

Prejudice towards Culturally Similar-Dissimilar Immigrants: An Empirical Investigation of Intergroup Threat Theory in Assam

Rashbha Dochania^[1]

Abstract:

This study sought to investigate whether the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) of prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 1996) explains prejudice towards Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants in Assam. The theory suggests that the factors, inter-group anxiety, realistic threats, symbolic threats and negative stereotypes, affect prejudice. This research also pursued to measure perceived similarity between Assamese and Bangladeshi immigrants. Multicultural attitude scale was also used as a predictor of prejudice. The sample consisted of 74 undergraduate students studying in various colleges of Guwahati (the most developed city in all of Assam). A questionnaire was issued to the participants in order to establish how they feel (perception) or have felt, interacting with immigrants from Bangladesh and Nepal. Various scales were used to ascertain this information. Simple linear regression and independent sample t-test were conducted. Findings indicated that prejudice was high for Bangladeshi immigrants, for Nepali immigrants however, prejudice was found to be low. Also inter-group anxiety and stereotypes predicted prejudice only for Bangladeshi immigrants, none of the factors of ITT predicted prejudice for Nepali immigrants. Analysis on perceived similarity indicated no similarity between Assamese and Bangladeshi immigrants. On multicultural attitude scale the participants scored high on Separation as a preferred acculturation strategy for Bangladeshi immigrants. In case of Nepali immigrants, participants scored high on integration, separation and Multicultural as a Benefit.

Keywords: Prejudice, Intergroup Threat Theory, Acculturation, Immigrants, Assam undergraduate students

I. INTRODUCTION

Assam across many years has been a recipient of many migrant groups, but the current study will limit itself to only legal and illegal international migration (i.e. Nepal and Bangladesh). The response of the people of valley has not been identical with respect to many immigrant groups (Sharma, 2012). The first instance of migration encouraged by colonialist which led to growth of community consciousness among the Assamese, was the immigration of the trained Bengali Hindu babus/officers from the East Bengal (later East Pakistan and now Bangladesh) to come and work in Assam (Guha, 1977). They began to occupy the petty clerical and supervisory positions in the government offices, courts and later on in the emerging tea plantations (Sharma, 2012). Imposition of Bengali in 1836 as the official language of the state added further insult to the injury. The inclusion of Bengali speaking district of Sylhet in 1874 led to increased number of Bengali migrants in Assam to a notch higher. This led to the first immigrant-Assamese conflict. Historically, Bengali Hindus were a bigger source of threat than the Muslim Bengalis, owing to the fact that Bengali Hindus had advanced its hold to urban areas and to jobs in the modern sector. Also, unlike the Muslim Bengali immigrants, Bengali Hindus were always viewed by the language-centric Assamese population as a threat to their language and culture because they never showed the same proclivity to accept Assamese language and culture as did the Muslim Bengalis (Sharma, 2012). Gradually, however the influx of Muslim migrants increased at such a great strength that it created apprehension among the people of valley that they would be turned minority in their own province (Guha, 1977) turning Assam into a Muslim majority province. This has been the

root cause of xenophobic tendencies among the indigenous communities in recent decades. It must however be noted that a large section of the Muslim immigrants in the Brahmaputra valley have identified themselves as Assamese speakers in recent censuses and they also show a strong proclivity to accept Assamese cultural practices. But the threat among the natives is still strong and forceful, that once they become a majority community they would try to merge Assam with Bangladesh and the Assamese would lose their religion, language and culture (Sharma, 2012).

The other international migrants that arrived in Assam since the early 20th century are the Nepalis. The Indo-Nepal Treaty and Friendship 1950 allows the Nepali immigrants almost all the citizenship rights as any Indian citizen. The Nepalis settled down in the villages, thus creating every possibility to come into conflict with the Assamese peasants. However, what saved them was that they slowly got assimilated with the Assamese (Baruah, 1991). Hence, it subsided on its own. Since then, there has been no major anti-Nepali feeling witnessed in Assam (Sharma, 2012). Many Nepali migrants have adopted Assamese language and culture and have almost merged with the Assamese society. Thus, the Nepali-Assamese relationship in Assam is cordial.

1.1 Intergroup Threat Theory

Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) also known as Integrated threat theory by Stephan & Stephan (2000) postulates four types of threat perceptions that underlie the negative attitudes that individuals hold toward social out-groups: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative

^[1]Research Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, Email: rashbha@gmail.com

stereotypes (Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006). The term realistic threat refers to perceived threat to the existence of the in-group resulting from the existence of competition, threat to physical as well as economic well-being and competition between the in-group and the out-group (Curseu, Stoop & Schalk, 2007), while the term symbolic threats refers to the perception of an out-group as a threat to norms, beliefs and values (Curseu et al; Riek, Mania & Gaertner). Intergroup anxiety involves feelings of uneasiness and awkwardness in the presence of out-group members, whereas negative stereotypes create negative expectations concerning the behavior of out-group members (Riek et al)" (Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009).

It is important to note that Intergroup threat theory is primarily concerned with perceptions of threat. Perceived threats have real consequences, regardless of whether or not the perceptions of threat are accurate. Thus, this theory is not as concerned with real threat posed by the out-groups as it is the degree to which threats to the in-group are perceived to exist (Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009).

Several studies coming from the ITT perspective have addressed relationships between perceived threat and anti-immigrant prejudice. Curseu et al. (2007) tested predictive relationships among the four threat types and prejudice in a sample of Dutch employees, by using path analysis, concluding that anti-immigrant prejudice is predicted by symbolic threat, realistic threat and intergroup anxiety, but also that negative stereotypes may mediate the effects of the other forms of threat on out-group prejudice. Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman (1999) tested relationship between perceived threat and several immigrant groups in several U.S. student samples. Negative attitudes toward Cuban and Mexican immigrants were significantly predicted by all four threat types, whereas negative attitude towards Asian immigrants were significantly predicted by only three, i.e. realistic threat, symbolic threat and intergroup anxiety (Stephan, Ybarra & Morrison, 2009).

1.2 Immigration and Acculturation

Acculturation has been defined in many ways. More recently, the sociologist Herbert Gans (1999), has defined acculturation as "the newcomers' adoption of the culture, that is, the behavior patterns, practices, values, rules, symbols and so forth, of the host society (or rather an overly homogenized and reified conception of it)" (p.162). This definition is significant because it moves closer to a psychosocial understanding of the concept and it acknowledges that a group's culture is an abstraction that is considered as something concrete (Organista, Marin, & Chun, 2010).

Immigration is a norm rather than an exception in contemporary times. Immigration however, generates as a challenge for both immigrants and host in terms of adjustment. This problem has been studied from cross cultural psychological perspective by Berry (1976, 1990, 1997) and further extended by Bourhis (1997). Berry (2003) suggests that as a result of exposure of two or more cultures, an individual experiences at least two types of changes. At one level are behavioral shifts that affect the way the individual acts in areas as diverse as speech patterns, eating habits, clothing styles or even self-identity. A second level

covers acculturative stress that includes emotional reactions on the part of the individual that can include anxiety and depression (Berry, 1980; Sam & Berry, 2006). The main motive of Berry's model has been to predict the adaptation capacity of the immigrant members by adopting one of the four acculturation strategies- integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. It has been generally concluded that Integrationist strategy among minority members is associated with the most favorable adaptation, Marginalization with the least favorable, and Assimilation and Separation fall between these two extremes (Berry, 1997; Liebkind, 2001, 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2010; Phinney et al., 2001 Ward, 1996). Berry (1997) suggests that the reason behind this trend is that Integration affords the individual some protection because it offers the possibility of social support from two cultural communities in the way that Marginalization, which implies rejection of both communities, cannot.

1.3 Intergroup Relations and Acculturation Choices

Some cross sectional correlational studies have found systematic links between intergroup relations variables and acculturation preferences (Brown and Zagefka, 2011). The existing literature suggests that host society's anti-immigrant attitudes may in part be due to the perception that immigrants pose a threat to the host society's cultural values (e.g., Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). The degree to which immigrants pose a threat toward the host society's cultural values is affected by their acculturation mode (Sam & Berry, 2010). The mismatch mode of acculturation may lead the host society to view immigrants as a threat (Rohmann, Florack & Piontkowski, 2006), whereby the more the immigrants groups adhere to their own culture and identity, the more the host society feels threatened by them (Morrison, Plaut & Ybarra, 2010). The theory of assimilation threat (Paxton and Mughan, 2006) suggests that failure to assimilate in the core culture of the host society constitutes a concrete form of cultural threat. For instance, there exists a widely shared hierarchy of expectations among Americans regarding assimilation behaviour of immigrants, the ability to speak English lies at the core of what "blending in to American society" means for Americans (Paxton and Mughan, 2006). The idea that immigrants pose a threat to the values of the receiving society derives from the general idea according to which the simple perception of differences regarding custom and values raises fear (Rockeach, 1960)" (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). However, contrary to the literature cited, there exists research (Adida, 2008) which suggests that cultural similarities hurt immigrant-host relations countering the conventional wisdom that cultural proximity facilitates social integration.

1.4 Intergroup Similarity as a Threat

Among the first to suggest that bringing groups closer might actually help improve intergroup relation was Allport (1954). Sherif's (1996) classic studies reported reduced in-group favoritism when cooperative contact was introduced after the imposition of a categorical distinction. A considerable and robust research program emerged from this idea that bringing groups together can be an important factor in creating more harmonious relationship (e.g. Brewer & Miller, 1984;

Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1997; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Vople, & Ropp, 1997). It is the general assumption that one of the ways to eliminate prejudice is to eliminate group boundaries. One seldom expresses group based prejudice against ones' own in-group members. Hence, the most common process is to identify a superordinate goal and the establishment of perceived commonalities between the in-group and out-group. This is the principle notion behind Common In-group Identity Model (Gaetner, Dovidio, & Validzic, 1998) which is itself inspired by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987).

Common theories of intergroup relations suggest that attention to group differences will increase prejudice, whereas cultural pluralism model contends that attention to group differences can (under certain conditions) reduce prejudice. Brown (1984) argued that, although perceived similarity will generally lead to positive impressions of an out-group, if the out-group is perceived as threatening to the in-group's status or uniqueness, perception of similarity will result in more negative evaluations of the out-group. Research has shown that when an in-group's status (Mummendey & Schreiber, 1984) or uniqueness (Rocca & Schwartz, 1993) has been brought into question, group members will exhibit increased group bias. According to Social Identity theory (Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Tajfel, 1974), perception of great intergroup similarity can be threatening because it blurs the distinction between groups, making it difficult for individuals to derive a distinctive positive social identity. It is argued that individuals form positive social identities from their various group memberships and are motivated to perceive their in-group as unique and positive. Similar out-groups are seen as threatening this uniqueness and therefore, the individual's positive social identity (Henderson-King, Henderson-King, Zhermer, Posokhova, & Chiker, 1997). Brown (1988) interpreted that intergroup similarity beyond a certain threshold is aversive and threatening. Uniqueness theory (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980), Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) and other models of individuation (e.g. Codol, 1984; Lemaine, 1974), have brought additional insight to the relationship between perceived threat and in-group bias. They postulated that people are motivated to feel moderately different from others, to find an optimal balance between assimilation with and differentiation from others.

II. METHOD

2.1 Objectives

- It was expected that all the four parameters of intergroup threat theory i.e. perceived realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes would be good predictors of prejudice towards out-groups (Nepali and Bangladeshi immigrants).
- It was expected that since the need to feel distinct is strong among the in-group (Assamese), the commonalities between in-group and out-group would trigger threat and hence perceived threat would be higher from only one out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) as oppose to the other out-group (Nepali immigrants), the nature of threat being symbolic.
- It was also expected that perceived realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes will predict multicultural attitudes and acculturation strategies.

2.2 Participants

For the present study, an attempt is being made to investigate how in-group (Assamese student population) perceives immigrant out-groups (Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants). 74 undergraduate students from various colleges of Guwahati were given the questionnaires out of which there were 41 females and 33 males. The age ranged from 17-25 years. Also it was observed that out of 74 participants, 65 of them belonged to Hindu religion and the other 9 were Muslims.

2.3 Dependent Measures

Participants responded to each of the questionnaire items using a seven-point Likert-type scale, which ranged from 1 (not at all) to 7 (Extremely). The scales employed were- prejudice scale (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002), and intergroup anxiety scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1989). Participants also responded to Symbolic Threat scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1996), realistic threat scale (Stephan & Stephan, 1996a), Multicultural Attitude scale (Breugemanns & Van de Vijner, 2004), and negative stereotype (Stephan & Stephan, 1993) each of the questionnaire items had a five-point Likert-type scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

2.4 Procedure

The prime method employed to distribute the questionnaires was snowball technique. The questionnaires were distributed to people known to the researcher which was further dispersed to others, and that is how a sample of seventy four undergraduate students was collected.

III. RESULTS

It was found that in Table 1, mean level of prejudice ($M=31.41$, $SD=7.04$) significantly differed from the mid-point of the scale, which indicates that the in-group (Assamese) show high prejudice towards the out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants). The mean level of intergroup anxiety ($M=49.50$, $SD=10.80$) also significantly differed from the mid-point of the scale, indicating high anxiety displayed by the in-group (Assamese) toward the out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants). For realistic threat the mean level ($M=23.29$, $SD=4.93$) did not differ significantly from the mid-point scale, implying that realistic threat was not explained very well. The mean level of symbolic threat ($M=18.39$, $SD=4.30$) also did not differ significantly from the mid-point scale, suggesting low symbolic threat experienced by the in-group (Assamese) from the out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants). As far as negative stereotype is concerned, the mean level ($M=50.72$, $SD=9.03$) differed significantly from the mid-point scale, indicating high negative stereotype towards the out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants).

As the prejudice increases by 1 unit, intergroup anxiety increased by .428 units. Its corresponding t value ($t=3.835$) is found to be significant at .000 level. For realistic threat, as prejudice increases by 1 unit, realistic threat increased

by .289 units. Its corresponding t value ($t = -2.278$) is insignificant at .026 level. Same trend was found for symbolic threat, where as prejudice increases by 1 unit, symbolic threat increased by .055 units. Its t value ($t = .379$) is insignificant at .706 level. For negative stereotype, as prejudice increases by 1 unit, negative stereotype increased by .153 units. Its t value ($t = 1.370$) is found to be insignificant at .175 level. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that among all the parameters of Intergroup Threat theory, only intergroup anxiety was found to have a significant effect on prejudice in case of Bangladeshi immigrants.

TABLE 1: Means and Standard Deviation of all four parameters of ITT in relation to Prejudice

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Prejudice	31.4189	7.04002	.011
Intergroup Anxiety	49.5000	10.80113	.000 S
Realistic threat	23.2973	4.93722	.026 NS
Symbolic threat	18.3919	4.30615	.706 NS
Negative Stereotypes	50.7297	9.03160	.175 NS

S = Significant, NS = Non significant

Table 2, represents the mean level of intergroup anxiety for Nepali immigrants ($M=30.14$, $SD= 10.73$) which did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting low anxiety towards the Nepali out-group. In comparison, the mean level of intergroup anxiety for Bangladesh ($M=49.50$, $SD=10.80$) differ significantly, implying high anxiety towards Bangladeshi immigrants. The mean level of perceived realistic threat for Nepali immigrants ($M=25.52$, $SD=4.22$) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, indicating low threat towards Nepali immigrants. In case of Bangladeshi immigrants, the mean level of perceived realistic threat ($M=22.91$, $SD=4.21$) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting low threat towards Bangladeshi immigrants too. Coming to perceived symbolic threat, the mean level ($M=20.60$, $SD=3.23$) for Nepali immigrants did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, implying low symbolic threat towards Nepali immigrants. For Bangladeshi immigrants, the mean level ($M= 17.85$, $SD=4.17$) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting low threat towards Bangladeshi immigrants. In case of stereotypes, the mean level ($M=35.36$, $SD=7.53$) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, implying low negative stereotype towards Nepali immigrants. For Bangladeshi immigrants, the mean level ($M=50.72$, $SD=9.03$) differed significantly from the mid-point of the scale, implying high negative stereotype towards

Bangladeshi immigrants. In conclusion, differences among Nepali and Bangladeshi immigrants were found only on two variables i.e. intergroup anxiety and negative stereotype, where both were high for Bangladeshi immigrants in comparison to Nepali immigrants. It was found that the mean level of perceived similarity for one out-group (Nepali immigrants) ($M=14.10$, $SD= 3.60$) did not differ significantly indicating that the in-group did not perceive the out-group (Nepali immigrants) as similar to them. The mean level of perceived similarity for the second out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) ($M=12.95$, $SD=5.86$) also did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting that the participants did not perceive the second out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) similar to them as well.

The t value (Table 2, perceived similarity) for Nepali immigrants was found to be ($t=1.435$) insignificant at .153 level. For Bangladeshi immigrants the t value ($t= 1.435$) was found to be insignificant at .154 level. The t value ($t=7.403$) for intergroup anxiety was found to be significant at .000 (sig. 2 tailed) level. For perceived realistic threat the t value ($t= 3.761$) was found to be significant at .000 (sig. 2 tailed) level. Also for perceived symbolic threat, t value ($t=4.489$) was significant at .000 (sig. 2 tailed) level. Finally for negatives stereotypes, the t value ($t=11.960$) was also found significant at .000 (sig. 2 tailed) level. It is safe to conclude that, all the four independent variables were significant at .000 level, implying that the model was significant

TABLE 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for both out-groups (Nepali and Bangladeshi immigrants) on all parameters of ITT and perceived similarity

	Country	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Intergroup anxiety	Nepal	34.8649	7.54589	7.403 S
	Bangladesh	43.7162	6.98829	
Realistic threat	Nepal	25.5270	4.22070	3.761 S
	Bangladesh	22.9189	4.21594	
Stereotypes	Nepal	34.9865	10.94130	11.960 S
	Bangladesh	59.0270	13.38981	
Symbolic threat	Nepal	20.6081	3.23854	4.489 S
	Bangladesh	17.8514	4.17324	
Perceived Similarity	Nepal	14.1081	3.60961	1.435 NS
	Bangladesh	12.9595	5.86478	

S = Significant, NS= Non significant

Linear regression was run to examine the effect of each independent variable, in this case multiculturalism as a benefit, multiculturalism as a threat, integration and separation on the dependent variable i.e. perceived realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotype. The following was calculated for Bangladeshi immigrants. Interaction of intergroup anxiety with MC as a

benefit, MC as a threat, integration and separation was conducted. Table 3, represents the mean level of intergroup anxiety (M=49.50, SD=10.80) which differed significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting high anxiety towards Bangladeshi immigrants. The mean level of MC as a benefit (M= 23.22, SD=5.15) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting that participants did not indicate multiculturalism as a benefit. For MC as a threat, the mean level (M=18.95, SD=3.90) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, also indicating low threat. The mean level of integration (M=20.52, SD=4.72) did not differ significantly from the mid-point of the scale, suggesting low support for integration by participants. The mean level for separation (M=14.95, SD=5.82) was found to be very close to the mid-point of the scale, indicating support for separation.

TABLE 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of all parameters of ITT and Multicultural attitude and Acculturation strategies

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intergroup Anxiety	49.5000	10.80113
Realistic threat	22.9189	4.21594
Symbolic Threat	17.8514	4.17324
Negative Stereotype	50.7297	9.03160
MC as a benefit	23.2297	5.15924
MC as a threat	18.9595	3.90798
Integration	20.5270	4.72598
Separation	14.9595	5.82728

After linear regression was run, it was found that separation as a preferred acculturation strategy for Bangladeshi immigrants and Integration as a preferred strategy for the Nepali immigrants by the Assamese students.

IV. DISCUSSION

The paramount motive for conducting the research presented in this dissertation was to evaluate Intergroup Threat theory and help Intergroup Threat Theory expand to include perceived similarity as one of the antecedents of threat. Over all the results reveal that only two parameters of Intergroup Threat theory i.e. intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes predicted prejudice for one out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) while none of the parameters of Intergroup Threat theory were good predictors of prejudice for the second out-group (Nepali immigrants). Also in terms of perceived similarity, which was thought to be associated with predicting prejudice, no similarity was discovered between in-group and both the out-groups (Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants). And lastly, for multicultural attitude, separation

(acculturation strategy) was obtained for one out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants), for the second out-group (Nepali immigrants), integration and separation (acculturation strategy) was found, also for the same out-group multicultural was viewed as an advantage.

Intergroup threat theory was employed because theoretically it aptly discussed and attended to the threats which suited the context in which the research is placed. However, the theory suggests that cultural value differences predict perceptions of threat, leading to prejudicial attitudes. After an intense review, it was found out that cultural differences may not always result in feeling threatened by the out-group; rather similarities between opposing parties can be threatening to the in-group, hence thwarting intergroup relations. There has been conflicting positions of intergroup similarity as a predictor of prejudice. On one hand there are set of theories (Common In-group identity model, assimilation model, similarity-attraction hypothesis) which postulate that when contact is established, similarity between parties in disagreement can literally ameliorate intergroup relations. On the other hand, other theories (e.g. Social identity theory, Uniqueness theory) suggests that similarity between opposing groups can threaten their distinctiveness and uniqueness, thus leading to more negative attitudes which in turn hinders intergroup relations. Perceived intergroup similarity, which has the potential to undermine one's sense of positive distinctiveness, could lead to greater endorsement of negative intergroup attitudes (Brown, 2000). The simplest and explicit conclusion to draw from the review of the literature and from the documented evidence is that contact which supposedly increases intergroup similarity may or may not foster intergroup relations.

The present research measured perceived similarity, calculations revealed no similarity between in-group (Assamese) and the two out-groups (Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants). Similarity was expected between in-group and one of the out-groups (only Bangladeshi immigrants), which was not supported by the results obtained. It was expected that perceived similarity between conflicting groups will predict prejudice, but in this case, this expectation could not be reached. The present study failed to take into account the role of intergroup conflict when evaluating perceived similarity between in-group (Assamese) and out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants).

The current study also predicts that realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes will be good predictors of prejudice for both the out-groups (Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants). However, the results indicated that realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotype did not predict prejudice for one of the out-groups (Nepali immigrants), for the second out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) only negative stereotype and intergroup anxiety predicted prejudice. It must be noted that as mentioned before that negative stereotype and intergroup anxiety was later appended to the Intergroup threat theory because both the factors in some way anticipate negative consequences. No threat was displayed explicitly in results but indirectly informs negative aftermath. The results obtained do not bolster the hypothesis thoroughly.

Lastly, the present research also attempted to investigate multicultural attitude of in-group (Assamese) towards the out-groups (Bangladeshi and Nepali immigrants). It was predicted that differences will be observed regarding multicultural attitude. The results were consistent with the prediction, for the first out-group (Bangladeshi immigrants) only separation (acculturation strategy) was unveiled. For the second out-group (Nepali immigrants) integration and separation (acculturation strategies) was found, and the in-group saw multicultural as a benefit in relation to the same out-group. Findings exhibits that prior prejudice plays a role on the effects of acculturation preferences on own acculturation preferences (Zagefka et al., 2012).

V. CONCLUSION

The study built on and contributed to work into inter-group relations, in specific relations to immigrants. This study attempted to understand this relationship (between Assamese and Bangladeshi and Nepali Immigrants). As such the study provided an understanding of the disliking Assamese have toward Bangladeshi immigrants in particular as well as reasons behind animosity and negative attitudes toward Bangladeshi immigrants. Furthermore, it provided an understanding based on the Integrated Threat Theory.

VI. REFERENCES

1. Adida, C.L. (2008). Too close for comfort? Immigrant –Host relations in sub-saharan Africa. Department of Political Science, Stanford University
2. Banaji, M.R. & Hardin, C.D. (2014). Automatic Stereotyping. *Psychological Science*. Vol.7, No.3
3. Bijukumar, V. (2013). Social Exclusion and Ethnicity in Northeast India. *The NEHU Journal*. Vol.11, No.2, 19-35
4. Bourhis, R.Y., Moise, L.C., Perreault, S. & Senecal, S. (1997). Towards an Interactive Acculturation Model: a social psychological approach. *International Journal of psychology*. Vol, 32. No.6, 369-386
5. Brewer, M.B. (1979). In-group Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A cognitive-Motivational Analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*. Vol.86, No.2, 307-324
6. Brewer, M.B., Ethnocentrism and prejudice: a search for universals. The Ohio state University.
7. Brown, L.M. & Lopez, G.E. (2001). Political Contacts: Analysing the Role of Similarity in Theories of Prejudice. *Political Psychology*. Vol.22, No.2.
8. Brown, R. (2004). Prejudice- Its social psychology. Blackwell Publishing.
9. Brown, R. & Zagefka, H. (2011). The dynamics of acculturation: an intergroup perspective. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. Vol.44
10. Croucher, S.M. (2012). Integrated threat theory and acceptance of immigrant assimilation: an analysis of Muslim immigration in Western Europe. *Communication Monographs*. Vol.80, No.1, 46-62
11. Croucher, S.M., Galy-Badenas, F. & Ruotsalainen, M. (2014). Host culture Acceptance, Religiosity, and the Threat of Muslim Immigration: An Integrated Threat Analysis in Spain.
12. Devine, P.G. (1989). Stereotypes and Prejudice: their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of personality and Social psychology*. Vol.56, No.1, 5-18
13. Gabarrot, F., Falomir-Pichastor, J.M. & Mugny, G. (2009). Being similar versus being equal: Intergroup similarity moderates the influence of in-group norms on discrimination and prejudice. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. 48, 253-273
14. Gonzalez, K.V, Verkuyten, M., Weesie, J. & Poppe, E. (2008). Prejudice towards Muslims in Netherlands: testing Integrated Threat theory. *The British Psychological Society*. 47, 667-685
15. Goswami, N. (2010). Bangladeshi Illegal Migration into Assam: Issues and Concerns from the field. IDSA Issue Brief