

Implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord: Key Recommendations and Updates

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What's in today's article?

- Why in News?
- What is Clause 6 of the Assam Accord?
- What is Biplab Sarma Committee?
- Recommendations of the report to be implemented
- Recommendations that have been left out by the govt

Why in News?

After a meeting with the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), Assam Chief Minister initiated the process to implement 52 recommendations from the Justice Biplab Sarma Committee concerning Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

This action follows the finalization of the committee's report in February 2020.

However, 15 key recommendations, which require Constitutional amendments, will not be implemented for now. The Chief Minister stated that these will be discussed with the Centre at an appropriate time.

What is Clause 6 of the Assam Accord?

- **Background: Assam Accord (1985)**

- The Assam Accord was a **Memorandum of Settlement** signed between the **Rajiv Gandhi-led Union government** and the **All Assam Students' Union (AASU)**.
- This accord ended a **six-year-long agitation** against the entry of Bangladeshi migrants into Assam.
- The agreement, signed in **1985**, marked the conclusion of the Assam Movement.

- **Clause 6 of the Assam Accord**

- Clause 6 of the Assam Accord promises to provide Constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve, and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity, and heritage of the Assamese people.
- These safeguards aim to address concerns regarding the state's demographic and cultural integrity amidst the influx of migrants.

What is Biplab Sarma Committee?

- **Formation of the committee**

- In July 2019, the Union Home Ministry formed a **14-member committee**, chaired by **retired Assam High Court Justice Biplab Kumar Sarma**, to provide recommendations on implementing **Clause 6** of the Assam Accord.
- A key issue the committee addressed was defining **"the Assamese people"** eligible for the safeguards under Clause 6.

- **Submission of the report**

- The committee submitted its final report in **February 2020**.
- However, instead of being presented to the Union Home Ministry, it was received by then Assam Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**.
 - In **August 2020**, four committee members publicly released the confidential report.

- **Key Recommendations:**

- **Definition of Assamese People:** The committee suggested that "Assamese people" should include:
 - Indigenous Tribals
 - Other Indigenous Communities of Assam
 - Indian citizens residing in Assam on or before January 1, 1951, and their descendants
 - Indigenous Assamese People
- **Safeguards:** Based on this definition, the committee recommended reservations for "Assamese people" in **Parliament**, the **state Assembly**, **local bodies**, and **jobs**.

Recommendations of the report to be implemented

• Classification of Recommendations

- The committee's 67 recommendations are divided into three categories:
 - 40 recommendations under the state government's jurisdiction
 - 12 recommendations requiring Centre's concurrence
 - 15 recommendations exclusively within the Centre's domain
- The 52 recommendations in the first two categories will be implemented by April 2025, with a roadmap to be submitted to AASU by October 25, 2024.

• Acceptance of 1951 Cut-off Date

- The Assam govt has accepted the **1951 cut-off date** for the specific recommendations of the Justice Biplab Sarma Committee report.
- However, the definition of "**Assamese people**" is limited to the context of the report's recommendations.

• Land Safeguards

- **Special Revenue Circles:** Designating areas where only Assamese people can own and transfer land.
- **Land Titles:** A three-year program to grant land titles to Assamese people who have long occupied land without proper documentation.
- **Char Areas Survey:** Surveying char areas (riverine regions) to treat newly formed chars as government land, prioritizing allocation to those affected by river erosion.

• Language Safeguards

- **Assamese as Official Language:** Retaining Assamese as the official state language per the **1960 Assam Official Language Act**, with provisions for local languages in certain regions.
- **Bilingual Government Documents:** Issuing all state government acts, rules, and orders in both Assamese and English.
- **Autonomous Language Council:** Establishing a council to preserve and promote indigenous languages of Assam.
- **Assamese in Schools:** Making Assamese a compulsory subject in all English medium schools up to Class VIII or Class X.

• Cultural Heritage Preservation

- **Sattras (Neo-Vaishnavite Monasteries):** Setting up an autonomous body to oversee the development of sattras and provide them financial assistance.
- **Cultural Complexes:** Building multipurpose cultural complexes in every district to preserve the cultural heritage of all ethnic groups.

• Sixth Schedule Areas

- The autonomous councils of Assam's **Sixth Schedule** Areas, including the Bodoland Territorial Council, the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council, and the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, will decide whether to implement the 52 recommendations.
- These councils have certain legislative and judicial autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Recommendations that have been left out by the govt

- **Inner Line Permit**

- Proposal for implementing an ILP for entry into Assam, similar to existing regulations in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Mizoram.

- **Reservations for Assamese People**

- **Parliament and State Assembly:** 80-100% reservation of seats for Assamese individuals in Parliament and state Assembly, as well as in local bodies.
 - **Government Jobs:** 80-100% reservation in Assam government jobs.
 - **Private Sector Collaborations:** 70-100% reservation for vacancies in partnerships between the Assam government and private companies.
 - **Creation of an Upper House:** Proposal for establishing a Legislative Council in Assam, exclusively reserved for Assamese people.
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Q.1. What is Clause 6 of the Assam Accord?

Clause 6 of the Assam Accord provides constitutional, legislative, and administrative safeguards to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity of Assamese people amidst demographic changes due to migration.

Q.2. What key recommendations from the Justice Biplab Sarma Committee are being implemented?

The Assam government will implement 52 recommendations, including land safeguards for Assamese people, bilingual government documents, and preservation of cultural heritage, by April 2025, while discussions on 15 recommendations requiring constitutional amendments are pending.

Source: [What is Clause 6 of Assam Accord, which Himanta govt said will implement?](#) | [Assam Accord](#) | [The Hindu](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/implementation-of-clause-6-of-assam-accord/>

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