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India and the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill - Swelling Waves of Mass Protests: Reject NAA / NRC /NPR!

Sunday 22 December 2019, by [SEN Sukla](#) (Date first published: 20 December 2019).

The Beginning

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (CAB) [1] has now become the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), having been notified in the *Gazette* [2], at midnight (Dec. 12/13), following the grant of assent by the President on December 12, in turn preceded by its passage in the Lok Sabha on Dec. 9 and then the Rajya Sabha on Dec. 11th [3].

Despite the huge asymmetry in terms of number, the Bill had been bitterly fought back both in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha [4].

Mass Protests

The parliamentary endorsement of the Bill immediately sparked off street protests, nationwide. [5].

Since then, mass protests, from its initial epicentre in the North-East, has spread far and wide, all over the nation - very much including the national capital [6].

Police brutalities and vandalism have been reported from mainly BJP-ruled states: Assam, Tripura, West Bengal, Delhi, U.P., Karnataka.

Over a dozen protesters have been reported killed till now [7].

Global Condemnations

No less than the UN Chief himself has put on record his concern over the “fundamentally discriminatory” nature of the Act concerned and the violence and state repression that followed [8].

The US administration has also conveyed its serious concerns [9].

Over 10,000 students, academicians and teachers from across the globe - including Noam Chomsky, Judith Butler and Romila Thapar have condemned “in the strongest possible terms the police brutality in Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, and the ongoing illegal siege and curfew imposed on Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.”

A large number students and academics from the West have voiced strong disapproval of the government actions [10].

Unfazed Regime

All these, as yet, have, however, failed to make any, whatever, meaningful impact on the incumbent regime [11].

It remains undeterred by the fact that apart from the opposition ruled West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, even Bihar - ruled by a coalition of the JD(U) and the BJP itself, and Odisha - ruled by a friendly BJD, have indicated that they would refuse to implement the CAA/NRC [12].

Implications of NRC+CAA

I. The CAA as a stand-alone measure has little significance (except in the North-East and, also, West Bengal), other than symbolic.

II. It, however, singles out Muslims for exclusion.

The persecuted from the non-Muslim-majority neighbouring countries - Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Tibet/China, Bhutan etc., do not qualify.

Nor the persecuted Muslims - Ahmadiyas, Shias, Hazaras, Balochs etc., from the Muslim-majority neighbouring countries.

III. But, bundled with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), it is designed to send out the (deceptive and) toxic message that the huge number of Hindus who would, certainly, be filtered out by the NRC process, for want of "documents", have nothing to worry - the CAA would take care of them, and only the Muslims would be stripped of their citizenship and turned stateless.

IV. It's quite another matter that even the filtered out Hindus, and other non-Muslims, in order to be counted as Indian citizens will have to establish the claim of migration, in terms of "documents", from either Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan, to India, on or before Dec. 31 2014.

[13]

[14].

NPR: The Vital Link

Chastened by the experience of the NRC exercise in Assam, where 1.9 million, understandably including a large number of Hindus, out of total 33 million applicants have found themselves, eventually, filtered out [15], the Union Government has, this time, opted to, first, carry out a survey in order to prepare a National Population Register (NPR) - containing biometric details of the individuals, as the stepping stone towards the NRC [16].

Utility of the NPR

I. It'll help delineate those to be targeted during the NRC exercise proper.

II. It'll create a biometric database to subsequently apprehend those filtered out by the NRC process, from any corner of the land.

Apparent Illegality of the Planned NPR

The biometric data collection, unrelated to any state-run welfare scheme (or linking with the PAN) appears to go against even the Aadhaar judgement by the Indian Supreme Court, let alone the (previous) one on privacy, recognising it as a fundamental right of a citizen.

This deserves to be also legally challenged on the ground of being violative of privacy rights. Regardless of how the Court is going to respond.

The Real Driver

The real intent and purpose of the CAA-reinforced NRC is, by threatening an ethnic cleansing by specifically targeting Indian Muslims, to trigger and perpetuate a civil war-like situation - by stirring up panic, rage and hatred, across religious divides, in order to mobilise the Hindus as "Hindus" - drowning out all other competing identities linked to gender, ethnicity, language, caste, class, age-group etc., in turn, to dismantle the "India" that had been brought into being by the epic Indian freedom struggle to make way for a "Hindu Rashtra" - a Hindu majoritarian state, denuded of all vestiges of substantive democracy and pluralism.

[17].

It's, however, a huge misconception that the NRC process would leave the Hindus, the poorer ones in particular, just unharmed.

Even the (huge number of) Hindus, who would be filtered out by the NRC process - for lack of (difficult to produce) "documents", in order to regain citizenship, would, under the CAA, have to establish the claim of migration from either Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan to India, on or before Dec. 31st 2014, in terms of "documents".

Hence...

Conclusion

Unless all the myriad ongoing protests - sweeping the land, gradually coalesce, grow and culminate into a really powerful civil disobedience movement, for which some sundry players have already issued calls [18], "India" is, for sure, doomed.

It would, most likely, be even worse than mere Pakistanisation of India.

Conversely, a powerful counter movement can help "India" bounce back, as had happened in the wake of Indira Gandhi's spectacular electoral defeat, post-Emergency.

In fact, the ongoing mass protests, cutting across religious divides, have already, to a significant extent, has undermined the fiendish scheme of the regime to trigger a religious civil war.

But, finally, the NPR-NRC project has got to be scuttled.

That is only how "India" can be pulled back from the very brink of the abyss it has been dragged to.

Sukla Sen

Footnotes

[1] ref.: http://164.100.47.4/BillsTexts/LSBillTexts/Asintroduced/370_2019_LS_Eng.pdf

[2] ref.: <http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2019/214646.pdf>

[3] ref.: <https://barandbench.com/citizenship-amendment-act-notified-at-midnight-receives-presidents-asse>

[nt/?fbclid=IwAR1_yD2FDiXLcnn0lQWxsSrcsSb1Ybz-srlyooFjVwlAzQxtCFutWtKjeD_Y](https://www.facebook.com/IwAR1_yD2FDiXLcnn0lQWxsSrcsSb1Ybz-srlyooFjVwlAzQxtCFutWtKjeD_Y)

[4] ref.:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/lok-sabha-passes-citizenship-amendment-bill/article30260415.ece> and

<https://www.news18.com/news/politics/rajya-sabha-tv-briefly-stops-telecast-of-cab-discussion-after-opposition-members-heckle-amit-shah-2420183.html>

[5] Ref.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geJ5PYaXy2w>,

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/anti-cab-protest-congress-narendra-modi-chandigarh-1627446-2019-12-11>,

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/bjp-congress-workers-clash-presi-students-march-to-bjp-state-hq-gift-constitution/articleshow/72497610.cms>

[6] ref. e.g.:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/citizenship-amendment-act-caa-protests-live-updates-sp-leaders-among-17-booked-for-violence-in-ups-sambhal/liveblog/72878744.cms>,

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<https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/201219/citizenship-amendment-act-fire-spreads-nationwide.html>

[7] ref.:

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/assam-protest-against-citizenship-act-death-toll-reaches-five-partial-relief-in-curfew-today-11576469211760.html>,

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/two-killed-in-firing-during-anti-cao-protest-in-mangaluru-police/articleshow/72891008.cms> and

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/six-killed-in-cao-protests-across-up-net-shutdown-in-several-districts-6177753/>

[8] ref.:

<https://www.thestatesman.com/world/un-chief-concerned-violence-use-excessive-force-cao-protests-1502834872.html>

[9] ref.:

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/urge-authorities-to-respect-right-to-peaceful-assembly-us-state-department-on-citizenship-act-protests-2149958?amp=1&akamai-rum=off>

[10] ref.:

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/us-to-france-to-oxford-cry-against-police-brutality/cid/1727989>

[11] ref.:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/bjp-unfazed-says-will-implement-cao-nrc/articleshow/72893970.cms>

[12] ref.:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/another-cm-opposes-nrc-naveen-patnaik-latest-after-his-party-voted-for-citizenship-amendment-bill-6174035/> and

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/nitish-kumar-says-nrc-wont-be-implemented-in-bihar/article30360443.ece>

[13] Ref.:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/migrants-wont-get-citizenship-automatically/articleshow/72799784.cms?fbclid=IwAR3A5mMc4F2JD1NXCHfQ8V6Xn8Gm9D-LRtYWMVdtPvpPRDtxYrn9pdBvli0>

[14] May also look up: https://youtu.be/9n_bjgrCLjg,

<https://www.facebook.com/unbhakt/videos/vb.1749099242046711/448885106030986/?type=2&theater>

and

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[15] ref.:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/assam-nrc-final-list-bjp-congress-bangladesh-illegal-migration-5954490/>

[16] ref.:

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/2020-national-population-register-to-lay-foundation-for-nationwide-citizens-register/story/370277.html>

[17] Ref.: What Now? and Conclusion in

[https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/greenyouth/Sukla\\$20Sen\\$2C\\$202019\\$20Parliamentary\\$20Poll\\$3A\\$20Outcome\\$3A\\$20Drivers\\$3A\\$20Consequences\\$20%7Csort:date/greenyouth/jDH-u677CzY/z4ES9B7OBAAJ](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/greenyouth/Sukla$20Sen$2C$202019$20Parliamentary$20Poll$3A$20Outcome$3A$20Drivers$3A$20Consequences$20%7Csort:date/greenyouth/jDH-u677CzY/z4ES9B7OBAAJ)

[18] ref.:

<https://scroll.in/latest/946382/former-ias-officers-activists-call-for-civil-disobedience-against-citizenship-bill-and-nrc>