

## **NRC, CAA, and Muslim Minority in India: A Source of Potential Conflict in South Asia?**

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### **1. Introduction**

The rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – a far right Hindu nationalist political party - as ruling power in India has pushed the South Asian region into turmoil. After assuming central power of India, BJP government has brought some conflicting issues to the center of attention, for instance, erasing Muslim history from school text book, construction of Ram Mandir in the site of demolished Babri Mosque, National Register of Citizen (NRC), and Citizenship Amendment ACT-2019 (CAA) that have been issue of heated debate and potential source of political and religious violence. The moves have ignited serious criticism in Indian and beyond. For example, former Pakistani Prime Minister, Imran Khan, in his speech at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva said, “India’s Citizenship Amendment ACT could not only lead to refugee crisis in South Asia but trigger a conflict between nuclear armed nations” (The Times of India, 2019a). Although Bangladesh termed NRC and CAA as “internal matter of India” people from different quarter have shown their reaction (Hindustan Times, 2020).

The Indian parliament has passed CAA on December 11, 2019 which rectified the Citizenship Act 1955. With the proposal of this bill by Home Minister and also the BJP’s then President of BJP, Amit Shah, in Indian parliament, the backlash has been sparked throughout the Sub-continent due to its discriminatory nature to Muslims. The amendment reads:

“Provided that any person belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian community from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan, who entered into India on or before the 31st day of December, 2014 and who has been exempted by the Central Government by or under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 or from the application of the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 or any rule or order made thereunder, shall not be treated as illegal migrant for the purposes of this Act;”.

Soon after the approval of the President of India, huge criticism and reaction has come out from the minority Muslim as it is straightforwardly discriminatory against Muslim. Anti-CAA protest has erupted all over India and many have been detained. The move has also ignited huge repercussion in Indian neighboring countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The statement by Indian government’s officials, such as Home Minister Amit Shah, regarding NRC creates the feeling of deep anxiety and apprehension among Bangladeshi

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people as people those are excluded from NRC termed as “illegal Bangladeshi Migrant”. Bangladeshi people have already shouldered the big burden of nearly 2 million Rohingya people. They have been the sources of several crises, for example, environmental degradation, spread of contagious disease, potential of extremism as they are victim of violent persecution and tension between local host community and Rohingya. Given the background, if NRC excluded 1.9 million people are forcibly pushed into Bangladesh the situation would be intricate, for instance, dreadful ethnic conflict, protracted communal riot and interstate tensions might arise.

In this backdrop the study, therefore, attempts to examine whether or not the BJP government’s moves push the regional actors into a violent conflict? May NRC and CAA create stateless people and trigger refugee crisis? And to what extent it can stimulate communal riot in the region? The research has been conducted on the basis of secondary data such as journal articles, books, reports published by governments and research organizations, published and unpublished thesis, newspapers articles. Various websites and internet sources have also been used for data collection. Online content has been searched using google scholar and google search engine.

## **2. Background of NRC and CAA in India**

NRC and CAA are interrelated issues in political marketplace of India. After partition of India in 1947, both Pakistan and India have experienced huge overlapping migration in and out. Therefore, after independence, Congress government made Citizenship Act, 1955 Act to fix the problem with regard to who are Indian legal citizen. This act provides citizenship to people in four category that as follows: 1. Citizenship by birth 2. Citizenship by descent 3. Citizenship by registration and 4. Citizenship by naturalization (India, 1955). In 1971, following the outbreak of liberation war in the then East Pakistan (presently Bangladesh) a huge number of Bangalee people, Muslim and Hindus, fled to India, particularly in neighboring states such as West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, to escape war. Since then, in Assam, “illegal migration” became an issue of politics and heated debate. Shortly after liberation war of Bangladesh, Assam have experienced a large agitation and demonstration during late 1970s and led by All Assam Student Union (AASU) and All Asom Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) against “illegal migration” and “foreigners” those who allegedly to have influence in assam election. Following the movement, the Indian Parliament passed Illegal Migrants Act 1983 and Assam Accord 1985 between central government and the government of Assam to detect and deport “foreigners”. In 2005, Indian Supreme Court declared the Illegal Migrants Act unconstitutional. The Assam government published a “White Paper” containing foreigners’ issue in 2012. Surprisingly, this time, Indian Supreme Court issued a summon in 2013 to update NRC (Sufian, 2020). Following the court order, Assam government began to update the NRC in 2015 and published first draft in 2017. The government published draft in 2018 excluding over 4 million people from the list. Finally, Assam government published final version of NRC list that exclude at least 1.9 million people including 1.3 million from Hindu community on August 31, 2019 (BBC, 2019). Interestingly, nearly three months after final NRC list published, BJP government has moved forward to amend the Citizenship Act 1955 which is known as Citizenship Amendment Act-2020. This amendment as mentioned in the above, is vividly discriminatory against Muslim community while bias to other community particularly

Hindu. The Indian Parliament passed the bill on December 12, 2019. Thus, it appears that given the 1.3 million people from Hindu community has been left out of the final NRC list, the BJP government now bring the CAA on focus to please and mobilize Hindu voters. So, it is clearly evident that BJP government's moves regarding NRC and CAA is completely discriminatory against its Muslim minority.

### **3. Understanding the Intention of BJP with NRC and CAA**

As BJP high officials including president Amit Shah vehemently supported NRC and CAA and that they declare repeatedly to realize the NRC in all other states of India, it is, therefore, significant to understand the intent of BJP with NRC and CAA. BJP's politics is clearly based on Hindu nationalism and to win the electoral game it needs to mobilize the Hindu voters, on the one hand, and dilute the Muslim voters on the other. In Assam, Muslims are the second largest religious minority much enough to change the direction of electoral politics. Out of total state population Muslims stand for approximately 35% according to the census conducted in 2011 (Population Census, 2011). Minimum 9 districts of Assam are Muslim majority which include Nagaon, Dhubir, Barpeta, Karimganj, Goalpara, Morigaon, Darrang, Bongaigaon, and Hailakandi. Traditionally Indian Muslims keep trust on Indian National Congress (INC) (Majeed, 2009) as other political parties, in particular BJP, are champion of communal interest and predominantly try to make India a pure Hindu state. Since 1946, in Assam, out of 21 provincial governments, congress accounts for 11 governments which clearly indicates that Indian National Congress is in good position in electoral politics compared to BJP. This favorite position of congress leads BJP to bring changes in demographic nature by realizing NRC where nearly 1.9 million people are termed as dubious or doubtful voter, better known as D-voter. BJP government similarly turns to change demographic pattern in Kashmir. To realize this motive, it has nulled the special status of Jammu and Kashmir which enables people from all India, mainly Hindu community, to come to Kashmir, buy land, and settle which can lead to demographic change in Muslim majority Kashmir. Once this demographic change is happened – which is perceived to influence electoral politics and landscape – would lower the density of Muslim population in Kashmir. In turn, BJP can easily bag political and electoral privileges. Additionally, fascist parties and leaders globally loudly talk about ideology, religion, patriotism and narrow nationalism; because they are often failed to address the economic and political issues of the country, as a result, it is easier to turn the public attention to non-political and non-economic issues. Like other extremist and fascist political parties, BJP also move towards using such cheap but effective weapons of religion, parochial and extremist nationalism. For example, BJP government is said to be unsuccessful to address the crisis in healthcare caused by Covid-19. During the West Bengal assembly election, the party's trump card was religious excitement. However, Modi and its party were less successful in terms of electoral result. In Assam, BJP government handover some national energy corporation to private hand, to side this issue, government highlights the NRC that actually promotes communal tension and riot. Keeping people busy with NRC, the government silently have privatized the national corporations in energy sector.

#### **4. Relationship between NRC, CAA and Communal riot in South Asia**

Undoubtedly, NRC and CAA are such projects that provoke communal excitement among people, especially among Minority Muslims and Hindu majoritarian of India. Different sections of people, organizations of Muslim population in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan have reacted strongly to the move. Although, their statement and speech are not directed to the Hindu community of their country, however, Hindu community does not take it in good faith. Following the final list of NRC and the pass of CAA, various Islamist party and organizations from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and even Afghanistan express their concern. Pakistan Minister Imran Khan indicated that there might be nuclear war and refugee crisis because of CAA initiated by the extremist Hindutva government (The Times of India, 2019b).

As NRC and CAA is overtly discriminatory against Muslims, Islamic organizations and parties in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan might involve in violent clash with minority Hindu community. Thus, it can be argued that NRC and CAA maybe the source of communal conflict and riot in South Asia.

#### **5. NRC and CAA: Political Refugee and humanitarian crisis in South Asia**

Do NRC and CAA trigger political refugee and humanitarian crisis in South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh India border? This can be one of the biggest questions about NRC and CAA. South Asia is already burdened with almost 1.5 million Rohingya living in refugee camp in Bangladesh. Given that Bangladesh is a densely populated country, nearly 1240 persons (WB, 2018) per sq. km., it would be a serious challenge for the country and for the global community to maintain the minimum living conditions in the country. Although, Rohingya people are planned to shift to Bhasan char, an island near the estuary of Meghna River and in Bay of Bengal, it is not as easier as thought. As of today, only 7000 Rohingya were shifted to the Island while rest of the refugees are left to the compacted temporary camps in Ukiya, Cox's bazar. About 1.3 million people, refugee and local community, are facing serious humanitarian crisis such as lack of food, shelter, hygienic sanitation and safe drinking water. Due to the high squashed of population, it is quite difficult to maintain minimum living condition in the camps and neighboring.

Given the conditions, if another 1.9 million people, who are excluded in NRC in Assam and termed as illegal Bangladeshi by Indian government, are forcibly deported in Bangladesh, the situation would be formidable. These people, once pushed in Bangladesh, would certainly generate another humanitarian crisis in the region which would be beyond control.

Shamefully, BJP government has already constructed six detention centers around Assam: Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Tezpur, Silchar, Jorhat, Dibrugarh (Deka, 2020). And not only that authority has only set up detention centers, they also detained many innocent Indian citizen termed as "D-voter" from both Muslim and Hindu communities. Different Media outlets, domestic and international including BBC and TRT, have exposed the dark story of these draconian centers. Plight of detainees and their family members goes beyond expression as they are suddenly pushed into statelessness. For example, a short video report aired by Eastmojo, exposes that Achbhanu, a female inmate detained in Kokrajhar detention center, has three school going daughters who are smashed in despair and grief due to the separation from their mother (Eastmojo, 2018). Survivors of

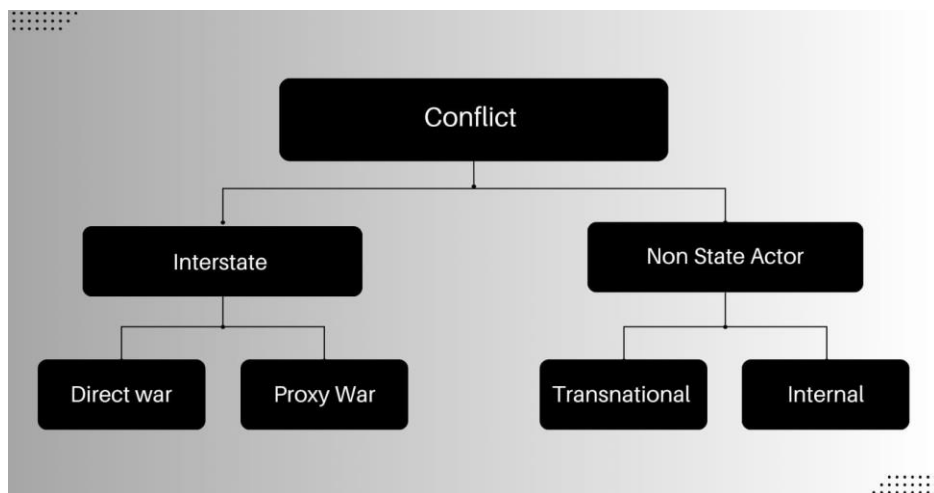
detention camps also reveals the indefinable misfortunes of inmates inside the centers. Unhygienic living conditions, malnutrition, insufficient food and inhumane treatment by security forces cause humanitarian crisis. Unexpected death is commonplace, until now, according to the Assam government source, at least 30 died in the centers (Karmakar, 2020).

It is appeared that one or two members of a family is listed as “D-voter” or “D-citizen” while all other members of that family are surprisingly included in the NRC. Now, the question is, if most of the members of a family are qualified or listed in NRC then how one or two can be excluded? How is it possible? If one person from a household is “illegal migrant” how other members from that very household can be legal migrant or citizen? Naturally, it should be like that all members of a household are either legal citizen or so called “illegal migrants”, but it is not possible that from a household one/two members are listed as “illegal” while rest of the members are turned as legal.

Clearly, NRC and CAA make nearly 2 million people stateless in South Asia which affects not only India but also Bangladesh directly, although Indian authority says that there is nothing to be worried for Bangladesh. But the concern for Bangladesh is that these stateless people are termed as “illegal Bangladeshi migrants”. Similarly, high officials of Bangladesh government including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina terms the moves as Indian “internal matter” and “unnecessary”(Roy, 2020). However, whatever the both authorities from India and Bangladesh label these moves, the reality is different that is it would certainly be a deadly humanitarian crisis that already begins to unearth.

#### 6. Is NRC and CAA a source of Potential Regional Conflict in South Asia?

NRC and CAA might be potential source of violent conflict in the near future, especially, when excluded people from NRC would be pushed in Bangladesh. Violent conflict might be multidimensional: State to State, not direct rather proxy war in Kashmir, non-state actor to non-state actor. Conflict relating to non-state actors are ethnic, communal (Figure 1).



**Figure:** Figure-1: Types of Conflicts, **Source:** Developed by Author

### **Interstate conflicts are as follows**

In the following interstate conflict would be elaborated which include interstate conflict between Pakistan and India, Bangladesh-India conflict, Indo-China Conflict, and Indo-Afghan conflict.

#### **6.1 Pakistan India interstate conflict**

It is said that India-Pakistan and conflicts were born together; they are enemy to each other by birth. Even, conflict originates long before birth of these two south Asian nations. Two major religious groups, Hindu and Muslim, in undivided India, have had many fights in terms of deadly communal riots. Thus, it become clear to the then political leaders from both community that Muslim and Hindus are not fit to live in a single state. In 1947, partitioning Indian territory two states have come into being as India, a Hindu majority country, and Pakistan, a Muslim majority state. After independence, over only Kashmir, Delhi and Islamabad waged four full scale wars. Soon after the partition the neighbors fought first war to keep control on Kashmir.

First Kashmir War, started in October 1947, when Pakistan comprehends that the Maharaja Hari Singh of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir would join Indian dominion. The state had a majority Muslim population and significant fraction of Hindu population. Tribal Islamic forces with support from the Pakistan Army attacked and occupied parts of the princely state. Being a Hindu by religion Maharaja was inclined to accede India. To receive support from the Indian army Maharaja had signed the Instrument of Accession and joined Indian republic. Following the accession of the state to India on October 26, 1947, Indian troops airlifted to Srinagar, the state capital. Later in 1948, they relented and the Pakistani armies entered the war after this. The fronts solidified gradually along what came to be known as the Line of Control. A formal cease-fire was declared on 31 December, 1948 and became effective on the night of 1 January 1949. The nations again involved in a full-scale war in 1965 on the same issue - Kashmir. The war started following Pakistan's Operation Gibraltar, which was designed to infiltrate forces into Jammu and Kashmir to precipitate an insurgency against India. Indian army retaliated by launching a full-scale military attack on the then West Pakistan. The seventeen-day war caused thousands of casualties on both sides and witnessed the largest engagement of armored vehicles and the largest tank battle since World War II (Rawat, 2015). The hostilities between the two countries ended after a ceasefire was declared following diplomatic intervention by the Soviet Union and USA and the subsequent issuance of the Tashkent Declaration (Lyon, 2008). India had the upper hand over Pakistan when the ceasefire was declared.

Third Indo-Pakistan war was in 1971 which was unique in that sense that it did not involve Kashmir. Bangladesh, the erstwhile East Pakistan has been the epicenter of this war. This was a kind of spillover conflict between the neighbors. The source of conflict was originated in East Pakistan while central leader of Pakistan launched a full fledged military strike on Dhaka denying transfer of power to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Awami League – the party won a decisive victory in the 1970 general election. Following the “operation searchlight”, a military crackdown on Dhaka by Pakistan army on 25 March, 1971, 10 million people mostly Hindu community crossed the border and took refuge in neighboring India (Jaffrelot, 2004). Immediately after the refugees took shelter

in India Border States, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, the Indian army invaded in East Pakistan on December 3, 1971. Hostile relations in the past between India and Pakistan added to India's decision to intervene in Pakistan's civil war. Two adversaries fought for 13 days leaving Indian force as conclusively victor in the war on 16 December, 1971.

Kashmir became the birthplace of 4<sup>th</sup> India and Pakistan war in 1999 which was commonly known as Kargil war. During early 1999, Pakistani troops infiltrated across the Line of Control (LoC) and occupied Indian territory mostly in the Kargil district. India responded by launching a major military strike to drive out the Pakistani infiltrators (Wolpert, 2010). The conflict last for two months and India had slowly retaken most of the occupied areas that were trespassed by the Pakistani army. An estimation says that nearly 80 % of the encroached land was taken back under Indian control (Dettman, 2001). Apprehending a massive destructive armed conflict, the outer world, led by the USA pressurized Pakistan to withdraw forces from battle field. Pakistan initially did not acknowledge many of its casualties, but Nawaz Sharif later said that over 4,000 Pakistani troops were killed in the operation and that Pakistan had lost the conflict. By the end of July 1999, organized hostilities in the Kargil district had ceased. The war was a major military defeat for the Pakistani Army.

Apart from the aforementioned wars, there have been skirmishes between the two nations from time to time. Some have bordered on all-out war, while others were limited in scope. Some of the conflicts are namely: Siachen conflict, Sir Creek disputes, India–Pakistan maritime trespassing, and Insurgency in Baluchistan (Lyon, 2008). Recently, tension grows as India grabs Jammu and Kashmir abrogating the article 370 (a) of constitution. Pakistan retaliates to India's activity and warns the worst for India. Perhaps, another round of all-out war is likely to happen.

## **6.2 Indo-Bangladesh conflict**

Bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh fluctuates along with the changes in the regime in Dhaka. Historically, Awami League (AL) has a friendly relationship with the Delhi since liberation war in 1971. The Indira Gandhi regime supported heavily in Bangladesh liberation war – providing arms training and weapons for freedom fighters and Mukti bahini, shelter for nearly 10 million mass people in neighboring states of India like West Bengal, Assam and Tripura – that makes both Indian authority and Awami League amicable in journey. As a result, when Awami League controls Gono Bhaban, Government residing palace for the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Delhi remains in comfortable zone with Bangladesh. However, plunder by Indian military in Bangladesh immediately after the end of war and Delhi's unexpected role in the government in exile tarnish the India's friendly image that make many Bangladeshi hostile to India since then. Secondly, it is widely perceived that India all along improves and maintains a parochial relation with a single party, Awami League, not with people or state of Bangladesh, therefore, there grows a vulnerable imbalanced relationship that is not mutually respected and bilateral. Thirdly, Delhi's role in Bangladesh since 2009 has got an entirely new dimension that is not welcome by millions of Bangladeshi people; more precisely Delhi is conceived largely responsible for the contemporary political crisis in the country. Many argued that India's interference and mechanism in the 2009 general election benefits Awami League to takeover, which Pranab Mukherjee, Indian former President, disclosed in his book "The Coalition Years" published in 2017, is the principal source of

outrage of Bangladeshi people. Yet again, not only that, it was Indian government which provides wholehearted support and aid for Awami League to gain international recognition for the 2014 election, which was completely a farcical and lopsided game and boycotted by mass people and major oppositions. In the election, 153 out of 300 constituencies were uncontested which proves it was a highly manipulated election. Regrettably, India continues to play the same controversial role in the next election which was held in 2018.

Fourthly, it is now commonly believed that India's spy agency Research and Analysis Wing, better known as RAW, is involved in enforced disappearance of Bangladeshi nationals, crackdown on opposition, particularly repression on Islamists in Bangladesh. This popular perception gets strong ground when BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed has been disappeared and later found Shillong, capital of the Indian state of Meghalaya. Moreover, Forhad Mozhar, a renowned writer and Marxist, is recovered by Bangladeshi police from Bangladesh India border area, Benapole, who was reported to forcibly push in India by RAW (Rashid, 2015). For war crime trial, many believe that the trial is Delhi's brainchild and mechanism that is being executed by the AL government. It is assumed that war crime trial project is designed to give benefit for both India and its ally, AL, as a result, only BNP and Jama'at leaders are being tried. Another point of popular argument is that Sukharanjan Bali, one of the witnesses against Delwar Hossain Sayeedi in the trial, has been abducted and later found in India (Bergman, 2013).

Fifthly, people's perception on economic and strategic affairs between India and Bangladesh is that India is benefited from Bangladesh while the latter is far less profited. It is argued that without or with nominal charge, Delhi gets water and land transit through Bangladesh which is economically and strategically significant and much awaited issue for India (Mohan, 2019). Without transit, Indian vehicles have to travel a protracted route to reach northeastern states, popularly known as seven sisters, while transit makes it substantially shorter and time and cost effective. Transit through Bangladesh, is not only benefits India economically, but also equally important for Indian national and regional security in Northeastern states which are turbulent with decades long separatist movements. Similarly, it gives India privilege to deter Chinese influence over Bangladesh. During her visit to India, October 3 to 6 2019, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has signed seven treaties with her Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, which allow India to withdraw Feni river water without any fee or charge, set up surveillance in the coastal belt of Bangladesh, use of Chattagram and Mongla seaports and export LPG from Bangladesh (Mohan, 2019) to India.

Sixthly, conflict over water sharing of transboundary rivers such as Padma, Teesta, Feni and others is long-standing issue. Although there is a treaty, signed on 12 December 1996 between Bangladesh and India, for Padma water sharing at the Farakka point, however, the treaty doesn't guarantee the fair share for Bangladesh; as a result, Bangladesh is easily deprived by India (Pandey, 2012). Due to the Farakka barrage, opened in 1975, salinity, siltation on river bed, changes in river course are acute in the Bangladeshi parts of the rivers. During dry season, water flow in Padma, especially in Bangladeshi part is remarkably lower (Malhotra, 2010). This also immensely impacts and damages agriculture, biodiversity, fishery and forestry of Bangladesh (Malhotra, 2010). Along with this, India also continues to play hide and seek with Bangladesh regarding water share of other transboundary rivers such as Teesta. For long, Bangladesh wants to frame treaty for



sharing water of the river; however, Indian authority seems reluctant to do so, as a result, the treaty is yet to come into light. Thus, Indian suspicious role with regard to water sharing of all international rivers becomes a contentious issue and anguishes Bangladeshi people.

Finally, bilateral trade deficit between Bangladesh and India is one of the much-talked issue both in academia (Bari, 2021) and in public conversation. Trade deficit between both the countries continues to rise by larger amount, Bangladesh's import from India proliferates significantly from \$2,920 million in fiscal year 2010(Rahman, 2011) to \$7.91 billion in the fiscal year 2020(Trading Economics, 2020); while export to India counts only \$517.89 million in 2015. Additionally, Indian nationals in Bangladeshi corporate offices, especially in garment sector is booming. Bangladesh is the fifth largest remittance-earning country for India where 500,000 Indian nationals (Sadeque, 2014) working and sending to \$3.7 billion(Kabir, 2018) to their country. Nevertheless, India politicians, state and central leaders including BJP president and Home Minister Amit Shah, propagate negatively and express disgraceful speech against Bangladesh (Alamgir, 2021).

The crucial point is once the new regime takes over in Dhaka, particularly the one that is anti-Indian, bilateral relations might not remain as friendly as it is at present. And the possibility of imminent anti-Indian regime in power is strongly perceived because a considerable percentage of population do not perceive India as friendly state. Recent history of Bangladesh has such record of anti-Indian government that is quite threatful for Indian national security. For example, ten truck arms haul in Chittagong is widely believed that these arms and ammunitions were reportedly being transported to separatist groups of North-east India such as United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)(Ahmed, 2014). It is appeared that with the change of regime in Dhaka, many issues such as treaty and agreement might discontinue. Thus, if anti-Indian regime takes over in Bangladesh, China is likely to become more active in the country and try to exploit the advantages of anti-Indian sense which might lead to serious threat to Indian national integrity. Once anti-Indian regime is stabled in Dhaka, separatist groups in North-East India may have a congenial environment and strong ground to fight for secessionist movement. If Bangladesh and China work closely, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan, might join hand. The trio might be able enough to cut the Siliguri "chicken neck" separating North-east from rest of the India. Consequently, existing wormer relationship between both governments, Indo-Bangla, does not ensure the sustainability in future. Thus, China and Pakistan might run proxy war against India.

### **6.3 Indo-Afghan tension**

Afghans has ruling legacies in some parts of Indian sub-continent before colonial period. Historical records suggest that Afghans were a ruling elite in India for nearly three-quarter century, 1537 – 1612, that Eaton (Eton, 1993) states as age of Afghan. They also ruled Bengal for about a half century(Ibrahim, n.d.), 1538 – 1576, and Kashmir for over half century from 1753 to 1819 (Mir, 2011). The most recent military operation launched by Afghan leader Ahmad Sha Abdali, also called Ahmad Shah Durrani, who defeated Maratha military in the third battle of Panipat in 1761 is remarkable.

On 03 September 2014, Al Qaeda leader Ayman Al Zawahiri has released 55-minute video in which he launched a regional branch of the organization in South Asia: Al

Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQUIS)(Swami, n.d.). In the video, Zawahiri firmly announced new front to wage war on India, particularly in Kashmir and in Assam. Unsurprisingly, there are many Jihadi groups operating in the India controlled Kashmir region. Some of this groups are Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Al-Badr, Harkat-ul- Ansar, Harkat-ul-Jehadi Islam and Jaish-e-Moham- madi (Trehan, 2002). In Assam, similarly, there are at least 14 such Muslim Jihadi groups reported by the South Asia Terrorism Portal, of them, Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) is the most active entity. Another such group is the Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam (MULFA) which also active next to MULTA (South Asian Terrorism Portal, n.d.).

Interestingly, changes in the political landscape of Afghanistan are indicative for South Asia, particularly for India. The number of Taliban controlled districts is rocketing, and the group is about to size Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, 85 percent of the country is captured by Taliban and it is widely reported that Taliban is going to take over soon as NATO forces leave the country (Al Jazeera, 2021). Once Taliban takes over, which is just a matter of time, there is no perceptible reason which indicates that their policy towards India would be friendly. Because, India has been one of the protagonists of so-called War on Terror (WT) projects in Afghanistan for the past twenty years, 2001-2021, that unsurprisingly makes Taliban fighter hostile to India. Not only that India has been an ally of the USA against Taliban in this two decades long bloody war, the country also has made huge investment to support US backed Kabul regime(The Times of India, 2019a).

Past ruling legacy in India, Muslim persecution by apologists of radical Hindutva, annulling the special status of Kashmir by Modi regime, implementation of disputed and discriminatory NRC in Assam, enactment of CAA and role of India in WT venture would certainly have provoked Taliban regime to be stern against India. It is, therefore, effortlessly conceivable that return of Taliban in Afghanistan might be a challenging age for India. Recently, Taliban has trended the death anniversary of Ahmad Shah Abdali in twitter, which means significant affinity of Taliban to the memory of Abdali.

#### **6.4 Indo-China war**

China might play double role with India one as direct war in border area and another as proxy war in Kashmir and Northeast. China and India have fought one war in 1962 and other border conflicts for decades. Of late, China and India engage in arms conflict for Ladakh and Doklam frontier. Boundary conflict may lead to full scale war between the neighbors. With the world second largest economic and powerful military – world third largest according to Firepower ranking – it is easier for China to wage a war against India. In the recent standoffs, it is lucidly evident that Chinese military keep its Indian counterpart on huge pressure and provoke to engage fight. However, India is seen frightened and do not dare to retaliate in the same manner as China. It can be perceived that China is testing India's response and planning heavy war if it necessary. Still now, Chinese military keep a large area of Ladakh under its occupation and India does not try to restore its land.

#### **6.5 Conflict Related to Non-state Actor**

Conflict related to non-state actor might be two types: transnational and internal. For transnational conflict, "Islamist jihadist" groups are remarkably pertinent. In Bangladesh,

there are some far right Islamist groups such as Hefazat-E-Islam, Islami Andolon Bangladesh and Islami Oikya Jote etc. Additionally, there are also some banned “Jihadist” groups such as Horkotul Jihad (HUJI), Jamatul Mujaheden Bangladesh (JMB), Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) and Hizbut Tahrir. These groups are banned due to their alleged “extreme” activities. At least two brand new “extremist” groups are found named: Shaheed Hamza Brigade (SHB) and Bangladesh Jihad Group (BJG) (Riaz, 2016). These groups are said to have link with other South Asian groups such as Lashkar-E-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen etc.

With regard to internal conflict, it may arise when the “extremist” groups both from religious background and leftist and secular background political outlet get into a clash within boundary of a state. It can be true in Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. Already, in Bangladesh, there have been series of violent conflict between left secular extremist groups and groups based on religion. For example, in 2013, Shariar Kabir and Montasir Mamun, secular activist and writer, have been beaten by chased by Hefazat e Islam. Moreover, heated debate between the groups is prevailed in the different mainstream and social media. Violent conflict can erupt, in any time, in the future. Taliban take over in Afghanistan might be an encouraging event for Islamist groups. Therefore, it cannot be ignored that being motivated by the Taliban victory over the USA, such Islamist group can organize and operate internally and regionally.

## 7. Conclusion

After the above discussion, it can be concluded that NRC and CAA are a politically biased and discriminatory communal projects of BJP against the Muslim minority in India. Although BJP denied any discrimination against minority, it is appeared that to earn political gain, BJP government puts these communal and anti-Muslim political agenda forward. NRC in Assam is likely to be a major source of violent conflict in South Asia because about 600,000 Muslim minority have been excluded from the list, on the one hand, 130,000 Hindu, those who are also left out of the final list, but are seemed to be provide citizenship through CAA-2019. To provide Hindu community citizenship privilege those who are left out of the NRC list, BJP government brought an amendment in the Citizenship Act-1955 in a quicker move. Unfortunately, India makes its 1.9 million people “stateless” that may lead to transboundary and internal conflict even full fledge war. Not only conflict, it would create serious humanitarian crisis in the region, that is already evident. In the detention centers, at least 6 in Assam, though Indian government denies such measures, the detainees and their family members are going through a psychological trauma. Moreover, different report published in the media confirmed that detained people are deprived from their basic human rights. The conflict between Bangladesh and India is nearly certain, because when India would push this stateless 1.9 million people or at least .6 million Muslim into Bangladesh would retaliate. Additionally, change in the regime in Dhaka might change many issues among Bangladesh and India that may lead to interstate conflict.

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