

Title: The Constructed Bangladeshis in Assam— the Political Economy of the Narrative of Illegal Migration

Abstract

The paper aims to unravel how the individuals residing in the north-east Indian state of Assam, comes to be defined as a migrant and further gets constructed as an illegal immigrant and infiltrator. This construction happens through a semiotic intersection of language, religion, appearance, appearance, and nationality. At the crux of this construction lay the differentiation between the indigenous, and those who lay beyond indigenusness, in relations of delineation. And thus, is constructed, the citizen, or the indigenous, and the citizen-outsider, or the delineation of citizenship. With this background, my paper aims to explore the logic of such constructions, contributing to the visibility of large section of the population, who exhibit certain appearance entailing a visible Muslim with *lungi*, *tupi* (caps), and beard, speaking a certain dialect, residing in certain locales which come to be labelled and stigmatised as those inhabited by the ones, coming to be identified as the ‘illegal immigrants from Bangladesh’, are rendered as individuals with intermediary citizenship, and doubtful belonging. Hence my paper aims to pose the following questions: What is the logic of such constructions insofar as the political economy is taken into consideration? How do these constructions help to maintain them as the cheap labourers in Assam and elsewhere in India owing to their social and legal location with doubtful citizenship? And, what role is played by the state in determining their mobility, identity, documentation, and undocumentedness? Thus the paper consciously engages with questions on citizenship, residency, identity, belonging, legality and illegality.

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