

Abstract:

The Politics of the Local: the Contingencies of Citizenry in Assam
A Case Study

Ankur TamuliPhukan

Most of the literatures on immigrants discuss the legal-historical etiquette of the immigration problems in Assam and northeast India in general ignoring the basic structure of the operation processes of identification, determination and finally the deportation of a particular individual as foreigner. This paper will try to locate that processes in order to understand the shifts and changes in biopolitical agendas of a nation-state and how in a particular historical-cultural context of Assam such cartographic anxiety of a nation-state would align itself with other sub-national(s), bureaucratic anxieties of a particular local. The problem of reading legal-juridical structure and their limitation in the case of immigration discourses is that it simply ignores the efficacy of practices and their transcendental aura in developing the political-legal arithmetic in the locals. This particular chasm between legal-juridical and political-legal is critical to understand the question of marginalization and how it operates, articulates or dislocates itself historically in accordance with the efficacy of practices of the operative process of identification of an individual as immigrants. Of course, it is also critical to understand whether such practices are also developed through commonsensical notions of identification of particular community as immigrant origin or other legal-political arithmetic that partly determines the structure of practices. If efficacy of the practices is already given in this particular historical-cultural context of Assam then how such practices are sabotaged, inverted by the individuals/communities and what kind of contingencies that generate through these inversions. The research will address larger questions of citizenry, everydayness of operation of identity, the idea of border both in discursive and material level.

Methodology:

The 'plight of the detainees' as a discourse is yet find its way in the academia and has only remained notified as marginals in the print media. To fill in this gap the research would try analyse the descriptive rolls on detention available with Assam police archive and Assam State archive Dispur, Guwahati to understand the method, discourse, narratives of plight of the individuals recognized as foreigners in general historical time line, while the main ethnographic study will be done in Goalpara district area region. Goalpara is very critical for this study-i. the Asia's biggest detention camp construction is ongoing in Goalpara district, ii. The Goalpara District Foreigner's Tribunal has always been in the limelight for different controversies and in a particular verdict some lawyers had assaulted the FT judge. Later newspaper reports, commentaries of the incident suggested that the issue itself as a sign of how casual the process of verdict could be. However, the lawyers have been arrested immediately thereafter. This research also focuses on that incident as a case in point. iii. In 2016, in protest against the eviction drives of BJP government in Assam in general and Goalpara area in particular, a rally

was organised by local level All Assam Minority Student Union members. It was almost a peaceful rally but Assam police fired without much provocation and killed two young students. Therefore, a serious ethnography in the area would give a lot of information about the local politics and different discourse on D-voters, Detainees, Detention Camps experience and more importantly, the operation of local administration and their negotiation in this particular area.

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