

Practices, Contingencies, Politics of the Locals and the Indian State: An Overview from Assam

Ankur Tamuli Phukan

Calcutta Research Group

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 individuals as foreigner. This paper will try to locate that processes and practices in order to understand the shifts and changes in disciplinary politics of a nation-state and how in a particular historical-cultural context of Assam the cartographic anxiety of the nation-state would align itself with other sub-national(s), bureaucratic anxieties of a particular local. The problem of reading legal-judicial structure and their limitation in the case of immigration discourses is that it simply ignores the efficacy of these practices and their transcendental aura in developing the political-legal arithmetic in the locals. The inconstancies in the legal-judicial is somewhat given in the sense that the inconstancies have to be defined, resolved through constant enactments, interpretations and reinterpretations despite the fact that legal-judicial always rests upon a known orientation or somewhat on an epistemic civility. While on the other hand the political is a temporal and a historical qualifier without having a particular legality to it. Of course, there is a friction and commensurability between power and politics, however, there operative manoeuvre articulates historically rather than having a pre-history together. In that sense, political-legal assumes a temporal, historical identity –an autobiography that needs to be genealogically defined and articulated.

This particular chasm between legal-judicial 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. 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 will also be addressed in the essay. This is also critical in terms of different administrative experiences of different regions of Indian state as they got exchanged within, translated and thus produced a governmental knowledge on the administrative modalities on the question of citizenry, detention camps and so on in different regions and context of the Indian state. It will be interesting to trace how such modalities actually influences or disrupts the legal-

juridical as a position of power. In a way, this project will try to understand the fallacies of protection realm and the operative contingencies of bordering, identity and citizenry.

Methodology:

The practices or their efficacies in the field are yet to find its way in academia mainly because of lack of research on historical temporalities and their contingencies. Of Course, the research will not entirely trace the shifts and changes of these temporalities of practices in colonial and post colonial archives but read them as symptomatic amalgamation of bordering, identity and citizenry in Assam. However, this archival fixity will be traced in the field as constitutive of practices and their discursive structures and how they are being used as constitutive of a pre-discursive world of bordering and citizenry. So, in a way the research will use both archive and field interviews as case in point to understand the contingencies of practices, their translation as administrative modalities.

Select Bibliography:

Sanjib Baruah, *In the Name of the Nation: India and Its Northeast*, Stanford University Press, 2020

Amalendu Guha, *Planter Raj To Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam, 1826-1947*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2016.

Hiren Gohain, *Assam: A Burning Question*, Spectrum Publication, Guwahati, 1985.

B.N. Bordoloi, *Reports on the Survey of Alienation of Tribal Lands and Scheduled Castes*, Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati, 1999.

Abdul Mannan, "Anuprabash: Asom Andalonar Adhi kotha," Ayna Prakashan, Guwahati, 2017.

Arupjyoti Saikia, *A Century of Protest: Peasant Politics in Assam Since 1900*, Rutledge, New Delhi, 2014.

Sanjay Barbora, "The Crisis of Citizenship in Assam", *The Indian Forum*, 11 December, 2020 (<https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/crisis-citizenship-assam>)

Ranabir Samaddar, *A Pandemic and the Politics of Life*, Women Unlimited, New Delhi, 2021.

Brett Neilson and Sandro Mezzadra, *Border as Method, Or, Multiplication of Labour*, Duke University Press, 2013.

Prathama Banerjee, *Elementary Aspects of the Political : Histories from Global South*, Duke University Press, 2020.

