

An Understanding of Slogans– the Rhetoric of the Assam Movement (1979-1985)

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Abstract: The Assam Movement (1979-1985) is recognized as one of the most important events in the history of modern Assam. Actually, the root of Assamese nationalism can be found in the 19th century colonial rule, which gained new momentum and dimension during the Assam Movement. The Assam Accord, 1985 was signed in presence of the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, ensuring the fulfillment of rights and demands of the people of Assam. The slogans that were being raised during the movement motivated the people to come out and organize protests against the government. But how could those slogans mobilize the common masses and how have they been contextualized with the glorious past of Assam during the movement? The migration in pre- and post independent India into Assam, especially from Bangladesh, erstwhile East Pakistan, creates political tension in the region even today. And Assam's relation with the mainland India also didn't seem to change much even after the British left Assam. It created a sense of socio-political and economic alienation among the masses. During the movement the slogans that were being raised portrayed those issues that the common masses of Assam had been feeling for a while and converted those sentiments into a mass movement. The paper tries to understand the historical connotations of the texts of the slogans that were being used in the Assam Movement and how they could contribute to creating a sense of Assamese 'self'.

Key words : Assam Movement, slogan, the Ahoms, nationalism, self, identity construction