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## Transformation In Politics Of Assam In Last Two Decades

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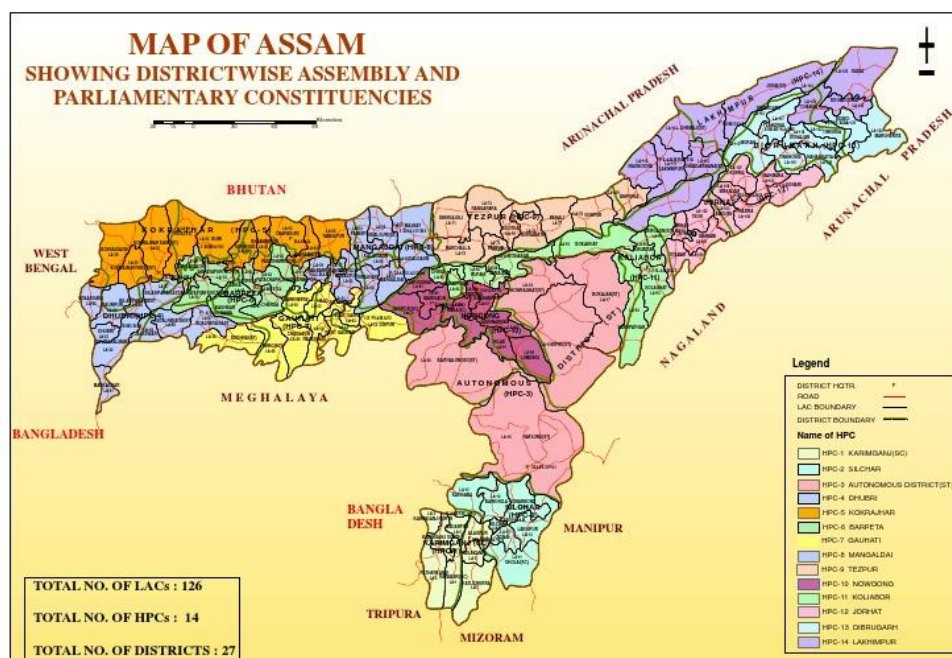
**Abstract:** In the last twenty years, Assam's political landscape has experienced significant transition, influenced by changing election dynamics, identity-driven movements, governance goals and the evolution of party systems. This era has seen the deterioration of established political hegemony, the emergence of novel political entities and the integration of regional ambitions inside national contexts. Critical factors like immigration, citizenship, ethnic identity, development, insurgency and peace agreements have profoundly impacted political discourse and electoral behavior. The execution of policies concerning the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and diverse autonomy arrangements for ethnic groups has further transformed the political environment. Moreover, shifting alliances, the rise of coalition politics and the growing influence of national parties have transformed the power dynamics inside the state. Socio-economic development programs, infrastructural growth and welfare-focused government have significantly influenced public expectations and political narratives. This article analyzes the principal trends, catalysts and ramifications of these political transformations, emphasizing the shift in Assam's politics from conflict-driven mobilization to development-oriented governance, while still contending with issues of identity, representation and federal relations. The study seeks to offer an in-depth analysis of the changing dynamics of democracy and state politics in Assam within the larger framework of Indian politics.

**Keywords:** Assam Politics, Electoral Dynamics, Identity Politics, Immigration, National Register of Citizens (NRC), Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Regional Parties.

### 1. Introduction

Given its geographical significance and diverse sociocultural makeup, the northeastern Indian state of Assam has always played a special role in India's politics. Migration, border security and demographic change are major topics in the state's political debate because of its shared international boundaries with nations like Bhutan and Bangladesh. Efforts to protect indigenous peoples' cultural practices and political rights have long informed political discourse in Assam, which in turn has been influenced by concerns of language, ethnicity and regional autonomy. The Assam Movement (1979–1985) had a lasting impact on current political discourse and voter attitudes through its focus on the apprehension and expulsion of undocumented immigrants. Assamese, Bodo, Karbis, Mishing and Bengali-speaking peoples are just a few of the many ethnic groups that call this state home. They all have their own unique histories, traditions and political goals. As a result of its diverse population, Assam's politics are constantly evolving and can be somewhat contentious due to competing

aspirations for autonomy, representation and resource allocation<sup>1</sup>. Ethnic insurgencies, calls for independence and movements for more power have all contributed to a more fraught political climate over the years. Consequently, the government of Assam has had to walk a fine line between fostering unity and catering to the unique requirements of the state's many varied communities. The Indian National Congress was the dominant political force in Assam from the era immediately following independence till around the middle of the 2010s. From 2001 until 2016, when Tarun Gogoi was in charge, there was a period of administrative continuity and a degree of political stability. Economic growth, peace-building initiatives and efforts to curb insurgency were the priorities of his administration and they helped bring about a period of relative calm in the state. Nevertheless, unemployment, sluggish industrial growth, corruption accusations and ongoing worries about illegal immigration eroded the Congress's support over time, even if they accomplished a lot. There will be a sea change in Assam's political landscape between 2005 and 2025. There was a larger realignment in voter preferences and ideological orientation during this era, as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) gradually but decisively shifted political power away from the Congress. After decades of Congress rule, the state saw its first ever BJP government in 2016 after the historic win of Sarbananda Sonowal in the Assembly elections. This shift was indicative of larger structural shifts, such as the increasing popularity of national political narratives, the need to strategically form coalitions with regional parties and the importance of effective grassroots mobilization and was therefore more than just an election phenomenon. This political shift was solidified even further under Himanta Biswa Sarma's leadership. A new style of government has emerged in Assam under his watch, one that prioritizes development, infrastructure expansion, regional connectivity and strict administrative control. Also, with laws like the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), identity politics has been a major focus. As a result of these changes, discussions over citizenship, belonging and cultural preservation have heated up, which in turn has prompted political mobilization and social division<sup>2</sup>.



**Fig. 1 Map of Assam: Showing Districtwise Assembly and Parliamentary**

<sup>1</sup> Buragohain, M. (2025). Contested belonging: Citizenship, migration and identity politics in Assam. *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, 23(3), 123–126.

<sup>2</sup> Borah, P. P., & Bhuyan, A. J. (2024). Regionalism and its contestations: Changing political discourse in contemporary Assam. *India Review*, 23(3), 197–222.

The growing alignment of Assam's politics with national political currents is another distinguishing element of this era. In contrast to previous decades, when state politics were more tightly tied to national objectives, national parties now have more power, bringing state politics into line with national priorities. New political alignments have emerged to mirror the shifting sociopolitical circumstances and conventional regional powers have been declining alongside this transformation. Furthermore, media and technology have played a pivotal role in reshaping political discourse and engagement in Assam. Political parties may now communicate with voters, especially young people, through the proliferation of social media, which is changing the way campaigns operate and how the public talks about issues. A more involved and educated electorate that is sensitive to both regional and national issues is shown by rising political consciousness and voter turnout. The shift in political focus over the past two decades from an identity-centric to a more balanced approach that includes development-oriented goals is another important development of this time. There is a noticeable shift in focus towards economic growth, infrastructure development, employment generation and regional connection through efforts like India's Act East Policy. However, political alliances are still shaped by problems of migration and ethnicity. The state's political agendas and voter expectations have been reshaped by this dual focus. Finally, the years 2005–2025 mark a watershed moment in Assam's political history, marked by changes in party power, new forms of identity politics and deeper national integration. It exemplifies the way regional politics navigates identity and autonomy crises in the context of shifting socioeconomic circumstances. Researching this era helps us understand democratic transitions in varied and complicated civilizations more generally and it sheds light on the political development of Assam specifically<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1: Political Leadership and Party Dominance in Assam (2001–2025)**

Period	Chief Minister	Political Party	Key Characteristics
2001–2016	Tarun Gogoi	Indian National Congress	Political stability, peace-building, gradual anti-incumbency
2016–2021	Sarbananda Sonowal	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	Beginning of political shift, focus on identity issues
2021–Present	Himanta Biswa Sarma	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	Strong governance, development focus, central alignment

## 2. Congress Era and Its Decline (2001–2015)

### 2.1 Dominance of Leadership and Political Stability

During the years 2001–2015, the Indian National Congress, led by Tarun Gogoi, was the most powerful political party in India. Gogoi brought a period of relative calm to a state that had been impacted by insurgency and political upheaval during his three periods in office. Law and order, administrative processes and economic development were the primary goals of his administration. There was less bloodshed and more stability in government and public trust as a result of peace-building initiatives, which included talks with armed organizations.

### 2.2 Governance Achievements and Development Efforts

Notable attempts to stabilize the economy and enhance infrastructure were made by the Congress government during this era. A sense of efficient government was helped along by efforts to improve connectivity, attract investment and boost social welfare. The state was able to redirect resources toward development-oriented initiatives as insurgency-related disruptions decreased. This led to an

<sup>3</sup> Bhuyan, A. J., & Tripathi, V. (2024). Making of the BJP dominant system in Assam. In *Electoral narratives of democracy and governance in India* (pp. 191–207). Routledge India.

era of institutional strengthening and relative administrative efficiency in Assam when contrasted with previous decades.

### **2.3 Corruption Allegations and Declining Trust**

The later years of Congress rule were characterized by accusations of corruption and ineptitude, notwithstanding earlier triumphs. Claims of inefficiency in the bureaucracy, misappropriation of public monies and a general lack of transparency emerged. The youth and urban middle class, in particular, became more dissatisfied as a result of these problems. People lost faith in the government and became anti-incumbency as a result of the widespread belief that the current leadership is corrupt and sloppy with the facts<sup>4</sup>.

### **2.4 Illegal Immigration and Identity Concerns**

Illegal immigration, especially from Bangladesh, was a major problem during this time. The interconnectedness of this age-old worry with issues of citizenship, resource allocation and identity propelled it to the forefront of political debate. Cultural and demographic marginalization were major concerns for many indigenous people. People were even more turned off by the Congress government and wanted stronger policy measures because of all the criticism it received for not acting quickly enough.

### **2.5 Ethnic Tensions and Regional Movements**

The political stability of Assam was jeopardized by ongoing ethnic strife. Bodos and Karbis-led movements brought attention to calls for self-determination, official acknowledgement and fair economic growth. The government's efforts to resolve these difficulties through administrative procedures and peace accords were not always successful in bringing about long-term solutions. Violence broke out periodically, highlighting the government's ineffectiveness in resolving ethnic tensions and highlighting the permanence of ethnic grievances.

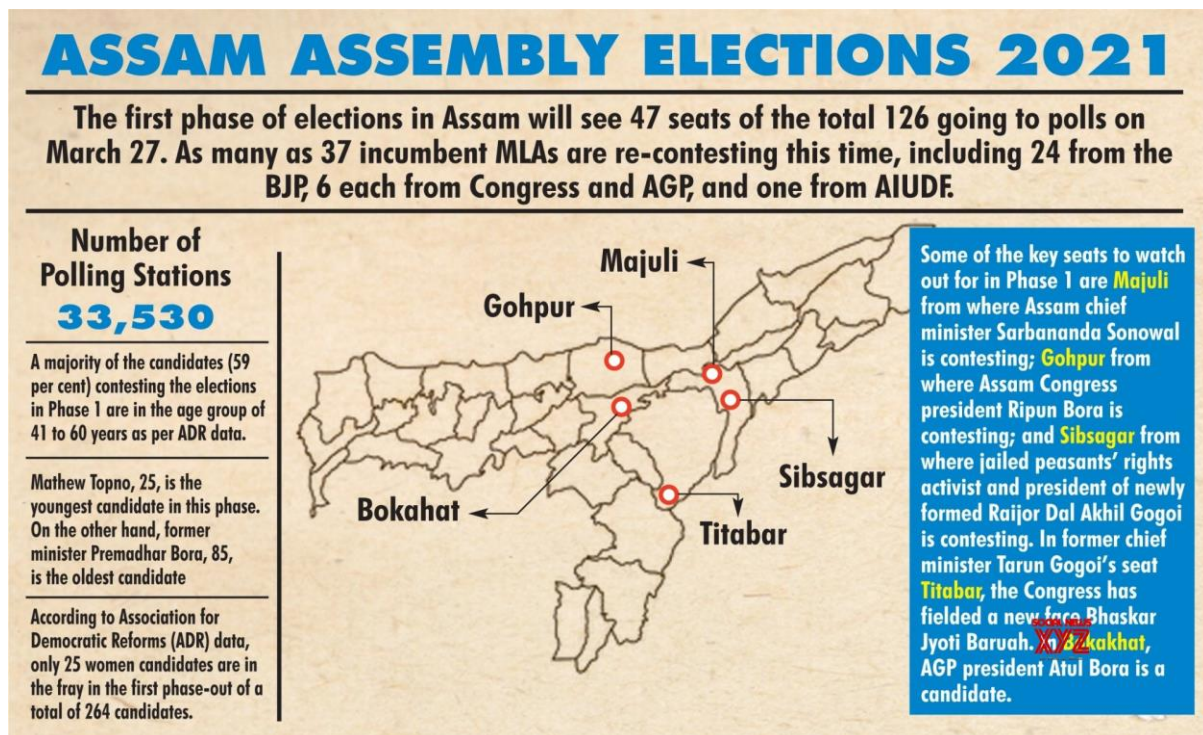
### **2.6 Decline in Grassroots Connection and Rise of Anti-Incumbency**

The strong grassroots connection that had been crucial to the Congress party's political success in the past started to erode over time. People began to feel that the leadership didn't care about their day-to-day problems. This decrease was exacerbated by organizational shortcomings at the local level. There was a window of opportunity for new political groups to arise as public discontent with the current administration increased owing to outstanding concerns and difficulties with governance<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Hazarika, H. (2024). *Religion in electoral politics: A study on the shifting trends of voting behaviour towards BJP in Assam* (Doctoral dissertation, Tezpur University).

<sup>5</sup> Saikia, A. (2023). *The quest for modern Assam: A history (1942–2000)*. Penguin Random House India.



**Fig. 2 Assam assembly elections 2021**

### 3. Rise of BJP and Political Realignment (2016 onwards)

#### 3.1 Electoral Breakthrough and Leadership of Sarbananda Sonowal (2016)

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) electoral triumph in 2016 was a watershed moment in the political history of Assam. The BJP, spearheaded by Sarbananda Sonowal, ended the Congress's long reign of power with a resounding mandate. Symbolizing transformation and regional assertion within a national political framework, Sonowal had previously been famous as a politician linked to the Assam Movement and concerns about illegal immigration. Many people who wanted a change from the current political system found an ally in his leadership.

#### 3.2 Strategic Alliances and Coalition Politics

Forming coalitions with regional parties was an effective approach that contributed to the BJP's success. In order to garner support from a wide range of ethnic and regional groupings, the party partnered with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF). By forming these coalitions, the BJP was able to increase its voter base and gain traction in regions often controlled by regional parties. A more realistic change in Assam's politics was shown by the coalition strategy, which united national and regional concerns in order to win elections<sup>6</sup>.

#### 3.3 Strengthening of Nationalist Narrative

An increasingly nationalist narrative in Assam that prioritized cultural preservation, citizenship and identity played a significant role in the BJP's ascent to power. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), updates to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and illegal immigration were at the center of political discussions. The party successfully rallied support on these topics, painting itself as a defender of indigenous culture and the nation's best interests. Those voters who were worried about the future of their culture and the changing demographics responded positively to this strategy.

<sup>6</sup> Saikia, S. (2020). Saffronizing the periphery: Explaining the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party in contemporary Assam. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 8(1), 69–84.

### 3.4 Transition to Leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma

Himanta Biswa Sarma took over as BJP leader in 2021, after Sonowal had completed the party's first term in office. The BJP's organizational structure in the Northeast was greatly enhanced by Sarma, a prominent political strategist and a former leader of the Congress. Under his leadership, Assam's politics entered a more vibrant and forceful phase, defined by strong political communication, swift policymaking and efficient administration. During his time in office, the BJP strengthened its grip on the state's political landscape.

### 3.5 Shift from Regional to National Political Influence

During this time, there has been a dramatic movement from a political structure based on regional power to one that is more impacted by national politics. With the BJP's ascent to power, Assam's politics drew closer to national ideological and policy objectives, in contrast to previous decades when regional parties and issues ruled the political arena. This change is a reflection of how the state is becoming more vital to the national political story, with policies and leadership taking center stage.

### 3.6 Emphasis on Governance and Central Alignment

A style of government that integrates development with strong alignment to the national government has been highlighted by the BJP-led governments in Assam. Efforts have been made to implement policies that prioritize the development of infrastructure, connectivity, investment promotion and welfare systems. Improvements in coordination for the execution of national projects have resulted from the alignment with central leadership, especially within frameworks like the Act East Policy. There is a general consensus that public services are being provided more efficiently and with stronger leadership thanks to this strategy.

### 3.7 Overall Transformation

Finally, a major shift in Assam's political landscape has occurred since 2016 due to the BJP's meteoric surge. The shift of political power from the Congress to the BJP is indicative of deeper shifts in ideology, priorities in administration and voter expectations, as is the change in leadership within the party. The state has entered a new era of its democratic evolution, with the political landscape being redefined by the combination of nationalist narratives, development-focused governance and strategic partnerships<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 2: Key Political Issues in Assam (2005–2025)**

Issue	Description	Political Impact
Illegal Immigration	Migration concerns from Bangladesh	Rise of identity politics, voter polarization
Ethnic Conflicts	Bodo, Karbi and other movements	Demand for autonomy and representation
Citizenship Policies	NRC and CAA debates	Political mobilization and protests
Corruption Allegations	Governance-related concerns	Decline of Congress popularity
Development and Economy	Infrastructure and investment focus	Shift toward development-based politics

<sup>7</sup> Sharma, D. P., Gogoi, T., & Tripathi, V. (2019). Religion, ethnicity and politics: Understanding the BJP's rise in Assam. In *Politics and religion in India* (pp. 64–83). Routledge India.

## 4. Role of Identity Politics

### 4.1 Legacy of the Assam Movement

Anxieties over undocumented immigration and the preservation of indigenous culture laid the groundwork for modern-day identity politics in Assam. The movement, which was spearheaded by student groups and regional organizations, called for the apprehension and expulsion of unauthorized immigrants, with a focus on those from Bangladesh. The Assam Accord, signed in 1985, was an attempt to resolve these issues via administrative and legislative means. Issues of cultural preservation, citizenship and identity continue to permeate electoral politics and the public psyche in Assam, a lasting effect of this movement.

### 4.2 National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Debate

The most noteworthy event in the past few years has been the revision of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a procedure designed to find Indian nationals living in Assam who are actually citizens. Although the NRC exercise aimed to resolve long-standing worries around illegal immigration, it also sparked a great deal of controversy and debate. Others voiced worries about humanitarian ramifications, paperwork issues and isolation, while yet others saw it as an essential step to safeguard indigenous rights. A key topic in political mobilization, the process heightened conversations about citizenship and belonging.

### 4.3 Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and Political Controversy

Politics in Assam have become even more identity-based after the Citizenship Amendment Act was introduced. Protests in the state were quite strong in response to the Act, which offers a route to citizenship for some non-Muslim migrants from neighboring countries. Critics of the CAA pointed out that it went against the Assam Accord's stated goals and endangered the region's demographic and cultural harmony. The demonstrations brought to light the intricate relationship between religion, citizenship and local politics and they mirrored widespread fears about losing one's identity.

### 4.4 Polarization along Religious and Ethnic Lines

More religious and ethnic divisions have emerged as a result of the NRC and CAA discussions. Framing political narratives as "insiders" vs. "outsiders" has a history of dividing people even further. Communities' reactions to these changes have been diverse, reflecting their unique histories and current social and political climates. A person's identity is now a determining element in their political affiliation due to the division that has affected voting patterns and public discourse.

### 4.5 Political Mobilization Based on Identity

In Assam, identity politics has evolved into a potent instrument of political mobilization. Ethnic, religious and cultural identity-based appeals to voters have grown in popularity among political parties and their leaders. A number of factions have found common ground on matters of citizenship, language and property rights. A more dispersed but politically active electorate has emerged as a consequence, with questions of personal identity frequently taking center stage over more systemic concerns about development. Meanwhile, it has also helped communities become more politically active and aware in order to safeguard their own interests<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Barbora, S. (2019). National register of citizens: Politics and problems in Assam. *Indian Sociological Society e-Journal*, 3, 3–28.

## 4.6 Overall Impact

Finally, in the past twenty years, identity politics has been essential in determining the political climate in Assam. Modern events like the NRC and CAA, along with the long-lasting effects of the Assam Movement, have further demonstrated the significance of identity in political deliberation. Identity is a unifying and divisive force in the state's politics, since these dynamics have enabled greater political engagement and representation while also leading to growing polarization<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 3: Evolution of Party Dynamics in Assam**

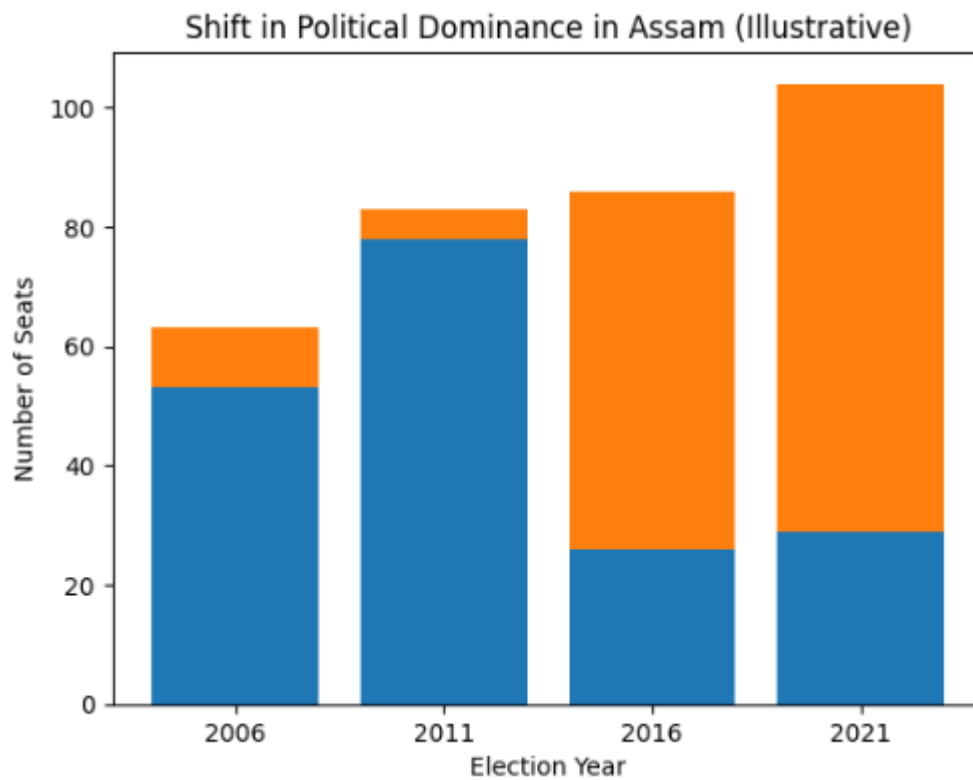
Political Phase	Dominant Parties	Nature of Politics	Key Trend
Pre-2016	Congress, Regional Parties (AGP)	Regional + Identity-based	Congress dominance
Post-2016	BJP + Allies (AGP, BPF)	National + Identity-based	BJP rise
2021 onwards	BJP Dominance + AIUDF presence	Development + Identity mix	Hybrid political model

## 5. Ethnic and Regional Party Dynamics

### 5.1 Decline of Traditional Regional Parties

Traditionally, regional parties in Assam have been quite influential in the state's politics, especially when it comes to voicing concerns related to local identity and ambitions. One such group that rose to prominence during the Assam Movement and is now known as the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) is no stranger to political clout. But the AGP has been steadily declining during the past 20 years. Its position was eroded due to internal strife, leadership problems and an inability to adjust to shifting political realities. The regional forces' support base was already dwindling before the emergence of powerful national parties like the BJP added insult to injury. Consequently, groups such as AGP went from being major actors to minor players in coalition deals over time.

<sup>9</sup> Borah, N. (2019). Regional politics in Assam: The journey of AGP. *International Journal of Engineering Development and Research*, 7(3), 747–750.



**Fig. 3 Shift in Political Dominance in Assam**

### 5.2 Emergence of New Political Forces: AIUDF

New political movements have arisen to reflect particular community interests, coinciding with the waning influence of conventional regional parties. The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), spearheaded by Badruddin Ajmal, has emerged as a prominent political party in India, mostly campaigning for Muslim minority groups who speak Bengali. In Assam, identity-based political representation is becoming increasingly important and AIUDF's rise is a reflection of that. The party has built out a unique electoral space and impacted political competition, particularly in some parts of the state, by emphasizing concerns like social justice, minority welfare and citizenship rights.

### 5.3 Changing Nature of Political Competition

New regional groups have declined while new parties like AIUDF have emerged, changing the face of political rivalry in Assam. The political landscape has been increasingly fractured as several political parties target distinct regional, ethnic and religious groups. The electoral contests have become more intense due to this fragmentation and it is now difficult for a single party to dominate without forming larger alliances. Furthermore, it is indicative of the growing variety of political representation, as more and more groups strive to have their voices heard inside the democratic system<sup>10</sup>.

### 5.4 Rise of Coalition Politics

Coalition politics has become increasingly important as a result of these shifting dynamics. The heterogeneous population of Assam makes it difficult for any one political party to get enough support to win the election on its own. A good example of this trend is the strategic alliances that the BJP has formed with regional parties such as the AGP. Thanks to coalition politics, national and regional parties can pool their resources to address both national and local issues. On the other hand, new

<sup>10</sup> Borah, N. (2018). Changing trends of electoral politics in Assam: A study of Jorhat district. *Clarion: International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 7(1).

difficulties in governance have emerged as a result of the need to negotiate and compromise in order to keep varied political partners united.

## 6. Governance and Development Politics

### 6.1 Shift from Identity to Development-Oriented Politics

There has been a clear transition in the current political landscape of Assam from one that is largely identity-driven to one that is development-oriented. Ethnicity, language, migration and the preservation of traditional practices have always been crucial to Assam's political landscape. But voters and politicians alike have come to understand in the last decade that improving governance, economic growth and public welfare are essential to achieving long-term success. While development concerns have become more prominent, this shift does not mean that identity politics are no longer present. Better infrastructure, job opportunities, healthcare and education are some of the tangible benefits that voters are looking for when evaluating administrations. Campaigns no longer rely solely on appeals to identity; instead, they also highlight efficiency in governance, long-term development objectives and performance. A more self-assured and aspirational electorate is driving this change, along with rising incomes and better job opportunities<sup>11</sup>.

### 6.2 Infrastructure Growth and Modernization

Growing public and private investment in infrastructure is a prominent sign of this political shift. Significant investments in physical infrastructure, including as the construction of highways, bridges, flyovers and enhanced railway networks, have been witnessed in Assam during the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma. These advancements have improved the state's and India's overall connectedness, opening up new opportunities for commerce, tourism and regional integration. Public services, transportation networks and city planning have all been enhanced as a result of urban development programs that sought to modernize Guwahati and similar cities. Better roads, electrification and access to basic amenities are all examples of rural infrastructure that has been the focus of attempts to reduce regional inequities. For political narratives that center on modernization and advancement, improved infrastructure is essential because of the role it has played in drawing investment and creating jobs.

**Table 4: Role of Media and Youth in Assam Politics**

Factor	Description	Impact on Politics
Youth Participation	Increased voter awareness and engagement	Higher voter turnout, demand for accountability
Social Media	Platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram	Direct communication, political influence
Digital Campaigns	Targeted online political strategies	Shaping public opinion
Political Awareness	Access to information and debates	More informed electorate

### 6.3 Investment Policies and Economic Development

The government's initiatives to foster an investment-and growth-friendly climate are further indications of the rising focus on development. The government has implemented policies to entice both local and international investors by making it easier to do business, streamlining regulatory frameworks and providing incentives to various businesses. The state's economic diversification

<sup>11</sup> Goswami, P. J., & Dhar, B. (2018). A study of dynamics of population and its impact on state politics in Assam. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(6).

efforts have focused on sectors including agriculture, tourism, small-scale enterprises, oil and natural gas and oil and natural gas. Efforts to combat young unemployment have also placed a premium on programs that encourage entrepreneurship and skill development. The government's efforts to connect Assam to national and international economic networks are shown in its emphasis on digital infrastructure, trade facilitation and industrial corridors. Voters' expectations of government are changing as a result of these initiatives, linking good governance with development outcomes and economic opportunities, which in turn boosts the economy.

#### **6.4 Connectivity and the Act East Policy**

India's Act East Policy seeks to forge closer economic and strategic links with Southeast Asian states; Assam's strategic location has made it an integral part of this initiative. Connecting India to its surrounding countries, the state also acts as a gateway to the Northeast. Roads, trains, inland waterways and air travel have all seen substantial investment to improve connectivity. Not only has internal mobility been enhanced, but new trade and cross-border cooperation possibilities have been opened up by these advances as well. Commerce, tourism and cultural interaction are anticipated to benefit from infrastructure initiatives that connect Assam to surrounding states and nations. From a political perspective, this has changed the focus from internal conflicts and identity issues to Assam's position in regional and international growth, elevating its strategic relevance<sup>12</sup>.

#### **6.5 Balancing Development with Identity Politics**

There may be more of an emphasis on development, but identity politics is still very much a part of Assam's social and political landscape. Political parties have changed their strategies and are now using a mix of identity-based messaging and development projects. Some examples of government priorities include infrastructural development and economic growth, as well as citizenship issues, cultural preservation and indigenous peoples' rights. Assam is a complex place and its different communities seek economic growth while also protecting their cultural identity. This balancing act reflects that. A common tactic in politics is to target different groups with tailored messages in order to garner more votes. Development politics and identity politics coexisting shows how complex governance is in a varied society.

### **7. Role of Youth and Media**

#### **7.1 Rise of Youth Participation in Politics**

Being one of the most powerful demographics in Assam's electorate, young people's influence has grown in the last several years. The younger generation makes up a sizable chunk of the population, so it's no surprise that political parties are focusing on issues like youth employment, education, skill development and entrepreneurship. Millennials and Gen Zers are more politically savvy, articulate and outspoken than their parents' generation. They participate enthusiastically in political discourse, raise valid concerns about policy and hold leaders to account. Student groups, political campaigns and grassroots movements are all seeing more participation, which translates to higher voter turnout. The younger generation in Assam is actively involved in influencing political results rather than just watching.

#### **7.2 Influence of Social Media on Elections**

The advent of widespread internet connectivity and other forms of digital technology have revolutionized political processes in Assam. In recent years, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (previously Twitter) have emerged as potent instruments for political

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<sup>12</sup> Barbora, S. X. (2017). Violence, agrarian change and the politics of autonomy in Assam. In *Geographies of difference* (pp. 128–139). Routledge India.

discourse. By cutting out the middlemen and going straight to the people, political parties and their leaders can reach more voters on these platforms. By facilitating the instantaneous distribution of data, campaign rhetoric and political narratives, social media platforms play an essential role in the electoral process. It also serves as a platform for political mobilization, public opinion development and discussion. In order to forward their objectives, showcase their accomplishments and refute the narratives put forth by the opposition, political parties make strategic use of these platforms. Therefore, social media is become a crucial part of contemporary election tactics.

### 7.3 Digital Campaigns and Political Messaging

By allowing for more personalized and participatory forms of communication, digital campaigns have completely transformed political outreach in Assam. In order to reach certain demographics, especially young voters, political parties are increasingly relying on data-driven tactics. Videos, infographics, live conversations and tailored ads are all part of online campaigns that aim to influence how voters perceive and act. A feeling of openness and transparency is fostered when leaders interact directly with the public through digital media. Politicians and citizens now have closer ties as a result of this. Meanwhile, political information travels at a faster pace because to digital campaigning, which makes elections more exciting and competitive<sup>13</sup>.

### 7.4 Shaping Public Opinion and Political Awareness

Public opinion in Assam has been greatly impacted by the combined effects of youth participation and digital media. Voters are better equipped than ever before to research candidates, examine platforms and compare policies thanks to the abundance of readily available information. A more engaged political culture is fostered via citizen journalism, internet debates and social media discussions. But there are also problems that come with this change, such the proliferation of false information, biased stories and political division. Notwithstanding these reservations, the media and young people have had a positive effect on politics, raising participation and understanding of the issue and making democracy more accessible and accommodating to all.

## 8. Conclusion

After twenty years of Congress rule under Tarun Gogoi, the state of Assam has seen a dramatic shift in leadership to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since the historic 2016 election of Sarbananda Sonowal and continued under the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma. This transition indicates more than just a change in the ruling party; it also represents a larger reorganization of the political ideology, leadership style and voting habits of Assam. Voters have shifted their focus from stability and continuity to accountability, development-oriented leadership and more decisive governance, as seen in this transition. Meanwhile, Assam's sociopolitical fabric is still profoundly influenced by identity politics. Political narratives and voter alignments are still profoundly affected by issues including migration, culture preservation, ethnicity and citizenship. But what makes this phase different is how identity politics has evolved into a multi-layered phenomenon that works in tandem with development ambitions. There has been a change toward a more integrated and practical style of government, as political parties increasingly promote economic growth, infrastructure development, social programs and identity concerns all at once. In addition, the state's traditional emphasis on regional issues has changed due to the growing integration of Assam's politics with national political tendencies. In order to accommodate local sensitivities while yet matching Assam's political aspirations with larger national aims, national parties, especially the BJP, have been instrumental. A new political balance has resulted from this, with regional ambitions being worked out within the context of a national framework. This tendency has been further solidified by the participation of centralized leadership,

<sup>13</sup> Devi, A. (2017). *Assam movement and its political dynamics: A historical study (1979–1985)* (Doctoral dissertation).

strategic alliances and coalition politics. There are a number of important aspects that will determine how Assam's politics develop in the future. The ongoing impact of shifting migratory patterns and demographic changes on identity-based discussions is certain. Simultaneously, prospects for investment, job creation and economic growth will play a larger role in influencing voting behavior, particularly among younger generations. Citizens will be much more engaged and held accountable as a result of the rising influence of digital media and political consciousness. Another major obstacle for political players will be striking a balance between national integration and regional identity. Finally, the political growth of Assam throughout the past two decades shows how a state is always changing as a result of the intersection of past legacies and present aspirations for development and leadership. It shows how a complicated and diverse culture deals with issues of identity, economic ambitions and institutional change as it navigates its political destiny. Therefore, the state of Assam can be used as a case study to learn about the larger trends of political realignment and democratic transition in contemporary India.

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