Rights

The people of Assam who were declared foreigners by the foreign tribunals and are not deported or detained, would be entitled as Non-Citizens. India has no fixed policy for the non-citizens, their right to work, government healthcare, housing and other rights are also not specified but the thing which is clear is that there exists no voting right for the stateless persons.

E. Fear and Anxiety

People of Assam were stressed and fearful during the whole updating process. Finding and collecting all the essential documents or legacy data and understanding the whole process of NRC caused stress in the minds of the people. Due to the fear of non- inclusion in the list of NRC and getting detained, many were forced to commit suicide, especially the poor and the illiterate.

F. Neither Indian nor Bangladeshi

Who will accept the people who were not included in the final list of NRC. It's unlikely that Bangladesh will accept these people as its own. Nor India is accepting them. It has been assured by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh's foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque that NRC is India's internal matter. So if the foreigners are not to be deported to the country of their origin, then what is the use of NRC?

VI. ECONOMIC IMPACT

A. Government Expenditure

The process of updating NRC was a mammoth exercise as it involved about 52000 state government officials who worked for a quite long period. It almost took a decade to complete the process. A huge amount of money was drained in setting up NRC Sava Kendra's (NSKs) to verify the documents presented by the people. Also work for establishment of more than 200 Foreign Tribunals had been initiated by the government. The total cost incurred by the government for undertaking the NRC was more than 1200 crores which means an all India NRC would cost more than 2 lakh crores. Many detention centers are also being established by the government for the illegal migrants. Goalpara Detention Center is India's first and largest detention center to be constructed in Assam with a budget of Rs46.41crore.

B. Per Capita Income

The per capita income of Assam during the year 2018 was Rs 67,620 as per the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. But after such a huge per head expenditure by the excluded people the per capita income reduced to Rs 48,555 or about US \$700.

C. Per Head Expenditure

The per person expenditure incurred was quite high because the people who were excluded from the NRC draft had to present themselves before NRC Seva Kendras multiple times and the hearings took place in faraway districts. Not only the excluded ones had to attend the hearings but all the other family members had to escort him to act as witness before the authorities. On an average Rs19, 065 had been spent by each person excluded from the draft list which implies that a total of Rs 7856 crore would have been spent by all the 41 lakh people expelled.

D. Level of Wage Rate

The ones excluded from the final list of NRC would be deprived of all rights as citizens reducing them to a state of extreme poverty. Thus they would flood the labor market by providing labor services at a lower wage rate as compared to the citizens of the state in order to maintain their survival. As a result, the overall level of wage rate in the state would fall.

E. Inclusion Rates

The Muslim dominated districts had high inclusion rate while the tribal dominated districts had a relatively lower rate, like the districts of Sonitpur and Baksa which are Hindu majority districts had low inclusion rate whereas Karimganj and Hailakandi - Muslim dominated districts had high inclusion rate.

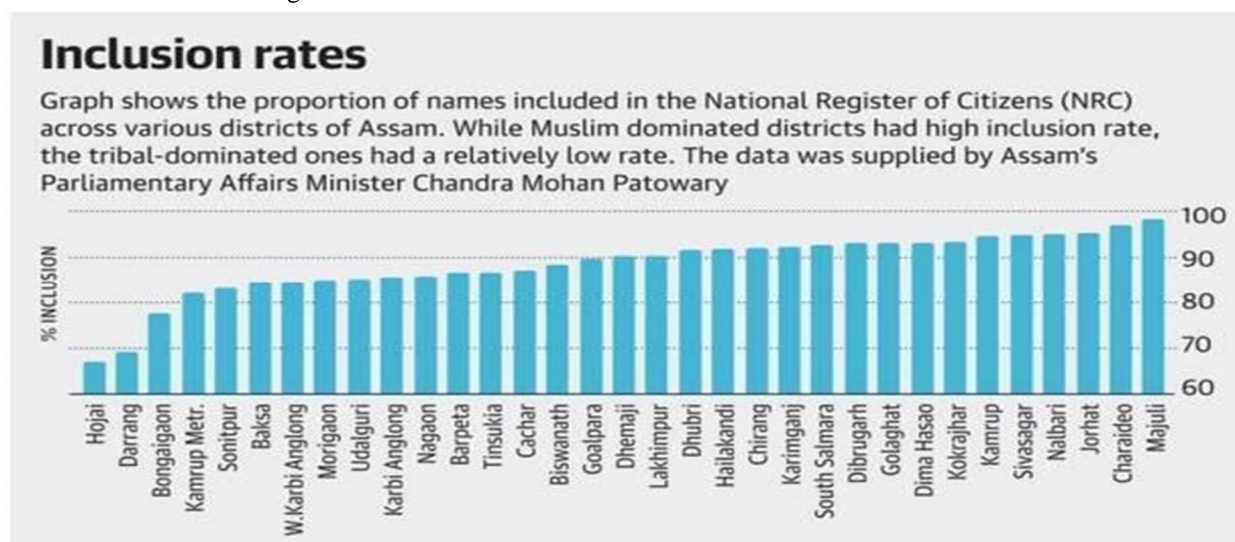


Figure 2

Source: With district-wise data, Assam govt. pushes for NRC, *The Hindu*, 1 August 2019.

Objective 3- To understand the public opinion on social and economic changes that will take place due to implementation of NRC in Assam.

For the purpose of this study survey was conducted and results are displayed as under-

VII. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A. Age

Age

239 responses

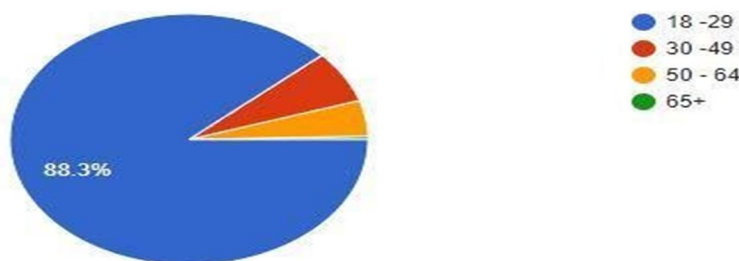


Figure 3

Majority (88.3%) of the respondents are from the age group of 18-29. This age group constitutes the demographic dividend of India so it's very important to understand their point of view of this crucial socio – political move by the government.

B. Gender

Gender

239 responses

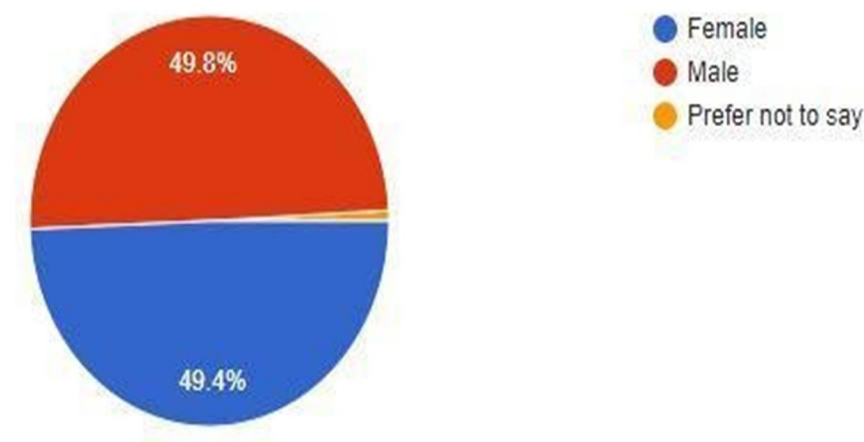


Figure 4

Female (49.4%) and Male (49.8%) survey has almost equal numbers of male and female responses.

C. State

State

239 responses

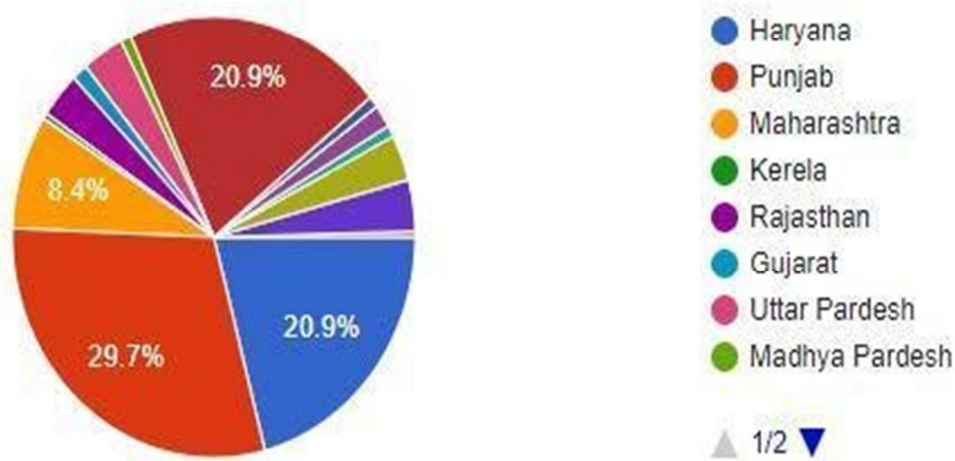


Figure 5

Majority of responses are from Punjab (29.7%) followed by Assam (20.9%) and Haryana 20.9%). Survey has responses from 13 different states and union territories from North, South, East and West. Research has reviewed the perception of people from different parts of India.

1) Do you know about implementation of NRC in Assam?

Do you know about implementation of NRC in Assam?

239 responses

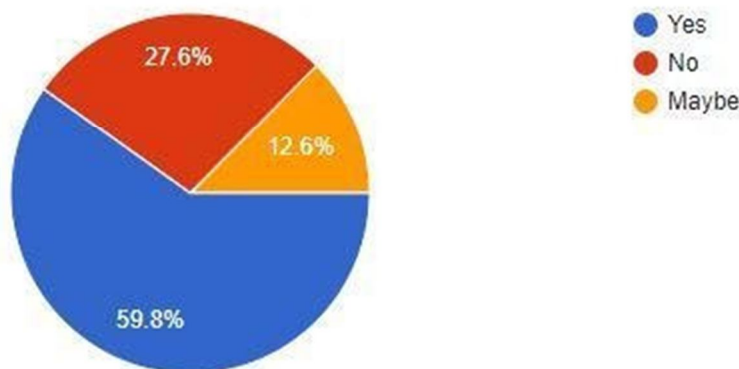


Figure 6

Majority (59.8 %) of the respondents are aware about NRC in Assam but a huge percentage of people are (27.6%) of people are not aware about such a crucial decision taken by the government of India and almost (12.6%) are in dilemma about NRC.

Researcher has used a gateway in which only those respondents who know about NRC can access the second part of questioner out of total responses (71.12%) of the respondents has attempted the second part of questionnaire .Results of which are as follows:

2) What do you think would be the result of NRC on the economy of Assam?

What do you think would be the result of NRC on the economy of Assam?

170 responses

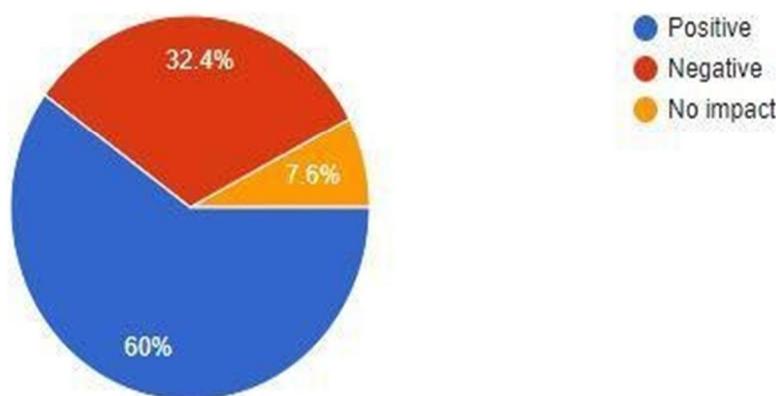


Figure 7

Majority (60%) of the respondents feel that implementation of NRC in Assam will have a positive impact on the economy of Assam. But this public opinion is in contrast to the stats as per capita income of Assam during the year 2018 was Rs 67,620 as per the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. But after such a huge per head expenditure by the excluded people the per capita income reduced to Rs 48,555 or about US \$700. So there is a decline in the per capita income of Assam after the implementation of the NRC. So NRC has a negative impact on the economy in its initial years. So it can be stated the public is misled on its economic impact or we can see an increase in the economy in further years.

3) According to you what should be done with people excluded from the final list of NRC?

According to you what should be done with people excluded from the final list of NRC?

170 responses

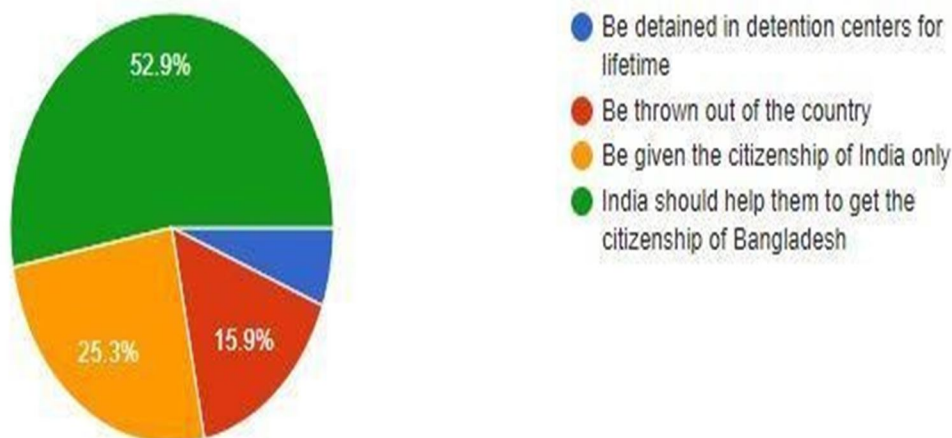


Figure 8

Majority (52.9%) of the respondents feel that India should help them to get the citizenship of Bangladesh. But this is not happening in reality government of India announced that it's a internal matter of India and there will be no involvement of any other country in this matter and government is putting people excluded from the list into detention centers which is opposed by (94.1%) respondents, only (5.9%) respondents feels that they should be put into detention centers. So it can be clearly stated that the government is adopting the wrong solution.

4) Do you think NRC will be successful in its mission?

Do you think NRC will be successful in its mission?

170 responses

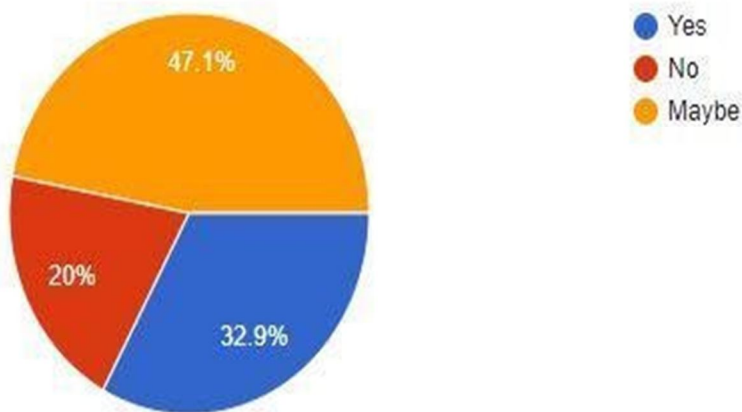


Figure 9

Majority (47.1%) of the respondents are confused whether NRC will be successful or not, which means the public is unknown about its outcome and there is a lot of ambiguity about this move.

5) Do you think spending crores of rupees in the construction of detention centers is a right step by the government?

Do you think spending crores of rupees in the construction of detention centers is a right step by the government?

170 responses

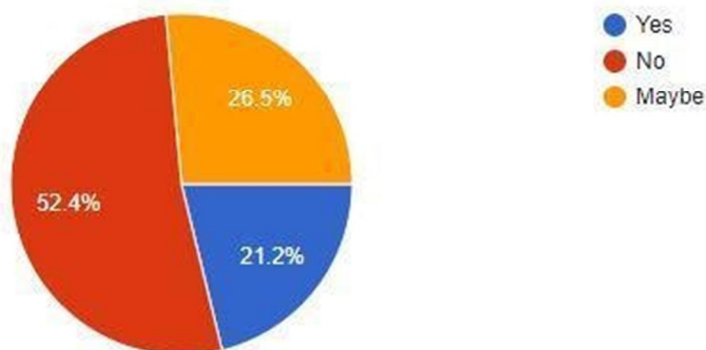


Figure 10

Majority (52.4%) of the respondents feel that the government is not using funds appropriately as it is spending huge amounts on construction of detention centers. Crores are being spent by the government in building such detention centers. The country's first and largest stand-alone detention center is being constructed with a budget of Rs 46.41 crores near Guwahati which has the capacity to accommodate nearly 3000 illegal immigrants. The project was started in December 2018 and is on verge of completion. So this suggests that to house all the 19 lakh people excluded from the list nearly 27000 crore of rupees would be required which is really a huge amount and thus outweighs the purpose of constructing such centers

6) Do you consider the method selected of proving citizenship is appropriate?

Do you consider the method selected of proving citizenship is appropriate?

170 responses

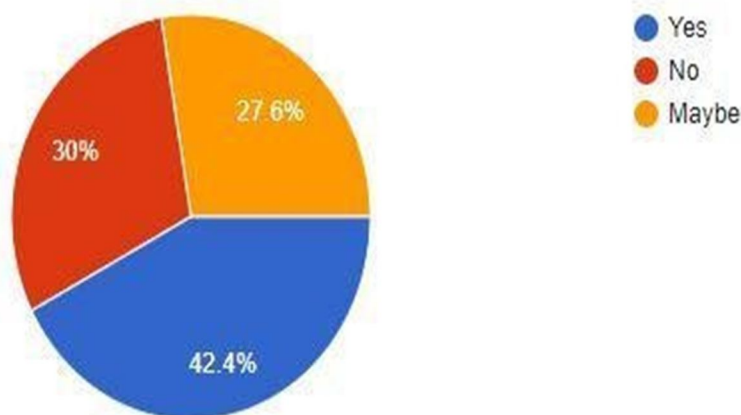


Figure 11

Majority (42.4%) of the respondents feel that the government has adopted a correct method of providing citizenship to the people. They feel that the documents included in the list are appropriate.

7) Do you consider the proposal made by the government to implement NRC nationwide a right step?

Do you consider the proposal made by the government to implement NRC nationwide a right step?

170 responses

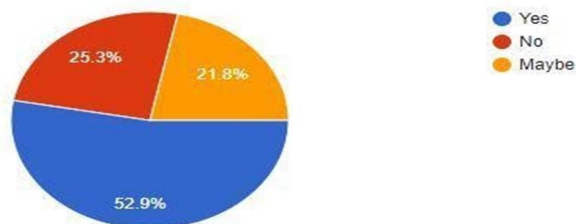


Figure 12

Majority (52.9%) of the respondents feel that implementation of NRC nationwide is a right step by the government and they support the government in implementation of NRC nationally.

8) Do you consider NPR as the first step towards NRC?

Do you consider NPR as the first step towards NRC?

166 responses



Figure 13

Majority (4.6%) of the respondents are confused about the link between NRC and NPR; they feel that there may or may not be any link between NRC and NPR.

9) Do you think NRC has any link with Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) ?

Do you think NRC has any link with Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) ?

170 responses

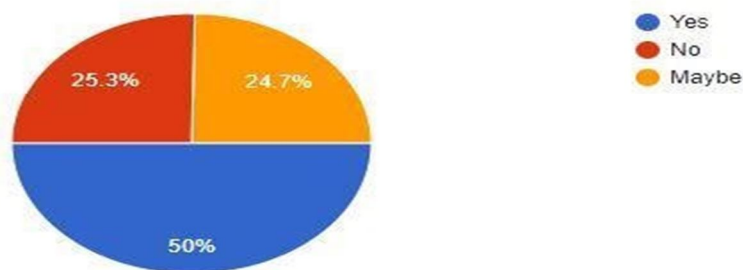


Figure 14

Majority (50%) of the respondents feel that there is a link between NRC and CAA. Yes we can say that there is some link between NRC and CAA.

10) According to you what would be the overall impact of NRC on Assam?

According to you what would be the overall impact of NRC on Assam ?

170 responses

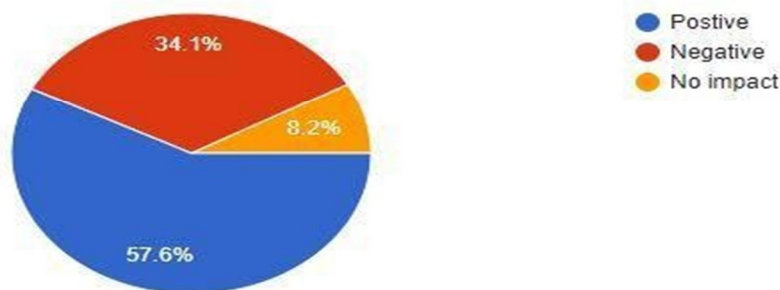
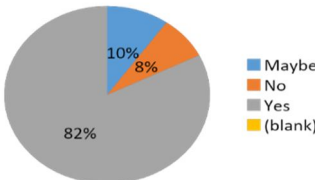
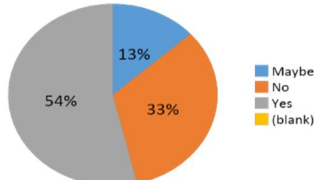
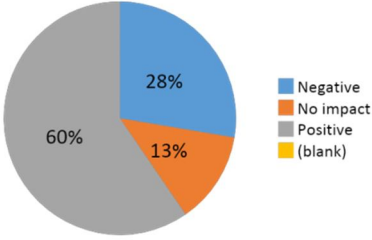
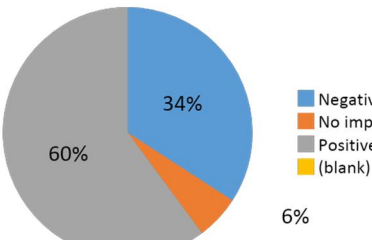

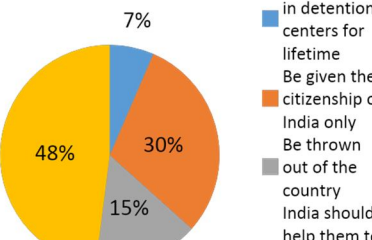
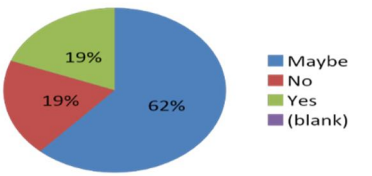
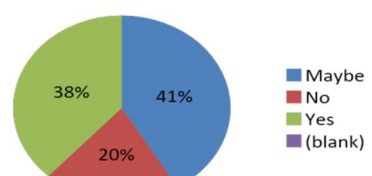
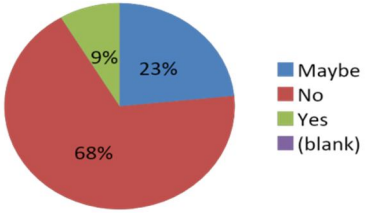
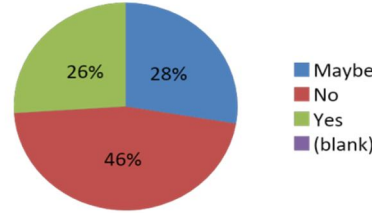


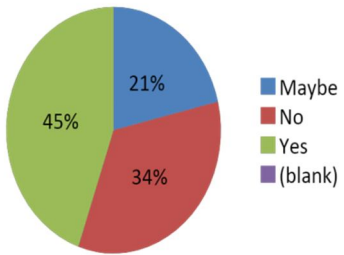
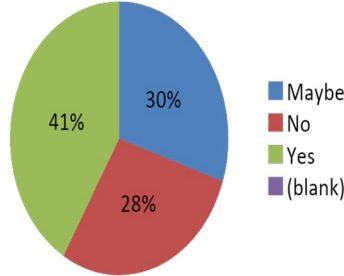
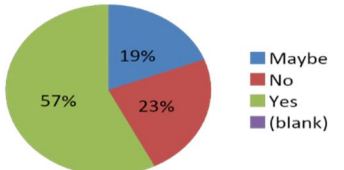
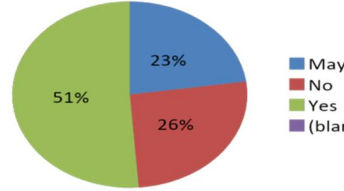
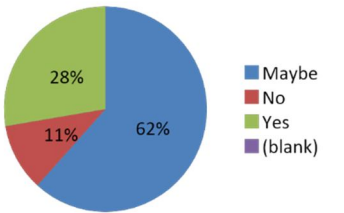
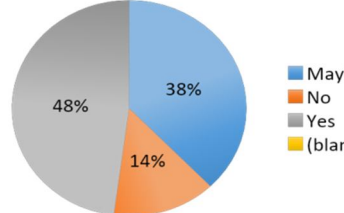
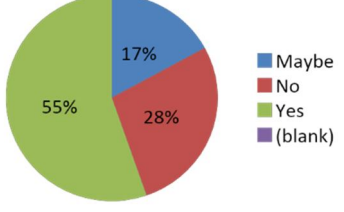
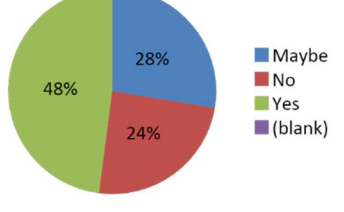
Figure 15

Majority (57.6 %) of the respondents feel that the overall impact of NRC will be positive. But NRC hasn't shown any fruitful sign till now there is a lot of but some communities are also not happy with the decision as many of them are taking it as a religious move.

VIII. COMPARATIVE STUDY

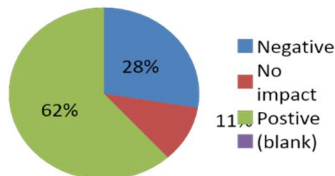
Basis	Assam	Rest of the India	Comparison																																												
Introduction	<p>Total number of sample from Assam: 51 Number of male responses: 30 Number of female responses: 19 Prefer not to say: 2 Responses from different age groups:</p> <table><tr><td>18 -29</td><td>44</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>30 -49</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>50 - 64</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Grand Total</td><td>51</td></tr></table>	18 -29	44	Female	16	Male	26	Prefer not to say	2	30 -49	5	Female	3	Male	2	50 - 64	2	Male	2	Grand Total	51	<p>Total number of responses from rest of the India: 188 Number of responses from males: 89 Number of response from females: 99 Prefer not to say: 0</p> <table><tr><td>18 -29</td><td>167</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>87</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>80</td></tr><tr><td>30 -49</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>50 - 64</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>Female</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>65+</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Grand Total</td><td>188</td></tr></table>	18 -29	167	Female	87	Male	80	30 -49	11	Female	6	Male	5	50 - 64	9	Female	6	Male	3	65+	1	Male	1	Grand Total	188	<p>The total number of responses from Assam is 21.34% of total responses. Out of the total responses of Assam 37.26% are from females as compared to 52.66% of total responses from rest of India which are by females.</p>
18 -29	44																																														
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Grand Total	188																																														
Do you know about implementation of NRC in Assam?	<p>Total</p>  <p>■ Maybe ■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)</p>	<p>Total</p>  <p>■ Maybe ■ No ■ Yes ■ (blank)</p>	<p>Majority (82%) of the respondents in Assam know about the implementation of NRC as compared to the rest of the states where only (54%) of the population is aware of the process.</p>																																												

<p>What do you think would be the result of NRC on the economy of Assam?</p>	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Majority of respondents from Assam (59%) as well as from rest of the states (60%) feel that there would be a positive impact of implementation of NRC on the economy of Assam. There are approximately the same percentage of people who possess this point of view. But the secondary sources shows that there had been a negative impact on the economy of Assam as we could analyze that per capita income of the people have</p>
<p>According to you what should be done with people excluded from the final list of NRC?</p>	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Majority of respondents from Assam (66%) as well as from other states (48%) are of the view that the people who are excluded from the final list of NRC should get help from India in getting the citizenship of Bangladesh. But according to the secondary sources the prime minister of India has assured Bangladeshi's foreign secretary that NRC is India's internal matter.</p>
<p>Do you think NRC will be successful in its mission?</p>	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Majority of the respondents from Assam (62%) as well as from other states (42%) are confused regarding the success of the mission of implementation of NRC. The NRC process may get success in future or may fail too in its mission.</p>
<p>Do you think spending crores of rupees in the construction of detention centers is a right step by the government?</p>	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Total</p> 	<p>Majority of the respondents from Assam (68%) as well as from other states (46%) felt that spending crores of rupees on the construction of detention centers was not a right step by the government. The public opinion regarding this is right as spending crores of rupees on construction of detention centers for illegal immigrants in a country with high rates of poverty and unemployment cannot be considered as a wise task.</p>

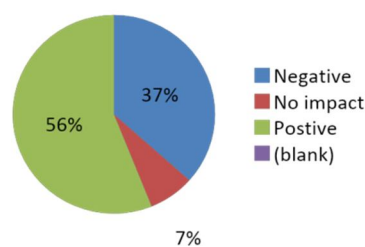
Count of Do you consider the method selected of proving citizenship is appropriate?	<p>Total</p>  <p>45% 21% 34%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Total</p>  <p>41% 30% 28%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Majority of respondents from Assam (45%) as well as from other states (42%) are of the point of view that the method selected for proving citizenship was appropriate.</p> <p>But according to the secondary data many genuine Indian citizens have been excluded from the list of citizens and a large number of people faced a lot of hardships in finding and collecting all the essential documents and proving their citizenship</p>
Do you consider the proposal made by the government to implement NRC nationwide a right step?	<p>Total</p>  <p>57% 19% 23%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Total</p>  <p>51% 23% 26%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Majority of respondents from Assam (58%) as well as from other states (51%) agree on the proposal made by the government to implement NRC nationwide.</p> <p>But according to various reports and articles there were a series of events and protests against implementation of NRC in the whole country.</p>
Do you consider NPR as the first step towards NRC?	<p>Total</p>  <p>28% 11% 62%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Total</p>  <p>48% 38% 14%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Majority (62%) of the respondents are confused about the question of considering NPR as the first step towards NRC as compared to the respondents of other states where majority (48%) considers NPR as the first step towards NRC.</p>
Do you think NRC has any link with Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)?	<p>Total</p>  <p>55% 17% 28%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Total</p>  <p>48% 28% 24%</p> <p>Maybe No Yes (blank)</p>	<p>Majority of respondents from Assam (55%) as well as from other states (48%) agree on the point that there is a link between NRC and CAA.</p>

According to you, what would be the overall impact of NRC on Assam?

Total



Total



Majority of respondents from Assam (62%) as well as from other states (56%) feels that NRC will have a positive overall impact on Assam. But according to the secondary sources we found that the overall impact of NRC is negative only as it deteriorated the social and economic conditions of the people of Assam and especially of the poor people. Also the impact of this on the economy of Assam is also not good.

IX. CONCLUSION

The NRC updating process was conducted to identify the Indian citizens living in the state of Assam but it proved to be a mammoth exercise. There is still a controversy regarding its correctness as the final list excluded many genuine Indian citizens. Till date, NRC process has been beneficial neither for the government nor the people living in Assam. It has worsened their social and economic condition. Also the government has spent a huge amount of money to implement NRC in Assam. Crores of rupees are being spent on constructing detention centers to house the illegal immigrants. Some people even committed suicide because of the fear of being sent to detention centers. Cases of deaths in the detention centers were also reported. The NRC process brought many hardships for the people especially for the poor and illiterate as it was difficult for them to collect all the legacy data that was essential for proving citizenship. The people who were not included in the final list were either detained or officially declared as non-citizens but were not deported to their native country. So this questions the purpose of implementing NRC. And since NRC is our internal matter as per our Prime Minister, the people who were excluded from the final list are facing uncertainty in every aspect as nothing is clear about their rights and status. The government should take some serious steps towards it so that at least people get a fair idea about their rights, duties, status and citizenship. Hypothesis that Implementation of NRC in Assam has positive impact on social and Economic variables of the state can be contradicted as it has been observed that NRC process is not economically viable as huge cost would be incurred to carry out this implementation further it has also been observed that it has negative impact on the social condition of poor people. But in contrast to this, survey shows that people are happy with this move but we can say that they are looking at their benefit and not accessing it as a whole. To conclude we can say that it has a negative impact on the economy and society. According to the research government should make some amendments to the current NRC bill as it raises questions on India being secular.

X. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens up new grounds for further research. Further studies can address the following issues to have more insights on the subject. Studies can be done to find out the impact of implementation on NRC after one year and analyze the scale of development taking place in the state. In this study, social and economic impact is clubbed together but they could be separated in future studies and can be analyzed thoroughly. Further studies can analyze the link between NPR, NRC and CAA. This study area is confined to Assam but in further study we can analyse the impact on neighboring states. In further research the employment rate can also be analyzed. A similar study of this sort could be conducted after a period of time and even after a regular interval of time. This might reveal possible differences in assumed benefits and real life situations.

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