

CHAPTER 3

Electoral Politics in Assam: Historical Trends and the Role of Religion

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter intends to highlight the communal angle in the electoral politics of Assam. In this chapter, efforts have been made to understand the electoral politics of Assam from the pre-Independence Period to 2021 election and the role of religion in it. In addition, the chapter tries to analyze the electoral trends of Assam (in general) from 2006 Vidhan Sabha to 2021 Vidhan Sabha elections and how religion played its role over the years. The chapter also tries to understand the electoral trends in three of the research sites from 2006 Vidhan Sabha election onwards and try to highlight the role of religion in these trends.

The researcher wants to start the chapter with a critical remark, which is ‘instances of demonstrating communal remarks and hate speeches by some of the prominent political leaders in Assam is becoming a trending phenomenon’. In this regard, multiple examples can be cited. In more recent times, communalism has taken a prominent place in the political discourse of Assam. However, if we look at the early history, the idea of assimilation and melting point was clearly visible amidst common people. Including the architect of the Ahom’s places, especially temple and so on, and amiable relationship between saint Sankardeva and his disciple, Chandsai, were some of the remarkable examples of social inclusivity and pluralism in Assam. It is said that, there was a Muslim army leader in the troop of Lachit Barphukan who fought bravely against the Mughal force (Guha, 2016).

After the treaty of Yandaboo in 1826, Assam was annexed to the British Empire. In addition, on 12th September 1874, British added Srikhatta with the mainland of Assam. Due to various reasons, both Hindu and Muslim religious people stood against this separation of Srikhatta from ‘Banga’ or the undivided Bengal. Regardless of any religion, people from Srikhatta did not want to be added with such an underdeveloped area like Assam. These people also wanted to exercise their everyday affairs under the purview of Bengal revenue regulation (Goswami, 2012).

After this, addition of Srikhatta with Assam, the mainland of Assam was divided into four parts:

- 1 Various illiterate tribal population in hills and plains.
- 2 The mainland area of Assam, which includes Brahmaputra valley with Assamese speaking people.
- 3 Goalpara district with the presence of both Hindus and Muslims.
- 4 Bangla speaking Srikhatta and Cachar district (Guha, 2016).

In this newly born state, Surma valley was dominated by the Muslim people and Brahmaputra valley was dominated by the Hindus. During that time, the Muslim population was one-third of the collective population of Assam. This strict separation in demography instituted the politics of interest regarding religion and ethnicities (Bhuyan & De, 2008).

The spiritual tests and other known history of Assam basically stands upon inclusiveness and plurality. But, the changing dynamics of the 21st century politics of Assam brought vigorous changes to the attitude of the people of Assam. The Assamese people who hesitated to talk openly on communalism, and who did not want to establish a society based on communal clashes and religious animosity, now openly started to take part in these issues (Dutta, 2021). The possible reason for this polarization may lie in the fact that there was an impact of pan-Indian politics over regional politics of Assam, where politician of various political parties started to get benefits from clear separation of religious identities and polarization of different religious groups (ibid.). In this context, it is difficult to assume for the future, but based on the records of the past election, the researcher is trying to highlight and decipher the meaning, tune, and the line of communal politics in Assam. An attempt is thus made, to understand its genesis, evolution and the changing trends.

3.2 Understanding communal politics of Assam from Historical Perspective

3.2.1 Pre-Independence period

3.2.1.1 Year 1891 – 1901: To trace the origin of the communal politics in Assam, we must look back to the decade of 1891 to 1901. This decade signifies a history of change

in the demography of Assam. During this decade, in various districts of Assam, population change was so noticeable that one can easily term the decade as a decade of immigration in pre-independence era. If we look at the Brahmaputra Valley, the increase in population rate was 5.7% and increase in population rate of Surma Valley was more than 6%. Among the districts of Brahmaputra Valley, the rate of population significantly increased in Lakhimpur district with 46.1% growth. Here, the 16% population growth rate happened through natural reasons and 30% population growth rate happened due to immigration. Population growth rate in Sivasagar district was 24.41% and half of which was the result of immigration (Guha, 2016).

(3.2.1.2) Year 1906 – 1912: Next, if we look at the period of 1906 – 1912, the most notable and remarkable incident was the Bengal partition or division. There was certain degree of separateness that already existed in the society. There were various reasons such as, the Ultra nationalist sentiments of various nationalist leaders. Spreading of such narratives for example, only Hindus were attaining top government officials, sparked various communal conflicts in some regions. This mindset of separateness gave fuel to the communal tension during the time when Bengal division took place. In the towns of Mymensing and other districts, several communal processions and gatherings led to the communal riots. Lord Curzon left no stone unturned to grab the opportunity to polarize the population and divided them based on religion to sustain the British rule in India. Majority of the Hindus stood against the decision since the Muslims middle class already had a feeling of separatism and marginalization. Curzon managed to attain the support of the Muslims landlords (Goswami, 2012).

(3.2.1.3) Year 1907 – 1915: In this period, we can notice a rise of Muslim communalism. In 1892, some foreign officials of British Raj wanted to add Chattagong division of Bengal province with Assam. In 1896–97, the chief commissioner wanted to add Dhaka and Mymensing along with Chattagong into Assam. British administration wanted to clear a roadway for transportation of tea and other natural materials. Certain parts of Bengal province were to be added with Assam. In 1905, the status of Assam province came to end and the chief commissioner, Foorer was appointed as the governor of new joint province of East Bengal and Assam (Guha, 2016).

A well-known revolutionary, Bipin Ch. Pal added some Hindu religious and spiritual elements to anti-Bengal division (Swadeshi) movement. He inspired the Hindu youth to

be violent against the supporting power of Bengal division. This was only because of less population of Hindus in the newly formed province. Muslims were happy with the decision only because of having most of the Muslim population in this newly born province (Bhuyan & De, 2008).

(3.2.1.4) Year 1912 – 1920: In the month of November 1912, Assam legislative council was formed. Serious Assamese thinkers like Padmanath Gohain Baruah assumed that the name Assam will be dissolved due to Bengal division. But, the creation of Assam legislative council ushered a ray of hope against such assumption. That council was formed according to the Council Act 1909. The first meeting of the council held on 2nd January 1913, where the majority of members were British. In 1918, the second Assam legislative council was formed, where 12 members were Indian and 13 members were British. Still, most of the members were British. In these newly formed Assam legislative council, the British members worked as government and Indian members worked as opposition. But, among the opposition, within the Indian members, Assamese and Bengali were representing two fractions due to their difference in linguistic nationalism (Goswami, 2012).

In the first world war period, Hindu nationalist section led by Bipin Ch Pal and Muslim youths and the middle class came out against Britishers. This made a coalition between Hindu and Muslim against the common enemy, British. This resulted into Congress Muslim Accord in 1916, reconciliation between the extremists and the moderate sections of Congress by placing a memorandum with the initiatives Md. Ali Jinnah, Kamini Kr Chand and other 19 members of central legislative council (Guha, 2016).

After this coalition between the Hindus and Muslims, a slight increase in the immigration to Assam was noticed. Among the immigrants, 85 % were Muslim and it happened from East Bengal. East Bengal was a populous region. Lack of opportunities to work for living led to immigration towards Assam. As compared to East Bengal, Assam had low density of population and these immigrated Muslims managed to survive in such terrains like rivers and forests. Various Assamese landlords also used to sell lands to these immigrated people. But with the course of time, this led to a various conflict between immigrants and local people. According to the Census Commissioner the immigration to Assam was as a peaceful attack. The 'line system' was adopted in 1920 to solve these clashes (Goswami, 2012).

(3.2.1.5) Year 1920 – 1947: On 13th July 1927, Mahadev Shama raised a proposal to stop allotting land to immigrants. This proposal made by a Hindu made a clear division between Hindus and Non-Hindus. Since majority of the immigrants were Muslims. In this period, the Muslim community got divided into two sects, indigenous Muslims and Pomuas or immigrant Muslims. Though the religion was same, difference in their mentality and socio-economic milieu is different (Bhuyan & De, 2008).

In 1935, on 8th September, a conference called Assam Valley Muslim Political Conference was held. At first, this conference made it clear that Government of India Act 1935 as unsatisfactory and unusable. Secondly, the conference made a way for communal solution and ensured a talk between Md. Ali Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad. Thirdly, a group of people was formed to discuss on separation of Srikhatta. The team was led by Fakharuddin Ali Ahmed and Saddulla. In addition to these advancements, Assamese regionalist Ambikagiri Raichoudhury formed 'Asomiya Sangrakhini Sabha'. Leaders like Nilamoni Phukan forced the Congress to consider immigration as an attack on Assamese ethnicity. The British civil servant, A.C. Mulan commented that in the period of 1921 -31, Nagaon was captured by them (immigrant Muslims) (Guha, 2016).

In this period, a significant growth in Muslims politics was seen in Assam. Prominent figures like Moulana Bhasani worked hard for the formation of provincial branches of the Muslim League in Assam. He also started agitating against the 'line system'. Moulana Bhasani separated the Muslim community from the Congress. On the other hand, through the influence of Deoband School of Islamic Theology, Jamiat was formed. Prominent figure like Hussian Ahmed Madani were responsible for the formation of Jamiat. Jamiat stood against the Muslim League's view of dividing India based on religion and allied with the Congress in the struggle for independence. Their minority politics had notable impact on communal politics of Assam (Goswami, 2012).

The GoI Act 1935 mainly ensured popular government with the help of collective responsibility and provincial autonomy for the provinces. Therefore, in 1937, Assam also entered into parliamentary system. For a brief understanding of communalism in parliamentary politics, the table 3.1 mentions the number of Muslim members in each ministry along with the head of the governments.

Table 3.1: Representation of Muslim Members in various Ministries (Year 1937-1946)

Time	Head of the Government	No. of Muslims ministers in the Ministry
April 1937	Muhhamad Saadulla	3 Muslim members in 5-member ministry (3:5)
February 1938	MuhhamadSaadulla	3 Muslim members in 6-member ministry (3:6)
September 1938	Gopinath Bordolai	3 Muslim members in 8 members ministry (3:8)
Up to 1946	Saadulla	In each ministry 5 Muslim member in 10-member ministry (5:10)

(Source: Guha, 2016, p.179.)

It is clear from table 3.1, that under the headship of Muhamaad Sadullah, the approximate ratio of Muslim ministers to the total number of ministers was always 1:2, except the government headed by Gopinath Bordoloi.

(3.2.1.6) 1946 provincial election:

In 1946 provincial election, the Congress swept the general constituencies. Out of the 34 Muslim dominated seats, 31 were claimed by the Muslim League, only three were claimed by Jamiat-ul-ulema-e-Hind. Among the 3 seats claimed by Jamiat, two seats were from Sylhet (that is the present Bangladesh) and one from Cachar (present Assam). Prominent Muslim leader Fakhr Uddin Ali Ahmed won in 1937 election from Kamrup (North) but lost in 1946 as a League candidate in the same constituency. Though Assamese indigenous people support Congress, it lost their Sivsagar and Lakhimpur seats. The seats reserved for Muslims were also lost by the Congress. A significant rise in Muslim League politics was noticed subsequently (Nath, 2021).

3.2.2 post-Independence period:

The communal representations of the electoral politics of Assam in the post-independence period has been depicted in the tables 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 as mentioned below.

Table 3.2: Data of Communal Politics in Post-Independence period (Year 1952-1972)

Year	Total no. of Constituencies	No of Contestants	Total no. seats won from Congress	No. of Muslims Won				
				Congress	Indp	PSP	SWA	Total
1952	94	105	75	8	7	-	-	15
1957	94	108	71	11	1	3	-	15
1962	105	409	79	12	-	2	-	14
1967	126	487	73	10	7	2	1	20
1972	114	476	95	20	-	-	1	21

Note: Indp: Independent, SWA: Swatantra Party, PSP: Praja Socialist Party.

Table 3.3: Data of Communal Politics in Post-Independence period (Year 1978-2001)

Parties	1978		1983		1985 (10.85% of total votes polled)		1991		1996		2001	
	No of seats won	Muslim won	No of Seats won	Muslims won	No of seats won	Muslims won	No of seats won	Muslims	No of seats won	Muslims	No of seats won	Muslims won
INC	26		91	30	25	5	65	16	34	11		
INC(I)	8	10(Inc+Inc(I))										
CPI	5	1	1				4	1	3	1		
CPI(M)	11	1	2		2		2	1	2	1		
JNP	53	7						1				
NC(S)				2								
RCPI	4	1										
UMFA					17				2	3		
ICS			2		4	1						
BJP							10		4		8	
AGP					63		19	1			20	4
JD							1	1				
AGP&Jamiat									59	9		
AIIC(T)									2			
INC&Jamiat											70	13
ASDC							4		5		2	
AITC												1
SAP											1	1
NCP											3	1
SP											1	1
UTNLF					1							
PTC	4		3		3							
Indep	15	8	10	6	92	16	15		11	2	19	2
Total	126	28	109	38	126	22	126	21	122	27	126	23

Note: CPI: Communist Party of India, CPI(M): Communist Party of India(Marxist), JNP: Janata Party ,NC (S): National Congress (Socialist), RCPI: Revolutionary Communist Party of India, UMFA: United Minorities Front, Assam, ICS: Indian National Congress (Socialist),JD: Janata Dal, AIIC (T): All India Indira Congress (Tiwari), ASDC: Autonomous State Demand committee , AITC: All India Trinamol Congress, SAP: Samata Party, NCP: Nationalist Congress Party, SP: Samajwadi Party, UTNLF: United Tribal Nationalist Liberation Front, PTC: Plain Tribals Council of Assam .

Table 3.4: Data of Communal Politics in Post-Independence period (Year 2006-2021)

Parties	2006		2011		2016		2021	
	No of seats won	Muslim won	No of Seats won	Muslims won	No of seats won	Muslims won	No of seats won	Muslims
INC	53	9	78	9	26	12	29	8
INC(I)								
CPI	1							
CPI(M)	2						1	
AGP(P)	1							
UMFA								
ASDC	1							
BJP	10		5		60	1	60	
AGP	24	3	10	1	14		9	
UPPL							6	
AGP & Jamiat								
AIIC(T)								
BPF			12		12		4	
AITMC			1					
SAP								
NCP	1							
SP								
AIUDF	10	8	18	15	13	12	16	5
LKS	1	1						
Indep	22	4	2	1	1		1	
Total	126	25	126	26	126	25	126	13

Note: AGP (P): Asom Gana Parishad Pragatishil, UMFA: United Minorities Front, Assam, ASDC:Autonomous State Demand committee , UPPL: United People’s Party Liberal ,AIIC (T): All India Indira Congress (Tiwari), BPF: Bodoland People’s Front , AITMC: All India Trinamol Congress , SAP: Samanta Party , NCP: National Congress Party , SP: Samajwadi Party , LKS: Loko Sammilon.

Source: (Nath, 2021), (Phukan, 2019), (Baishya, 2014), <http://www.election.in>

As seen from the given tables, after independence, the communal politics in Assam took a new path. Due to the demarcation of boundary lines, various Muslim dominating parts

were included in the newly born East Pakistan. The communal politics of Muslim League and Jamiat also had its own way of politics. After independence, Muslim League had lost its significance and Md. Sadullah joined the Congress party. Fakharuddin Ali Ahmed worked as an interlocutor between the Congress and Sadullah (Nath, 2021).

Fakharuddin Ali Ahmed made possible an en-masse joining of Sadullah into Congress. Thus, the Muslim League leaders who chose Assam and overall, India as their first choice for living became political companion of Congress. Saddullah was an indigenous Muslim. Therefore, his joining of the Congress was not enough for Congress to win the tribal dominated seats of Assam. Therefore, the Congress also tied up with Jamiat. The Leaders of Jamiat from Chachar and Uttar Pradesh came to Assam to enhance that political tie up of Congress and Jamiat (Talukdar, 2019).

The Congress tied up with various Muslim fronts due to various reasons. Firstly, Congress tried to put an effort to establish a regime with the grand support it had from the masses. But, without the support of tribal and anti-Congress political parties, it was necessary for the Congress to come together with the Muslims. Serious demands for separate land by the people in Naga Hills, Lushai Hills, and Khasi and Jaintia Hills compelled the Congress to rely more on the Muslims. On the other hand, Muslims also wanted to be associated with the power holders and to take serious political steps to upgrade the social and economic status of the Muslims (Nath, 2021).

If we notice the first election after independence, the total Muslim candidates who won the assembly election was 15. Among these fifteen candidates, 8 candidates were from Congress and 7 candidates won as independent candidates. These 7 independent candidates completely relied on the minority votes of the following constituencies including South Salmara, West Bilasipara, Dhubri, Laharighat etc. But, in the next election of 1957, although the same numbers of Muslim candidates won but the number of winning candidates from the Congress party increased to 11. An independent Muslim candidate won from Muslim dominated constituency, Dalgaon. A merechange was noticed in the second election because another party called Proja Socialist Party (PSP) came into the scenario and there were three main Muslim candidates who won election representing the same. It was the first instance where Muslim candidate relied upon another political party rather than the Congress. Constituencies such as South Salmara

and Bilasipara had independent candidates that is anti-Congress Muslim MLA already and this anti-Congress sentiment was used by the PSP (Nath, 2014).

The third election was held in 1962. In this election, the Brahmaputra Valley mainly agitated for making Assamese as the official language of Assam. A revolution was also built up through student organizations and Assamese nationalist. But the composition of Assam, just after the independence, was wider and fuller of varieties. The State Reorganization Commission (SRC) submitted its report and suggested to form the state of Assam with the exclusion of NEFA and Manipur. The GOI accepted the recommendation of SRC and the Constitution (seventh amendment) Act came into existence. But this was opposed by parties like All party Hill Leaders Conference. Nagaland and Mizoram also wanted to be separated. These demands got more relevance when the Assamese Language Act 1960 was implemented. This Act made Assamese as the state official language of Assam. But the people like Nagas and Mizos had their own language and cultures among various tribes and sub-tribes. These made a clear reason for separation of tribal dominated area with the mainland Assam (Talukdar, 2019).

After that in 1967 election, the tribal dominance from Assam was largely reduced. Therefore, this situation increased the opportunity for Muslims to have more representation. This played a vital role for having 20 Muslim MLAs in 1967 election and most importantly, the Congress was not the only party to give representation for Muslim candidates. That also means in the previous elections, Muslims were only dependent upon the main power bloc Congress. The Muslim candidates won from other parties like Swatantrata, PSP and 7 Muslim independent candidates won from constituencies like Mancachar, Baghbar, Rupahihat, Dhing, etc. Many clashes were seen in Dhing, Doboka, Laharighat, Kharupetia, etc., between Hindu Bengalis and immigrant Muslims. In the early 70s, through the 72 movement, a widespread awareness for Assamese language was seen and immigrant Muslims stood strongly for it. On 5th October 1971, All Assam Students Union (AASU) called a day long strike in support of the Assamese language. During the strike, a clash between Hindu Bengalis and immigrant Muslims caused the death of Muzamil Haque (Baishya, 2014).

In the 1972 election, Congress had secured a clear majority. Election was held for 114 constituencies and Congress won 95 of them. Factors like India's win against Pakistan in 1971 Indo-Pak war, charismatic leadership of Indira Gandhi etc., favours a huge win for

the Congress. There were 21 Muslim MLAs and 20 were from the Congress. Here, a serious impact of the voting behaviour by Muslims can be noticed. As a community, Muslim voting behaviour never has been seen as constant and predictable. In the 1962 election, Congress had 86% of the total Muslim MLAs. In the 1972 election, Congress had 95% of total Muslim MLAs and while in 1967 it won only 50% (Nath, 2021).

After Emergency period, a serious anti-Congress environment was seen in Assam. Due to intra-party clashes, the Congress was divided into India National Congress (INC) and Indian National Congress (Indira) [INC(I)]. Both the INC and INC(I) combined won 10 Muslim MLAs. Numbers of Muslim MLAs from Janata Party (JNP) were 7, CPI 1, CPI(M) 1, RCI 1. Due to the lack of faith upon the Congress among the common people, Muslim reliability on Congress also decreased. 8 Muslims candidates won independently on their respective assembly seats (Baishya, 2014).

If we look at the politics of Muslim people, then a linguistic alliance with Assamese people and a political alliance with the Congress could clearly be seen.

In 1977, the first ever Muslim-based political party called Eastern Indian Muslim Association (EIMA) was formed. Earlier, the independent Muslim candidates already had a tendency of establishing a root-based politics of Muslims but the formation of such political parties carry forwarded this view. EIMA also won 2 seats in 1978 election. It merged with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and finally emerged as Eastern Zonal Muslim League. In Assam, the late 70s is commonly known for the agitation against outsiders. With the secular ideologues, the agitation was against immigrants regardless of any religion (Nath, 2015). From most of the immigrants, majority of them belonged to Islam. Because of this, the movement also took a communal turn. Various Muslim leaders of Assam Movement and AASU either restricted themselves from agitating or separated themselves from AASU. The movement was mainly led by the students of Assam. In February 2, 1980, a memorandum was submitted by the agitating students in front of state machinery. The memorandum had seven demands, and the first demand was foreign nationals must be deleted and deported from the country. The movement has started against outsiders. It includes outsiders from Indian states as well. But it shifted the idea of foreigners and thus the Assam Movement took a communal turn (ibid).

Students' organizations such as Akhil Bharatiya Vidyathi Parishad (ABVP) also supported Assam Movement. Prior to that, these organizations were not so much notable in Assam history. These organizations consisted of students from the majority religious group, Hindus. This was criticized by Islamic cleric Moulana Asad Madani, national president of Jamiat and a Congress MP. He commented that such accord encourages separation and secession by creating Assam for Assamese. Prafulla Kr Mahanta, a prominent student leader and two times chief minister of Assam, then denied the influence of Hindutva ideology in Assam politics and Assam Movement. This is either to maintain law and order or to not accept the Hindutva ideology over secular ideology of the Congress. Hiteswar Saikia also nullified the Hindutva elements in Assam Movement. But later, personalities like Hiranya Kr Bhattacharya, veteran police officer who started to rise consciousness of Assamese people against illegal immigration, also joined in BJP. This indicates a Hindu upraise against the political activities of Muslims (Nath, 2021).

As against this, if we noticed the role of Jamiat in Assam Movement, then there is nothing to hide that, they openly opposed the core issues of Assam Movement. Jamiat mainly opposed the idea of registering citizen based on 1951 Live Register. NRC was completely opposed by them, only to safeguard the immigrants who came after 1951. It was interesting to observe that during late 80's, when Assam Movement started to take a new shift, Jamiat began to advocate the rights of minorities against the movement (ibid.). A committee namely, Citizen Rights Preservation Committee (CRPC) was formed aligned with this advocacy. If we look at the fourth resolution of the 14th Conference of "Assam unit of Jamiat", then it is clearly mentioned that it had expressed grave concerns at the attempt of the central Election Commission to correct the voters list based on 1971. Other organization such as AAMSU and Tablique Jamat were also formed and have tried to uphold the minority issues. Therefore, Assam Movement is the period when a clear communal divide was seen practically in the politics of Assam. Hindus stood for Hindus and minorities stood for minorities. In the previous years of Assam Movement, though the communal hatred and separations were only limited to some issues, but the Assam movement entirely communalized the politics of Assam (Talukdar, 2019).

The Indian democracy is stood upon the number equation. If we consider the number equations, Janata government led by Golap Borborah and Jogen Hazarika were also leading minority governments. Then Anuwara Taimur became the chief minister of Assam in 1980. Since Taimur belonged to minority community, the government was also

termed as minority government. Then Assamese Media constantly tried to spread the news of Muslims being more benefitted under the Muslim Chief Minister. This environment cleared the path of RSS and BJP to mobilize the masses in communal way. The tendency of appeasing Muslims by the Congress(I) high command also led to communal politics in Assam. On the one hand, the birth of AAMSU, Anuwara Taimur's chief ministership, and on the other hand, the connections of some leaders of the movement with Hindutva organization and influence of Muslim religious forces made Assam Movement more communal (Nath, 2014).

In 1983, the immigrant Muslims, plain Tribals, Nepalese, tea garden labourers and Bengali Hindus organized themselves to resist the Assam agitation. Then a clear distinction between supporters and opponents of the election of 1983 was seen. On 12thFebruary, 1983, religious conflict resulted into killing of both Assamese and immigrants. 130 AASU members were martyred during 1983 election. On 18thFebruary 1983, a large-scale massacre in Nellie took place, which was a clear result of communal conflict between Hindus and Muslims. On 10thApril, 1983, newly elected CM, Hiteswar Saikia alleged that the volunteers of the movement had directly involved in the massacre. This resulted into alienation of Muslims from the Assam movement. Muslim leaders of AASU gathered themselves and took decision of making a clear separation from AASU (Nath & Goswami, 2007).

Sympathy of Congress towards Muslims and immigrants could be seen through the Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act. Primarily, it was enacted in 1983 by Indira Gandhi government. The Act was passed to detect minorities and to give safeguard to the minorities. Indian states through different reports and comments, remarked that the minorities were harassed during the Assam agitation. As a result, IMDT was enacted to make a clear appeasement of the minorities in Assam. The enactment of IMDT Act divided social organization into two groups. The first one supported the IMDT Act and the next one were opposers to the same. The previous ones were the supporters of illegal Bangladeshis and they wanted to safeguard their human rights. Congress as the architect of the Act gained massive support among both Hindus and Muslim immigrants. Since in number, Muslim immigrants were large, therefore, 1983 election during Assam Movement was clearly divided on the basic of religious sentiments. Immigrants stood in favour of 1983 election. AASU also targeted the immigrants and stood against the election. Through this massive support of immigrants,

Indian National Congress won 91 numbers of seats out 109 Assembly constituencies in the 1983 assembly election (Talukdar, 2019).

After the Assam Movement, a political awareness took place among ‘participants of the agitation’. In the year 1985, a political entity, AGP was formed by AASU. Therefore, the minority groups formed various political groups including CRPC, AAMSU, All Assam Minority Front, All Assam Minority Gana Parishad. Assam unit of Jamiat organized themselves and formed UMFA. In the history of Assam politics, it was the first instance where election was held between two communally divided fronts. The first one supported Assam Movement and the second one opposed the same. Therefore, Assam Movement had much influence on communal politics in Assam (Nath, 2021).

In 1985 election, AGP formed the government in Assam. On the other hand, UMFA with 17 seats and 10.85% of total seats polled appeared as the saviour of minority sentiments. But, mainly due to the Hindu Bengali leadership in UMFA, Muslim leaders defected to other parties. Gradually UMFA, disintegrated several times and left serious influence on the politics of Assam. The easiest option for Jamiat and these disintegrated leaders were to join the Congress. In 1991 election, UMFA could not win any seats. A trend of majoritarian politics was seen in Assam to counter Jamiats political activism. This helped BJP to gain ground in Assam politics. Mainly due to Ram Temple Movement, BJP as an alternative to the Congress for Barak Valley Hindus and reaction to Jamiat, BJP could win 10 seats in 1991 assembly election. AGP also disintegrated into AGP and Notun AGP. Thus, AGP and BJP relied upon majority politics and Congress with the support of Jamiat hold the support of Minorities (Baishya, 2014).

The minority front of Assam had a tendency of supporting the party who formed the government. For this solereason, Jamiat supported AGP alliance despite the fact that it opposed the Assam Accord where AASU was the key signatory. Therefore, the Hindus of Barak valley offered their support to the Congress for defeating AGP-Jamiat Alliance. AGP made pre-poll alliance with communist parties including CPI and CPI(M), regional parties like Autonomus State Demand Committee (ASDC), Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and United Peoples Progressive Alliance (UPPA). AGP formed the government with 68 seats. Only due to the alliance with Jamiat, AGP managed to win four seats with the support of Hindu Bengalis. Congress increased its wining constituencies from 4 to 7 in Barak Valley. BJP had won in 4 seats whereas it managed to win in 9 seats in the

previous election. It is already mentioned that the Jamiat had a very good connection with AGP since a decade. Therefore, for reasons such as AGP's support to 'D' voter concept initiated by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in 1998, AGP's support towards BJP led NDA, the alliance could not go for long (Phukan, 2019).

In 2001 election, Jamiat had to support Congress. Congress also needed support to form the government. AGP stood for Assamese nationalism and it supported BJP led NDA. Therefore, Hindu Bengalis did not support AGP. This helped Congress to form the government with 70 members of seats (Nath, 2015).

If we overlook the growth of majoritarian politics in 1951, Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha and All India Bharatiya Jana Sangha contested in 1 and 3 seats respectively. In 1962, Jana Sangh (JS) contested in 4 seats. In 1967, Bharatiya Jana Sangha contested in 20 seats. On the contrary to this, representing the minority front EIMA, a Muslim political party emerged in 1977 and disappeared in 1978. In 1985, when AGP formed the government. UMFA with the support of Jamiat become third largest party with 17 seats. In 1991, 1996 & 2001 the government formed by the Congress, AGP and Congress again respectively had the support of Jamiat. In 2001 census, the Muslim population of Assam was 30.92%. Therefore, this percentage of total population played a crucial role in Assam Politics (Bhaishya, 2014; Nath, 2021).

In 2005, IMDT Act was nullified by the Supreme Court of India. In Sarbananda Sonowal vs UOI case, Sarbananda Sonowal got a huge popularity among Assamese people for his sole contribution to diminish IMDT Act. When IMDT Act was challenged by Sonowal and three Judges bench of Supreme Court gave verdict against this, another phase of communal politics in Assam got new pace. The Muslim community considered this verdict as an attack on their existence. Therefore, to enhance political consciousness of Muslims, the President of Jamiat Assam unit, Maulana Badaruddin Ajmal formed a political outfit called Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) in 2005. Ajmal was blessed by Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid. Three years later, AUDF reemerged as All India United Democratic Front. This growth of communal environment in Assam made assembly elections to be fought on communal grounds from 2006 onwards (Nath, 2016).

2006 is the year when the veteran Congress leader, Tarun Gogoi initiated the politics of soft Hindutwa of Congress. He wanted to cater the votes of ethnic Assamese tribes and Hindus. Tarun Gogoi questioned Ajmal, who led the Muslim political front of Assam,

for supporting immigrants Muslims. Due to this tribal politics, the political outfit of Bodos, Bodo People Front (BPF) supported Congress to form the government in 2006. Congress formed the government with 53 MLAs. Tarun Gogoi asked for updating NRC based on 1951 as cut of year. The enactment of NRC was also a long-time demand of AASU and AGP. AUIFD won ten seats and got 9.03% of the total votes polled. In 2001 census, the Muslim population was one-third of the total population in Assam. This made a huge success possible for AUIFD. Non-Muslims became politically subjugated. Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi asked publicly 'who is Badruddin'? Prior to the election of 2006, Tarun Gogoi's decision of clear separation of Congress from the Muslim Front made Assam politics more communal. The environment was so intense that, the Muslim Front, which was always an ally with the government, gradually emerged themselves as a strong opposition. That way, Assam Assembly was divided based on religion. It is notable that the government was formed by the Congress with 78 seats and on the other hand, the main opposition party was AIUFD with 18 seats in 2011 election. Therefore, in Assam, Congress played a vital role by mobilizing soft Hindutwa ideology and BJP stucked to their ideology of hard Hindutwa. But in Barak Valley, due to the AGP-BJP alliance, soft Hindutwa of Congress party over powered BJP's hard Hindutwa, a result of which Congress won 13 seats in Barak Valley (Talukdar, 2019).

AIUFD was mainly formed to represent the Muslims of all over India. But it could never be a reality. In any other states except Assam, AIUFD had almost zero influence. Leader of the party, Maulana Badaruddin Ajmal only tried to create a charismatic and divine image among Muslims of Assam. The immigrant Muslims are less likely to be educated through formal education. Therefore, Ajmal made himself as a divine leader through the use of various means of superstitious elements and political offerings. Despite constituting more than one-third of total population in Assam, the consolidation of Muslim votes in one political party was never possible. Because Muslim population was defected in various political parties. In 2006, 8 Muslim candidates won from AUIFD and 17 Muslim candidates won from other political parties. Similarly, in 2011 assemble election, 15 Muslim candidates won from AIUFD and 11 Muslim candidates won from other political parties. Although this defection was notable in election statistics, Tarun Gogoi publicly gave speech against Ajmal. This new trend in the politics of Assam, compelled the political parties to rely on majoritarian politics (Nath, 2016).

After the three-landslide victory of Congress, during the period of 2011 to 2016, the politics of Assam experienced some major issues. Gradually, a sense of anti-incumbency grew against the Congress. Firstly, this anti-incumbency helped BJP to enter into the majoritarian politics of Assam. Secondly, majority of Hindu Bengalis opposed the AGP-BJP alliance led by the AGP. But the same Hindu Bengalis had no objection to support the same AGP-BJP alliance led by BJP. Thirdly, and most importantly, the factor of defection in the Congress and other political parties. Due to some internal conflict, many popular leaders of Assam joined BJP. Among them, Himanta Biswa Sharma was the most influential leader who became CM of Assam in 2021 assembly election. Various defected leaders also got opportunity to take part in Sarbananda Sonowal's Cabinet (Dutta, 2021). These three are the main regional issues, which helped BJP to gain grass root support instead of the Congress. The Congress, under the leadership of Tarun Gogoi set an example of how government can be formed without the support of Muslim Front in Assam, which was better used by BJP while implementing the proper Hindutva ideology. 2012-2014 was the period, when BJP emerged as the best option than the Congress to form the government. Emergence of national leader in Narendra Modi also fueled BJP campaign in Assam. A strong Hindutva force with the national wave of BJP after 2014 helped BJP to win majority of the seats in Brahmaputra Valley too. Voter's turnout was 84.72%. Increasing numbers of voters turn out signifies that people cast their vote against the incumbent, i.e., Congress party. Declaration of Sarbananda Sonowal as CM candidate, the main person, behind declination of IMDT, helped BJP to gain ground in Assam. The number of Muslims dominating constituencies were: Karimganj, South Badarpur, Hailakandi, Algapur, Sonai, Mancachar, Salmara South, Dhubri, Gouripur, Bilasipara East, Abhayapuri North, Goalpara West, Jaleswar, Barpeta, Jonia, Baghbar, Sarukhetri, Chenga, Dalgaon, Laharighat, Dhing, Rupahighat & Jamunamukh. In the other 8 constituencies, Muslims were in majority in numbers (Nath, 2016).

Just like the previous election, AIUDF tried to represent the Muslims, especially the immigrant sections. Congress had its own way of politics initiated in 2006 and BJP had 'hard Hindutwa' in its nature. Therefore, no political alliance could happen between AIUDF and other political parties. The ex- General Secretary and the in charge of Northeast BJP, Ram Madhab gave a statement describing three factors of BJP's win in 2016.

- (a) A successful ‘rainbow coalition’ of BJP with AGP & BPF.
- (b) Centering electoral strategies around local issues and concern not allowing the national issues to overshadow the campaign and also picking up a tribal leader, Sarbananda Sonowal as the Chief Minister.
- (c) Defection of popular regional leader Himanta Biswa Sharma from the Congress to BJP, also making him a core strategist for the election campaign (Dutta, 2021).

As a result, the Muslim community was defected in this election too. Out of the 13 candidates who won from AIUDF, 12 were Muslim. Out of 26 candidates who won from the Congress, 12 were Muslim. Whereas out of 60 candidates who won from BJP, only one was Muslim. This proves the consolidation and unification of Hindus in favour of BJP's effort to construct the ideology of hard Hindutva in Assam politics. It is interesting to observe that against BJP's 29.8% voting percentage, Congress and AIUDF got 31.3% 13.2% respectively. But, BJP with its allies could manage to win more seats than Congress and AIUDF. Despite getting more percentage of votes than any other political party, Congress lost many seats (Nath, 2016).

The aftermath of 2014 was very communal in Assam politics and as a whole in India. Even M.S Nityananda Rai gave a statement in Lok Sabha, “India witnessed 3399 cases of communal or religion rioting during the period 2016-2020” (*Hindustan Times*, March 30, 2022). In Assam, BJP treated infiltrators or refugees as parallel to Muslim population. This communalization helped BJP to consolidate the Hindu vote bank. A clear scene of communal polarization could be seen. Over two-thirds of population were Hindus. While 57% of Assamese Hindus supported BJP in 2016 Assembly election, 67% rallied behind NDA. Congress alliance could only secure two of every ten Hindu votes – 19%. In 2016, BJP mainly relied upon its rainbow alliance. The party workers proudly publicized most ethnic tribal politics outfits and added Bodos to its alliance mainly in the districts of lower Assam where Bodos had majority in numbers. This move played a crucial role (Dutta, 2021). The 2016 Assembly election was termed as ‘The Last Battle of Saraighat’ by BJP leaders and pledged to make salutation of yearlong illegal migrants’ problem. Obviously illegal migrants pose a threat to the political rights and cultural identities of the indigenous people of Assam. India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi took part in the election campaign and gave his famous election speech to oust the illegal immigrants as soon as the result declares. BJP also prepared its ambitions ‘Vision document’ and promised to overhaul the internal security economy and wellbeing of its

citizens. Though the ‘Last Battle of Saraighat’ was to be fought against illegal migrants, the Hindutwa ideology posed it as anti-Muslim (ibid.).

After winning of 2016 election, BJP brought its core Hindutva ideology to mainstream by introduction of the famous Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016. Many political critics of India, criticized CAB as it might break the secular structure of India. In response to that, in Assam, a state-wide agitation could be seen. Assamese people took part in the movement wholeheartedly and opposed BJP’s very own idea of incorporating communalism with Assamese nationalism. The BJP government used some state sponsored apparatus like (UAPA) and NSA against leaders of the movement. Underlying provisions of giving citizenship to all the major communities without Muslim clearly indicated BJP’s political narrative of majoritarianism in Assam. This resulted in various unprecedented resistance and such incidents paralyzed the state administration. It has been alleged that various eviction drives run by the government also had some communal links. The eviction drive that was conducted on September, 2016 in some bordering areas of Kaziranga National Park is an example of such cases. Because of evection drives carried out by the Assam Government, two persons including a 12-year girl student were killed in police firing. A massive protest was also being seen. Evicted persons were mostly Muslim peasants of East Bengal Region (Muktia et al., 2018).

3.3 Electoral Trend from 2006 to 2021: Analysis from the Research Sites

3.3.1 Nalbari Vidhan Sabha Constituency and Mangaldoi parliamentary Constituency

Table 3.5: 2006 to 2021 Electoral trend of Nalbari constituency (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2006	2011	2016	2021
BJP	15.17	10.64	62.92	58.84
INC	32.99	33.93	29.25	31.43
AGP	44.89	26.94		
AGP(P)	0.78			
AIUDF	3.3			
CPI(M)		3.92	1.06	
TMC		13.58		0.77
LKS	0.49			
NCP		0.48		
JD(U)			0.14	
SUCI©		0.41	0.14	0.48

AJP				6.53
NOTA			1	1
IND1 2006	1.27			
IND2 2006	1.09			
IND1 2011		8.18		
IND2 2011		1.2		
IND3 2011		0.72		
IND1 2016			2.29	
IND2 2016			1.92	
IND3 2016			0.44	
IND4 2016			0.38	
IND5 2016			0.25	
IND6 2016			0.17	
IND1 2021				0.64
IND2 2021				0.32

Table 3.6:2009 to 2019 Electoral trend of Mangaldoi lok sabha constituency (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2009	2014	2019
BJP	31.11	39.43	48.83
INC	25.4	37.57	39.63
AGP		5.39	
AGP(P)			
AIUDF	18.23	6.06	
BPF	16.23	7	
VPI			0.75
NOTA		0.87	0.71
IND 2014		1.01	
IND2 2019			6.9

Note: Nalbari Sadar Vidhan sabha constituency (Vidhan Sabha election)-

2006 election: Winner: Alaka Sharma (AGP), Runner up: Madan Kalita.

2011election: Winner: Jayanta Malla Baruah (Congress), Runner up: Alaka Sharma (AGP).

2016election: Winner: Ashok Sharma (BJP), Runner up: Pradyut Kumar Bhuyan (Congress).

2021election: Winner: Jayanta Malla Baruah (BJP), Runner up: Pradyut Kumar Bhuyan (Congress).

Mangaldoi lok sabha constituency (Lok sabha election):

2009 election: Winner: Romen Deka (BJP), Runner up: Madhab Rajbanshi (INC)

2014 election: Winner: Ramen Deka (BJP), Runner Up: Kirip Chaliha (INC)

2019 election: Winner: Dilip Saikia (BJP), Runner up: Bhubaneswar Kalita (Congress).

Source: (Phukan, 2019), (Nath, 2021), www.eci.gov.in.

Nalbari (Sadar) Assembly constituency is situated in Nalbari District. It is the 59th assembly constituency of Assam and one of the major assembly segments of Mangaldoi parliamentary constituency. The number of Muslim voters in Nalbari assembly is approximately 46,792. It constitutes around 24.1% of the total voters as per voter list analyses. In 2006 assembly election, the AGP candidate, Alaka Sharma won from the constituency with 44.89% votes. In 2006 assembly election, there was no Muslim candidate in Nalbari Sadar. AIUDF, led by Badaruddin Ajmal gave the candidature to Gautam Prashad Goswami, an upper caste Hindu. Therefore, Muslim votes were scattered in different parties like Congress, AIUDF, etc. In 2011 assembly election, though Congress paved the way of soft Hindutwa, due to beneficiary politics, the main vote bank summed up in its favour. A Muslim candidate, Tajuuddin Ahmed was given party ticket from Nationalist Congress Party but due to weak hold of NCI, he could only able to collect 0.48% of the votes. In 2016 assembly, the environment of the assembly election was clearly visible as communal. People were divided on the basis of religion and Nalbari was not any different. A minority candidate, Khusid Alam contested for the assembly seat and got 2.29% of the total votes polled independently. He stood at third position and left the CPI(M), JD(U), Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) (SUCI(C)), and the other independent candidate behind. Alam mainly subtracted the vote share of the Congress. In 2016, Congress got 29.25% of the votes and the same Congress after five years in 2021, got 31.43% with a position of minority support. In 2021, there was not any other minority candidate and therefore, that 2% subtracted by Alam, Congress managed to win it.

Nalbari assembly constituency is included in the Mangaldoi parliamentary constituency. Other constituencies included in this parliamentary constituency are Kamalpur, Rangia, Paneri, Kalaigaon, Sipajhar, Mangaldoi, Dolgaon, Udalguri and Majbat. If we notice the recent 2021 assembly election results, then it can be seen that along with Nalbari Sadar, BJP has won Kamalpur, Rangia, Nalbari, Paneri and Sipajhar assembly segments.

BPF has won two constituencies mainly Kalaigaon and Majbat. Congress, AIUDF and UPPL won one seat each in Mangaldoi, Dalgaon and Udalguri respectively. As per the voters list analyses, 27.9% votes of Kalaigaon assembly seat are Muslims. Similar to that, 36.7% of the voters of Sipajhar seat, 48.8% voters of Mangaldoi seat and approximately 77% voters of Dalgaon seat are Muslims. If we look at the overall statistics, then 32.8% voters of overall Mangaldoi parliamentary constituency are Muslims. This large section of Muslim population makes the electoral political of Mangaldoi crucial for all the political parties. In 2009 parliament election, Muslim votes got divided between the Congress and AIUDF. AIUDF candidate, Badiuj Zamal managed to get 18.23% of the total votes. As a result of which BJP candidate Ramen Deka won from the Mangaldoi parliamentary seat. It should be mentioned that prior to 2014 Lok Sabha election, BJP was politically not strong in the state politics. Despite that, the winning of Ramen Deka from the Mangaldoi Lok Sabha constituency shows clear polarization of votes. The Muslim votes got divided and Hindu voters voted for the BJP candidate. In 2014 general election, there was no Muslim candidate to represent the 30%+ Muslim voters of Mangaldoi. Even AIUDF also gave its candidature to Paresh Baishya, a Hindu. Therefore, the Muslim votes got scattered to other political parties. In 2019 general election, Dilip Saikia of BJP won from the Mangaldoi Lok Sabha constituency. AIUDF did not give any candidate. This had direct impact on the outcome of the Congress. It increased its vote share by 2% than in the previous general election. While 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha election clearly shows the polarization of Hindu votes in support of the BJP candidates. Despite of the presence of more than 30% Muslim votes, the winning of BJP candidates signify that Hindu voters unanimously voted for BJP in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha constituency.

3.3.2 Tezpur Vidhan Sabha Constituency & Tezpur parliamentary Constituency

Table 3.7: 2006 to 2021 Electoral trend of Tezpur LAC (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2006	2011	2016	2021
BJP	2.59	8.96		
INC	42.72	41.27	26.95	40.93
AGP	50.74	20.9	52.52	47.69
AGP(P)	2.3			
AIUDF		10.53	16.46	
TMC		15.23		
NCP		0.61	0.42	

JMBP			0.48	
SUCI©			0.63	0.61
AJP				5.8
NOTA			1.11	1.37
IND1 2011		2.23		
IND2 2011		0.49		
IND1 2016			0.8	
IND2 2016			0.54	
IND1 2021				2.69
IND2 2021				0.51

Table 3.8:2009 to 2019 Electoral trend of Tezpur Parliamentary constituency (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2009	2014	2019
BJP		45.52	57.48
INC	38.2	36.75	37.08
AGP	41.77	4.13	
AGP(P)			
AIUDF	5.49		
CPI(M)		2.54	
CPI(ML)		1.09	
IMC		0.89	
AIFB		0.43	
NOTA			
IND1 2014		6.4	
IND2 2014		0.53	
IND3 2019			1.99

Note: Tezpur Vidhan sabha Constituency (Vidhan Sabha election)

2006 Election: Winner: Brindaban Goswami (AGP). Runner Up: Bizit Saikia (INC).

2011 Election: Winner: Rajen Borthakur (INC), Runner up: Brindaban Goswami (AGP).

2016 Election: Winner: Brindaban Goswami (AGP), Runner Up: Hiranya Bhuyan (INC).

2021 Election: Winner: Prithiraj Rava (AGP), Runner up: Dr. Anuj Kumar Mech (INC).

Tezpur Lok Sabha Constituency (Lok Sabha Elections):

2009 Election: Winner: Joseph Toppo (AGP), Runner Up: Moni Kumar Subba (INC)

2014 Election: Winner: Ram Prashad Sharma (BJP), Runner up: Bhupen Kumar Borah (INC).

2021 Election: Winner: Pallab Lochan Das (BJP), Runner Up: MGVK Bhanu (INC).

Source: (Phukan, 2019), (Nath, 2021), www.eci.gov.in.

Tezpur Assembly Constituency is the 74th constituency among 126 other constituencies in the state. It is based in Sonitpur district and one of the other constituencies of Tezpur Parliamentary Constituency. There are 86 villages and 4 main towns in Tezpur assembly constituency. Total numbers of electors in 2006 assembly election were 1,43,712 and the total numbers of electors in 2021 assembly election was 1,88,449. In 2006 Assembly Election, Brindaban Goswami won Tezpur Legislative constituency with 50% + votes. But in 2011, he lost to INC'S candidate Rajen Borthakur. Rajen Borthakur got 41.27% votes and AGP's Brindaban Goswami had to restrict himself with 20.9% of votes. But in 2016, the case was totally different. AGP allied with BJP in NDA alliance. BJP's wave of change on the one hand and AGP's strong hold in Tezpur made the win very easy for Brindaban Goswami with 52.55% votes.

In Tezpur, 5.54% and 1.4% voters are SCs and STs respectively as per 2011 census. According to the same data source, the number of Muslim voters in Tezpur assembly is 57,170, which is 31.7% as per the voter's list analyses. 31.7% is a notable factor in a representative democracy, but due to the lack of community voting the whole Muslim community's vote is divided between INC, AGP, AIUDF and other independent candidates. In 2006 and 2011 elections, a Muslim candidate Md. Mia Hussian contested for the assembly seat independently and got 1.62% and 0.49% votes respectively. In 2011 election, the AIUDF stood on fourth position with 10.35% of vote shares and in 2016 election, it remained in the third position with 16.46% votes. In two consecutive elections, AIUDF increased its vote share to 6%. But it is important to note that in both elections, the candidates of AIUDF were Hindus. From the 1996 assembly election, Asom Gana Parishad had a strong hold in Tezpur Legislative Assembly. Brindaban Goswami had been MLA of the constituency for 25 years and he is the longest serving MLA of the constituency.

Tezpur Parliamentary constituency constituted of 9 assembly segments of Sonitpur and Lakhimpur districts. They are Dhekiajuli, Barchala, Tezpur, Rangapara, Sootea, Biswanath, Behali, Gohpur and Bihpuria. Moni Kumra Subba won this parliamentary seat in three consecutive parliamentary elections of 1998, 1999, and 2004. In 2009, AGP candidate Joseph Toppo became its M.P. and after that, the BJP's candidate has been winning from this parliamentary segment for two consecutive elections. Now, in all the assembly segments of Tezpur parliamentary constituency, BJP either has its own MLA or has MLA from NDA alliance. In the last Lok Sabha election, Pallab Lochan Das

won the MP seat of Tezpur. Considering community-wise population, Muslims are in the largest number with 16.1%, which is followed by STs with 13.5% of votes and SCs with 5.9% of votes. Community-wise voting trend could be seen with various SCs and STs but not so much as seen among the Muslims. Muslim votes are commonly disintegrated among all the political parties and independent candidates. In 2009 and 2014 elections, BJP's nationwide wave has worked as a fuel in Tezpur parliamentary constituency too. BJP has chosen RP Sharma as its candidate, who was from the Gorkha community and won Tezpur Parliamentary seat with 45.52%. In the next election, BJP gave its candidature to Pallab Lochan Das who hailed from the populous tea tribe and had a great victory with 57.48% vote share.

3.3.3 Jorhat Vidhan Sabha Constituency & Jorhat Parliamentary Constituency

Table 3.9: 2006 to 2021 Electoral trend of Jorhat LAC (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2006	2011	2016	2021
BJP	5.08	5.1	52.91	48.84
INC	48.79	64.85	42.48	44.2
AGP	44	28.67		4.95
AGP(P)	1.25			
AIUDF			0.64	
TMC		1.38		
CPM			1.18	
LDP			1.05	
NOTA			0.91	1.23
IND1 2021				0.79

Table 3.10: 2009 to 2019 Electoral trend of Jorhat Parliamentary constituency (Vote share)

Political parties/ Year	2009	2014	2019
BJP	38.04	48.99	51.35
INC	47.46	38	43.54
AGP		5.01	
TMC		0.62	0.58
AIUDF		0.79	
CPI	9.72	3.11	
AIFB		0.97	
CPM			1.69
RS	0.74		
SP		0.62	
JMM	0.45		

AAP		0.39	
NOTA		1.57	1.19
IND1 2009	0.76		
IND2 2009	2.25		
IND3 2009	0.6		
IND1 2014		0.51	

Note: Jorhat constituency (Vidhan Sabha election)

2006 election: Winner: Rana Goswami (INC), Runner up: Hitendra Nath Goswami (AGP)

2011 election: Winner: Rana Goswami (INC), Runner Up: Hitendra Nath Goswami (AGP)

2016 election: Winner: Hitendra Nath Goswami (BJP), Runner Up: Rana Goswami (INC)

2021 election: Winner: Hitendra Nath Goswami (BJP), **Runner Up:** Rana Goswami (INC)

Jorhat lok sabha constituency (Lok sabha election)

2009 election: Winner: Bijoy Krishna Handique (INC), Runner up: Kamakhya Tasa (BJP)

2014 election: Winner: Kamakhya Prashad Tasa (BJP), Runner up: Bijoy Krishna Handique (INC).

2019 election: Winner: Tapon Kumar Gogoi (BJP), Runner up: Sushantta Borgohain (INC) .

Source: (Phukan, 2019), (Nath, 2021), www.eci.gov.in.

Jorhat Assembly constituency is in Jorhat district and it is the 98th constituency of Assam Legislative Assembly. Jorhat assembly constituency is one of the 10 assembly constituencies of the Jorhat parliament seat. If we look at the demography of Jorhat assembly segment, as per 2011 census, SC voters at Jorhat assembly is approximately 14,091, which is around 8.04%, ST voters are approximately 3,418 which is around 1.95%, Muslim voters are 1,38,846 that is around 7.95%. The amount of rural and urban voters is 35.13% and 64.87% respectively. The largest caste Hindu Assamese community in Jorhat assembly segment are Bora with 14% of the population, then Dutta (with 8.4%), Das (8.2%) and Muslims has 7.95% of the vote share. AIUDF, the political party led by Badaruddin Ajmal contested for Jorhat Legislative Assembly segment in 2016 and got more than 2% of votes in booths such as Dhapkata L.P. School, Jankhana M.E. School, Murmuria T.E. Primary School and Sankardev L.P. School where Muslim

voters are there. The emergence of AIUDF in a constituency like Jorhat of Upper Assam clearly indicates the communalization of 2016 Assembly Election and consolidation of Hindu votes against the 'Muslim' immigration. This can be one of the main reasons, why BJP got a ten times hike in the vote share in 2016.

Goswamis are mainly the upper caste Brahmin. In the last four consecutive assembly elections, wining of the Goswami leader as the BJP candidate is significant and clearly denotes the hierarchy of caste in political power.

On the other hand, Jorhat parliamentary seat is constituted of (98) Jorhat, (100) Titabar, (101) Mariani, (102) Teok, (103) Amguri, (104) Nazira, (105) Mahmara, (106) Sonari, (107) Thowra, & (105) Sivsagar. In 2011 Assembly election, all of the ten assembly constituencies had Congress MLA's. Yet still in 2014, the parliamentary election due to nation-wide wave of Narendra Modi, BJP won the Jorhat parliament seat. In 2016 Assembly election, 6 of the 10 Assembly segments had MLAs from NDA alliance either of BJP or of AGP. This made 2019 parliament election easier for BJP. The BJP candidate, Tapan Kumar Gogoi won with a 3% more vote percentage share than the previous election. Due to the Congress dominance in 2009 parliamentary election throughout India, it gained 47.46% votes in the same. But when in 2014, BJP came with a national wave of change in politics, Congress restricted itself to 38% and BJP emerged as the largest party with an approximate 49% total votes polled in Jorhat. In 2019, it crossed the 50% votes and Tapan Kumar Gogoi became its M.P. In the Jorhat parliamentary segment, Muslim voters are approximately 1,11,141 or 8.2% as per voter list analyses.

Due to very less population of Muslims (less than 10%) in the Jorhat parliamentary constituency, the communal factor is not the key to win the elections in this constituency. The communal factor is so weak that the candidate of AIUDF contesting for the Jorhat Assembly segment was Sanjib Rajkhowa, a Hindu. Though emergence of AIUDF in 2016, was termed as a minority political consciousness by majoritarian political commentators, it had no impact on the ground and got only 842 votes.

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